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MENTOR

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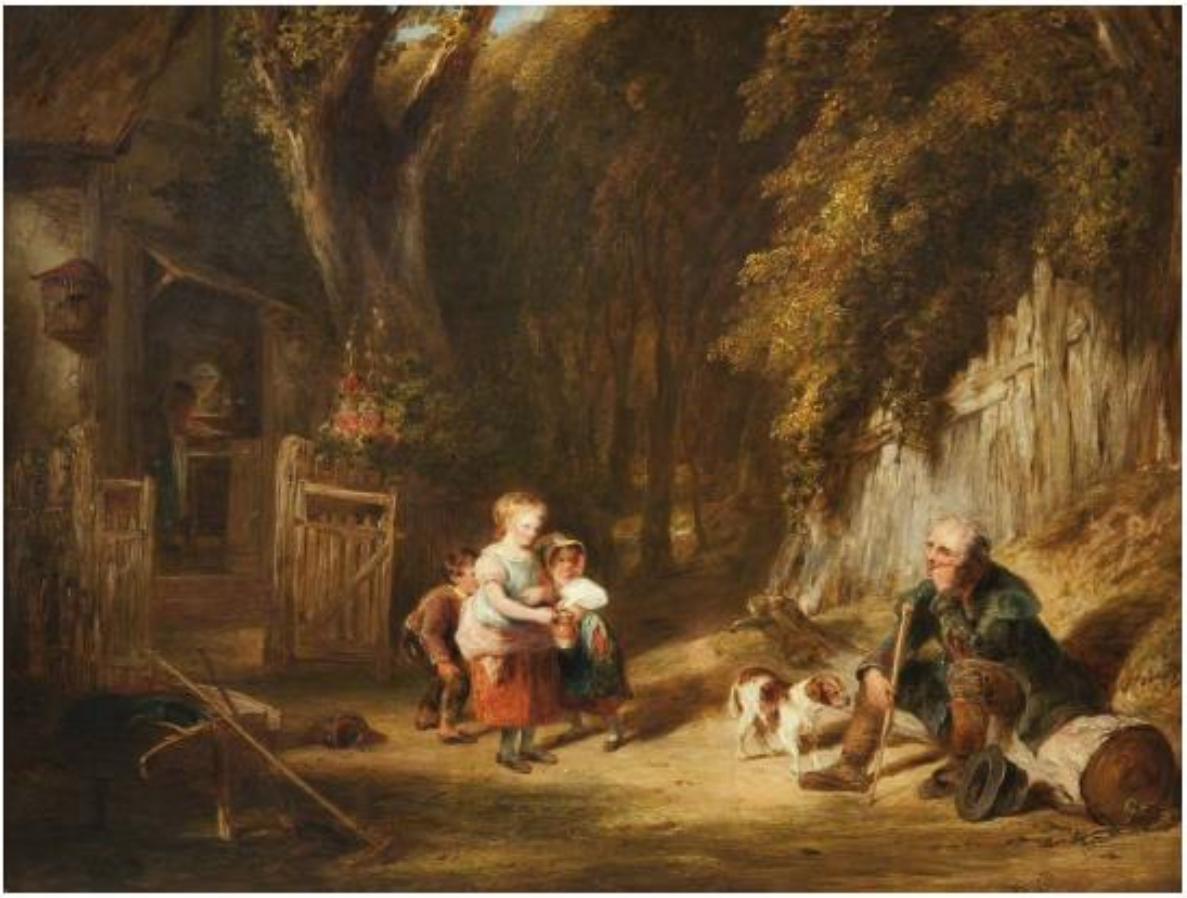

Abundance Mentality

John Adams ACADEMY

Mentor: Vol VI, Iss. I

MENTOR™ is the faculty journal of John Adams Academy. The purpose of this journal is to uncover the tenants of John Adams Academy's American Classical Leadership Education® model, especially as it applies to the role of the mentor. Here we hope to explore the alliance between the four pillars of American Classical Leadership Education—the Art of Mentoring, John Adams Academy's Ten Core Values, Classics, and the Liberal Arts, considering how they guide scholars to become servant leaders. As educators and members of an intellectual community that inherit and relate a legacy of truth, wisdom, and beauty, we perceive the abundance in each contribution to the Great Conversation.

We take our name from the complementary sources of the Latin word *mens*, and *mentis* (mind, thought, intention) and the Homeric character Mentor (Μέντωρ), to whom great Odysseus entrusted care of his home and family, and in the guise of whom the goddess Athena gave counsel to the young Telemachus. The former origin recalls our human tradition of sentience, the latter our divine duties of love and loyalty. Taken together, the essence of mentoring is sharing with others the beauty and truth that has fallen to us.

Each issue of *Mentor* invites all John Adams Academy faculty and the larger classical education community to examine how the liberty-based art of mentoring and particular core values, expressed in classic books, histories, artifacts, songs, equations, and theories, guide scholars on their journey to greater light and truth. Whether the themes be humble, aimed for the heart of the youngest child, or rich and complex and intended for the minds of the mature and wise, we welcome your invaluable insights as we seek to better understand what the liberty-based American Classical Leadership Education offers us in our collective journey toward servant leadership.

John Adams Academies are TK-12th Grade, TUITION-FREE public charter schools open to all, currently operating campuses in El Dorado Hills, Lincoln, and Roseville, California, and offering our unique American Classical Leadership Education™ model.

John Adams Academy is restoring America's heritage by developing servant-leaders who are keepers and defenders of the principles of freedom for which our Founding Fathers pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor. By combining classical education with servant leadership training and core values, John Adams Academy develops scholars who are leaders in their homes, communities, and country. Through classics, mentoring, and modeling, scholars are inspired to prepare for their unique missions and will naturally hunger for oncoming responsibilities and future contributions to society.

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Core Value #8 – Abundance Mentality

(As a contextual preface to the following articles, the editors include this extended definition of the 7th core value as it appears on the official John Adams Academy website).

Abundance is the opposite of scarcity. A scarcity mentality implies that each individual is in direct competition with those around them and that one's gain is another's loss. Conversely, an abundance mentality is inherently optimistic; abundance suggests that when one succeeds another need not fail. Rather, in a free society, one person's success benefits the whole society and should be celebrated. An abundance mentality is tied to the belief that human success and potential is expansive, and that this potential can be realized by anyone through hard work, determination, and collaboration. We seek to share this value with our scholars by celebrating each person's successes and empowering scholars to work collaboratively and synergistically to accomplish difficult tasks and great acts of service.

"You, Not Them" – A Journey of Becoming

Linda Forman

Co-Founder of John Adams Academy

Good Evening! I'd like to thank the Parent Service Organization for the invitation to be with you tonight.[1]

We're Celebrating 12 years!! We could not have imagined this journey if we had not lived it! I was asked to tell a little of our story (mine and Dean's) as we have grown so quickly it has sadly become impossible to know each of you or for you to know us.

Here's the abbreviated version:

Dean and I met on a Thursday. He asked me to marry him the next Thursday. We were married two months later. After 41 years we have four children, and 12 beautiful grandchildren. They are the delight of our life. Dean spent almost 40 years in the financial services industry, which our boys have now taken over, and I had some opportunities to use my design and drafting degree but was greatly blessed to be a stay-at-home mom.

Somewhere along the years of working in the children's classrooms and Dean serving on a school board we became disgruntled with the education system. We were introduced to classical education with *A Thomas Jefferson Education,* and I realized I had received that type of education in many schools I had attended around the world. We don't necessarily agree with every idea in the book, but we have taken the true principles and tried to adapt them, first in homeschooling our last two sons and their friends and now in a public school setting.

As we were homeschooling, we had others start to tell us we needed to bring what we were doing in our home to a larger audience. We took a long drive down the coast and talked

[1] Adapted from a speech delivered August 2022 to John Adams Academy Parent Service Organization at the Eldorado Hills campus.

about what a school might look like. We had two absolutes immediately, it had to be classical, and it had to promote the founding principles of American liberty. I made notes, Dean finished a doctorate in Constitutional Studies and Philosophy… and his doctoral project became John Adams Academy.

My vision of this was a small country school with maybe a couple of hundred children…very containable, controllable, personal and low stress. We had hoped that we might get at least 200 scholars. But what we discovered was a flood of families wanting more for their children and Dean had the perfect combination of vision, tenacity, and financial expertise to navigate through the morass of government regulations and cultural chaos to make it happen, no matter the odds.

Now, we have three campuses and an online program—that's about 5,000 children in seats and close to 5,000 more on waitlists. We also have multiple parent groups in multiple states in various stages of developing the possibility of a John Adams Academy in their neighborhood. It is surreal to me, but of course, I've left out all the really gory, heart-stopping, hair-ripping moments and it remains to be seen how many years it has taken off our lives.

As I thought of all the many stories and experiences of the last decade and a half that I could share with you it was too difficult to narrow it down, you probably wouldn't believe half of them and many of them make me cry—mostly tears of joy and amazement bounded by gratitude—but a few, not. So this may not be the "inspiring story of how it all began" that you expected to hear tonight.

I want to go WAY back. How was it that Dean and I would even dream up opening a school and what was it that allowed us to go forward with this? As I have pondered that, I've realized that the beginning of this academy began with our individual journey of becoming. We are celebrating 12 years open, but for me and Dean this journey of becoming is already 20-25 years in the making. We recognized that we wanted to become better educated, better stewards of our time and resources, better servant leaders in our family and in our community and the natural outcome of these desires is to identify, develop and fulfill purpose and mission.

Our academy has a very specific and intentional mission statement:

> The John Adams Academies are restoring America's heritage by developing servant-leaders who are keepers and defenders of the principles of freedom for which our Founding Fathers pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor.

Our long-range vision is that this organization will be a model for the future of public education.

John Adams Academy is preparing future leaders and statesmen and women through principle-based education. We have carefully and deliberately chosen the 10 Core Values through which this is made possible.

Dean and I are so very grateful for each individual who has come through these doors adding their own vision and passion to create something greater than self. Since each of you have entered in these doors this is now your mission and these core values are your core values. It is a shared concern and a duty. All stakeholders are responsible for safeguarding its integrity and for inspiring others. Please, we invite each one of you to volunteer, give service, and model what we teach. Your scholars are watching.

When the mission and values of John Adams Academy are embraced lives are changed. We have now been at this long enough to see the outcomes for scholars and their families, and we are all blessed in the process. All the great and noble things in this life can be attributed to who we are and are striving to be. My message to our scholars, and tonight to each of you is this wonderful place is not about learning, it is about becoming.

I want to share two principles that are formational and foundational to John Adams Academy which is the natural outcome of our journey of becoming. My remarks tonight are an invitation to begin or continue your personal journey of becoming. I can only imagine what the outcome of your purpose and mission will bring!

First: "You, Not Them"

In *A Thomas Jefferson Education,* Oliver DeMille developed, after years of research, Seven Keys of Great Teaching. His seventh key is "YOU, NOT THEM."[2] I consider this to be

[2] Oliver Van DeMille, *A Thomas Jefferson Education: Teaching a Generation of Leaders for the Twenty-first Century* (Cedar City, UT, 2006), 52.

the most important Key. Everyone here, whether teacher, parent or scholar, who stays here at the academy, is SETTING THE EXAMPLE of learning, teaching, and serving.

DeMille says,

> Set the Example. The best mentors (parents are a child's most important mentor) are continually learning and pushing themselves. Read the classics. Study hard…pay the price in your own studies...
>
> In our modern society, whenever education is the subject, we always want to talk about the kids. We care about them, and we know their education is important, but we also find that it's easier to talk about their education than to improve our own. In reality, you are unlikely to pass on to your children a better education than you have earned yourself, no matter how much you push them or how good the teachers... Children tend to rise to the educational level of their parents…The most effective way to ensure the quality of their education is to consistently improve your own.[3]

So, what great book have you read recently? What new ideas have you entertained? What new gift or talent have you developed? Are you modeling Servant Leadership here within your child's view, by giving of your time and talents to fulfill the mission and vision of John Adams Academy? In all of this, how have you been changed?

If you think these principles are exclusively or even primarily about improving your child's education, you will never have the power to inspire them to do the hard work of self-education. Give serious focus to your education, create an environment where curiosity is activated, learning is facilitated and excellence is modeled, and then invite your children along for the ride.

Second: The Importance of Classics.

The human race for thousands of years has been writing experiences, telling how it has met our everlasting problems, how it has struggled with darkness and rejoiced in light. What fools we should be to try to live our lives without the guidance and inspiration of the generations that have gone before.

This idea is a foundation block to John Adams Academy. In our original document of vision and mission you can read our statement on classics, but I will highlight several points:

[3] Ibid., 52-53.

- A classic is a work that can be experienced many times over.
- A classic or great book has three essential qualities: great theme, noble language, and universality. And I would add a 4th, it speaks to you.
- A classic can be judged by its influence; it will have enduring value.
- Classics open our eyes to the true nature of our world.
- Reveal our essential humanity and teach us about human nature.
- Bring us face-to-face with greatness.
- Classics force us to quietly study, ponder, analyze, think, ask, discover, cry, laugh, struggle, and above all feel, change, and become.
- Classics are great because they contain great ideas and have given birth to a great and ongoing conversation about what is beautiful, good and true.
- They were read by the intellectual giants of our culture – the same books come up again and again.
- A classic can correct the characteristic mistakes of our period.
- A classic gives us the personal wisdom to be better as an individual and citizen of a free nation.

Classics come in many forms but tonight I will particularly address literature. Literature is simply life selected and condensed into words. The expression of truth, the transmission of knowledge and emotions between man and man from generation to generation, these are the purposes of literature. Literature generally means light. Light of any kind is important. But the kind of mental, spiritual, and moral light that can come from great literature can nourish our souls and give a tone to our lives that almost nothing else can.

The human mind itself is a possession of uncalculated value, but it needs to be lighted, charged and vitalized. The mind can get balance, reason, foresight and understanding from the thoughts of others. The right kind of ideas, properly introduced into the mind breeds initiative, moral courage, the will to grow, and a love of fairness. When the mind is not properly pollinated and vitalized by the inspiration of stimulating thoughts and uplifting ideals, much of its power is wasted. A chemist, a lawyer, or an inventor does not depend upon his own discoveries for his occupational success, he appropriates for his own use all the tested methods and good ideas of all

of the best men in his field. What an opportunity we have to enlighten the mind, teach the heart, enrich the soul, and charge the ambition with power.

Suppose that each of us selects the ten authors that we would most like to resemble. Our ten authors should be those with the greatest power to move us personally. Then suppose that we proceed to exhaust each of them one at a time. That is, we first select our author and then read everything that he has ever written. We consider his every idea, we rethink his every thought, and we live his life over again. We try to understand his moods and the reasons behind them. We probe and search and pry into every corner of his life. We leave no mental pockets unsearched or no emotional files unexplored. As we proceed, we can isolate and adopt his most stimulating procedures for our own use. We may be thrilled by his example and capture the spirit of his success. Our hero may have spent 80 years in successful living, but the essential parts of his experience have been distilled for us in a book which we may absorb in a few hours.

