

What Can Man Become?

Whatever we do in teaching depends upon what we think people are like. The goals we seek, the things we do, the judgments we make, even the experiments we are willing to try, are determined by our beliefs about the nature of man and his capacities. It has always been so. Teachers who believe children *can*, will try to teach them. Teachers who believe children are *unable*, give up trying or spend their days on a treadmill, hopelessly making motions they never expect will matter. The beliefs we hold about people can serve as prison walls limiting us at every turn. They can also set us free from our shackles to confront great new possibilities never dreamed of before. No beliefs will be more important to education than those we hold about the nature of man and the limits of his potentials. Whenever our ideas about human capacities change, the goals of teaching must change, too. Whatever we decide is the best that man can become must necessarily set the goal of education. (*Perceiving, Behaving, Becoming—1962 ASCD Yearbook, page one*)

(Dr. Russell A. Baum submitted the above quote because of its powerful message.)