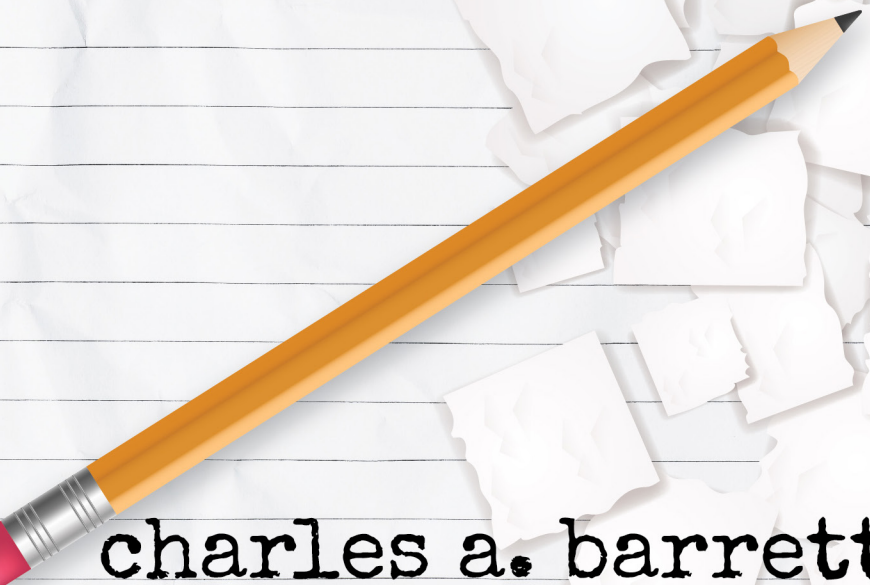




Today in School Psychology

this is why a day without direct
contact with students is wasted



charles a. barrett

TODAY IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

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Charles A. Barrett

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This is Why a Day Without Direct Contact with Students is Wasted

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DEDICATION

To the children—

Thank you for inspiring me. Thank you for teaching me.
And even when I don't see you, I am always thinking about you.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Although I believed in the message of *Today in School Psychology*, I wondered if it would be as meaningful to others as it was to me. Having known some of these amazing individuals for more than 20 years, I am grateful for their feedback that not only confirmed what I felt about the book, but also motivated me to finish it. I am honored to consider them colleagues and friends.

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ABOUT TODAY IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

When speaking to educators and various parent and community groups, I often share a few short stories about my interactions with the students in my schools. More than the smiles (and maybe laughter) from the audience, these brief moments allow them to understand who I am as a person and how I think as a school psychologist. Perhaps best described as a diary, *Today in School Psychology: This is Why a Day Without Direct Contact with Students is Wasted* includes some of my encounters with children and musings on school psychology and education.

Most of the entries in this collection were written at the end of day while thinking about how amazing it is to be a school psychologist. From being incredibly proud of students who have graduated from high school to highlighting the outstanding families and colleagues who passionately serve and advocate for young people, this book has something for you.

Most of all, *Today in School Psychology* is filled with the innocence and insight of children. Whether using the anecdotes as icebreakers or discussion starters during staff meetings and retreats, or enjoying them for personal inspiration, I hope that *Today in School Psychology* encourages you to become an even better champion for young people—one who always keeps children at the center of their service and professional practice.



June 12, 2017

GRADUATION DAY

I am extremely proud of the Park View High School Class of 2017! Although graduation was great, once again, I had mixed emotions. Seeing some of these outstanding young people walk across the stage to receive their diplomas—some as the first person in their families—was nothing short of amazing. For one student, I literally saw her walk for the first time. I really have the best job in the world. Having known and worked with some of these young people since 4th grade, I've witnessed their hard work, focus, and relentless determination to succeed in spite of challenging circumstances, significant adversity, and what others said they could not achieve. In the words of Michael Vereb, "I love you and I'm proud of you."

August 6, 2017

SUMMER VACATION

While spending the last ten days vacationing with Lisa and Miles, I couldn't help but think of all the boys and girls whose families can't afford this privilege. I'm especially grateful that we have jobs that allow us time away without penalty. It could be otherwise, and it is for too many families. Improving students' achievement is not only about more or better instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic; equally important to their development are rich experiences beyond their communities that expand their perspective and exposure. Because it's always about the children, looking forward to the day when these opportunities and experiences are accessible to all.

August 23, 2017

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Tomorrow is the first day of school and I'm just as excited as I was when I was a child packing my backpack and supplies. When I no longer feel this way about the first day, and saddened by the last day, is the day that I need to find something else to do.

November 15, 2017

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY AWARENESS WEEK

Earlier today I attended a meeting to discuss a student's academic difficulties. Although her parents disagreed with our recommendation to evaluate the student, it was a great meeting. The parents, immigrants who speak Arabic, Somali, and English, are fierce advocates for their daughter. In sum, they weren't comfortable with the possibility of their daughter being a child with a disability. I respect their position. At times it's hard enough identifying students with disabilities; I have no idea how this feels for a parent. In sum, our conversation was a respectful dialogue of differing opinions that was centered on the student's success. Although I felt strongly about the student's academic difficulties, because the parents were listened to, and their perspective was valued, I left the meeting pleased with the outcome. Morals of the story:

1. Our views aren't the only important ideas to consider.
2. Parents' perspectives and being comfortable with the direction of their children's education are of utmost importance.
3. If parents, or other team members, disagree with our analysis, it's okay.

November 21, 2017

IEP MEETING

Earlier today I attended an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting to support a friend and her son. As I listened to the input from the teachers, social worker, school counselor, and assistant principal, I was pleased with what they said and the manner in which they respected the student and his family. I was particularly impressed with the school psychologist and her contributions. After the meeting, I let her know that she did a great job and that I was also a school psychologist. It was a pleasure to see a colleague in action—serving students and families with sensitivity. Moral of the story: we never know who's watching what we're doing. There are people who attend our meetings who know at least as much as we do. Serve. Always.

November 28, 2017

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

I spent some time observing students in five classrooms today at Forest Grove Elementary School and Guilford Elementary School. I always enjoy seeing great instruction and active student engagement! There's nothing like serving with committed educators in public schools.

January 24, 2018

GUITAR PRACTICE

One of my students asked me to come to his guitar practice this afternoon. He and the other students were great! Because I enjoy it so much, I can't call it a job. I absolutely love what I do each day.

February 27, 2018

“HE’S BLACK!”

As I was preparing to evaluate a student, a 5-year-old Black child pointed at me and exclaimed, “He’s Black!” Notably, I wasn’t in one of my assigned schools, but a portion of the county that is considerably less diverse. When this happened, I couldn’t help but wonder if this student had ever seen a Black male in a professional position. Would he ever have the experience of a Black, male teacher? While the surprise and excitement from his voice made my day, it also renewed my commitment to diversifying the field of school psychology. I shouldn’t be an anomaly.

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