

The Zax, by Dr. Seuss: **Making a Character Connection II**

Discussion 2: Education: The Good, the Bad, the Ugly

In the sixth paragraph of “The Zax” the South Going Zax claims that he can endure great hardship in order to maintain the dedication and loyalty to his teacher:

*And I'll prove to YOU, " yelled the South-Going Zax,
"That I can stand here in the prairie of Prax
For fifty-nine years! For I live by a rule
That I learned as a boy back in South-Going School.
Never budge! That's my rule. Never budge in the least!
Not an inch to the west! Not an inch to the east!
I'll stay here, not budging! I can and I will
If it makes you and me and the whole world stand still!"*

His promise to stand in the Prairie of the Prax for fifty nine years was upheld by both he and the North Going Zax. Ultimately, this act of obedience was a life sentence.

As a student, the South Going Zax learned well; the teacher taught a strict lesson. Imagine what that teacher must have said! We can only presume that the teacher advocated that he *go south and never stray! Never budge; never give in, never compromise.*

Question:

Have you ever been taught something that harmed you rather than helped you? If so, what role did the teacher play in your life? Was the teacher faculty at your school? Was the teacher a parent? Was the teacher an employer? What was it you learned? Why was it harmful?

Task: describe a time when you learned something that was harmful, yet you obeyed.

Discussion:

1. Why are teachers and parents and mentors so influential? Is this a bad thing? Is this a good thing?
2. Is racism similarly destructive? Obviously no one is born to be a racist; it is a process of thinking most often learned at home. What role do parents play in education?
3. How does this sort of negative thinking relate to the Zax and their situation?