**Journal Entry – August 15, 2019**

**What Do You Wish Your Teachers Knew About You?**

**BY MICHAEL GONCHAR**

 Do you ever wish your teachers knew you better — knew what your life was like outside of school? Do you ever feel your teachers just don’t get you — who you really are as a person?

What do you wish your teachers knew about you?

In the article “[What Kids Wish Their Teachers Knew](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/31/well/family/what-kids-wish-their-teachers-knew.html),” Donna De La Cruz writes:

When Kyle Schwartz started teaching third grade at Doull Elementary School in Denver, she wanted to get to know her students better. She asked them to finish the sentence “I wish my teacher knew.”

The responses were eye-opening for Ms. Schwartz. Some children were struggling with poverty (“I wish my teacher knew I don’t have pencils at home to do my homework”); an absent parent (“I wish my teacher knew that sometimes my reading log is not signed because my mom isn’t around a lot”); and a parent taken away (“I wish my teacher knew how much I miss my dad because he got deported to Mexico when I was 3 years old and I haven’t seen him in six years”).

The lesson spurred Ms. Schwartz, now entering her fifth teaching year, to really understand what her students were facing outside the classroom to help them succeed at school. When she shared the lesson last year with others, it became a sensation, with the Twitter hashtag “#iwishmyteacherknew” going viral. Other teachers tried the exercise and had similar insights. Many sent her their students’ responses.

In her recently published book, “I Wish My Teacher Knew: How One Question Can Change Everything For Our Kids,” Ms. Schwartz details how essential it is for teachers and families to be partners.

“I really want families to know how intentional teachers are about creating a sense of community and creating relationships with kids,” Ms. Schwartz said. “Kids don’t learn when they don’t feel safe or valued.”

**Students:** Read the entire article, then tell us …

— Finish the sentence: “I wish my teacher knew. …” What would you write?

— What do your teachers not understand about you or your fellow students that you wish they did? Is there anything about your life outside the classroom that teachers should know — and that might increase learning and improve teacher-student relationships?

— How do you think your teachers see you? Do you feel they know the “real” you?

— Should all teachers ask their students this question at the beginning of each school year? Why?

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