During his lifetime Shakespeare wrote 37 plays. He staffed them with a thousand characters. Each of his characters is the personification of some personality trait. Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* is the personification of courage. Casius said of Caesar, "Why man he doth bestride this narrow world and peep about to find ourselves dishonorable graves…Now in the names of all the Gods at once, upon what meat doth this our Caesar feed that he is grown so great." That is a very good question, for greatness does feed on a certain diet. Caesar fed on courage. He said,

> Cowards die many times before their death. The valiant never taste of death but once. Of all the wonders that I yet have seen, it seems to me most strange that men should fear: seeing that death a necessary end will come when it will come…danger knows full well that Caesar is more dangerous than he. We are two lions littered in one day, and I, the elder and more terrible, and Caesar shall go forth. [4]

From Caesar we may take courage to our heart's content.

From Portia in the *Merchant of Venice* we borrow "mercy" as we hear her say to Shylock,

[4] William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans and J. J. M. Tobin, The Riverside Shakespeare, 2nd edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 1154.

> The quality of mercy is not strain'd, it droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath: it is twice bless'd; it blesseth him that gives and him that takes; 'tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes the throned monarch better than his crown; his scepter shows the force of temporal power, the attribute to awe and majesty, wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings; but mercy is above this sceptered sway, it is enthroned in the hearts of kings, it is an attribute to God himself, and earthly power doth then show likest God's when mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew, though justice be thy plea, consider this, that in the course of justice none of us should see salvation: we do pray for mercy, and that same prayer doth teach us all to render the deeds of mercy.[5]

No one can say it like Shakespeare! His language alone language enriches our lives.

In the same play we may learn from the generosity of Antonio and the avariciousness of Shylock. Most of our education comes through the experiences of others, and the greatest education is the awakening of the heart, and the arousing of the spirit. It is by these processes that we add to our own stature and increase the dimensions of our own lives. As Oliver Wendell Holmes pointed out, "A mind once stretched to a new idea never returns to its original dimensions."[6]

I have been inspired by Cato's devotion to republicanism in the face of tyranny; Plato's Allegory of the Cave has become, for me, the symbol of understanding John Adams Academy and its mission as I strive to continually move out of the shadows and seek truth, turning my soul to re-orient it to correct and proper loves; Plutarch gives me lessons, both good and bad from the great leaders of history, the Founders didn't just look to the classical world for the structure of American government but they used the classics to inform them of the type of personal character necessary of the citizenry for this republican democracy to be a success; I have faced moral quandaries with Jane Eyre and learned obstacles are overcome by ordinary characters; Elie Wiesel showed me that evil exists but also that the human spirit can triumph; Bad things can happen to good people. I came to understand patriotism from George Washington in his Farewell Address; I have pondered my own country's story reading Gibbons. I have experienced joy in the sheer beauty of the language of Hawthorne; And then there is Elizabeth Bennett, and Snowball,

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[5] Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, 310.

[6] Oliver Wendell Holmes. Famous quotes at Brainyquotes. https://www.brainyquote.com/authors/oliver-wendell-holmes-jr-quotes, accessed January 15, 2020.

Jo March, Falstaff, Atticus Finch, Huck Finn, Hamlet, Hester Prynne, Pip, Jean Valjean, Frodo Baggins, Aeneas, The Wife of Bath, Ebenezer Scrooge, Eeyore and Mr. Toad!

I faced moral dilemmas impossible to actually experience in my own life, free from consequences and I was able to contemplate suffering without really suffering. The list of characters and lessons learned, and wisdom found grew longer and longer as I started making a list. Which is my favorite? It depends on the day and circumstance, which has been the most influential? Looking back over 60 years, I don't know. But I do know that the great books that are part of my life have given me the wisdom to be better at each stage of my life, a better person, a better wife, a better mother and grandmother. The great books have taught me how to better deal with other people and adversity (I think those two are the same thing), to recognize right and to have the courage to defend it and… to know when I should have remained silent. They have helped me understand that our nation is special with a unique destiny. To be an American is a blessing. To be free is a responsibility.

Another thing that great books have done for me is to help me find my destiny. My mother read to me every day, providing me a framework of good and bad, right and wrong and boundaries. She read fairytales. She especially loved Hans Christian Anderson – "The Little Match Girl" caused me to see the beggars on the streets of Europe with a more compassionate eye, "Little Red Riding Hood" helped me deal with the wolves. The wolves were real! It has always fascinated me the influence of Aesop's Fables on the world's great leaders. My mother read fables, myths, biographies, mysteries, and Bible stories, I'm sure they all contributed to my moral foundation but when I realized that part of my personal mission is "to create beauty" one story is well remembered for its impact…it even contributed to my choice of formal education and practice.

Some of you may know the story of "The Magic Geranium" by Jane Thayer.[7] Because of that book, I thought geraniums were magic as a child. The simple story inspired in me a sense of wonder. It made me want to paint a table or sew new curtains, rearrange my bedroom and bring order and beautify my surroundings. I did this often as we moved somewhere in the world every

[7] Jane Thayer, *Read-Aloud Funny Stories, first edition*, "The Magic Geranium." (New York: Wonder Book, 1958), 46-50.

year or two with my engineer father. I always started with a pot of flowers. This story taught me that one small thing can make my life better and then one more and one more until huge change has happened. And I am responsible for the change I seek in my life. (It is me not them.)

Looking from the perspective of the geranium I also learned that *I* can be the change agent. One person and/or one idea can change the world. In the words of Kobi Yamada, "Then, one day, something amazing happened. My idea changed right before my very eyes. It spread its wings, took flight, and burst into the sky…and then, I realized what you do with an idea…You change the world."[8]

This was the idea. It began with just me and Dean in the car and then we added one more and one more until we have all of you, and we are changing the world!

The great books and stories have been indispensable in discovering who I am and who I want to be and developing my values and informing what choices I make.

We need to set the example and inspire our children to want something more than social media or video games or the pleasure of the moment. A century ago, children were immersed in the McGuffey Readers and other like books that portrayed the good life as a moral life, founded on truth.

Kids don't read for fun anymore. They watch movies and YouTube and TikTok, and they listen to music. But the songs have changed. They are no longer about love but of transactional sex. We have good evidence that the kind of music, books and media our children are exposed to influences their beliefs, attitudes, and behavior. We need to give our children a healthier, better culture than what they are exposed to now. We need to model to them how and where they will find a sense of purpose, of meaning, of work worth doing, of who they are and are meant to be.

Somewhere between "Once upon a time" and "They lived happily ever after" we find – virtue, wisdom and redemption.

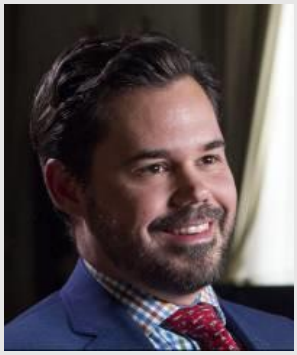
[8] Kobi Yamada, *What Do You Do With An Idea?*, (Seattle: Compendium, Inc., 2013), last pages.

It is about becoming! Character has always been the chief goal of classical education, cultivating wise, virtuous men and women. We wish for us and for our scholars "to learn what is true in order to do what is right."[9]

We are so optimistic for our future as we see the impact that your scholars and your families are making in your homes and in your communities. It is truly you, not them. Together, we will change the world!

[9] Thomas Huxley, Famous Quotes at Brainyquotes, https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/t/thomashuxl109170.html. Accessed January 15, 2022.

Restoring Community by Pursuing Virtue, Service, and Beauty



Matthew Post, Ph.D.

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(The following written remarks were delivered as a speech at John Adams Academy Commencement Ceremony, May 27, 2022 at the Lincoln campus.)

I'd like to thank Dr. Forman for that kind introduction and John Adams's leadership, teachers, and students for the warm welcome that I've received. Let me just say what a beautiful community you have here. This morning, the graduates walked through the elementary school, with the younger grades lined up along each wall, cheering them and high-fiving them. You should've seen how excited and enthusiastic these kids were. I was following behind as an observer and these kids were cheering and high-fiving *me,* and I hadn't even done anything. No one's ever been this excited about me, even at my own graduation.

I look out here and see many of the graduates with tears in their eyes. I've only been here a day and half and *I* don't want to leave. I can only imagine how you feel as you contemplate departing this community, but you have my sympathies.

It's an immense honor and privilege to be here with you today. Let me offer my congratulations to the scholars—as well as to the teachers and parents who have supported you—on your remarkable achievement. Today, graduation from high school is treated as an ordinary thing, but you have attended no ordinary school. Yours is a classical school, which is part of a small, but ever-growing national movement to rejuvenate education in intellectual, moral, civic, and spiritual virtue. Your school has asked you to pursue and attain excellence, which is hard, but which is available to each and every one of us, regardless our background or talents.

Reflecting upon the principles of your education, I wish today to speak of virtue, service, and beauty. Let me begin by observing that every generation worth its salt wants better for the next generation, but it matters a great deal what you think "better" means.

We cannot speak of what's good for a person without understanding human nature. The problem with understanding human nature, as opposed to just nature, is that whereas I can demonstrate the principle of gravity with a well-designed experiment in a matter of seconds, some principles of human nature only become clear over long periods of time, such as decades of one's life, or the centuries of history. This is one reason why we engage with the great works of the tradition: Vergil, Dante, Shakespeare, Jane Austen. Their works *gift* us with insights hard-won over long periods of time, sometimes saving us having to learn the hard way, sometimes offering us insights that we would never discover otherwise. To have such a tradition is an incredible blessing.

Of course, as we know all too well, not everything in the past was good and thus we also need to learn how to distinguish what's good from what's merely pleasant or what's bad. I'll return to this in a moment.

When I was young, I did not receive a classical education until college. There, I encountered many of the great works—philosophical, literary, artistic, and scientific—from the Bible up to the present, focused primarily on Western civilization, but including some works from outside the West, as well. I entered adulthood convinced that learning and virtue were important and I dedicated my life to teaching the great works. What could be better? And yet, over time, I became unhappy—not just unhappy, but anxious and petty. I always worried about the future, about what other people thought of me. I knew it was vicious, but I didn't know where it was coming from, why I was becoming someone that I no longer respected.

It took quite a bit more time before I learned the answer. Despite my great education and aspirations, what mattered most to me was a well-paying job, praise, my social life—in short, whatever conduced to me enjoying myself—while being a decent person and sometimes helping others along the way. I had profoundly misunderstood the lesson of the tradition. Its lesson is that the goal of life is to be virtuous, which Dr. Forman advanced so well. This doesn't mean that you should reject financial security, respect, fun with friends, not at all, but it means that those goals are secondary to being a good human being.

This may seem like a subtle difference; it isn't. When enjoying yourself is your ultimate goal, whenever you face many difficult obstacles, you resent them, how they deprive you of a good time, how other people don't seem to suffer the same difficulties that you do. It's not fair. Worse, even when you don't face obstacles, you may become bored and seek distractions that never really satisfy you. In all cases, you become anxious, inclined to complain. If you feel as though you can't do anything about your problems, you may start to feel powerless, to shift from complaining to shouting.

Over the past few years, we've faced quite a few obstacles, fighting with each other over how to respond to the pandemic, to acts of violence, to problems in education. I am deeply troubled by the news articles I read online, the tweets I see parried back and forth. There are some good journalists out there, but they seem increasingly rare. I find many articles talking *about facts*, but very few that *give me facts*. Instead, these articles and tweets tell me what I should think, written by people adopting the most self-righteous poses. They're always accusing the other side of the most dishonest tactics, which inevitably turn out to be the exact same tactics used by the one making the accusation. Progressives, liberals, conservatives, all at each other's throats. All wanting to silence their opponents, real or imagined. So many of them speak of a coming civil war, of how afraid they are. And yet you cannot help thinking that they *want* this war, because they imagine that they will win and finally live in a society in which they no longer need to suffer having to speak with, or even be in the same room with, someone who disagrees with them.

They have no idea what they're talking about. And it's almost inexcusable. As young and old alike die in Ukraine, we should have an idea of what war really is and we should not be relishing the thought of it.

In all of human history, there has never been a community, of whatever size, without divisions. Even families have divisions, sometimes deep ones. Thus, the question is not and has never been: "How can we have a society in which we'll all just agree?" We won't. The question is: "How will we negotiate those disagreements?" Will we do so with hard work and virtue or will we, rather, take the easy road of partisanship and toxic words?

I think of your school's namesake, John Adams, and of that whole generation who founded this great country. The Founders sometimes spoke of the virtues of their generation, so

much so that we might imagine that they just started with more virtues and favorable conditions than we have today, and that that's why they were able to overcome their differences and found this nation. In a way, nothing could be further from the truth. Though we indeed see corruption, disinformation, and injustice today, they had their share of corrupt politicians, partisan journalists, and injustices and hardships the likes of which we can scarcely imagine.

And yet, in another way, they *were* great and seem greater than us—how so?

In the summer of 1787, delegates of the several states spent their time in the old Pennsylvania State House debating, often in absolutely stifling heat, endless hours long into the night, about how to resolve their differences or if their differences even could be resolved.

Among the topics they debated was slavery, which some of them believed an abominably unjust practice and others wanted to retain. They eventually came up with the nefarious three-fifths clause of the Constitution, which counted a non-free person as three-fifths of a free person, for the purposes of representation and taxation. It has sometimes been argued that this meant that a slave was "worth" three-fifths of a citizen. This is not true and was not the intention, which is clear if you consult the notes of the Constitutional Convention, which today are even available for free online. The key expression is "for the purposes of representation." Some of the delegates of the slave states wanted their slaves to increase the number of representatives, and thus power, that they would have in federal government—power that they could use to protect and expand slavery. Those opposed to slavery thought it unjust to increase the representation of slave states on the basis of human beings who were denied their fundamental natural rights.

The three-fifths compromise was intended to keep slave states in the Union, but curb their power. The abolitionists feared that if the slave states formed their own federal government, they would never abolish slavery, but hoped that if they were kept in the Union, they could slowly but surely end the injustice. Why would abolitionists do that? Why not just let the free states be free and the slave states have slaves? That way, the free states could have a purer founding, not tainted by that terrible injustice. But the abolitionists cared more about ending that injustice than they did about their own reputations and convenience. They understood that even if we have vices, we should aspire to virtue and we must therefore fight hard and make sacrifices to do the right thing: *sacrifices*—not just self-righteously shouting at each other (even if there were some raised voices back then in Philadelphia).

