This I believe: Encouragement
By Anthony Conwright

Every teacher has experienced the moment when you are teaching and there are students not paying attention. In my first attempts at teaching, lack of attention towards my lessons came in many forms. Sometimes students were preoccupied writing love letters, eating, texting, or putting on make-up. One day, I was teaching a math lesson and I noticed one of my students putting on make-up. Personally, I deplore the idea of make-up because of what I know it can do to people. Once I saw the student putting on make-up, I stopped my lesson and said, “Lisa, can you put away your make-up?” Lisa turned red (not from blush she was putting on) and put her make-up away.

One of the things I’ve learned about teaching is that you have to be comfortable with saying the same thing multiple times. I often tell myself it’s a good way to make sure I have a strong memory. One week later, I caught Lisa putting on make-up again. This time, I decided to use a different approach. I stopped class and said, “Lisa, you are so beautiful why would you want to cover it up in make-up? Can you please put it away?” Lisa and I played this same song for a few weeks, and I made it a point to tell her that she was beautiful before I told her to put her make-up away. I often wondered if I embarrassed her; I never intended to. I know how hard it is to be in 7th grade and to deal with what you see in the mirror everyday. I thought if I told her she is beautiful in front of the entire class then it may stick one day.

After Lisa left 7th grade I received e-mail from her. It said:

Hi it’s Lisa and I just wanted to email you because well the last day of school I did not really get to like say goodbye and so Yeah I am doing it right now but first I want to say that (please don’t get mad) the moment Mrs. Jones told me we were going to have a new teacher I thought I am seriously not going to like this new teacher, and that was certainly not the case but at first in class I know I was being a pain in the butt and I was not really giving you or me any chances to really get to know each other but I felt like at the end of the semester I really like your class and the way you taught and what really always made me happy was when (I admit) I would be looking in the mirror to fix my hair and you would tell me I was beautiful .I just really appreciate this phrase you told me because I did not get it a lot at school or at home but if I can say you were like my very disliked teacher and know don’t tell anyone you are one of my favorite teachers at HTMMA.Well thanks for listening Mr Anthony.
P.S thanks for being gr8 you are almost like a dad to me

I realized, no matter how old we are, we all need encouragement. Whether it’s telling an adult they are great at their job or telling a young 7th grader that they are beautiful. You never know how one sentence (repeated over and over) can make someone’s year. I believe in encouragement.