Love, teach, wander







Tatiana Martynova





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Аннотация

This is a true story about dreams, teaching and life.

When Tatiana was a little girl, people told her she was not good at languages. Later, they said it was impossible to open her own school. But she did not give up! She started teaching at 14, and at 22, she opened her own language center I-You-We-They

In this book, Tatiana tells funny and touching stories about her students, her three children and a big family trip to the mountains. She shows us that every person is special, mistakes are normal, and love helps us grow.

This book is for students, parents, and teachers—and for everyone who wants to believe in themselves!

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About the Author

This is a story about Tatiana Martynova, who has travelled a long path from a student to a teacher, director, and founder of her own school. The author's journey began with a childhood love for English, which, despite difficulties, developed into a deep passion and profession. Tatyana's personal and professional growth is closely linked to her experiences, both in her own education and in teaching.

The book will cover:

● **The journey of falling in love with English:** from early childhood fascination to overcoming school challenges and rediscovering the joy of learning.

● **The path to becoming a teacher:** the first students, the development of teaching skills, and the creation of an educational center.

● **The role of students as teachers:** how children, through their unique perspectives and personalities, have taught Tatiana valuable life and professional lessons.

● **Founding a school:** the challenges and rewards of building an educational institution and a strong team.

● **Balancing life and work:** Tatyana's experiences as a mother of three and how her children influenced her professional

life and vision for education.

Tatiana Martynova shares her personal stories, reflections, and pedagogical insights, offering a warm and inspiring perspective on education, personal growth, and the profound impact of human connection.

Foreword

«Mom, why are you writing?» Olya asks.
«To understand myself better,» I answer.
«To understand your world inside your head better?»
«Exactly, Olyusya!»

Since we were little, people have tried to put labels on us, judge our abilities, and often, cut our wings as early as possible. We do not get many chances to discover ourselves.

At the age of nine, I was told I definitely had no talent for languages. At the age of fifteen, I was told I would not get into a good university. When I was nineteen, I was told that working with other teachers was like hell. Being twenty-one, I was told that building a business in Russia was impossible. And at the age of twenty-three, that all children go to tutors, and opening foreign language courses was a risky idea.

It is so good that at five years old, I found myself in wonderful classes with a great teacher and fell in love with English. At twelve, I found my teacher who gave me confidence in my knowledge and future. At fourteen, I had my first student.At sixteen, I found my love. At seventeen, I entered one of the best universities in the country. And at twenty-two, Iopened my own language school.

I often surprised people with my decisions and achievements. But I was just slowly walking towards myself all these years. Towards the self from my childhood. I remembered my dreams and desires and stayed true to them and to myself. I did it for myself and for my loved ones. I intuitively felt that deep down, I was more than the girl who showed herself on the outside. It was important for me not to lose my wings and, if possible, to give wings to others. Creating my own reality day by day and getting to know myself a little better that is what has always been interesting to me.

And on this path, for twenty years now, my students and my children have been my teachers. They are honest, natural, they hear their heart's voice, feel their body, and express themselves in all their diversity. Every student taught me something. I am thankful to each of them and I want to tell you about many of my students.

Why? Probably, mostly, to keep these important pieces of myself, on one hand, and to inspire my readers, on the other. I want us, together, to become even more attentive to childhood, to our children, to our «teachers.»

My First Student

You run around the room, shout, jump up from your chair. We play, we write, you learn new letters. You do your homework quickly, you cannot control your emotions, but you have a good memory – you can remember many words at once. I have a teacher's book with games, rhymes, songs, exercises, and all sorts of advice. For you, I bought Oxford textbooks. Everything is serious. For me, this is real work. I responsibly approach learning problems. You probably feel good with me. I am young, I also go to school. I am only fourteen years old, and you are half of my age. Although we have books on the table, it is still not a school.

I conduct experiments. You are eight and we learn Shakespeare, Robert Burns, and sing The Beatles. I decided to develop your memory. You resist a little, but over time, you confidently recite what you have learned. In the third grade, you get a certificate at school – first place in the English language Olympiad. Well done. I made a color copy. I keep it.