To be sure, slavery should have been abolished immediately—it should never have existed at all—and some of the founding generation even freed their slaves, though this sometimes goes unremembered. But if others will not do the right thing, then one must continue to work, even when it means compromise, to defend the cause of justice. And, of course, Americans, white and Black both, eventually gave their lives to end slavery. You may have heard that the Civil War was fought for other reasons. There are always many reasons, but read the letters of the many men who went to war expressing their desire to end slavery and the many women who made innumerable sacrifices to support the effort. But it was not just about the war, but also about the incredibly difficult work of rebuilding and healing, of learning to respect everyone's natural rights, that followed.

We face obstacles, it's true, but theirs were greater. If they could rebuild community, we can, too.

But how did they know what to do? When to strive to work together and when war was justified? How did they know what was virtuous? What was just? That each of us—regardless of sex or skin color—was endowed with the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?

As many students have told me over the years, the Founders only had certain *opinions* about virtue and justice, but those are just culturally relative; such things aren't *true or real*. But if they're not true, then aren't our own views of justice only opinions, as well? And if they're all just relative, no more authoritative than whether you think vanilla or chocolate tastes better, why should we care about them? I can't tell you how many times I've heard this argument. You'd think I'd get the message. And yet every time I hear it, it sounds more and more false.

To be sure, some of the founding generation and those that came after thought a certain way about virtue and justice because that was their culture, but an important number of them *knew* that virtue was real because they had, to one degree or another, a *classical* education, the precursor to the education that you have received.

It begins with the ancients, Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero among them. The ancients also thought that virtue might be a matter of opinion, but they weren't sure. So they began with what wasn't a matter of opinion: health and fitness. If someone has a truly terminal disease, they will die whether they *think* they have a terminal disease or not. By the same token, if someone is a

better athlete and they run faster or throw the discus farther, that's not a matter of opinion, either; that's a fact, for all to see. Please note that I say a *better* athlete. Not everyone can be the best, but everyone, through effort, can become better than they were.

The ancients—especially the aristocrats—also saw from this two kinds of bodily liberty, one was the liberty to lie around and satisfy idle desires, the other was to become *strong enough* to accomplish other things, to run a race, climb a mountain, defend your family. The first kind of liberty, the lazy kind, makes one anxious because they become more vulnerable and powerless. And even if they lie to themselves about it, deep down they know. The second kind of liberty, based on strength, didn't make them invincible, but it did make them better able to handle whatever came at them and thus more confident and happier.

But, see, the strange thing with the second kind of liberty was that it was only accessible to those who learned discipline and resilience. But discipline and resilience seemed to require one to do all sorts of exercises that they don't want to do—"homework," if you will—and so this was oppression, right? But, no, when someone viciously makes another person their slave, threatens them with violence, *that* is oppression. When someone submits to discipline to become stronger, *that* leads to true freedom.

But I am only speaking of the body, which only partially defines us. Is the same true for our psyche? For the ancients, it certainly was. Just as a body can be ill or out of shape or else healthy and fit so too can the psyche be vicious or inconsiderate or else decent and virtuous. Just as the fit athlete can run faster, climb higher, and throw farther than the lax person, so too can the virtuous person give their word and keep it; they can resist the temptation to betray their friend to ingratiate themselves with the cool crowd; they can restrain their anger long enough to really assess the situation and listen to others; they have the courage to feel fear and yet to do the right thing, even if it's difficult; and they have the strength of character to be generous and serve others even when doing so is not just inconvenient, but even entails sacrifices, of time, of sleep, of reputation.

What the ancients discovered was that, though this *was* a harder road—as Miss Webster rightly said—taking it gave one the confidence needed to enjoy a truer, deeper, and more enduring happiness. It made one capable of self-government. The alternative was a life spent

forever worrying about money, status, and petty pleasures. At first, pursuing these seemed to offer the enjoyable life; in time, it became clear that it was the very opposite.

Some of the ancients thought that only the wealthy and privileged could be virtuous. In time, they realized that virtue didn't care whether you were born rich or poor, or what color your eyes or skin were. Virtue has no political party, but is available to all of us as human beings.

Is this really culturally relative? When someone, out of love, sacrifices their life to save their friends, do we need our culture to tell us that there's something noble and beautiful about that person's soul? Or does it just hit us? Do we just see it?

The ancients realized that understanding virtue as personal excellence, though important, wasn't enough.

As Mr. Rodda's remarks suggested we consider: Too often, we tend to think of the beautiful in terms of what we find pleasant, what appeals to our taste. The ancients, by contrast, thought that beauty was real independent of our preferences and that it was up to us to educate ourselves to perceive it.

By their account, fitness is beautiful. It is the integrity of the body. But virtue, too, is beautiful. It is the integrity of the soul. But what is integrity? In time, it was understood as the emergence of a stable, orderly, holistic pattern from what was disorderly, of the fit body from the lax body, of the virtuous soul from the self-indulgent soul. But we don't just see this in human bodies and souls. Communities can have greater or lesser cohesion and integrity. And we even see this order emerging in nature, in the fractal patterns and Fibonacci sequences of everything from the rhythms of biological generation and tectonic shifts to the structures of proteins, leaves, mountains, and even the stars.

Virtue is therefore not just some random opinion of yours or mine. Nor is it just what advances survival, since many vicious things can advance survival. No, for the ancients, virtue is the participation of your psyche in a stable, orderly, and *beautiful* pattern that is manifest throughout nature. It is real.

For Aristotle, one of the greatest virtues was love, and like all virtues, he did not understand love to mean what you find pleasant or what is to your taste, which is how we often

think of it. Love was rather the activity of pursuing the good of another human being. People who live in community, as we do, may disagree with each other, sometimes vehemently, but, because we live together, there are goods that benefit us all. If I truly benefit you, I benefit the community and also myself. Similarly, if I truly harm you, I harm the community and also myself. But what is of the greatest benefit, according to Aristotle? To be virtuous. That is what will allow you to be happier and to flourish, to live a life of confidence and dignity, no matter your disposition or fortune, whether you pursue a simple life or great ambitions.

If one thinks that love is just about preference and pleasure, they won't just want to take pleasure in the things that they happen to like; they'll also want to vent their anger against the things that offend them. And venting is pleasant, too, after all—the more deeply one is offended, the greater their pleasure in venting, but also the greater the division and harm that ultimately results.

Some of the Founders in the Pennsylvania State House may not have liked each other, but, by Aristotle's definition, they loved each other, because they worked together and made sacrifices to inspire each other to be better human beings and to build community. Miss Benson spoke compellingly of human creation. Though educated by the ancients, the Founders framed a government and built a society far greater than anything the ancients did or even dreamed of.

I speak of "inspiring virtue" because virtue, like bodily fitness, makes us free. It frees us from our anxieties, our pettinesses, our vices, so that we can live happier, more flourishing lives of real worth and dignity. But you cannot help someone come into the full and mature enjoyment of that virtuous liberty by pressuring or coercing them. Whether you're a teacher or friend, you must eventually *support and invite* them into it. But this also means allowing them to support you, for—not to offend you—you probably need help becoming more virtuous, too. And so do I. Indeed, it was only when I started working with classical teachers and their students that I learned what really matters. So, even though you don't know it, you've already helped me more than I can say.

To return to my opening remarks, my life before was lacking because I failed to truly put virtue and service ahead of enjoying myself and so, when I faced challenges, had to deal with people whom I felt mistreated me, had to make sacrifices, I felt robbed. Ironically, by living for the sake of enjoyment, I had become too anxious and petty to actually enjoy myself. I didn't

realize that I should be grateful to those difficult moments. Those are the occasions for becoming a stronger, more virtuous human being. But even this becomes paltry if it is only about myself. We exercise the greatest virtue when we look beyond ourselves and freely serve others. That is when we truly flourish, when we experience the greater joy of community, as Miss Beloberk reminded us.

So it's not about self-righteously yelling at people who disagree with us. By all means, enjoy your First Amendment rights—I think we need them now more than ever—but the truly virtuous people aren't devoting all their time to protests or tweets. They're out there, doing the hard but incredibly worthwhile work of rebuilding trust between police officers and communities, helping the underserved build affordable housing for themselves, serving as chaplains to soldiers in war zones, comforting them in their pain, and striving to offer a better education to the next generation.

These people aren't social media influencers and one doesn't look at their vacation pics and feel jealous. But those who've dedicated themselves to service aren't feeling jealous, either. They don't need "likes"; they live out their goodness and don't need cheap marketing tricks as a substitute for it. Theirs are the lives that are healing our country.

I used to think about all the pundits online venting their misleading, angry, divisive rhetoric and I would get depressed and angry. I thought that they'd taken over the country. But it's not just their country. It's your country, as well. One day, you'll stand in the positions of power, influence, and *responsibility* that are misused today and you'll do better because, like the Founders and like John Adams, you've been educated to see that virtue is real and that service is where we find a meaningful, dignified, and flourishing life in community.

So no pressure. "Just get out there and fix everything. Sorry we left it to you like this!" No—at graduation, it's common to speak of how we're sending you "out there," and, in a way, we are. But, as the scholars up on stage have emphasized, you are now servant leaders. Your parents, your teachers, your school leadership, they too are servant leaders. So, in another sense, you are not leaving, but rather joining us in the work. They're all here for you. And even though you and I have just met, I'm here for you, too. We're gonna do this.

Community will always have its divisions, but it is only in community—in particular, in the hard but happy work of *healing* community—that we are able to live in virtue, truth, and beauty together.

So my congratulations again and God bless you all.

The Humanities and Hamlet

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(The following essay is adapted from a speech delivered at the 2023 EDH commencement ceremony).

Many schools call "English" or "History" classes what we at John Adams Academy call the "Humanities." Is this just a quirky preference for one word over others, or is there something different about what these classes called "Humanities" should be doing and teaching? When other schools talk of English classes, they refer to classes in which one acquires the skills related to reading, writing, speaking, and listening; and History classes where one acquires knowledge of specific events and people in the past (often seen through the ideology du jour). However, the Humanities classes are something of a different category. Yes, they are concerned with historical events and persons, and they will sharpen English Language Arts skills. But historical knowledge and language acuity are a means to the end of something else: knowing human nature. The essence and complexity of our own humanity we share with our ancestors, and its expression cannot be divorced from our linguistic capacities. This is why what we call "History" or "English" find their completion in the proper study of humanity, in *the humanities*.

Knowing our human nature involves knowing what it means to act as a human should act. In other words, it involves ethics, the study of right action. But knowing how one should act requires knowing what one is. In other words, it involves anthropology, the study of *man as such*. All this to say that one cannot know how to act if one doesn't know what one is. Ethics is downstream from anthropology. Aesop tells us of the crow who dies trying to replicate the diet and habits of the swans he envies. Studying the humanities will save us from the crow's fate.

Shakespeare's masterpiece *Hamlet* also gives profound insight into the human condition. When Hamlet is paralyzed by indecision and shamed by his own cowardice, he asks, with such deceptive simplicity, "to be, or not to be – that is the question." And he's right. That is *the* question. It is multi-layered in its profundity. He is not simply contemplating suicide. To ask "to be or not to be" is not just to ask "to live or to die?" Nor is Hamlet just calling to mind the first and most important question we all face either directly or indirectly: Is there *being* or *non-being*, at the center of existence. "To be or not to be" is not just to ask "Is there a God or is there not?" For Hamlet is also meditating on what it means *to be* human at all. "To be or not to be" is also asking "To be human, or not to be human."

At first glance, this question seems silly. "How can we *not* be human?" We are what we are. But the veneer of silliness reveals an abyss of terrifying depth. Do we really know what we are? Why are we plagued with ethical quandaries and doubts? If right action depends on knowing what we are, we must face this reality: how is it that we, of all God's creatures, must deliberate and discover what we are? For Hamlet, his existential despair is caused by the revelation that his father was murdered by his uncle and the corresponding responsibility that as his son, he must avenge his father. In other words, he must now choose to act; he must choose to fulfill the responsibility given to him. If he does, Hamlet would *be* a good son. If he does not fulfill his responsibility, Hamlet would *not be* a good son. Hamlet is aware that *to be* a good son, to fulfill his responsibility, he would inevitably "suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." He knows that getting justice for his father, though good and right, would cost him dearly, maybe even his own life.

The only alternative is to *not* act, and in so doing, he might avoid suffering. To evade the sling and arrows of outrageous fortune is tempting, yes. But it is a death in its own right, a death "devoutly to be wished," as Hamlet says, for in that death you "end a thousand heartaches." So why not die? Why not forsake responsibility? "To be" only brings suffering. "Not to be" is "to sleep; To sleep, perchance to dream." So maybe the easy life of irresponsibility is the better option. What is the drawback? Hamlet wisely sees, though, that "not to be" may indeed bring sleep, but "in that sleep of death, what dreams may come [?]" We cannot know what such a life would truly bring. It may bring horrors worse than the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." Similarly, maybe the life of perpetually avoiding responsibility will somehow lead to greater

suffering than what he can presently imagine. Furthermore, just as no one can truly imagine what death is like, for we are currently alive; so no one can truly imagine what a life of total neglect is like. Responsibility comes with being human. The laziest basement-dwelling troll may try to avoid responsibility, but the responsibility is still there; he is simply refusing to fulfill it. And despite his best efforts, he is fulfilling some responsibilities. Simply eating and sleeping fulfills what he owes his ever-expanding anatomy. The question is not "will I take on responsibilities?" but "will I fulfill the responsibilities I have been given and cannot escape?"

Here we begin to see an answer to our question: What does it mean to be human? Hamlet suggests that to be human is to fulfill our responsibilities, to act according to the demands of justice. Hamlet's tragedy is his refusal to do so. Inaction turns out to be a kind of action, afterall. And like the crow that tried to live as a swan, Hamlet's refusal to be what he is leads to death. To avoid this death, studying the humanities forces us to ask life's difficult questions: What are our responsibilities? What do we owe others? The ghosts of our murdered fathers have probably not commissioned us to avenge them. But we do all have fathers and mothers. We are all children. As a matter of justice, we have certain responsibilities towards our parents. Elsewhere, we are commanded to "Honor thy father and thy mother."

This is a good starting point but certainly not the end of our responsibilities, especially in light of the fact that we also have a Heavenly Father, our very creator, who out of love has gifted us existence and our specific human nature. Out of respect for our creator, will we cultivate those unique human capacities, will we strive to be as human as possible? We can choose to sharpen our moral imaginations by attending to the great stories or to blunt them with narcissistic and nihilistic pop culture. We can choose to work for true and proper leisure or to work to fill our life with meaningless material goods. We can learn to delight in goodness and beauty or to scoff in cynicism and arrogance. We can choose to participate in creating order or disorder. We can choose to speak truth to a world that denies there is truth or succumb to cowardice and participate in falsehood. We can choose to be servant leaders or entitled slaves. In other words, like Hamlet, we can choose "to be" or "not to be."

Once we truly grasp the choice we all face, we understand what it means to study the humanities.

