

**Segment of text from article “Re-learning the Teacher Archetype”
by Tara Cariaso, about her trip to Liberia in 2016 (unpublished)**

“...At first, in my ignorance, I considered that maybe the actor’s expression of joy was only partially externalized, and that with prompting to lean into bigger breath and more movement, the joy would escalate and look more the way I expected it to look. But even at a maximum of expression, the actor proffered stillness and calm, and her eyes only got more sparkly and full of possibility. That was her joy at a maximum, and it was powerful and it was striking.

After seeing several young people show me their expression of their joy externalized, it seemed that once again, the problem was my expectation. I was predisposed to expect something different than what my students were experiencing. It was me who didn’t know what joy looked like. I was very grateful to those students, and vowed to myself to monitor my own assumptions about whether or not my students were fully engaged in the future, wherever I was teaching. I would rather believe whatever expressive creation they offered me than question that they had done it with anything less than complete commitment.

It was important to enter this cultural exchange in Liberia with humility and gratitude. But it was clear to me where I had learned my poor manners. Humility is not always cultivated in western classrooms by the teacher, and gratitude is not always afforded to every western student. Perhaps humility and gratitude should form the spine of every relationship between teacher and student.. This lesson was one of the most important for me in my life as an educator...”