Then I entered Moscow Linguistic University. You decided to start learning German. I began to learn new teaching methods. Subjects like psychology and pedagogy appeared. I am slowly becoming a professional. I put all the knowledge I gain into practice with you. At nineteen, I already have a lot of experience. Through word-of-mouth, students from your school, friends, and

friends of friends learned about me.

This is how I realized that my calling is to be a teacher. This is how I discovered my abilities. This is how I learned that students are all different. Why should it be easy? You still have a difficult personality. But you are already completely different. Smart, good-looking, mature enough for your age. You have become an interesting person. I do not know what you think about this, but I believe we have influenced each other in many ways.

It is amazing. Ten years have passed. You graduated from the eleventh grade. I opened my own school. So much lies ahead. We studied all these years. Individually, in a group with wonderful girls, a lot and in passing.

I learned to teach, and you learned to learn. It is interesting to see what happens with us next. I think we will not let each other down.

P.S. This story was written in 2013. Twelve years have passed. And I, as before, remember my first student with warmth. I remember the trust of the parents, my first job, my first teaching and earning experience. I remember how it all began.

Though, is this really the beginning? It all started with me. It started with fun English lessons at the age of five, with exciting

classes with my first teacher. When people ask why they should start learning English so early, even before going to school, I often tell this story, besides the usual useful reasons. I think it is time to write it down. I want to tell a little about myself from the outside, turning my experience into stories about a girl

named Tanechka. There are a few sketches ahead.

Part 1. Stories about Tanechka

How Tanechka Fell in Love with English

«Hooray! It came true! My dream came true! Father Frost gave it to me! This is something only our teacher

has. And now it's mine!»

Tanechka is five years old. In the autumn, her parents signed her up for English classes at the Community Centre. She was very lucky with the teacher. Olga Grigoryevna could engage everyone and Tanechka as well.

«How is she doing?» her parents asked after a few classes.

«She's active. She doesn't always understand right away. Sometimes her answers aren't quite what was asked, but she's involved in the process.»

Actually, Tanechka did not think much about what kind of lesson this was. The only important thing was *how* they were taught, not *what* specifically. And the lesson turned out to be like a fairy tale. Every time, the teacher played with the kids, drew, molded with plasticine, brought new toys, and sang cheerful songs. Tanechka especially liked the fishing game. Catching fish and other «sunk» items with a magnet was a real fun. I guess the task was to catch, name, and count the items. But Tanechka does not remember that at all.

What caught her attention was the teacher's involvement and

the unusual activities. This English lesson perfectly broke the routine of everyday events. The teacher always had something that was not part of normal life. Take, for example, a big, colorful Disney picture dictionary. Thick pages, bright pictures, strange words written in a new language, and surely some way to remember them. This book amazed Tanechka. It seemed like it came from another country. She thought that if they had such a book at home, she could look at it for hours. It was surprising that you could learn English by looking at pictures of cartoon characters.

Asking for such a dictionary for New Year seemed risky. Father Frost would surely have trouble finding such a rare book. But Tanechka still took a chance. Her joy knew no bounds. It was a New Year's miracle for a five-year-old girl. The book lay under the Christmas tree. It was exactly like the teacher's.

Tanechka fell in love with English. And this dictionary reminded her of those wonderful classes for many years. Classes that served as a starting point on her journey to mastering foreign languages. «The lesson turned out to be like a fairy tale. Every time, the teacher played with the kids, drew, molded with plasticine, brought new toys, and sang cheerful songs.»

I am sure psychologists and educators know about Abraham Maslow's concept of «peak experiences.» These are strong, memorable experiences and emotions that make a person happy, help them open up, and gain valuable experience. Such experience can serve as a foundation for further learning. It

does not seem like a big deal: the game-based lessons and the dictionary, which, of course, was not as hard to find as the little girl thought, laid the foundation for her future profession and became a solid base without which nothing might have ever happened.

When people ask me at what age it is best to start learning English, I always say without hesitation: the earlier, the better.