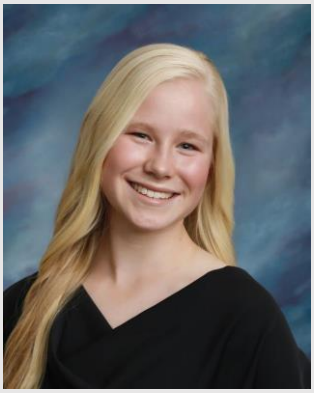
The Proper Education for Americans

"The liberal arts are not merely indispensable; they are unavoidable. Nobody can decide for himself whether he is going to be human. The only question open to him is whether he will be an ignorant, undeveloped one or one who has sought to reach the highest point he is capable of attaining. The question, in short, is whether he will be a poor liberal artist or a good one."

~ Robert M. Hutchins[1]

America is universally known as the land of the free and the home of the brave. A pioneer in liberty, America has flourished as a nation not led by one man, but by millions. Everyone retains the ability to secure their natural rights, not because a government allows it, but because those rights are found to be unalienable. The people have the power to lead themselves, and thus a democratic republic is possible. But with great power comes great responsibility and for the American style of government to succeed, it requires a moral, educated people united in patriotic support of the values rooted in the nation's founding. Accordingly, a liberal education, and a focus on the founding documents and heritage of the United States of America, should be the education of an American citizen. Liberal education fosters human excellence, while a comprehension of the founding documents fosters understanding of America's core ideals and inspires patriotism.

A key component to a liberal education is found in the Great Conversation, an ongoing process of writers and thinkers referencing, building on, and refining the work of their



Shannel Killorn

Shannel Killorn has attended John Adams Academy with her twin sister since first grade, the year when the Academy opened. Words cannot describe how grateful she is for her education at JAA. Shannel will be attending Corban University in the fall studying Agricultural Science, and will continue her athletic career playing soccer at the collegiate level.

[1] Robert M. Hutchins, "The Great Conversation~Britanica," Academia, Accessed January 30, 2023, https://www.academia.edu/8739489/The_Great_Conversation_Britanica.pdf, 57.

predecessors. This conversation, crafted out of the greatest masterpieces of thought, is a literary tradition that established the foundation of Western culture. The Great Books inside the Great Conversation portray immortal principles, highlighting the greatest truths and the greatest errors that humanity has ever pondered. They nourish the morality, intellect, and spirit, in essence the humanity, of every individual who decides to be enlightened by their knowledge. It is the books found inside the Great Conversation that make up the structure of a classical education.

Some individuals proclaim that a liberal education is not practical, and that it is better to prepare children for specialization by educating solely in scientific principles. This broad claim is false, entrenched in fallacies that have plagued America since the disappearance of quality education. The most bare and degrading definition of education is the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially at a school. Now, it is simple to acknowledge that the purpose of school is to educate, but to define education as simply receiving instruction at an institution demeans the undeniable importance of education. To be educated is to acquire the knowledge necessary to understand reality, think critically, reason rationally, and grow morally in order to better oneself and the world. A liberal education fulfills the true role of education as it cultivates both the mind and morality through reading, writing, and discussing to foster the growth of humans who are free to attain excellence. Reading and understanding the American founding documents and primary sources equips citizens with the knowledge to understand the workings and principles of the nation. Therefore, a liberal education, and a focus on the founding documents and heritage of the United States of America, should be the education of an American citizen since liberal education fosters human excellence, while a comprehension of the founding documents fosters understanding of America's core ideals and inspires patriotism.

Education is Essential

Education is necessary for the citizens of America because of its unique structure. Simply put, education is essential in America because the people are sovereign. In many nations the people have some degree of governing power and authority, but this sovereignty is not often the supreme authority of the nation. The opposite occurs in America. In America, the people’s authority is the cornerstone of national formation. Alexis De Tocqueville observed in *Democracy*

in America, that the form of the republic is centralized around the people, and that the people are the most essential component to prosperity in America: in the United States "the principle of sovereignty of the people is not hidden or sterile as in certain nations; it is recognized by mores, [and] proclaimed by the laws."[2] With the people holding political power it is paramount that every individual has the knowledge necessary to use that power correctly. It is the individual that becomes the legislator, the judge, the governor, the mayor, and the elector. George Washington asserted in his farewell address that "virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government" and that institutions for the diffusion of knowledge should be of primary importance since the public opinion should be enlightened in proportion to the force given to the people by the structure of government.[3] If every person is educated properly, then every government official, every civilian administrator, every entrepreneurial business owner will have not only a background in necessary subjects, but also a moral, spiritual, and emotional training to guide their actions. They will be educated to think clearly, reason rationally, understand morality, champion virtue, and ultimately protect the freedoms that the people retain.

There is even a greater importance to having educated individuals than what appears on the surface. Every individual has a degree of sovereignty, but a single person in respect to the entire state has only a fraction of the power that the collective holds. As a democratic republic, it is not only the individual that rules, but "it is the majority that governs in the name of the people."[4] The might of the majority can become tyrannical and abusive if it is not rooted in something other than emotion, preconceived notions, or illogical conclusions. Furthermore, the majority's will is broken up into political parties. In a nation that protects the freedom of speech, press, and assembly, it is inevitable that people form groups that represent the will of a large section of the population, often in opposition to one another. Political parties are dangerous simply because the friction between large parties clouds judgment, alienates ideas, and generally inhibits rational decision making at the expense of the nation. Since the people as individuals are

[2] Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop (New York and Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 53.

[3] George Washington, "Farewell Address (1796)," Teaching American History, Teaching American History, 2006-2023, https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/farewell-address/?_sf_s=farewell&_sf_document_author=george-washington.

[4] Tocqueville, 165.

sovereign and have the power to make critical decisions on the national level with the power of the majority, it is paramount that the citizens are educated to guide the passions of the majority and bring logic and morality into political parties.

Many of the greatest thinkers that have graced this nation have come to a similar conclusion that an educated populace is vital. The Massachusetts State Constitution, constructed in part by John Adams, dictates that knowledge is key to the prosperity of America: "Wisdom and knowledge, as well as virtue, diffused generally among the body of the people… [is] necessary for the preservation of… rights and liberties."[5] A sovereign people needs virtue and knowledge, which is cultivated through education, to preserve liberty, but a regular education does not train people to be moral or virtuous. In fact, Robert Hutchins, former president of University of Chicago and staunch defender liberal education, notes that in the United States the dominant opinion is that the "education that the democratic ideal requires… [is] met by universal schooling, rather than by universal liberal education. What goes on in school is regarded as of relatively minor importance."[6] While universal school and education is present in America, it is not the type that will foster the growth of virtuous people. The purpose of going to school is to be educated, and the education that Americans need is one that equips citizens with the knowledge necessary to understand reality and grow morally in order to better themselves, the nation, and the world. A generic public education is not enough. A specific type of education, a liberal one, is the proper education of Americans.

A Brief Dive Introduction to Liberal Education

Before proving that Americans need a liberal education, it is necessary to understand what a liberal education is and what it entails. The word liberal comes from the Latin word *liberalis*, meaning free. A liberal education, in essence, is the education that is fit for the free.

[5] "Massachusetts State Constitution" in "The Federal and State Constitution, Vol. III Kentucky-Massachusetts," OLL, Liberty Fund Network, Accessed January 29, 2023, https://goo.gl/ZUzBVe.

[6] Hutchins, 57.

The purpose of a liberal education is widespread. It does not aim for specialization, but to promote a well-rounded individual who can think well in all fields, with the substance of this education consisting "in the recognition of basic problems, in the knowledge of distinctions and interrelations in subject matter, and in the comprehension of ideas."[7] It also instills a strong sense of ethics and values, or morality, into those who study it by being composed of many interconnected and essential subjects.

In antiquity, a liberal education was for the free man, and it was composed of seven arts. These included grammar, logic, and rhetoric, collectively known as the trivium. The trivium model is used to systematically give children the tools for learning by first developing the skills to absorb knowledge, then comprehend, and finally to apply that knowledge and understanding to draw wise conclusions. The goal is to train individuals to discern and present the truth. Secondary education, and the second half of the seven arts, consisted of geometry, arithmetic, music, and astronomy, known as the quadrivium. Together these studies are the basis for a well-rounded education. In modern times the study of the liberal arts has evolved, but its essence is still the same. It is rooted in the study of humanities, which contains history, philosophy, literature, languages, social sciences, performing and visual arts, while mathematics and sciences form another branch of liberal education. The end of these studies is to understand the natural world and universal truths.

In general, this education that promotes continued freedom is fading away. At large, education for youth is more often geared towards meeting certain standards of testing and presenting processed information, which leads to stagnant thought and an inability to think for oneself. This generic education for children up to young adults, often called a public education, does not supply adolescents with the skills needed to responsibly impact the future of the nation. Public education brings universal education to all, but it does not have the qualities that a liberal education requires. It only skims the surface of subjects, without encouraging deep thinking and questioning. Deviation from education of the free is widespread, but fortunately, although liberal education is disappearing, it has gained strength in those being classically educated.

[7] Hutchins, 49.

The classical education movement in America, characterized by charter schools like John Adams Academy, is the conscious return to a liberal education, and it seeks to impart to those that learn under its model the need to seek truth, goodness, and beauty by studying the liberal arts. Classical liberal education includes and stresses the importance of classical literature, the Great Books, fine arts, history, and primary source documents. It emphasizes writing, reading, and Socratic discussion to promote individuals who can communicate, question, and discover truth, rather than mechanically accepting dubious conclusions made by others. Liberal education contains the entire essence of classical education.

In summary, a liberal education is one that is for the free man. Liberal education cultivates the mind and morality through reading, writing, and discussing the Great Books and classics in order to foster the growth of a free human being.[8] According to Hutchins, those with a liberal education are equipped to think well in many fields, since the "liberally educated man understands…the distinctions and interrelations of the basic fields of subject matter, the differences and connections between poetry and history, science and philosophy, theoretical and practical science; he understands that the same methods cannot be applied in all these fields; he knows the methods appropriate to each."[9] In its entirety, a liberal education is a process of acquiring knowledge that strengthens the mind, builds character, and imparts life skills, and it instills individuals with the skills for communication, critical thinking, and reasoning, along with fostering a sense of personal and social responsibility.

Liberal Education Fosters Excellence

It is clear that an educated people is necessary for America since the people are sovereign, but the *right kind* of education is needed to equip individuals with the knowledge necessary to be a good citizen. The broad goal of a liberal education is to nurture "human excellence, both private and public."[10] A liberal education fosters excellence by teaching how to

[8] Hutchins, 50.

[9] Hutchins, 49-50.

[10] Hutchins, 49.

understand reality, think critically, and reason well to make appropriate conclusions. This is achieved through studying philosophy, as well as reading and discussing the Great Books and classical literature. Philosophy, the study of fundamental truths through questioning knowledge, reality, and values, teaches critical thinking, close reading, clear writing, and analysis skills that allows individuals to structure a clear argument, spot fallacies in false conclusions, and better understand humanity by contemplating the great ideas. The Great Books are a key component to liberal education, since each highlights what good writing and thinking is. As Hutchins notes, "These books shed some light on all our basic problems, and that it is folly to do without any light we can get."[11] These books wrestle with life problems and their broad themes shed light onto problems in everyday life. They prompt deeper thinking on behalf of those who study them. For example, *The Republic* introduces the concept of justice to its readers and encourages the individual to consider the virtues that are necessary in a society. Aristotle's *Ethics* teaches that the end goal of humans is to attain happiness through virtuous action. Other Great Books, such as *Hamlet* or the *Odyssey*, inspire readers not only to enjoy quality literature, but to contemplate humanity. The federal system of America rests "on a complicated theory whose application requires of the governed a daily use of the enlightenment of their reason."[12] To participate in voting, discussion of politics, and daily life it is essential that individuals are trained to think and understand universal concepts. Americans are required to use their sovereignty in such a way that affects the trajectory of the nation, and thus an education that illuminates humanities problems and trains people to reason well will ensure that individuals have enough guidance to act in a way that promotes personal excellence.

Liberal education also fosters excellence by teaching morality and virtue. Morality is the distinction between right and wrong and the recognition of good and bad behavior. Virtue is recognized by displaying high moral standards. A liberal education teaches morality, and thus kindles virtuous behavior, by training the chest. In *The Abolition of Man*, C.S. Lewis broke man into three parts, the head, the chest, and the stomach, modeling Plato's tripartite soul. The head is the rational part, the chest the spirited part, and the stomach the appetite or animalistic part. The

[11] Hutchins, 47.

[12] Tocqueville, 155.

chest is particularly important to humans since it is the moral compass of humanity, the source of virtuous sentiments, and trained emotion. According to Lewis, "the task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles but to irrigate deserts. The right defense against false sentiments is to inculcate just sentiments…. For famished nature will be avenged and a hard heart is no infallible protection against a soft head."[13] A liberal education inculcates just sentiments by showing adolescents the truth and wisdom in humanity. It trains morality by highlighting virtues. Without trained emotion people will let emotions rule rather than moral intelligence. Untrained emotions and sentiments should not rule rationality, but it is equally degrading to ignore emotion. Rationality on its own begets brutality untempered by compassion or virtue. There is a balance that must be struck between the mind and spirit to make appropriate decisions. In the words of C.S. Lewis, "No emotion is, in itself, a judgment; in that sense all emotions and sentiments are alogical. But they can be reasonable or unreasonable as they conform to Reason or fail to conform. The heart never takes the place of the head: but it can, and should, obey it."[14] Morality creates a sense of right and wrong, without which society cannot function justly, nor can individuals coexist with respect. An education that trains just sentiments and correct responses ultimately causes moral excellence.

Finally, liberal education fosters excellence by teaching individuals to communicate well. As a nation founded on the freedom of speech, press, and assembly, Americans are blessed with the ability to communicate freely. It is crucial that the ideas, arguments, and stances, as well as policies and laws, are understood and communicated in a clear manner. Without a clear mode of communication it is impossible to convey the logic and purpose behind political change with clarity. A liberal education nurtures clear communication by training individuals to think clearly. Comprehending great ideas, truths, and teaching rational thinking positively impacts communication. Writing and speech is thought put into a form that allows for it to be understood by all. Clear thought leads to articulate, organized communication. Furthermore, by reading the literary masterpieces of humanity, adolescents can observe what good writing is and strive to emulate it. As Hutchins observers, the man who is liberally educated "is at home in the world of

[13] C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 13-14.

[14] Lewis, 19.

ideas and in the world of practical affairs, too, because he understands the relation between the two" and can communicate knowledgeably in many areas.[15] The broad, but deep, training that liberal education entails allows adolescents to know what they themselves are thinking, and convey their thinking clearly to others.

