A year ago, I felt I was stuck in a rut. It seemed that my English was not improving at all. So I decided to find someone who I can learn from, who encourages my learning and who can make me more creative and brave in using English.

As an autonomous and self-directed adult learner, I looked at myself and tried to figure out what’s my problem and what kind of lesson I needed. It turned out, I lacked of reading, listening, speaking and writing. Yes, I needed to improve every four sector of language skill.

I found an English teaching website and took some drama English courses at home. It cost moderate and his lecture was good. I could get the picture of American culture and spoken english. But I couldn’t have any conversation with my teacher. Of course, I got no feedback from him.

So, I moved to real teaching and learning zone. I signed up for English language courses at some well known English language institutes. It was a good experience. And I think I’ve found a few good teachers there including the best teacher I’ve ever had. I’d like to talk about them under the ‘three types of teacher’ category.

The first teacher was the explainer. I signed up for reading course in order to enrich my vocabulary and read between the lines. The teacher was the author of a best-seller grammar book. He was very enthusiastic. He had amazing quantity & quality of knowledge of English. He was very confident about what he conveys to students. I amazed by the way he interpreted articles in The Economist, Slate.com, and New York Times editorials. The problem was, I was so overwhelmed by vocabularies and expressions that I was too busy taking notes and putting his idea into my head, like ‘jug and mug’. Only my receptive skills -listening and reading- could be used in the whole class. To make matter worse, I gradually felt inadequate compared to other learned students in the class because I couldn’t even memorize that much of expressions at each time. I respect him and but I have to say that the class was little bit boring and demotivative. Maybe I found somewhat too difficult class for me.

The second teacher was the involver. I took a pronunciation course from him so as to have good pronunciation. He was a tech-savvy person. He knew how to use all the technology. He even had his own computer program for his pronunciation class –e.g. when I spoke ‘R’ to the mic, I could see where my tongue was from a monitor.- It looked very stylish. It was very effective tool for the students who want correct their pronunciation. I practiced a lot with the program even though I had limited time in the class. But I felt distant from my teacher. Why? Because there were too many students in the classroom, He hardly remembered students’ names. He never called my name. He didn’t even ask my name. I had no counseling from him. I guess maybe giving personal feedback after class was quite a daunting task for him. No matter what I learned from him, I remember him as a technician rather than a teacher.

The third teacher was so much of the enabler. He was the best teacher and still is the best to me. Actually I saw him teaching on educational TV program. He had good sense of humor. He knew lots of tips for English and understood students’ difficulties well. I joined his listening and speaking course out of curiosity. To be honest, I was little bit disappointed as I walked in the classroom. Only 15 students were there and the classroom was so small. But later, he explained me that too many students can’t feel as being a member of a family. I think he was right, At the beginning of the class, He always started with 2 minutes small talk like, “how was your weekend, anything special?” I felt more relaxed than just started watching video. His class was, instead of the days flying by, forgotten, the time was much more memorable. He gave us question like where do you see yourself in 5 years? And he let us take time to prepare the answer. Include me, students often got very involved his sudden questions related to the subject. I still remember many answers I gave him and the classmates. The Study materials were also very abundant. He covered sitcoms, news, interviews that could make us interesting. Sometimes we had very deep and serious materials like TED talks. But all was so much fun with his fun and informative guide. He always listened to me and gave positive feedback even when I ask really silly question. He also was very honest, being himself. He talked about his feeling about hot issues, about family, about friends, about clothes and cars and so on. I and other students could open ourselves a little bit more as he opened himself to us. I went from an all time note-taking silent student to the kind of person who likes to talk. I also noticed that as I started to speak more and harder, my self-confidence grew. I started to teach my boyfriend what I learned that day. I ended up taking a TESOL course, the highest level in learning English. I would never been this adventurous before I met my teacher, ‘the enabler’.

So here’s one last thing I’d like to mention, these words from my teacher ‘the enabler’.

“Never settle for less than what you deserve. Find the one who makes you happy and never let go.

I think I found one. And I hope I can be the one who make my future students happy.