

Appendix X: Book- *Transformative Educator's Guide to Mindful Practice: Daily reflections and exercises for Peace of Mind, Excellence and Teaching from the Heart*----
By John Shindler

Looking out at our students, what do we see?

It is useful to stop every once in a while and look out at your students and notice how you see them. That may seem obvious – “I see them just fine” you might say. But the truth is that most of the time, we tend to see our students (just like anyone we see all the time) as concepts to some extent. We lose the wonder, freshness and the truth of who they are if we don't intentionally make the effort to see who they *really are* moment to moment. Of course we need to know *about* our students. We need to remember what they did yesterday. And we need to think about understanding their psychology and changing their patterns from less functional to more functional. But what in us is seeing what in them?

So as you look at them scan your body for feelings of separateness, and threat, or turning them into pawns in a mental game of “do others make me feel good about myself?” It is normal to turn them to some degree into those that you like, or don't, those that are worth it, and those that we have given up on. Recall our discussion of the Pygmalion in the classroom. Can we see them all as rising stars? But even beyond that, we need to train our awareness to see each student as a human spiritual being. We need to be able to see at least a little of their true self – an eternal being with limitless potential that is occupying a young body. When we do that we let our formless true self see their formless true self and we feel more spacious and peaceful and coming from a true and aware place. And as a result the students look less like a group of problems and sources of frustration, and they become more fresh and interesting and lovable.

Exercise;

Stop 3 times today (and it may be helpful to do it once before you walk into class), and look at your students and allow yourself to see past their appearances and habits and limited forms to who they really are. See the limitless, lovable potential in each student. It may be helpful to say to ourselves, as we let our essence connect with theirs, “I see who you really are, I accept you, I see your limitless potential and I want all good things for you.”

Then feel the difference in your body. Is this exercise to make you a better teacher, or to make you feel more free and happy? Notice how they are impossible to separate?