In total, liberal education fosters excellence by imparting understanding, rationality, virtue, and morality. It promotes clarity in communication by establishing clarity of thought. It forces individuals to think for themselves, ask questions, and then make appropriate conclusions. It inspires a search for knowledge to obtain the truth, a result which is paramount in a nation ruled by people who have liberty, for as Hutchins says, "political freedom cannot last without provision for the free unlimited acquisition of knowledge…A political order is tyrannical if it is not rational."[16]

American Founding Documents and Heritage in Education

It is clear that good American citizens need liberal education, but it is also critical that the populace of America knows about the founding ideals of this nation. A liberal education gives individuals the ability to know how to see what is good, true, and beautiful, and understand universal virtues, like justice, courage, moderation, and wisdom.[17] As such, this education enables people to determine the good in the structure of a nation. By studying the founding documents and the heritage of America, it will then become apparent to all those who are liberally educated that the United States of America rests on a basis of firm, true principles. The founding documents include the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, each of which are essential pillars to the values of America. Other primary source documents, such as the Federalist Papers, original state constitutions, as well as various speeches that showcase the values and culture of America. By reading founding documents and primary sources it is apparent that America's heritage is grounded in the great ideas of independence,

[15] Hutchins, 50.

[16] Hutchins, 73.

[17] See Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 2016).

freedom, natural rights, unity, and the idea that all men are created equal. Learning about these foundations cannot be neglected because even a base founded on truth will eventually crumble if it is not maintained, as Hutchins cautions, "the only defense that any nation can have is in the character and intelligence of the people. The adequacy of that defense will depend upon the strength of the conviction that the nation is worth defending. This conviction must rest on the comprehension of the values for which that nation stands."[18] If the heritage of the United States is not promulgated then America, a haven of freedom and self-governance, will disappear, and as John Adams warns, "liberty once lost is lost forever."[19]

It may seem redundant to reiterate the principle of the sovereignty of the citizen, but it is the most apparent reason for the need for an educated people. A liberal education and a view of the founding documents will foster patriotism and a sense of responsibility. Those with the aforementioned education will understand, as Ronald Reagan did, that the fate of the nation is in their hands, that their actions directly impact posterity, and that "freedom is a fragile thing and it's never more than one generation away from extinction."[20] The citizens of America will lead the nation, so by learning to be responsible through proper education, they can lead well. Citizens must not only be responsible for the sake of America, but also for the sake of the world: "A country that is powerful, inexperienced, and uneducated can be a great danger to world peace. The United States is unlikely to endanger peace through malevolence."[21] Americans must be knowledgeable about the founding, because while a liberal education sets the framework for a good citizen, only a comprehension of how the country works and what its values are will truly foster prosperity by inspiring responsibility on behalf of the citizens. To be a citizen, to be gifted with all the privileges of citizenship, it is necessary to understand the full power each individual

[18] Hutchins, 71.

[19] John Adams, "Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 7 July 1775," *Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive*, Massachusetts Historical Society, Accessed February 6, 2023, http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/.

[20] Ronald Reagan, "Inaugural Address," (Speech, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum National Archives, Virginia, 1967), *January 5, 1967: Inaugural Address (Public Ceremony)*, https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/january-5-1967-inaugural-address-public-ceremony#:~:text=Freedom%20is%20a%20fragile%20thing,only%20once%20to%20a%20people.

[21] Hutchins, 71.

has, and that power must be used to reinforce the values that are rooted in the foundation of America. By understanding the founding documents—the core of the country's structure—Americans are able to rightly and responsibly participate in government and know their own power.

As Tocqueville observed, the people rule the American political world and "are the cause and the end of all things; everything comes out of them and everything is absorbed in them," but it is only because of the unique composition of America that this sovereignty is organized into a power that can be used.[22] A liberal education shows that the ideas America is founded on are true, immortal, and right. By understanding the heritage, structure, and foundation of America, citizens will not only be more responsible, but will become more patriotic, more united, and stronger as a nation. Hutchins understood this and argued that "the essential ingredients of strength are trained intelligence, love of country, the understanding of its ideals, and such devotion to those ideals that they become a part of the thought and life of every citizen."[23] Trained intelligence comes with a liberal education, but only an understanding of the core of America fosters an irreplaceable love and devotion for this great nation.

The Practicality of Liberal Education

Liberal education is proven to be needed in America, but there are arguments that claim that liberal education is not practical enough. Many say that although liberal education teaches individuals valuable skills, the vision of such a deep education being available to every American citizen is romanticized since it is not even close to being widespread today. It is also more practical to prepare children for specialization and the workforce rather than educating philosophical ideas. Many believe that technical skills are necessary for success in life and should be educated over the general skills that liberal education instills. Furthermore, liberal education deals largely in reading the Great Books, but many of those texts were written long ago, and have little bearing on industrialized nations like America. Therefore, according to some,

[22] Tocqueville, 55.

[23] Hutchins, 72.

it is better to base education on entirely factual and scientific principles rather than on intangible ideas, making liberal education impractical and irrelevant for most American citizens.

These arguments may appear legitimate, but that is because we have lost sight of traditional purpose of education. It is true that liberal education is not currently widespread, but it is not impossible for it to be such. History demonstrates that liberal education was once a great deal more popular. In fact, the formation of the United States of America was largely conducted by liberally educated men and a learned, well-read populace. According to Hutchins, liberal education is fading in current times because of "internal decay and external confusion."[24]

Internally, liberal education has decayed because the Great Books have been deemed the private domain of professional scholars study and interpret. Citizens who specialize and have real, practical jobs lend their talents to industrializing do not have the time to read and discuss theoretical ideas. As a result, those who specialize deem that deep study of the classics is not necessary, when in fact industrialization and specialization provide even more reason to be liberally educated. Industrialization gives individuals more leisure, and with leisure comes the opportunity to widen the mind in order to exercise political power well. Hutchins notes that:

> If leisure and political power are a reason for liberal education, then everybody in America now has this reason… If leisure and political power require this education, everybody in America now requires it, and everybody where democracy and industrialization penetrate will ultimately require it. If the people are not capable of acquiring this education, they should be deprived of political power and probably of leisure. Their uneducated political power is dangerous, and their uneducated leisure is degrading and will be dangerous. If the people are incapable of achieving the education that responsible democratic citizenship demands, then democracy is doomed.[25]

Americans have political power and leisure, and it is through liberal education that citizens are taught responsible democratic citizenship. It is through studying under a liberal education that individuals learn to communicate well by understanding the factors that unite humanity, rather than focusing on the differences between separate specializations. It is the guidance of the Great Books that allows "specialized knowledge… [to] radiate out into a genuine infiltration of

[24] Hutchins, 58.

[25] Hutchins, 53-54.

common learning and common life."[26] America needs an education that, rather than isolating and dividing, draws out common humanity.[27] Every citizen will find that once they have been educated liberally and focus on the founding, they will be able to use their education in everyday life to not only demonstrate the habits formed from focused study, but also to showcase their ability problem solve, research, communicate both in writing and speech, as well as understand a vast variety of subjects, the relation between them, along with how to think critically. Arguing that a liberal education is idealized and that it is more practical to prepare children for specialization and the workforce rather than educating philosophical ideas is a valid argument, but ultimately a liberal education fosters human excellence in all aspects of life and is more practical overall.

Externally, liberal education has become confused by the advances in science making people step away from older writers and the "unscientific" traditions of the West, despite the fact that many things cannot be proven by a formula or a test. Ideas such as justice, morality, and religion cannot be answered, but they can be understood better through discussion and reflection. Many things do not have an immediate answer, so it is critical that individuals know how to question, reason, and mentally grasp large concepts. Reading the Great Books will not give the answers, just like experimental science will not, but the process of being liberally educated will present possible answers and prompt individuals to think rather than write difficult inquiries off as unnecessary to ponder. According to Hutchins:

> To proclaim the necessity of observing the facts… is not to say… that merely collecting facts will solve a problem… The facts are indispensable; they are not sufficient. To solve a problem it is necessary to think. It is necessary to think even to decide what facts to collect. Even the experimental scientists cannot avoid being a liberal artist, and the best of them, as the great books show, are men of imagination and of theory as well as patient observers of particular facts.[28]

An education that is only based in scientific fact results in adolescents being unequipped to rationalize critically, while having an absence of morality. Humans are not merely logical

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[26] Hutchins, 59.

[27] Hutchins, 68.

[28] Hutchins, 62.

creatures. Morality and great ideas cannot be defined by mere fact. Many situations require a sharp mind and a background in ethics and virtues. Certain experiences require a certain response, and the individual with an untrained mind and chest will be subject not only to inadequate responses, but to desires, appetites, and passions, because "without the aid of trained emotions the intellect is prowess to the animal organism."[29] Without the training in virtue that a liberal education provides, rationality becomes subject to the stomach, and will follow the stomach no matter the moral consequences. If anything, it is best to read widely and deeply, be educated liberally, and then specialize in a particular study. Overall, while the Great Books are from antiquity and do not include modern science, it is not practical for education to rest on a basis of entirely factual principles that omit intangible, morality based ideas. Liberal education fosters understanding of complicated ideas and morality, and therefore it must be reestablished to not only allow America to flourish with a new age of thinkers who find conclusions with both facts and clear thinking, but to ultimately better mankind, continue the Great Conversation, and promulgate truth and morality.

Conclusion

The scarcity of liberal education today is, in part, driven by a lack of realizing that such an education exists, combined with a disrespect for education to begin with and an inherent inclination towards idleness. A liberal education requires people to think and question. It requires people to have an open mind. People naturally shy away from hard things, forgetting that ease rarely translates to something worthwhile. The result of taking the easier way to be educated simply creates a weak mind and an even weaker understanding of first principles, virtues, and humanity. A liberal education can foster human excellence. Studying the founding documents and heritage of America can promote more unity, more patriotism, and appreciation for the blessings of this country. This education can be a catalyst for the creation of the most peaceful, united, educated, prosperous, and happy nation.

[29] Lewis, 24.

If every individual thought well, championed morality, and led with responsibility, then great change would ensue. Individuals would vote, not based on party loyalty, but based on the morality, truthfulness, and impact of their vote. Leaders would lead responsibility, with clear communication, and a sense of morality that would gear decisions towards the good. Lies, deception, and selfishness in the political landscape would disappear. But only *if* individuals wholeheartedly embrace this education. It must be the conscious effort of the educator and the educated to reap the full benefits of a liberal education. Those without dedication will lack results. It is impossible to know what the full effect of a completely educated citizenry would have on America, or even if it is possible since the nature of humans is to seek maximum result with minimal effort, but it is a forgone conclusion that allowing citizens to responsibly understand and use their power cannot cause anything but good.

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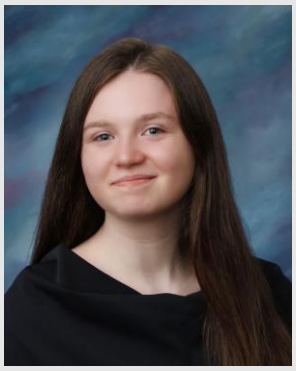
Daily Abundance: The Enriching Influence of Gratitude



Caitlin Coleman

A three-year member of advanced choir Virtus and a recipient of the Young Writer's Award, Caitlin is a proud graduate of the John Adams Academy class of 2023. Upon closing out her senior year, she received a Core Value Award for Scholar Empowered Learning. She is looking forward to spending a year at Sierra College, then transferring to BYU-Idaho.

My esteemed peers, often the simplest solutions are the most effective. I have found this to be startlingly true in many areas of my life, but perhaps the most interesting application of this axiom to me is in thanksgiving. So today, I want to talk about the relationship between abundance and gratitude, and how this simple practice can enrich our lives beyond measure.

Whenever we talk about an abstract concept like patience, virtue, or compassion, there are three main questions we automatically consider: What is it? Why is it important? And how do we develop it? Today, I'll be examining these three essential questions in the context of gratitude.

What is Gratitude?

The first of the three questions, "what is gratitude?" is essential to understanding the "why" and the "how." But we will begin by determining what gratitude is not.

It is not self-interested or prideful. Arrogance has no part in the recognition and expression of abundance. In fact, gratitude is more closely aligned with humility, because it requires one to turn outwards and seek the good that lies outside of oneself. It is not complacent or a state of inaction or passivity. Gratitude, much like

any other mentality that "flies in the face of our natural intuitions," requires applied, consistent effort.[1]

Finally, gratitude is not a state of comfort or laziness. Contrarily, a heart filled with thanksgiving is more prone to mental and spiritual growth and deeper understanding. Gratitude, instead of being a state of mind that hinders change or hinges on a refusal to change, is actually more open to change primarily because it is grounded in the love of what we've been given and, by extension, our love for the giver. The thankfulness we feel is a symptom of our love.

So now that we've established what gratitude isn't, what *is* gratitude? This question can yield a variety of different answers. People can understand it to mean an emotion, a behavior, a neural process, or a lifestyle. During this presentation, I want to focus on gratitude as a state of mind, a way of thinking about the world around you.

Gratitude is not only self-sufficient (meaning you don't need any extra materials or special circumstances to do it or have it), but also good for its own sake (meaning it doesn't have a particular end goal; it is an end goal in itself). Religious leader Russell M. Nelson speaks about gratitude as being "a remedy… [for] the many spiritual woes and ills that we face."[2] Note that he does not refer to gratitude as a panacea or a cure-all, but rather, a remedy, but a solution that might ease our pain if we apply it.

Gratitude should be at the heart of everything we do. Cicero called it the "parent of all other virtues" because the more we focus on appreciating the good in our lives, the more that goodness seems to increase.[3] It has been said that our focus determines our reality. Gratitude can not only turn "I have nothing" to "I have enough"; it can go further. It can turn "I have enough" into "I have *abundance*."

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[1] Russell M. Nelson, "The Healing Power of Gratitude," (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2020), 1, Accessed May 30, 2023, https://assets.ldscdn.org/ac/ce/acce1d6a5b114c8c6eb33605830000a4176eb859/prayer_of_gratitude_video_and_awareness_materials.pdf.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Marcus Tullius Cicero, The Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero, trans. by C.D. Yonge (London: George Bell & Sons: London, 1891). 80-81.

Why is Gratitude Important?

The second of the three essential questions is the "why." We should not only focus on *what* gratitude is, but why it is important.

It might seem completely counterintuitive to practice gratitude. When you are going through a difficult time, the most reasonable response might be to turn inwards, either out of a sense of self-preservation, or in an effort to heal. While these things have their time and place, and may be helpful, nothing can bring the same sense of peace and purpose in the same way that gratitude does.

Russell M. Nelson has said that gratitude "may seem [a] surprising [solution], because it flies in the face of our natural intuitions."[4] Not only because of its simplicity, but because of its inherently outward-turning nature, thankfulness is not the first thing that comes to mind for most people when we experience the bitter pangs of hurt, distress, or anguish. However, President Nelson clarifies that gratitude does not "*spare* us from sorrow, sadness, grief, [or] pain… but it does soothe our feelings… [by providing] us with a greater perspective on the very purpose and joy of life."[5]

In a book entitled *Radical Gratitude: Recalibrating Your Heart in an Age of Entitlement,* author Peter Maiden expresses his disdain for the widespread "entitlement culture" of today: "It is high time to stop thinking entitlement and to start thinking gift, privilege and grace. Thanksgiving and praise will then begin to flow from our lives. Imagine for a moment that you were able to get everything you wanted in life." [6] He follows this by reminding us that "[Our] unfulfilled desires remind us of where our ultimate satisfaction lies." Gratitude is an antidote to the expectations that entitlement generates and helps us learn, as the Apostle Paul counsels in Philippians 4:11, that "in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

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[4] Nelson, 1.

