

Scythes and razors

There is something about teachers

Autumn evening, Saturday. The first floor of one of the blocks on Styczyński street in Gliwice is indulged in light. No curtains, no blinds. Everything is in the open. I peek inside: by the tables piled with books, over cups of tea I see... The heads of focused students. And finally - him. He notices me, waves his hand and invites me in. I enter. The atmosphere is thick with fractions. Antique furniture, the walls filled not with formulas and sinusoids, but - like in any humanist's house - pictures, organised chaos around. The shelves are weak from the weight of books. He stands by the black board. He asks to work out a task with the use of "dots of ultimate laziness". He finally leaves his "hopeless cases", that is students with mathematical problems. They have a mission to complete. As for me, I am invited to the other room. We sit by the round table, he lights his cigarette and explains that the "dots of ultimate laziness" is his own method of teaching how to find one common denominator in a fraction. That is him: Krzysztof Cywiński. Tutor, mathematical passionate. Mathematical "losers" specialist. The author of, probably, the first "forbidden book" since 1988, that cannot go to bookshops. Despite all this, *Mathematics for humanists, the dyslexic and... other hopeless cases* is highly popular. He has just directed a film *Jolly mathematics for ordinary people*, which fascinated both students and their parents.

<p>* I teach, because I love doing it.</p> <p>* Teaching is my life purpose and a wonderful adventure</p> <p>* My students are terrific fun. Especially if I manage to help them break another barrier in education.</p> <p>* I like students with a sense of humour</p> <p>* I dislike parents spoilt by money or position</p> <p>* A teacher is a cicerone. A person that bases on their own subject to talk, comment and describe the world, passing on the good qualities of their personality</p> <p>* A tutor is a coach. Or rather a physiotherapist that helps a sportsman go back to their results after an injury</p> <p>* School. German neurobiologists claim it's a place that damages the brain</p> <p>* I'm happy when my "hopeless cases" have a chance to shine, when I manage to explain something better than a traditional school book</p> <p>* It grinds my gears when students don't bring back books</p>	<p>* The best moment is to see happy students discovering that school mathematics is easy. It is also being aware of how their lifestyle changes when they get rid of their fear of mathematics</p> <p>* Mathematics for me is a very important part of life, that gives a feeling of complement and being in the right place</p> <p>* Student trick. It's simple: I'm myself. Smiling, joking (also about my own self). I pass on knowledge in a young-person-friendly way. A way that makes them feel more valuable in their own eyes.</p> <p>* For Teachers' Day I wish for the governing body to understand, that 5 million Polish students with 15 million parents, grandmothers and aunts are close to losing their patience and next year someone may make use of their term. I wish that Polish teachers become a counter-example to Gauss curve, that is, that more than 15% are happy and wonderful. Finally, according to the quotation: "Rzeczpospolita Polska (official name of Poland) shall be what the young become" I wish everybody realises the message: education is the most strategic area in the country. In 10 years little Johnny will decide...</p>
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Cywiński seen by students:

He is an amusing person, demanding, sometimes cruel. A person that you can love or hate, but you can never be neutral about him. Charismatic just like a rock band leader, with passion and a gift from God to pass on great knowledge. He gets respect from students.

Wioleta, former student