

Here's what I think ...

By Ty Ankrom

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As educators, especially veteran teachers, it may be easy to forget your own first day or first year.

What an exciting, nerve-wracking, anxious, fun and terrifying time! Sometimes, it may be all of those things at the same time.

If you've been in your building for more than three years, I have an assignment for you: Find someone new and give him or her a tip. What do you wish you'd known that first day in that building? What would have helped you that day, that week or that year?

Most important, let that new person – be it teacher, aide, secretary or custodian – know that you are available to help.



And new people – you know who you are – you have an assignment, too. Find a colleague who has worked at your building for more than five years, introduce yourself and ask him or her for a piece of advice for the year ahead.

It's funny that no matter how old we get and how long we spend in the workforce, we still can get nervous talking to strangers.

Now, if we still get nervous as adults, imagine you're an elementary or middle or high school student in a new building, surrounded by new faces. That can be pretty intimidating.

And if talking to strangers is difficult, imagine what it takes for a young person to ask an adult for help.

Make it easier for them by letting your students know you are more than a teacher (or aide, secretary, custodian, bus driver, principal, etc.). Where once you may have been a stranger, you can become a friend.

And as cellist Yo-Yo Ma said, "Good things happen when you meet strangers."

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