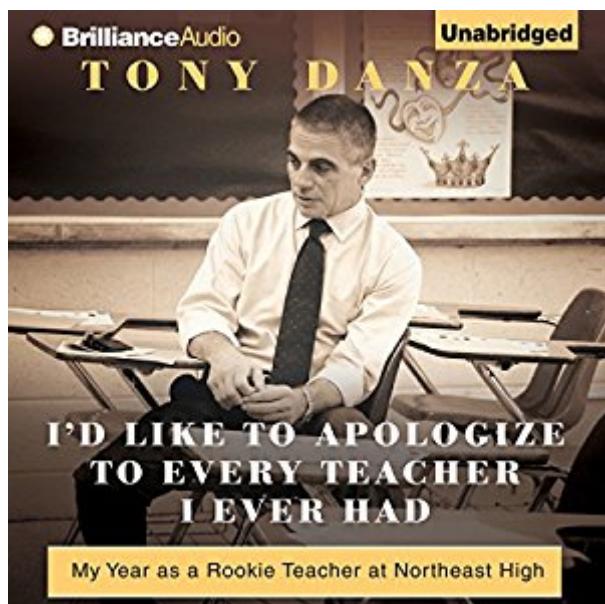


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# I'd Like To Apologize To Every Teacher I Ever Had: My Year As A Rookie Teacher At Northeast High



## Synopsis

Long before he starred on some of television's most beloved and long-running series such as *Taxi* and *Who's the Boss?* and went on to distinguish himself in a variety of film and stage roles, Tony Danza was a walking contradiction: an indifferent student who dreamed of being a teacher. Inspiring a classroom of students was an aspiration he put aside for decades until one day it seemed that the most meaningful thing he could do was give his dream a shot. What followed was a year spent teaching 10th-grade English at Northeast High - Philadelphia's largest high school with 3,600 students. Entering Northeast's crowded halls in September 2009, Tony found his way to a classroom filled with 26 students who were determined not to cut him any slack. They cared nothing about "Mr. Danza's" showbiz credentials, and they immediately put him on the hot seat. It was only after experiencing abject terror for several weeks - and even dissolving into tears on several occasions - that Tony began to pick up the tricks of how to get kids to learn. Featuring indelible portraits of students and teachers alike, *I'd Like to Apologize to Every Teacher I Ever Had* reveals just how hard it is to keep today's technologically savvy - and often alienated - students engaged, how impressively committed most teachers are, and the outsized role counseling plays in a teacher's day, given the psychological burdens many students carry. The audiobook also makes vivid how a modern high school works, showing Tony in a myriad of roles - from lecturing on *To Kill a Mockingbird* to coaching the football team, organizing a talent show, leading far-flung field trips, and hosting teacher gripe sessions. Inevitably, Tony's students steal their way into our hearts - in a way that always feels authentic. A surprisingly poignant account, *I'd Like to Apologize to Every Teacher I Ever Had* is sometimes laugh-out-loud funny but is mostly filled with hard-won wisdom and feel-good tears.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Wow! As a 15 year police officer and 23 year Army 1SG, and considering my next career in teaching, I had bought the book after looking for the show on Hulu. I remember one show and seeing how "flustered" he looked worried me a bit. I've been an Infantry Instructor thinking kids would be easy, but wow...I realize I am not a teacher. I would think this book would be great primer that would quickly dispell the fantasy of stepping into a classroom and kids would just listen to you because, of your experience and such. Realizing there is no "how to guide" on dealing with high school students, this book comes real damn close to being one! Danza illustrates really well the plight of todays education. This book should serve as a wake up call to parents and politicians to strengthen our public (not charter) education system because it truly has national security implications.

As a fan of Tony Danza, and a high school teacher with forty years in the classroom, I thought this might be an interesting book. I think it actually exceeded what I was expecting. His trials, tribulations, and rewards in the classroom are very real. This is not made up drama, he really very quickly came to understand the frustrations so many teachers feel today as well as the joys that keep us coming back year after year. This book should be required reading for every future teacher (especially upper grade levels), every school board member, every administrator that has forgotten what it's like in the classroom, and every legislator making rules for the schools should be beaten with this book until they have read every last word. Good job Tony!

