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Introduction

ONE-ON-ONE IS NOT JUST ABOUT TUTORING. IS BEING A DOCTOR JUST ABOUT MEDICINE?

Doctors spend major chunks of their lives learning how to heal us. They go through fortunes of time, effort, and money to learn their craft. They toil through medical school, internships, residencies, fellowships, and then apply for positions in offices and hospitals worldwide.

And yet, after we make an initial visit to a new doctor, what do we say when someone asks us how it went? What are the primary topics of discussion when we speak about doctors? While we deeply yearn for doctors who went to the best schools

and have every relevant certification, remarkably we don't begin our analysis of them with those "on-paper" descriptions. Rather, we first focus on whether they make eye contact with us, whether they answer all our questions, *how* they answer our questions, whether they smile and have a soothing presence, and any other qualities that reveal their level of *humanness*. We have even coined a term for it: "bedside manner," which is now firmly rooted in our lexicon. The personal connection we feel (or lack thereof) is paramount to us.

We surely appreciate the credentials on their walls; we may even coo over them. We would not be in the room with them in the first place had it not been for their credentials. Yet I believe that credentials must only be an implied starting point. We go to them saying, "I know you know this medicine stuff. I don't know this stuff. Please explain everything necessary to me, step-by-step, compassionately, so that I may heal." The starting point is the doctor's expertise. The end goal is our healing, fueled by a steadfast human connection with that person undertaking our care.

One-on-One education is no different. Doctors care for the wellbeing of our physical (and emotional/psychological) health. Educators care for the wellbeing of our academic (and emotional/psychological) health. Both are hired either to prevent or to address full-blown problems. Both fields deal in high stakes, ranging from the handling of long-term emotional wounds and feelings of despair, to the celebration of breakthroughs. For both doctors and educators, simply knowing the material alone does not guarantee their success. Many students have had at least one experience with a

particular teacher who knew the stuff, but could not get it across.

That notion, of “getting it across,” marks the impetus and burning need for this book. Let’s explore the recent rise of the flipped and blended learning models. Flipped and blended learning entails students viewing educational content at home, and then spending time in school practicing those concepts with the aid of the teacher, who circulates around the room. Sal Kahn’s *Kahn Academy* is a flagship driver of this model, which explicitly touts the merits of the One-on-One model over the One-on-Many. My question is this: assuming a teacher successfully flips her classroom environment, and at long last finds herself sitting across from her student... now what? Just talk about math, or science? Even before the proliferation of the flipped model, a huge part of the educational system has always relied on successful One-on-One exchanges. And now, adding up all the traditional schools, flipped classes, homeschooling programs, after school programs, One-on-One academies, independent study schools, and the ocean of extra help organizations out there, the need to define successful One-on-One practice is monumental.

Too many people incorrectly assume that almost anyone can communicate educational concepts clearly, if only they have expertise. What about the educator’s cadence, body language, where she sits relative to her student, use of silence, use of praise, relatability, connectability, bilateral expectations, nonverbal tactics, golden phrases she can utter, breaking down walls, and the poisonous practices to avoid at all costs? We cover all that and so much more within these pages.

At long last, this book shines light on every strategy possible to transform an average One-on-One relationship into an inspiring one. This book is dedicated to every parent, educator, tutor, coach, colleague, boss, friend, and family member who wishes to communicate as an effective One-on-One artist, a term that I will define shortly. My mission is for us to celebrate and magnetize those synergetic moments when true learning happens, and then teach you to create those moments yourself. Fleeting yet unmistakable, these magical learning windows are the direct portals towards the collective advancement and enlightenment of our civilization. This is how I see education, and why it is my life's calling.

This book is primarily “how” oriented. In relatable terms, I will outline everything you'll need to know and do to become a master One-on-One artist. This book is also “who” oriented. This means that in addition to describing in detail *how* to do this sacred work, I will also build up to the idea of *who* you need to be for it.

