

# What is a keeper of the future?

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## Teachers as keepers of the future – what does that title mean?

I have long thought of exceptional teachers as “**keepers of the future.**” If we think about it, all teachers affect the future to some extent, whether in positive or negative ways. For instance a teacher can make students love or hate a particular topic or subject – sometimes for a lifetime. Educators who know they have a sacred responsibility to prepare their students for a time to come – perhaps one of uncertainty and chaos - are rare. These folks realize that through both their teaching and their modeled behaviors they have the power to impact the future in positive ways. Too, really forward thinking teachers seem intentionally aware and focused on how the instructional choices they make will inevitably affect students’ abilities to live, work, grow, and thrive in a time to come.

## What are the differences between good and exceptional?

The difference between simply being a good teacher, or choosing to be someone who is deeply aware of their responsibility to the future can be rather profound. Teachers who are “**keepers of the future**” are not just delivering instruction and content, or thinking about test scores. These are the educators who are continually mindful that they have really big responsibilities in how the world is and will be shaped. They accept the “*keeper*” title with reverence, deep awareness, personal reflectivity, and great seriousness.

Teachers are “**keepers of the future**” only if they accept that responsibility and consciously concentrate on how what they do has the potential to shape the future through their students. These teachers continually reflect on cause and effect relationships. They persistently ask questions about the relevancy and the applicability of what they teach. True *keepers* make concerted efforts to stay in touch with reality, they keep abreast of what is going on in the world, and they adapt and adjust their teaching and curriculum accordingly. They are at that the nexus of where teaching becomes “artful.”

Yes, it is okay to just want to be a good teacher. However, as we are living in a rapidly changing global world, one that is moving at a greatly accelerated pace, and being just “good” may not be enough. The world is beginning to need more dedicated educators who perceive themselves as “**keepers of the future**” so that they can help create future generations who can think, strategize, empathize, react, and both solve and find problems quickly.