[5] Ibid., 2.

[6] Peter Maiden, *Radical Gratitude: Recalibrating Your Heart in an Age of Entitlement*, (IVP UK, 2020) chapter 1)

We find evidence of the peace and joy that gratitude brings not only in religious texts, but also in scientific endeavors. The University of California Berkeley has conducted countless studies, collected numerous data points, and compiled years' worth of research on the "science" of gratitude. In one article that described the effects of gratitude on the human mind, four distinct benefits were outlined. First, that gratitude possesses the power to liberate us from negative emotions. In a "study [conducted by UC Berkeley] involving nearly 300 adults" who "reported clinically low levels of mental health at the time," participants underwent a writing exercise for nearly a month.[7] One group wrote letters expressing thankfulness. Another group was instructed to write deeply about negative experiences they'd had. The third group was a control that didn't write anything. All participants received counseling for the duration of the study.

One might think that the second group's exercise provided catharsis and release. However, by the end of three weeks, the first group seemed happier: "Compared with the participants who wrote about negative experiences or only received counseling, those who wrote gratitude letters reported significantly better mental health."[8] Interestingly, the effect seemed to last. Even "[up to] 12 weeks after their writing exercise ended," participants from the first group continued to report improved levels of mental health.[9]

The second insight that the conductors of the study found is that "gratitude helps even if you don't share it."[10] They did not require participants to send the gratitude letters they wrote, but approximately 23% did so anyways. No noticeable difference in mental health appeared between the people who had sent their letters and those who didn't. And even if there did happen to be a perceivable difference, the benefits of gratitude are still open to those who express gratitude quietly. The authors of the article encouraged:

> If you're thinking of writing a letter of gratitude to someone, but you're unsure whether you want that person to read the letter, we encourage you to write it anyway. You can

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[7] Joshua Brown and Joel Wong, "How Gratitude Changes You and Your Brain," *Great Good Magazine* (Berkley: Greater Good Science Center, 2017), Accessed May 30, 2023 (https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_gratitude_changes_you_and_your_brain).

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

> decide later whether to send it (and we think it's often a good idea to do so). But the mere act of writing the letter can help you appreciate the people in your life and shift your focus away from negative feelings and thoughts.

Thirdly, like all things, the benefits of gratitude take time. Fascinatingly, the researchers observed what they called a "positive snowball effect."[11] Although "the mental health benefits of positive activities often decrease rather than increase over time afterward," with gratitude, they saw the opposite. The psychological benefits of writing about gratitude were seen to "gradually accrue… over time."

Which brings us to the fourth and final point, the lasting effects that gratitude has on the brain. After about three months, researchers took fMRI scans of the participants' brains. The individuals who felt a greater sense of gratitude "showed greater neural sensitivity in the medial prefrontal cortex, a brain area associated with learning and decision making."[12] Those who had written letters of gratitude three months prior *still* showed greater activation in the medial prefrontal cortex than the other two groups. This shocking and exciting find suggests that "practicing gratitude may help train the brain to be more sensitive to the experience of gratitude down the line, and this could contribute to improved mental health over time." Any amount of gratitude felt or expressed, no matter how brief, can quite literally have a lasting impact on the way you think and experience the world.

Linda Forman, co-founder of John Adams Academy, describes her experience with gratitude as follows: "I walk in my garden with gratitude, a spirit of thanksgiving that is becoming to man and will bless my life with abundance, all the while knowing that I am quite unworthy of it all. Gratitude this deep humbles me yet lifts and sustains me, independent of my circumstances. It is a way of living and thinking that can be cultivated and change the way I experience the world."[13]

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Linda Forman, "Gratitude in Autumn," *ldeanforman.blog,* Accessed May 30, 2023, https://ldeanforman.blog/2021/11/09/guest-post-gratitude-in-autumn/.

How do We Develop Gratitude?

Now that we're aware of what gratitude is and why it is so necessary, we must address how to develop it. One way is to keep a gratitude journal. I have kept a gratitude journal for 150 consecutive days. For five months, I would write down something to be grateful for. I found myself writing most often about family members, friends, and simple comforts like the fruit trees in my backyard. It was a fascinating exercise in expressing the awe and appreciation I felt for the abundance that surrounded me. And the longer I kept a gratitude journal, the more this strange yet compelling idea dawned on me: The more I listed, the more abundance there seemed to be!

The University of Berkley has eight steps to keeping an effective gratitude journal:[14]

1. Be Specific—Be specific and intentional. You don't need to be grateful for everything all at once. Take it slowly; look for things to be grateful for, but don't stress over it. Receive feelings of gratitude as they come and express them when they come.

2. Depth over Breadth—Don't focus on listing out as many things as possible. This can quickly turn superficial. Paying close attention to detail makes the experience more meaningful.

3. People vs. "Things"— Amie M. Gordon of Berkeley University put it this way. She defines gratitude as not only appreciation for what others do for you, but also appreciation for who they are as a person. She says, for example, that if a loved one takes out the trash for you, "you're not just thankful that [they] took out the trash—you're thankful that you have [someone in your life] who is thoughtful enough to know you hate taking out the trash." Gratitude means thinking about the best traits of those around you and remembering why you got to know them in the first place.[15]

4. Subtraction, not Addition—Sometimes it can be more effective to practice thankfulness for what you have by considering what life would be like without it.

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[14] "Gratitude Journal," *Great Good Magazine* (Berkley: Greater Good Science Center), Accessed May 30, 2023, https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/gratitude_journal)

[15] Amie M. Gordon "Gratitude Is for Lovers," *Great Good Magazine* (Berkley: Greater Good Science Center, 2013), Accessed May 30, 2023, (https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/gratitude_is_for_lovers)

5. Gifts, not Entitlements—As Peter Maiden advised, see things as gifts, not entitlements. Count your blessings.

6. Savor Surprises—Write down the moments of surprise that elicit gratitude-- and savor them for years to come.

7. Revise Repetitions—If you find yourself repeating certain things, focus on the specifics. "Zero in on different aspects" to keep practicing thankfulness from turning casual.

8. Write Regularly!—Commit to journaling regularly, whether this be daily, or even weekly. By making gratitude a habit, you will find yourself looking at the world in a fresh, new, more positive way.

Gratitude sweetens life. It makes reality palatable, without removing the bitterness of tragedy simply by recontextualizing it. It is important to recognize problems in life as that is the first step in finding a solution. We need to know that bad things exist, and we need to know what they are so that we can alleviate unnecessary suffering. But in these dark situations, we cannot let victimhood overtake us. Focusing on the negative only causes unnecessary anguish; it is when we "count our blessings" rather than "recounting our problems" that we can overcome the bitterness of misery.[16]

We should be grateful not only for the good, but for the unavoidable, the accidental. We should be grateful for the obstacles and the annoyances. Once we learn to not only accept but appreciate the setbacks in our life, the whole world opens up. Everything becomes a chance—a chance to change, a chance to grow, a chance for more. A chance to be happier—both where we are and looking forward to the happiness of the future.

It is no more fitting that I should leave this podium without expressing my own gratitude than to walk away mid-sentence.

Teachers and peers alike, I want to thank you for sharing your enriching ideas and intelligent minds, which never fail to fascinate and inspire me. I will forever be grateful for the

[16] Nelson, 2.

unexpected gestures of genuine, unprompted kindness that you have shown me. Each of you have taught me, both through word and action, the meaning of the word charity.

And thank you for listening.

Hospitality: The Law of An Abundant Life

Ross Garner

12th Grade
Humanities Teacher

John Adams
Academy—Roseville

Of John Adams Academy's ten core values, perhaps the one that poses greatest difficulty understanding and applying is Abundance Mentality. New scholars and veteran teachers alike may ask themselves, what exactly does abundance mentality mean? What classic books or characters might one look to for explanation or embodiment of this attribute? And why is it important for scholars and mentors to develop an abundance mentality in our American Classical Leadership Education model? These questions are important for us, as educators, to consider if we wish to accomplish our collective mission of "restoring America's heritage by developing servant leaders," and this essay is written as an attempt to respond to these questions.[1]

In answer to the first question, "what does abundance mentality mean?" the Academy's official definition explains it as an inherent optimism grounded in the "belief that human success and potential is expansive, and that this potential can be realized by anyone through hard work, determination, and collaboration."[2] By contrast, it is the opposite of a scarcity mentality, which "implies that each individual is in direct competition with those around them and that one's gain is another's loss." This belief in the potential brilliance and goodness of others and in the power

[1] John Adams Academy, "Vision and Mission Statement" (John Adams Academies), Accessed January 23, 2023 https://www.johnadamsacademy.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=2106668&type=d&pREC_ID=2147297.

[2] John Adams Academy, "Abundance Mentality" (John Adams Academies), Accessed January 23, 2023 https://www.johnadamsacademy.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=2003858&type=d&pREC_ID=2094510.

of collaboration brings out the best in us, making it easier to be both good and brilliant. Thus, to have an abundance mentality is to live in the spirit of generosity and cooperation towards others, to think of and treat others well, if not for their current behavior, then for their latent excellence.

Now, for the second question: what classical books or characters embody this abundance mentality characterized by this spirit of generosity? Fortunately, we need look no further for examples than the foundational books of both the Greek and Hebrew roots of Western civilization. In Homer's great epic *The Odyssey*, for instance, generosity is portrayed as a royal and divine attribute best expressed in the Greek customs of hospitality. Throughout this poem, the heroes Odysseus and his son Telemachus are generous and hospitable men who are respectful to strangers because they are just and fear the gods. In contrast, the villains (the wooers and Cyclopes) are selfish and inconsiderate, who display a marked lack of concern for others and an open disrespect of the gods. Importantly, the Judeo-Christian tradition, rather than contradict this ancient Greek story, reinforces its teaching on generosity and hospitality through figures no less significant than Abraham and Christ who instruct readers why they ought to treat even the lowliest of humans well.

These two traditions of Western civilization's ethical thought, the Homeric and the Biblical, show that human interaction should be predicated on treating others as generously as we would want to be treated, if not better, because we never know when a king or a god in disguise will ask us for help, or when we will be strangers in a strange land in need of help from others, which is the answer to the final question, "why is abundance mentality, generosity, and hospitality important for classical educators?" We should follow the law of hospitality as depicted in these ancient stories in our classical pedagogy by being generous to our scholars because of our respect for who they are and what they can become. By being hospitable, we invite generous behavior from them in return. And while our hospitable nature does not guarantee our scholars will follow our example, it provides the only conditions possible for them to develop this virtue.

Homeric Hospitality

On three separate occasions in Homer's epic *The Odyssey,* Odysseus arrives at a new island on his return journey home from the Trojan war and asks, "to what men's land am I come

now? Say, are they froward, and wild, and unjust, or are they hospitable, and of a God-fearing mind?"[3] Odysseus discovers an answer upon each landing, sometimes to his harm and sometimes to his benefit, but the nature of his question clarifies important values of ancient Greek culture that still form the foundation of Western civilization's moral ethic today, namely: the virtue of hospitality and the related attribute of having a god-fearing mind. This section seeks to understand these terms and argues that they are foundational virtues grounded in natural law.

As previously defined, *hospitality* is the proper and generous treatment of others. In Latin, the word, *hospitalitas,* literally means "friendliness to guests."[4] It is a homebound virtue characterized by a welcoming, nurturing attitude and is manifested by open arms, open pantries, and open hearts. It aims to comfort the afflicted, feed the hungry, and cloth the naked. Hospitality is a foundational ethical principle because it dictates how humans should treat each other when interacting in the foundational institution of society: the home. It is a natural law in the sense that all human cultures have customs governing the treatment of guests and all reasonable people recognize the moral goodness of treating guests well. The fundamental tenet of the natural law of hospitality is to treat others at least as well as you would wish to be treated if you were in their position. For the host, that means to act generously, and for the guest, to act gratefully. When we obey the law of hospitality, we can expect amicable and gracious treatment, but if we do not, we can expect contention and ill-treatment.

The first character to demonstrate the virtue of hospitality in *The Odyssey* is Telemachus, prince of Ithaca and son of King Odysseus and Queen Penelope. His lineage is significant because rulers are supposed to be the model humans in society, embodying the virtues all people should develop. Telemachus is first introduced as being "godlike," who, upon seeing a stranger at his gate (the goddess Athene disguised as Mentes, the captain of a ship) "thought it blame in his heart that a stranger should stand so long at the gates" without being welcomed in.[5] Telemachus promptly amends his delayed hospitality, offering his hand, taking the stranger's

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[3] Homer, The Odyssey, trans. by S.H. Butcher and A. Lang, The Harvard Classics, ed. Charles W. Elliot (New York: P.F. Collier & Son Corporation, 1909), 84, 119, 179.

[4] Online Etymological Dictionary, "Hospitality," accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=hospitality.

[5] Homer, 12.

spear, and declaring "thou shalt be kindly entreated, and thereafter, when thou hast tasted meat, thou shalt tell us that whereof thou hast need."

The Greek poet then goes to great length describing in epic style the manner of Telemachus' hospitality. First, he leads the goddess in disguise to a "goodly carven chair" made comfortable by a linen cloth and a footstool and set apart from the rude and boisterous wooers.[6] Then, after Telemachus comfortably situates his guest, water is brought for her to wash, and a feast is placed before her: "wheaten bread…many dainties…[and] platters of diverse kinds of flesh." All this is appropriately done before Telemachus asks the stranger's name and business. Though yet an unseasoned prince, Telemachus knows enough about his position of authority to be a dutiful host to this stranger without question or judgment, and his generosity wins him the favor of the disguised goddess.

Because of Telemachus' generous hospitality, and to aid in the restoration of Odysseus' home and kingdom, Athene plants in Telemachus a spirit of "might and courage" to deal justly with the unjust wooers who have taken advantage of his home's hospitality.[7] For many years, the wooers have dwelt as guests in Odysseus' house, intent on marrying Penelope and inheriting the kingdom after Odysseus failed to return from the war after the other Greek kings had returned. The wooers were dutifully welcomed as guests, but Penelope crossed them in their suits of love as she hoped Odysseus would return. The suitors, hoping otherwise, remained as guests, violating an important rule of hospitality: to be gracious as a guest and not overstay one's welcome. Emboldened by Athene, Telemachus confronts the suitors on their abuse of his hospitality, declaring, "Wooers of my mothers, men spiteful out of measure, leave these halls: and busy yourselves with other feasts, eating your own substance."[8] His rebuke underscores the respect guests owe their hosts in practicing a measured acceptance of hospitality, for it is not just that "one man's goods should perish without atonement" because other men's consciences are comfortable taking advantage of him. And if they demand hospitality out of measure,

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., 17.