I truly hope that this does not come off as a tale of my experiences in the classroom. After spending 30+ years teaching elementary school, I can vouch for Tony Danza. He truly understands what teachers go through every single day. Trained as a history teacher, Danza turned to a boxing career and then a very successful show biz career developed. But he always wanted to teach. He was given the one year job to teach at one of Philadelphia's toughest high schools. But of course it was all taped for a TV show called TEACH. During his one year experience, Tony learns that teaching children subjects, is a lot different than teaching subjects to children. He engaged his students, he laughed at himself and with his students and many times he broke down and cried. Tony realized

early on that teaching is one of the least respected, most difficult jobs ever. IMHO, this book tells it just the way it is. If we continue to engage in the NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND scenario, we will be doomed forever. Teachers need to allow themselves to walk in the student's shoes, as Danza writes. Try to figure out why they do not want to learn. Find a way to make them want to learn by making learning fun. And above all, have administrators that praise teachers, not degrade them for the silliest of issues. I don't think that I have ever read a better book on how to do a good job teaching. No college class, no textbook, no administrator, no other teacher has ever hit the nail on the head, as well as Tony does in this great read. It is not the teacher's fault, although there are some bad teachers. It is the responsibility of both the parents and the teachers to make certain that their children understand how valuable a good education can be. I really have to tip my hat to Tony Danza for trying to help as many children as possible, while fighting parents, administrators, secretaries etc. If we could all try to understand how difficult it is to teach a classroom of students and make changes which enable teachers to do their thing, we would all be much better off. One of the teachers at Northeast High in Philly gave Tony a plaque/scroll on his last day. This is what was inscribed, which to this reader is perfection, as far as a teacher is concerned. "The inscription in the scroll tells the story of a huge storm that roils the sea and washes thousands of starfish up onto the beach. The clouds break, and the sun comes out and begins to bake the starfish. A man wanders by and sees the thousands of stranded stars. He doesn't know what to do at first, but then starts to throw them back in the water one by one. Another man comes by and says to him, 'What are you doing? There are so many, you're not making much of a difference.' 'The first man bends and picks up another starfish, throws it in the water and says, 'Made a difference to that one.' " Education in the USA must change and it must change quickly for the better. Stop throwing money at the issue and let the teachers do their jobs without interference of having to teach to some ridiculous test. Danza understands and by reading this marvelous book, maybe one starfish will understand also.

This book is one of the best books I've ever read right next to Think and Grow Rich by Napoleon Hill. It was really unputdownable. My heart went out to Mr. Danza while reading it and I could totally understand him being an actor, singer, and teacher myself. Now I have never taught high school but I have taught acting and voice to children and teens in studio settings; so in that way I have experience teaching. I know it's not exactly the same thing as teaching 10th grade English BUT I have taught and have also dealt with the panics, the tears, insecurities and social problems that some of my students had and put my all to help them and guide them and I also felt deeply for them as he did for his students. Whether high school or studio, it all has its merit. I am also an actor,

singer, sketch comedienne who was also a "bad" student as Mr. Danza described himself; so in these ways we are very much on common ground. His book, in this way touched very close to home.Bravo! Mr. Danza! My compliments to him. I hope he continues to write a plethora of more books. I am definitely one of his biggest supporters. ~ Marlene Villafane

The book is different than I thought it would be. I thought that Tony's teaching experience would be hell on Earth, making him resentful of his past treatment of teachers. This is not the case. At first it seems that way. But he wins his class over splendidly. I guess he got compassion fatigue due to wanting to help every single student who came through his door, but you can't do that as a teacher/counselor/etc. His experiences warmed my heart, as he connected well with his class and got them to learn their subject matter with teaching authoritatively, not authoritarianly.

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