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## One Teacher's Personal Ten Commandments

Svea Barrett

*Northern Highlands Regional High School*

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## One Teacher's Personal 10 Commandments

SVEA BARRETT

*Northern Highlands Regional High School*

- I. You shall not ever allow high school freshman to choose their own seats.
- II. You shall not drag home papers to grade that will only sit in the bag all weekend.
- III. You shall not turn your phone off during class in case any of your sons should have an accident or a question or a bout of depression or self doubt.
- IV. Spiderwebs and cobwebs on the chandelier do not make you a failure. Your mother once had a small pearly mushroom grow in the corner of her bathroom, and she was a great teacher.
- V. Allow yourself to cry (after class) when the deaths of your mother or your son pierce you in an unguarded moment of reading the *The Little Prince* to your ninth graders.
- VI. When your favorite student cheats, or you're pressured to change a grade,  
do what's right, no matter how uncomfortable.
- VII. Before you eat, remember what fried food and dairy can do to you, and remember it most when you have three classes in a row.
- VIII. Avoid the upper levels of parking garages, lest you are forced to remember the three young people from your school who leapt from them in the past five years.
- IX. Honor yourself, and your own children, and your husband and dogs and cats.
- X. Walk with your old dog on summer mornings. Sit on the deck and listen to the tree frogs. Cut some pie shaped bunches of lilac blossoms and bring them inside. Smell the warm pine, the cut grass, the coming rain.