

Teacher, Empty Thy Cup was created by [Setanaoko](#)

We use the saying “empty your cup” frequently when we talk about students. But perhaps there is an arrogance to this phrasing. It insists that the teacher is superior and should be trusted.

But the truth is, the teacher needs to learn too. Because not every student will learn the same.

A teacher absolutely can be the reason a student fails. It is the height of ego to judge one’s ability to teach based on the success of a student, and to judge a student’s ability to learn based on their failure as a student. Both of these positions predicate upon the teacher’s inability to acknowledge their own shortcomings as educators. A student may succeed regardless of who their teacher is. A student might even fail regardless of who their teacher is. But an educator must be able to be honest with themselves as to whether or not they are the reason a student failed.

In the Jedi Community, I’ve seen it happen several times over. I’ve had it happen in my own interactions. Some students respond to my teaching methods, while others do not. If I want them to succeed, I either have to find someone who can teach them using different methods, or I have to meet them and adapt my own.

We say that teachers are also supposed to be students. But if we are to acknowledge this, we have to accept that it’s not just the student which must empty their cup- it’s us too.

Gather at the River

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Replied by [Arden Wayfarer](#) on topic [Teacher, Empty Thy Cup](#)

I've been studying the Tao Te Ching lately for inspiration, interpolating old translations while I wait for a new translation I'm excited for to come out, and this discussion reminds me of this quote:

The Master puts herself last;
And finds herself in the place of authority.
She detaches herself from all things;
Therefore she is united with all things.
She gives no thought to self.
She is perfectly fulfilled.

- [J.H. McDonald translation](#)

The concept is also found in our fictional inspiration. *The Jedi Path* emphasizes how a Jedi teacher must learn from their Padawan, as much as the Padawan learns from them, and the *Power of the Jedi Sourcebook* has "Honor Your Padawan" as an element of the Jedi Code. If a Jedi is meant to show

humility, then surely the more experience, authority, and seniority a Jedi acquires, the more they must embody Jedi ideals like humility, "self-improvement through knowledge and training", and serenity.

I haven't had many close relationships with Jedi teachers, but I've had a miserable experience in a real-world apprenticeship. My teacher had an easily bruised ego and got angry with his apprentices if we were better at him than something, asked questions, or pointed out when he made even simple accidental mistakes. It was a horrific experience that's left my career in flux. Recently, I reached out to an old contact I made in the same field, and had an absolutely wonderful experience. Asking nothing in return, she showed me around her shop, gave a lot of free advice, and called up some of her contacts to see if they were hiring. It was a night and day experience. It can be hard to realize the problem isn't *you* but your teacher, but exploring other options is worth the effort.