

1-1-1997

## A Part of Me

Shirley Fleischmann  
*Grand Valley State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/gvr>

---

### Recommended Citation

Fleischmann, Shirley (1997) "A Part of Me," *Grand Valley Review*: Vol. 16: Iss. 1, Article 19.  
Available at: <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/gvr/vol16/iss1/19>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@GVSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Grand Valley Review by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@GVSU. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@gvsu.edu](mailto:scholarworks@gvsu.edu).

# A PART OF ME

*Shirley Fleischmann*

... and I hope that you will see  
that what I'm giving you is a part of me.

I saw this on a Valentine's Day card and thought it had a great application to the grand profession of teaching, that, despite its sentimentality, it captures the essence of what we teachers do on a daily basis.

How do I teach my students what it means to be an engineer? I believe that the most effective method has always been by direct example. We all have the ability to interpret the world around us, to be enriched by it, and to gather joy from it; but engineers have an additional way of interpreting the world. For example, to a fluids engineer, driven snow becomes a means to visualize flow patterns in the wakes of automobiles. Even my pressure cooker, which I used to make applesauce when I had time for such things, finds its way into my thermodynamics class. Or I use some of my children's toys as beautiful and simple illustrations of the principles of fluid mechanics.

I try to give my students a knowledge of engineering that is motivated by a sense of curiosity and wonder. I don't try to program them for future performance, but rather to change their perceptions. Not every student will love the subject as I do, but every student should be able to see what it is really like to love a subject. If nothing else, I hope that they will find something in their own lives as enriching to them as teaching engineering is to me. If some of my students make contributions to their fields in the future, I will certainly take pride in that. But I will also feel as though I have fulfilled my mission if they retain only the memory of being associated with an educated adult who loved her work and who shared that love.