

A review of Kent Nerburn's book **Simple Truths**
Chapter I: "On Education and Learning"
by Joan E. Masaryk

It seems appropriate as the New year begins to reflect on education and learning. We live in an age where learning has become equated with a score on a test and all learning and curriculum is measured by that score.

Nerburn reminds us that education should be one of the great joys and solaces of life because it enables us to understand our world and to touch the thoughts and feelings of others both in the past and in the present. Education is an attitude of curiosity and wonder. Nerburn reminds us that education is both formal and informal. It is learning from our schooling and learning from the daily events of our life. He cautions us with the voice of Confucius, "*Study without thinking and you are blind; think without studying and you are in danger.*"

Schooling makes us part of a community of learners helping us understand, appreciate, and experience many peoples and cultures. Yet each of us has our own unique passions, something we know more about than anyone else on earth.

The true measure of our education is not, what we know, but how we share what we know with others. Is not that calling of a teacher? We are called to share what we know, to recognize and encourage the talents of our students so they can share what they know. This is no small challenge in today's world when learning is measured by a score rather than shared understanding and an endless sense of curiosity and wonder.

However, there are ways we can daily motivate wonder, curiosity, and encourage talent even amidst these challenges.

1. Choose Read Alouds that connect with and inspire students.
2. Use many modalities in teaching.
3. Provide opportunities for teacher modeling, student practice, and immediate feedback.
4. Ask students often: "How do you know?"
5. Integrate best teaching practices into the required curriculum.
6. Provide many opportunities for cooperative learning.
7. An encouraging word works wonders.