

What Do You Expect?

Speaker and author Mamie McCullough tells the story of second-grade teacher Frances Hurst of Rayville Parish in Rayville, Louisiana, who was told at the start of the school year that she had the "middle" class of students. At that time, all the students were grouped as either "low," "middle," or "high." This grouping or grading bothered Ms. Hurst quite a bit, because she had never taught "ability grouping" before.

On her first day of class, the students told her they were the "middle group." At that point, Ms. Hurst went into action. She closed the door, placed paper over the glass in the windows, and told the students there had been a mistake and that they were actually the "high" group. From that point on, she treated them as though they were the high group. Her expectations for them were high. Their own expectations and confidence grew, and at the end of the school year the SRA test (given to measure the achievement of each group) revealed that her group had tested one year ahead of the "high group." Since this test was a class average, that meant that some of the students were testing much higher than the "high group."

Someone once said that if you treat a person as he is, you make him worse than he was. But if you treat that person as the individual he is capable of becoming, you make him the best person possible. That is a marvelous philosophy because it is true. The principle was certainly proved by Ms. Hurst.

In the centers of Life Care and American Lifestyles, and in the work of Life Care at Home, wouldn't it be wonderful if every associate, supervisor, resident and family member treated each other as if they were in the "high group?" The odds are dramatic that everything would be better. You can't influence everybody, but you can influence those you work and live with. Put them in the high group and watch them climb higher. And so will you.

--Beecher Hunter