

Letter to Your First-Year Teaching Self

A FORTY-FIVE-MINUTE REFLECTIVE EXERCISE for a Sunday afternoon, an end-of-term evening, or the middle of a summer holiday.

Do it once, slowly, and keep it somewhere you will find again. The writing does not need to be good. It only needs to be honest.

How to use it

Set aside forty-five minutes. Use paper if you can. Put your phone away. Move through the five prompts at your own pace.

Prompt One. Name the day.

Write, in specific detail, the first day you stood in front of your own class. What was the school called? What was the room like? What did the light look like? What did you wear? What did you think the day would be like?

Prompt Two. What they did not know.

Write ten to fifteen things the person you were on that first morning did not yet know about what teaching would ask of them.

Prompt Three. What you would tell them.

Prompt Four. What you would not tell them.

Write one thing you know now that you would deliberately not tell them, and why.

Prompt Five. What they would say to you now.

To close

YOU ARE DONE. Take a moment before you get up.

What you do with the letter is yours. Put it in an envelope, fold it into a favourite book, keep it in a drawer, or tear it up.

Take care of yourself. The profession needs you. So do the people who love you.

— *Bart Reeves*