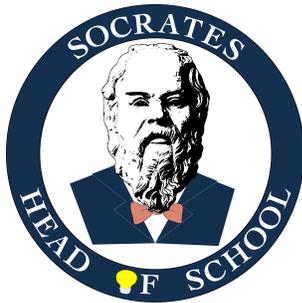


Am I Invisible? by Murphy Lynne



Think you might want to read this book?

Am I Invisible? by Murphy Lynne, gives her account (physically, mentally, emotionally) of what school was like as a student on the autism spectrum. Her brutally honest and eye-opening journey will leave all readers with a better understanding of how school is different for all students, and how we, as educators can help to make sure all students are seen.

What would Socrates ask?

- What can we do to identify students who feel they are not seen?
- How do you build relationships with students who feel invisible?
- How does your class environment affect the relationships you have with students?
- What is the difference between listening and hearing students?
- Are there ways you could more effectively engage with your students?
- Do you and your students have fun when you teach?
- How do you want to be remembered?

Concepts

- Ways for teachers to connect
 - Don't look away!
 - Don't ignore students who are more difficult to connect with.
 - No one wants to be invisible, even if they come across that way.
 - A smile can make a giant difference.
 - Teachers can change a child's story
 - Have intentional conversations
 - Make eye contact
 - Make sure your tone is genuine
 - Put in consistent effort, even when it is not easy
 - These conversations may be uncomfortable
 - Build a relationship with all students
 - "Get beyond, 'How are you?' See me, know me, get me."
 - Breaks down anxiety
 - Even if you are not the cause of the anxiety, you can help reduce it
 - Truly care, being nice is not enough
 - Say hello
 - Spend the first few minutes of class at the door or inside making connections
 - Be present and ready when students come in, not rushing around getting ready for class

- Students need the engagement and interactivity when they come in the room
 - Advocate for children
 - Create a safe space for all children
 - Show respect for students
 - Students may look like they are coping on the outside but spiraling out of control on the inside
 - Understand the language of mental health to aid in both recognizing and assisting students
 - Look at the whole student, not just the surface - dig deeper
 - Be generous with compliments, even if you do not mean them at first.
 - Draws students out
 - Starts relationships
- When teachers truly see a student, it makes it possible for other students to accept one another.
- Teachers can make all the difference in the kind of day a child has at school.
- All students need an outlet to run to.

Quotes from the author

- "I was fighting to make a statement that I was enough exactly as I am."
- "A diagnosis makes a difference in a teacher's ability to understand the challenges a child may face and therefore address them in the correct way."
- "I felt special. I felt as if they actually cared about what I had to say."
- "Nonetheless, being in third grade was the beginning of the end in a way. The last year when I felt as secure in myself as I've ever felt. The last year I felt like I belonged."
- "...she seemed to understand me. She saw me. I was not invisible to her, and in turn, she made me not invisible to others."
- "If only I had had teachers at every turn who celebrated differences, as opposed to working hard to make sure we were all the same."
- "...but what too many teachers and adults don't realize is that knowing how to do something and actually raising my hand with ease are worlds apart for a kid like me. The other kids could start conversations with those who were sitting beside them like it was nothing. I could not do that. I always wondered how they did that, which is where my deepest insecurities came from."
- "Once you got to know me, though, I was not all that quiet."
- "It is hard for adults to look past a diagnosis and see a kid who is full of anxiety and one who doesn't have the skill yet to make conversations like the others."
- "I was physically there, but no one recognized me, no one acknowledged me."
- "The impact of a teacher can be felt for years and make you believe things about yourself that just aren't true."
- "Despite my friendships growing stronger, my depression was skyrocketing."
- "I understand that I am quiet - that's a given - but I did not appreciate how that was the first thing she used to describe me."

- “Don’t just pay attention to the superstars. There might be a student who simply is too afraid to ask for help. Be the one to ask first!”
- “She did not make me feel like an outcast. She treated me like any other student, which made me feel a sense of safety.”
- “Each year there are students who are terrified to come back. Be aware of them. Make a plan to be inviting, and understand anxiety is real and impactful in times of change.”

Organizations/schools working on answers

- <https://sites.ed.gov/users/tag/asd/>

Gateways to further learning

- <https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism>

The applicability of this book to education is



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