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My teaching philosophy at heart:

*Show up.*  
*Pay attention.*  
*Give a damn.*

That hard-learned mantra – when I honor it – has served me well as a student, athlete, employee, reporter, editor, friend, partner. And as a teacher.

Each of those roles has different markers of success: Grades, scoreboard stats, paychecks and promotions, stories published, bylines counted, laws changed and lives changed. But no matter the external benchmarks, over time I've realized this: Things work out, in ways as both unpredictable and immeasurable, when I bring my full attention to an encounter. That means not caring as much about an abstract or expected outcome as I do about what I invest in the moment, in the other person, and in the purpose and value of the work at hand.

My other hard-learned truth: I can't really teach anyone anything. I can demonstrate how to do something. I can tell stories about how things can be done. I can provide examples and critiques of things done well and done badly. I can offer constructive criticism and applause for individual efforts.

But learning only happens when the student -- at whatever age and in whatever endeavor -- takes those lessons in, tries them on and makes them their own.

So rather than presume to teach in any directive sense, I strive to provide tools, experiences, encouragement and, I hope, inspiration that give others the chance to learn. And to discover the lifetime joy in doing that.

The best teachers I've had – and they have been legion – did that for me. My mother let (made?) me cook dinner and tend my baby brothers. My father put a bat in my hand and pitched me ball after ball, correcting (and yelling) when I dropped my elbow before my swing. Coaches put me in the game. Librarians led me to better books. Trail guides checked the balance of my pack and left cairns for me to follow. Editors gave me assignments that scared me – then dared and trusted me to get the story.

I suppose I was being taught. Looking back, I realize I was being given the chance to learn. By people who showed up, paid attention, and gave a damn.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jacqueline M. Banaszynski". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned at the bottom of the page.