[8] Ibid., 18.

Telemachus warns that he will call down the wrath of "the everlasting gods…[that the wooers] should hereafter perish within the halls without atonement."[9]

It is wrong for guests to abuse the hospitality of the host, and Telemachus' warning proves to be prophetic, as the poem ends with Odysseus returning home and slaughtering the suitors with the help of Athene for their years of abuse. However, it is equally wrong for hosts to abuse the trust of their guests, and the cyclops Polyphemus is the first example in the poem of an inhospitable host.

Odysseus describes the cyclopses as a "froward and a lawless folk, who…have neither gatherings for council nor oracles of law and reck not one of another."[10] The cyclopses live in a state where brute force rules instead of justice, where they do not consider the needs or views of others, but only think of themselves. Such a state is the antithesis of hospitality, which compels a host to postpone his own desires to meet the needs of others. We see the full consequences of being inhospitable when Odysseus, trusting to the hospitality of his host, visits the cave of the cyclops Polyphemus and asks for "a stranger's gift," as prescribed by "Zeus, the god of the stranger."[11] Polyphemus scoffs at Odysseus' entreaty, bragging that he pays "no heed to Zeus,… nor to the blessed gods, for verily we are better men than they."[12] And with that he grabs two of Odysseus' men, breaks their heads on the floor, and eats them whole.

It does not seem hyperbolic to say that eating one's guests is the height of inhospitableness, and Polyphemus pays dearly for his breach of hospitality as Odysseus and his men blind him with a firebrand while he sleeps and take his flock of sheep, leaving him with nothing.

A final example of hospitality is found in Odysseus' servant the swineherd, Eumaeus. After his twenty-year absence, Odysseus finally arrives at his island of Ithaca, but knowing his home to be full of traitorous wooers, he disguises himself (with the help of Athene) as a ragged

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[9] Ibid., 18-19.

[10] Ibid., 117-118.

[11] Ibid., 121.

[12] Ibid., 121-122.

beggar and visits his swineherd to test his loyalty. Eumaeus, a faithful steward, receives him hospitably "and Odysseus rejoice[s] that he had given him such a welcome," praising him openly.[13] The swineherd modestly justifies his humble hospitality, saying, "guest of mine, it were an impious thing for me to slight a stranger, even if there came a meaner man than thou; for from Zeus are all strangers and beggars."[14] Eumaeus seems embarrassed by the praise and sees himself as simply fulfilling his religious duty as a god-fearing man, making the praise unnecessary. But his response reveals a connection between hospitality and piety that is not intuitive to a modern reader.

As Eumaeus, and Odysseus before him, explain, Zeus is the god of strangers, whom he grants special protection. There are two possible reasons for Zeus' special interest in strangers. The first is rather self-serving: because Zeus and the other gods take an active role in the affairs of man, they bless those who treat strangers well and curse those who abuse them, thus guaranteeing their own proper treatment when they come in disguise. The second is more altruistic: because Zeus wants to help civilize humans, he promises peace and prosperity to those who are hospitable and death and destruction for those who are not. In either case, Zeus makes it more advantageous to be hospitable than to be rude, and those Greeks who fear his wrath or wish to reap his bounty are careful to obey this law.

However, both these possible reasons bring up an important counter-question: whether hospitality is a virtue if those who live it do so simply out of fear of being punished or desire for reward. To this reasonable objection of forced virtue, it must be conceded that good behavior done out of fear is a low-grade virtue. Ideally, a person would be good for goodness' sake and not simply to gain a reward or avoid a punishment. But virtue is not natural. It must be learned. And to learn a virtue, humans need rewards and consequences they value before they learn to value virtue for its own sake. In this sense, it is appropriate to couple godly fear with hospitality as it sets the person on the right track.

But there may be a third way of looking at the pairing of hospitality and godly fear that resolves this objection regarding compelled virtue more fully. To do so we must take a step back

[13] Ibid., 187.

[14] Ibid.

from the figure of Zeus as a literal god who rewards or punishes humans for their actions, and simply view him as a symbol of the good or bad chemistry that occurs among us when we are generous or negligent towards each other. A real god of thunder may not literally be waiting to strike us with lightning bolts when we are inhospitable or bless us when we are kind, but there are real social consequences for meanness and rewards for generosity that engenders trust amongst humans and forms the bedrock community. It is an observable fact that humans who trust and are generous to each other live and accomplish more together than they could if they were stingy and distrustful. And the fact that ancient Greek culture understood this law of hospitality and enshrined it in its most powerful god, speaks to its deep wisdom. Modern readers may scoff at the very imperfect natures of the ancient Greek gods with their petty disputes and wish to dismiss the pagan myths as mere superstitions, but they will miss this great insight into hospitality (and others like it) that the ancients offer to any willing to read and learn.

Biblical Hospitality

For some, the ancient pagan myths may be too foreign to relate to and learn from. For such, perhaps the more widely read Biblical stories, where the law of hospitality plays out almost identically, will be more relatable. This section looks at both Old and New Testament teachings related to hospitality and shows how they reinforce rather than contradict the essence of the Homeric examples.

The first example comes from Genesis in the story of Abraham and his nephew Lot. Abraham has left his homeland of Ur, sojourning in Haran, Canaan, and Egypt, acquiring significant wealth as a herdsman and a reputation for being a generous and a just man who gives "tithes to all" and takes no more than he deserves.[15] However, while Abraham has prospered materially, he and his wife Sarah are childless, even though Abraham has made a covenant with God and received a promise that he would "be a father of many nations."[16] They have waited faithfully, but Sarah is now beyond her years of fertility and they fear they will never have children and wonder how God will keep His promise.

[15] Genesis 14:20-24, KJV.

[16] Genesis 17:4.

Then one day, Abraham is visited by the Lord, or rather by three strangers (or both) and receives assurance of his promised blessing. The scripture says, "And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre…And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw *them*, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground."[17] Similar to Telemachus, Abraham asks to serve them, to fetch water to wash their feet and to feed them well, which the strangers accept, without explanation of who they are or why they have come. After Abraham ministers to the strangers of the Lord, one of the men blesses Abraham, saying, "I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son."[18] Miraculously, Sarah conceives, and the promised blessing of posterity Abraham and Sarah waited for is fulfilled because they were faithful to God and hospitable to these holy strangers.

After visiting Abraham and receiving such generous treatment, the strangers make their way to visit Lot who has established his home in Sodom and Gomorrah. The strangers want to make the visit "because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous," and they want to "see whether [the people of the cities] have done altogether according to the cry of it."[19] But what is the great sin of Sodom and Gomorrah that these holy strangers want to observe and test for themselves? Traditionally, the interpretation of the people's sin has been homosexuality. However, due to the extended social controversy about homosexuality's category as a sin, we will sideline that issue for one that is more fundamental and relevant to this thesis: that being, their treatment of strangers and guests.

When the men arrive at Lot's house (in this chapter they are initially described as angels), Lot welcomes them hospitably as Abraham did, bowing before them and giving them water to wash with and a feast to eat.[20] But as they lay down to sleep for the night, the record says that "the men of the city…compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came to thee this

[17] Genesis 18:1-2

[18] Genesis 18:10.

[19] Genesis 18:20-21.

[20] Genesis 19:1-3.

night? Bring them out unto us that we may know them," "know," being a euphemism in the original Hebrew for a sexual act. [21] Lot refuses to let them abuse his guests, but the men of Sodom threaten to "deal worse with [him], than with [the strangers]" and attempt to break down the door.[22] Seeing the danger of their situation and being convinced of the people's wickedness, the holy strangers smite the men with blindness and instruct Lot and his family to leave the city "for we will destroy this place because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it."[23] With this warning, Lot and his family leave lest they "be consumed in the iniquity of the city," and the "Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire."[24]

It is interesting that in both the *Old Testament* and *The Odyssey,* the destruction of the inhospitable is so gruesome and complete: Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed by fire, Polyphemus blinded and left without his herds, and the wooers slaughtered by Odysseus. It is as if the ancient Hebrew and Greek cultures could not emphasize enough how important the law of hospitality is and what the consequences are for breaking it. And, if this is not convincing enough, we are given one more example from ancient literature in the *New Testament* that is equally emphatic about the importance of hospitality and in condemning those who abuse it.

Towards the end of his life and ministry, Jesus gives a prophetic sermon regarding the end of the world and the judgment of the people in it. In addition to the explicit prophesies about false prophets, natural calamities, and wars that will plague the end of the world, Jesus includes parables to highlight the principles upon which humans will be judged. The first two are famously the parables of the ten virgins and the talents, which speak to themes of personal spiritual preparation, knowledge of God, and faithfulness in executing personal stewardships. But the final parable about the sheep and the goats reveals what our personal stewardships should be in relation to the people around us, establishing similar principles of hospitality that Zeus does in his role as the god of strangers.

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[21] Genesis 19:4-5.

[22] Genesis 19:6-10.

[23] Genesis 19:11-13.

[24] Genesis 19:15, 24.

The parable states that "when the Son of man shall come in his glory" he will gather all nations "and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."[25] And when they are all gathered and separated, "then shall the King say unto [the sheep] on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered [sic], and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in."[26] The sheep or people the King is addressing, respond, somewhat confused, saying, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger and took thee in?" thinking they would have recognized such an impressive person if they had. To which the King answers, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."[27] And to the people separated off to the King's left side, the King says, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," for "inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."[28]

This is a significant principle. Here Jesus establishes the Christian doctrine of vicarious hospitality: the concept that every kind, loving, generous deed we do for others is as if we do it to God. This doctrine, like the Greek tradition, effectively engages the moral imagination, instilling the fear, but also the love of God into every human interaction. The Judeo-Christian God may not be actively disguising Himself as mortals to take an active part in human affairs like the Greek gods, but His omnipresent character and this doctrine of vicarious hospitality motivates us to act with greater care and compassion than we otherwise would and provides sufficient deterrent to acting inhospitably if we do not wish to offend God and become eternally separated from Him.

This Christian doctrine of vicarious hospitality may seem incredible at first glance, for how can an action done to one person be as if we had done it unto someone else? But within the Judeo-Christian belief system it is not so absurd because of the established principle of vicarious

[25] Matt. 25:31-32.

[26] Matt. 25:34.

[27] Matt. 25:35-40.

[28] Matt. 25: 41, 45.

sacrifice. Throughout the Old Testament, the Israelites were commanded to offer animal sacrifice to atone for the injustices of their sins; and in the New Testament, Jesus is represented as the ultimate vicarious sacrifice, who was able to take upon himself the sins of the world because of his divine birth and perfect life.[29] In this parable of the sheep and the goats, Christ simply extends the principle of vicarious action to include the good things we do as well as the bad. He not only suffers for our vices, but apparently enjoys the effects of our virtues as well. How that works practically is a mystery, but the precedent for the concept of vicarious hospitality has good precedent in the doctrine of vicarious sacrifice and Christ's atonement.

However the divine arithmetic works in the Greek and Judeo-Christian traditions, both establish hospitality as a fundamental tenet of culture and civilization, the keeping of which leads to prosperity and eternal life, and the violation of which leads to destruction and damnation.

The Dangers of Hospitality

Despite the evidence in support of hospitality as a tenet of civilized society, some readers might still reasonably question the practicality of keeping this law, especially in the modern era. It seems clear enough from both Greek and Judeo-Christian myths that those who rely on the hospitable nature of others risk abuse, and that it would be better not to trust in the goodness of others or the gods, and instead rely on oneself. Telemachus and his mother, for example, suffer several years under the inhospitable invasion of their home by the wooers, who eat up their stores, drink their wine, and misuse their servants. Likewise, Odysseus and his crew suffer much because they trust in the hospitality of Polyphemus. Would it not have been better to do the reasonable and judicious thing of turning the wooers out and providing for themselves as best they could without relying on the hospitality of others? Why open oneself up to abuse in the first place? It may be true that the wooers and Polyphemus are punished eventually for their crimes, but in the modern world we cannot rely on the superstitions of karma or retributions of the gods to deter people from abusing the weak and over-trusting.

The safer approach to hospitality in the modern world is to commoditize it as we have largely done, offering food to eat and a bed to sleep in to anyone who can pay. This benefits host

[29] Leviticus 4; John 3:16-17.

and guest equally as it removes most of the risk. Restaurant owners and hotel managers can expect a direct and immediate return on their hospitality from their guests, and guests can expect a predictable and uniform service dependent only on their ability to pay. There is no need to rely on fear of divine reward or retribution, only the innate desire for profit and a moderately effective legal code to ensure it.

Ancient customs surrounding hospitality certainly seem outdated and dangerous compared to our modern industry, and perhaps we are better off having Marriotts and McDonalds on every corner. But at what expense have we outsourced the social virtue of hospitality? We may have removed the opportunity of abuse by commodifying this element of culture, but it is done at the price of genuine community and meaningful human connection. There is nothing personable or particularly virtuous about a hotel or a restaurant. They are simply professional spaces designed on principles of efficiency rather than affection. We do not immortalize hotel managers in epic verse for rolling out the red carpet for a guest because it is merely a business transaction for them, nor do we praise the cook or the cashier at our favorite fast-food chain because we are paying for their service. It is only at small family-owned restaurants or bed and breakfasts that the hospitable charm is preserved in the modern world, and even then, the encounter is still transactional.

By outsourcing hospitality, we have denied ourselves important human experiences of being generous as hosts to strangers and being humble as guests when on a journey. It takes courage to open the door to a stranger and to be the stranger knocking on the door for help, but the reward for such courage is usually a new friend, an opportunity to hear an interesting life story, and increased goodwill towards future strangers. We may not be able to revert completely to the old way of doing things, but where we can cultivate traditions of hospitality in our families and neighborhoods by inviting others into our home to share a meal and listen to their stories, we should.

Hospitality in the Classical Classroom

Previous sections have established the general importance of Homeric and Biblical hospitality to Western civilization and argued that we should revitalize the spirit of hospitality in our modern culture. But what role should hospitality play in our classical classrooms, and how

can we apply this law practically as educators? We cannot realistically bring back the ancient traditions of bathing, feasting, and giving kingly gifts, as much as we might like to. But we can and should integrate appropriate modern expressions of hospitality into our classroom cultures.

We can start by adopting a generous, hospitable attitude towards our scholars and fellow educators. We must be careful not to let the annoyed, irritated, or impatient feelings we sometimes have towards others become the dominant attitude and our default mentality. Rather, we should cultivate warm, welcoming feelings towards each other that encourage friendship and invite participation. We can do this with our scholars in simple ways like greeting them personally at the door as they come in, letting them know they were missed when absent or tardy to class, thanking them for sharing their thoughts in discussion or in their writing, and regularly inquiring into the important things happening in their lives. If scholars are left waiting at the door, so to speak, as Athene was, without a Telemachus to welcome them in, show them to their seats, and make sure their social, emotional, and academic needs are met, scholars will be more likely to be inhospitable in their conduct towards us in return.