Before we dive in, let's first create some common understandings. *The word “tutor” does not define this complex role. Therefore instead, I will use “One-on-One artist” or some variation.* There is nothing wrong with the word “tutor” itself; indeed, I tutor all the time. However, by acknowledging all the nuance and skill that goes into this role, this book is designed to forever turn you into successful One-on-One masters. The work reaches far beyond the transference of information from one person to another. It is about making connections in highly effective, creative, and inspiring ways to students who may be turned off, amidst a sea of peripheral challenges. It is about

the deeply rooted understanding that we all learn best when we feel connected, both to the person delivering the information, as well as to the information itself. This book will completely cover how to establish that.

One-on-One symbolizes a level playing field, where teaching and learning occur in harmonious balance. Think of a typical one-on-one basketball game—both people are equally necessary and important, and no player is inherently superior over the other. Skill levels vary, of course. However, within the true spirit of the game, there never exists an imbalance of *power*. Both parties are equally powerful. In fact, even the capitalization of One-on-One is intentional. It invokes the sanctity of each individual present.

Let's next create an understanding about the differences between teaching and tutoring. The traditional classroom model, which matches one instructor with tens or hundreds of students, is naturally prone to creating confusion. I have experienced the following dilemma firsthand as a classroom teacher. In a matter of seconds, I need to decide: do I teach to the lowest performers in order to ensure that no one is lost? Or do I teach to the top performers, in my attempt to strive for the highest level of learning possible? Or do I find a middle ground and teach towards the average, ensuring that some students understand, some are bored, and some are bewildered? Such is one of many teaching dilemmas that spawn the need for individualized instruction. Other factors that add to the growing need for effective One-on-One instruction are decreased attention capabilities associated with the younger generations, educational budgets being slashed and classroom sizes growing,

and an emerging demand for the educational experience to be more personalized and meaningful to the learners.

As a society, we debate over whether or not to decrease class sizes. Those for decreasing class sizes argue that smaller class sizes allow for students to enjoy more personal attention from their teachers. The smaller the classes, many reason, the more teachers will be available for each student. Through this logic, One-on-One learning (done correctly) is the *most* efficient and effective learning system in the world. Naturally so, because we cannot further decrease the number of students when the number of students is one.

One-on-One is also the true original form of teaching, as it starts at the earliest stages of life, between parent and child. And compared to the traditional classroom models we know today, One-on-One apprenticeship has been around for much longer and boasts iconic evidence of historical effectiveness. Leonardo da Vinci was a direct disciple of Verrocchio, who is lesser known today but was a leading artist in Florence at the time. Joe Higgs mentored reggae superstar Bob Marley, and in turn, Marley mentored hip-hop superstar Wyclef Jean. Coaches Phil Jackson and Dean Smith empowered basketball phenomenon Michael Jordan to achieve transcendent heights, as Jordan repeatedly cites how his growth and triumphs are directly linked to their relationship.

While individualized teaching is the most primary and most *primal* form of learning, it is nevertheless fraught with challenges. First, the One-on-One artist must fully immerse with the student. There is no podium to hide behind. There are no One-on-Many dynamics, which come with a higher

level of anonymity and the ability to generalize the material so that it speaks to no one person in particular, with only the *hope* that individuals present might understand. Take a moment to imagine the act of directly engaging a person in front of you. In any given interaction, you would know whether or not he is listening. You would know if he is tuned in. This level of engagement requires social and emotional forms of intelligence that extend far beyond the actual learning material at hand. Another challenge with One-on-One instruction is that it can be time consuming, impractical, and highly expensive. The time has come to open the floodgates and no longer accept the idea that effective One-on-One education is reserved for the select few who somehow magically “get it” and know what to do. The value of this book is that it shatters that particular bottleneck and empowers all who read it to swiftly and successfully partake in this life-changing form of education.

Indeed, any teacher can have a noteworthy One-on-One moment with a student at any time, either during class time or throughout the school day. But the scope of our definition must not be limited to scholastic or academic topics only. If you have ever helped someone figure out how to use a function on her cell phone, advised a work colleague to hone a skill he needed for the job, or taught a friend how to chop an onion, then for those brief moments, you were engaged in One-on-One artistry. Learning happens all around us, all the time. I warmly offer you a full range of solid and intuitive ideas that can help all of us learn and grow together.