Languages develop memory, thinking, logic, and hearing. Preschool classes help children learn better in school. And most importantly, interesting lessons form a positive attitude towards foreign languages and learning in general. After all, it might not be possible to get a child interested in learning foreign languages later in school.

How Tanechka Almost Stopped Loving English

Yes, yes, English in school was first disappointing, and then it was just torture. It started when, after enrolling in a school with an intensive English program, Tanechka found nothing in the lessons that reminded her of her favorite classes with Olga Grigoryevna. No games, no songs. The deceptively bright textbook turned out to be the most boring and difficult trial.

Live English was replaced by transcription, phonetic dictations, and confusing symbols in parentheses. The children in the class seemed to be learning two languages at once: a foreign one and a transcription one. If Tanechka had not known about other classes, English would have forever become her least favorite subject.

«I don't understand anything,» Tanechka told her parents. «How can you remember all these symbols? Why is it all for?»

Her parents had no answer. Her dad, who wanted his daughter to learn foreign languages so much, was also annoyed by this transcription. Besides the transcription symbols, all the students still wrote down ugly-looking Russian «hints» above the words, which did not always accurately represent the English sounds. «Mother» became «mazer,» and «daughter» became «doter.»

Her knowledge from the playful lessons helped. She understood enough of what they had covered by listening. Now, all she needed to do was learn to read and write everything. Tanechka tried. She believed that English would become more interesting soon. She just needed to wait a little.

The miracle did not happen. Tanechka did not like the school teachers. Until about sixth grade, they changed several times, but they were always cold, not enthusiastic about their subject, and too demanding. Getting a five [the highest grade] was not easy for the next five years. And Tanechka wanted to be an excellent student. English became a stumbling block. Very often, the only «four» [a good but not the best grade] in the quarter was for English. How disappointing that was!

At the end of elementary school, there was an English exam. They had to prepare twenty small «topics» on different subjects, learn everything, and be ready to draw their first exam ticket and talk about the cosen topic in English. It was quite nerve-wracking. Although the process of preparing texts and memorizing them interested the diligent third-grader. There was a clear goal: to learn, answer well, and get an excellent grade. On the day itself, however, something went wrong from the beginning. It was Tanechka's turn. She entered the office.

«How do you do!» the strict deputy principal for English greeted the student with a smile.

«I am fine, thank you,» Tanechka blurted out, her mind racing from nervousness.

And then it began:

«Did I ask you 'how are you'?»

Tanechka blinked in confusion. She stayed silent.

«I said, 'How do you do'. Do you know the difference? It's not 'how are you,' it's 'hello.' And you should have answered

'How do you do' as well.»

«Ah, so that's it,» Tanechka, already quite scared, understood.

«How do you do!» she managed to say. She drew her ticket. She started preparing. She answered well, getting a «five.»

Many, many years have passed since that third-grade exam. But Tanechka has not forgotten this story. Later, when she

was studying at university to become a teacher, a lecturer on teaching methods once quoted the words of the late Patriarch Alexy II during a lecture:

«Whatever you learn about teaching methods, please remember that 'love is higher than law, wisdom is higher thantruth, mercy is higher than justice.'»

Then, listening to such a «correct» and humane lecture, Tanechka remembered some stories from her school days.

Including this one. And it seemed to her that the deputy principal was not right then. And it would have been possible to greet the little exam takers more friendly. A smile is not always enough. Or rather, it is never enough, at least when working with children. But in my school, the principle was «The teacher is always right. If the teacher is wrong, see point one.» We got used to it, adapted to it, and the particularly sensitive and nervous

students, like Tanechka, quickly understood that «what doesn't kill you makes you stronger.» And they became stronger and stronger.

The teachers were sure that Tanechka still did not know everything perfectly. They suggested taking extra lessons. We tried. Then the grades instantly turned into consistent «fives.» In individual lessons, the teacher prepared Tanechka for future tests in advance. «Coaching,» so to speak. But since the family did not have the financial means to earn «fives» this way on a regular basis, her parents suggested this formula for possible success in school English:

"Aim at six to get a five.»

