

Invited Teaching

by Marge Yeager

Imagine that you are going to a large museum full of various types of exhibits. You had intended on wandering around, focusing here, focusing there, delving a bit more deeply into those things which you found fascinating. Grazing, to use a food metaphor. Asking questions of the kind and friendly docents available, who are a wealth of information on the displays.

Now imagine that instead, you are met at the door by a docent who informs you of the tour planned for you: the floors you will visit, the certain exhibits you will view, the order in which you WILL view them, and time allotted for you to have finished your tour. The docent will accompany you throughout, make sure that you complete the scheduled tour on time, and, to ascertain the effectiveness of the tour, give you a quiz at the end.

Invited teaching is asking the docents in the museum of life to share their knowledge with you, to give you information, perhaps to assist you in learning some certain thing with which you are experiencing difficulty. Uninvited teaching is having all that forced upon you. One chafes under the yoke.

To continue the food metaphor: Having and wanting to share knowledge is like preparing a wonderful meal for someone to eat. It is a great talent to be a wonderful cook. It is even fun. But experiencing uninvited teaching is like being made to eat when you are not hungry. There's nothing wrong with the food; you can eat it, you just don't want it, and too much of it might make you vomit.

I am still learning to apply this concept. Just ask my daughter, who said to me rather archly the other day from the piano bench, "Mom, I didn't ask for your help with this song!"