

# Introduction

I wasn't supposed to be a teacher. My heart was set on a career in the entertainment business. But after seven long and arduous years of trying to 'make it' in the biz, I decided to pivot. I just felt that I should have been further along in my career after that much time. I spent the next year trying my hand at television writing. Having worked in TV development for most of those seven years, led me to believe I could write a script as good, if not better, than most of what came across my desk. Boy, was I wrong! Scriptwriting is truly an art, and I admire those who make a living from it.

## **Lesson #1: Don't assume something is easy until you've tried it.**

A family friend who knew I had been working in the TV industry came to me with a proposition: Without an interview, letters of recommendation, or much of anything else, he would offer me a job as a middle-school television production teacher at a visual arts magnet school. All I needed to do was enroll in a teacher credential program and take classes on the weekends. I dismissed the thought initially, but couldn't ignore that annoying voice of reason.

"This sounds too good to be true!"

"Me, a teacher..? Yeah, right!"

"But what else do you have going right now..? A TV writing career..?"

"But I don't have any teaching or leadership experience."

"You once worked as a junior counselor at a YMCA day camp."

"But that's different."

"Kids are kids. How different could it be?"

"I guess I have nothing to lose..."

Looking back on that naive decision makes me realize how tenuous it was. I could have easily said, "Not for me" and my life would have turned out very differently. If I had never chosen to teach, I would never have met the thousands of amazing young people who came through my classroom doors over the course of those twenty-four years. Because kids are what I think about when I look back at my years as a teacher. I miss them to this day. It's for the students that you endure the sleepless nights, the 24/7 workload, and the heartbreaks...because those kids need you.

From what I've observed, there are still a lot of old-fashioned, traditional teaching methods being practiced out there. And kids deserve better! They deserve a world-class learning experience. It's time for a teaching *revolution* and it's calling YOU to be a part of it. It's a *revolution* that seeks *inspired* methods from people like yourself who have the guts to be extraordinary, to stand out in a sea of mediocrity, to be a maverick, a trailblazer, a rebel, to **teach outside of the lines**, and be the *legendary* teacher you were meant to be!

It is my sincere wish and desire that this book, which is part memoir, part 'How To,' provides an opportunity to warp speed your ascent as an educator, allowing you to *reach* kids that seemed unreachable, to develop a program that is unforgettable, and to enjoy everything that this incredible profession has to offer. The first section of the book describes my early years as a teacher. I hope that what I share is relatable and provides insight that benefits you. The remainder of the book is devoted to the latter years of my

career when I truly hit my stride. Some of the practices I share will be described in general terms, and some in much more detail. My intention in doing so is NOT to say, "You have to do it like this." On the contrary, I do so to get you pondering what is possible; to hopefully get you thinking outside the box, at ways that you can distinguish yourself from all the rest. You are here on this planet to serve others in a way that is uniquely yours. Your journey to SUPERSTARDOM starts now!