This life hack turned out to be effective. Tanechka was generally a slow learner for many years. Usually, it took her more time than others to understand new material. So, she needed to figure out how to learn English on her own, without a tutor, toa stable «five.» If it needed to be done, it had to be done. Tanechka was a diligent girl. The middle school years can be called years of independent English study.

How Tanechka Learned English Because She «Had To»

Many people probably know from their own experience or from their children's school English that understanding all the grammar that comes your way is not easy. And it is not just about grammar.

Tanechka tried to understand. Self-study books, answer keys, teacher's books, tests like the ones on the teacher's desk – she used everything that could be useful and help somehow. Tanya did the upcoming tests in advance, analysed her mistakes, and redid each test until she remembered everything. She explored the upcoming lesson topic on her own beforehand. She translated texts, lightly scribbled answers to questions in pencil, and marked the correct answer options. What many people do with a tutor, Tanechka did herself, creating more comfortable conditions for herself in class.

«I wasn't always a teacher, you know,» the most gloomy and strict elderly teacher, L. I., confessed for some reason during Tanechka's lesson. «I had been working at Sberbank my whole life, and then I got a job at a school.»

She probably had no idea what pedagogy, child psychology, or teaching methods were. A nice, easy job if you do not go into the

specifics of the profession. The main thing is to gain authority, scare everyone a little with bad grades, offer extra lessons as a lifesaver, and that's it.

Now Tanechka remembers her with some pity. She worked without passion, without love for children at school for many, many years. It seems it was hard not only for the children but for her, too.

Tanechka was lucky to meet real teachers at school as well.

One of them was a kind, caring teacher, I. I. She did not explain the material very clearly, but her lessons were not scary, they were interesting, and most importantly, fair. Finally, in the seventh grade, Tanya started getting consistent «fives» and gained confidence in her knowledge.

Although it was still not easy. At the school with intensive English studies, they introduced subjects almost like on college courses: English literature and the history of Great Britain.

And this is not about «London is the capital of Great Britain.» It is much, much more difficult. Students had to deal with endless unfamiliar words, dictated lectures, retelling pages from unadapted textbooks, translating poems, lists of books for summer vacation… A lot of everything.

Tanechka did not give up. In the summer, she read and translated in advance, and wrote down long lists of words in her notebook. And during the school year, it was a little easier.

What did Tanechka learn then? English? Yes, that too. Although, of course, long lists of those words were learned and

mastered much later, not during school age. Back then, she was developing perseverance, diligence, and determination. That's also good.

Falling in Love with English Again

A person needs a person. A student needs a teacher. Their own favorite teacher who will see them, understand them, and set them on the right path. To meet such a person is luck; to meet them twice in a lifetime is more than just luck, it is destiny.

In the tenth grade, Tanechka rediscovered that almost forgotten feeling from childhood that an English lesson could transport you to another reality. In her small classroom on the fourth floor, I. A. created her unique teaching style. She was very strict and demanding. But, unlike many other teachers, she was fair, pedagogical, knew her teaching methods, and gave everyone a chance. C's and D's [grades] were written only in pencil. «If you want to fix it, please do,» she would say. And many did it. If there is a chance to fix it, why not take advantage of it?

Tanechka went to I. A. for extra individual lessons once a week. It was high school. It was time to prepare for exams.

«Do you want to stay and do more exercises?» I. A. would say to Tanechka when the lesson ended and the next student came into the classroom.

And Tanechka would stay. She was sure that I. A. Was giving her a real, selfless gift. It was simply impossible to refuse such an offer.

What was so special about her offer? Simply put, no other

teacher made such an offer to her.

How English Became a Way to Communicate in All Lessons

Teenage emotions, crushes, secrets: how do you discuss all the most important things? Rather, how do you discuss them during a lesson? There's so much important stuff to say and there would not be enough time even during the longest break.

Of course, it's not good to get distracted during classes… But if you can do all your work, a little bit of whispering is okay.

Tanechka and her friend Yulechka found a great solution.

«Let's write to each other in English,» suggested her friend. «That way, even if the teachers see, they won't really understand what we're writing, and it'll be good practice for our English.»

«Let's try it, it's a great idea.»

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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