Adopting a hospitable attitude towards others, of course, is easier said than done. Especially when, despite our most generous efforts, our scholars act impudently towards us. We might more frequently feel and act like Telemachus, rebuking our scholars for their abuse of hospitality and calling down the wrath of the gods on their head in the fury of our righteous indignation. Teachers are human after all, and there are limits to our patience. And while it is likely our scholars need a little godly fear instilled in them from time to time with fiery rhetoric or motivating consequences, my experience has been that I always regret losing my temper with them and feel the need to apologize despite their insolence. Their meanness only explains my anger, it does not justify it; and the sooner I restore my generous attitude by apologizing after an inhospitable episode, the more likely they are to forgive, which restores a generous attitude in them as well.

We must remember that leading scholars in a classroom requires us to be the most confidently humble person in the room, never too proud to admit faults and always willing to take responsibility for mistakes. To remember this, it is helpful to take the Homeric and Biblical law of hospitality to heart and internalize a healthy sense of godly fear ourselves, by imagining and acting as if our scholars are gods in disguise.

In his classic sermon, *The Weight of Glory,* C.S. Lewis explains how the essence of the Christian ethic is to take seriously the proposition that we "live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship."[30] Lewis continues, "It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, [and the] awe and circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another… [for] there are no *ordinary* people. You have never talked to a mere mortal."

This imaginative exercise might resonate more easily with educators of religious perspective and practice, but one does not need to believe in the immortality of the soul for it to be effective. Even the thoroughly secular educators can, with some imagination, recognize that even their most unmotivated, disruptive, and disrespectful scholars are reasonable human beings who may one day become great people of significant influence and ability, and that it is better to treat them according to who they are and could become than how they are behaving in the moment. To treat scholars hospitably, based on this vision of their latent and potential greatness, is not self-deception or wishful thinking but is the most effective way to draw that greatness out of them. Our godly view of them will not guarantee their godly behavior, but most people strive to rise to others' positive expectations, especially when it is reinforced by positive treatment.

Conclusion

Having an abundance mentality, or a generous and hospitable attitude towards others, is an important core value of classical pedagogy. This hospitable attitude is the animating principle of all cooperative interactions and meaningful communities and is established as a fundamental ethic in Western civilization's oldest books. These books instruct us to treat others as we would like to be treated if we were in their position, acting as generously towards them as circumstances permit, because there is the potential of a divine encounter in every human interaction. This law of hospitality is such an important element of our civilization that breaking it is viewed to be a damnable offense in both ancient Greek and Judeo-Christian cultures, and

[30] C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*, accessed February 10, 2023, https://www.wheelersburg.net/Downloads/Lewis%20Glory.pdf.

keeping it leads to prosperity and eternal life. If we wish to restore our civilization's heritage and remain a great people, we should practice hospitality more carefully in our homes and schools and communities.

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The Essential Role of Music in Classical Education

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Elementary Music Teacher—Online

The modern view of music in education typically involves music instruction as ‘optional,’ a ‘luxury,’ a non-essential extracurricular, an elective, an after-school activity or a pull-out program from the ‘real classes.’ When we turn to the world of classical education, however, music is restored to its rightful place not only in the hierarchy of learning, but in the bigger picture of becoming fully human. Music is necessary in the world of classical education, an essential part of the core curriculum that is foundational in the pursuit of the good, the true, and the beautiful. For this reason, music should be liberally integrated throughout the classical curriculum, and with great enthusiasm. This is exciting for classical scholars and mentors alike, because it not only guarantees that all of our scholars will receive the opportunity for music to be integrated into their overall education through specific courses led by trained music educators, but also that music can (and should!) be integrated by all mentors into every type of learning environment.

However, many educators who are not trained as musicians lack confidence in bringing more music into their learning environments. To provide encouragement and context for further musical integration across the classical curriculum, let us first consider the role of music as an aid to memory, learning, and connection. Next, we will discuss the essential place of music in classical education, taking special note of music’s relationship with the principles of classical education and the historical importance of folk music. Lastly, we will look at some practical strategies to integrate more music with our scholars.

The studies that show the ability of music to improve mathematical reasoning, spatial awareness, and overall memory are innumerable. Anyone interested in these topics would also do well to expand our scope by also reading some of the studies on music and the brain, and to look into the field of music therapy. The findings of these studies and fields are truly awe-inspiring, and taking a closer look into the effects of music on the mind and the whole person, particularly in therapeutic settings, sheds light on the incredible power of music to tap into and activate areas of the brain in ways that are incomparable to any other activity. Listening to music can light up the brain in scans, but singing and performing music on an instrument produces a veritable fireworks display inside the human mind. In short, we should make more music and provide opportunities for our scholars to do the same!

Still, we do not simply study music so it will make us better at math, nor integrate music into our teaching solely to increase the linguistic abilities and overall academic prowess of our scholars. We love music for music's sake and teach music because it is an integral part of the human experience. Music is an important part of being fully alive, nurturing the soul, and aiding each person of their ultimate pursuit of goodness, truth, and beauty in this life as we journey toward the life to come. From the Pythagorean rule of musical ratios, to the writings of Boethius affirming that ancient epics and plays were regularly sung and accompanied by musical instruments, to the treatise on music by Saint Augustine of Hippo which asserted that anything to do with sound is the study of music, we see the undeniable significance of music steeped deep into the classical worldview, a worldview wherein education and participation in music led to true understanding, a window allowing a glimpse into the whole of nature and the universe through cultivation of the human soul. Let's look into some of the ways that we can still find music relevant to our modern revival movement of classical education.

In his course titled "Principles of Classical Pedagogy" (available through Classical U), Dr. Christopher Perrin discusses the relationship between music and the various principles of classical pedagogy. In particular, Dr. Perrin discusses the principles of 1. Festina Lente (make haste slowly), 2. Multum non Multa (much, not many), and 3. Repetitio Mater Memoriae (repetition is the mother of memory). Dr. Perrin describes the ways that the use of music in the classical classroom can aid us in taking our time to do and learn well. By hearing, singing, and performing a song we take our time to learn deeply. This also leads us to the concept of learning

much about a subject area, rather than many isolated facts. Learning songs of the time periods in which our studies immerse us leads us and our scholars deeper into history, culture, language, and tradition. Whether repetition or music itself might be the mother of all memory is debatable, but the power of music and repetition combined are a sure path toward long-term memorization. Certainly all of us remember a jingle or commercial from childhood, and Dr. Perrin suggests that we might make regular and repetitive use of songs, chants, and jingles not just for the sake of rote memorization but rather to revisit truth and knowledge that we love for the sake of the cultivation of virtue. We should, according to Dr. Perrin, embody our educational ideals in rhythms, practices, routines, and traditions, many of which may involve or be accompanied by music. Some simple examples of this would be the inclusion of musical intros, outros, and transitions in our classroom settings (the playing or singing of particular songs to signify certain events, moments, movements, or subjects), teaching our scholars via rhythmic recitation, singing, and movement, and engaging in musical traditions which accompany the seasons and cycles of the year.

In her course called "Essential Music" (available through Classical U), Dr. Carol Reynolds discusses the importance of folk music in the world of classical education. The key concepts discussed by Dr. Reynolds on music integration include the critical place of folk songs, the significance of hearing and participating in live music, and the importance of memory in music. Through folk songs, we learn about history, culture, and ways of life at particular points in time in different places. Dr. Reynolds asserts that unfortunately, much of what was passed on intergenerationally via folk songs has been lost, but one way to not lose the tradition completely is to regularly incorporate folks songs into home and classroom learning. Those teaching in a classical education setting should find easy ways to integrate folk songs and nursery rhymes according to a particular order by using the Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence as a guideline. Dr. Reynolds also mentions a perhaps even simpler way – picking up a book of folk songs!

Dr. Reynolds gives inspiration for all teachers, not just the music specialists, to integrate lots of singing and live music into our lessons with scholars, especially in the lower grades. Participation in, and listening to, live music lends itself to the overall spiritual order and development of our scholars, and the power of music to rise above the mundane and woeful aspects of life and to touch the deepest parts of the human spirit is unparalleled. Of course, we

can best encourage our children to sing by singing ourselves! We can also expose our scholars to live music whenever possible through concerts, which introduce concepts of timbre, texture, and world instruments as a point of unity among languages and cultures.

The importance of music in regard to memory, especially when the music is accompanied by text, should also not be underestimated. As Dr. Carol mentioned, all of us remember music we heard many years ago, and as in the case of music therapy, music can remain with and come back to people even when they cannot form complete thoughts. Dr. Carol recommends normalizing the practice of singing prose, which is a fun and effective way to bring singing into our classrooms even among those who are not trained vocalists. This can easily be implemented through such practices as call and response, choral reading, and chunking (learning small portions of text set to music in smaller chunks, and then later as a whole). Music tells a story and stories can be set to music; any story set to music will be remembered in a long-lasting way.

Lastly, let us reflect on this excerpt from John Adams Academy's own "Implementation of the Academic Model" document regarding music:

> John Adams Academy recognizes music and art as a vital component of a classical liberal arts education. According to Plato and Aristotle, music can move the soul toward virtue. Aristotle declares, "Music has a power of forming the character, and should therefore be introduced into the education of the young."[1] Great music uplifts the soul by rightly ordering our emotions, engaging the intellect, and awakening a spirit of contemplation and love. Likewise, art uplifts the soul, engages the intellect and awakens the moral imagination. When gathering to celebrate, mourn, praise, teach, share, and comfort, music is a significant presence. Music and art at John Adams Academy is an essential aspect of the pattern and culture, as it has been in all societies.
>
> Music and art is intentionally studied at the Academy and incorporated into our culture and learning in all grade levels throughout various content areas, and daily rhythms. Music may also be used in the classroom by having classical music playing in the background while entering, during transitions, or during working time which helps cultivate an environment and posture of scholarship. …Music is also utilized to teach language and knowledge in a beautiful and engaging way. We include music into our grammar program by learning songs and chants, learning folk songs, poetry, mathematical facts, our national heritage, and other aspects of the essential body of knowledge to best understand and appreciate the Western Tradition. Music and art

[1] Aristotle, *Politics* 1340 b 10-14.

> contribute to the education and enrichment of the whole child as well as the intellectual and social culture of our school.

When considering ways to integrate more music into the curriculum and our classrooms, let us keep in mind the abundance we have in our John Adams Academy teams! We have many music specialists among us at every campus to collaborate with and guide our mentors and scholars into an engaging musical experience as we set forth in this incredible ongoing journey of classical education, and many of our staff members in all areas of work have a rich and varied background of musical ideas and experiences. Some of our online scholars engaged in a service project this past winter where they shared the joy of music by singing at a local nursing home. What a wonderful idea! Why not consider collaborating with our colleagues, music mentors and otherwise, about ways we can immerse ourselves and our scholars more deeply into the boundless depths of the goodness, truth, and beauty of music? I hope we may find these discussions enriching, and continue to discover more ways to form ourselves and to guide our scholars (by music and other noble means) into the melodious symphony of the truth.

The Great Conversation: The Substance of a Liberal Education

A Book Review

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Humanities Teacher

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(This book review was originally published by ClassicalEd Review. For the original publication see https://classicaledreview.substack.com/p/the-great-conversation-the-substance).

Robert Hutchins may not have been the first to characterize the Western intellectual tradition as a great conversation, but his important book certainly solidified the term in the imagination and vocabulary of our generation of classical educators. Hutchins wrote *The Great Conversation* in the early 1950's while serving as president of the University of Chicago. At the time he and his friend Mortimer Adler led a team of scholars compiling the *Great Books of the Western World* series, a 54-volume set that serves as a greatest-hits library of Western philosophy, history, literature, mathematics and natural science, to which his *The Great Conversation* serves as a preface. Together Hutchins and Adler advocated for a return to the great books as the foundation of education in the West, an educational movement called perennialism because it maintained there were books and ideas that were always relevant no matter how advanced our technology or progressive our politics.

Adler's books *How to Read a Book* and *How to Speak, How to Listen* are more well known among classical educators, probably due to their practical self-help nature; but Hutchins' *The Great Conversation* offers a more sophisticated assessment, analysis, and criticism of modern education and politics. In this sense, Hutchins' book serves as the mission and vision of an educational renaissance and Adler's as the how-to manual, as *The Great Conversation*

explains why universal liberal education is the only sure basis for democratic societies if they wish to remain free and prosperous.

First, let us consider what Hutchins means by his titular phrase.

According to Hutchins, the Great Conversation is the millennia long dialogue among Western civilization's greatest thinkers about the fundamental questions of humanity—a dialogue made possible by the books those thinkers wrote. "No civilization is like that of the West in this respect," Hutchins posits, "that its defining characteristic is a dialogue [which can boast of so many] great works of the mind."[1] He attributes the greatness of the dialogue to "the spirit of inquiry" that animates the West, and "its dominant element of *Logos*." Armed with curiosity and logic as primary values, the West has developed a culture where "nothing is to remain undiscussed. Everybody is to speak his mind. No proposition is to be left unexamined. The exchange of ideas is held to be the path to the realization of the potentialities of the race."[2]

By participating in the Great Conversation, we participate in liberal education, which Hutchins argues consists of developing three primary intellectual skills: 1) "the recognition of basic problems," 2) "the knowledge of distinctions and interrelations in subject matter," and, 3) "the comprehension of ideas."[3] A liberally educated person is one who asks the right questions to clarify basic problems, who draws distinctions as well as connections between ideas, and who understands the underlying forms the questions, problems, distinctions and connections are grounded in. These are the fundamental skills of the proverbial Renaissance man—one who "has a mind that can operate well in all fields."[4] "For this reason," Hutchins asserts, liberal education "is the education of free men."[5]

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[1] Robert M. Hutchins, *The Great Conversation: The Substance of a Liberal Education*. Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952, 1.

[2] Ibid. 1.

[3] Ibid. 3.

[4] Ibid. 4.

[5] Ibid. 3.

Hutchins' description of liberal education is lofty and inspiring, reminding us that "the aim of liberal education is human excellence" and that we should all strive to "be as good liberal artists as we can in order to become as fully human as we can."[6] But where he succeeds in lofty generalities he fails in helpful specifics. Unlike Adler's books that spell out how to read, speak, listen, and write (the major learning activities of liberal education), *The Great Conversation* leaves one wondering how to pursue, let alone transmit a liberal education. The best Hutchins can do is provide two warnings to classical educators of what not to do.

Based on his historical view of the decline of liberal education and the rise of modern trends toward specialization, Hutchins attributes the decline of liberal education in the West to two causes: "internal decay and external confusion."[7]

Liberal education's internal decay is the result of liberal educators becoming illiberal in their pedagogical practices. Hutchins warns that when the great books "become the private domain of scholars," when "the word 'classics' [come] to be limited to those works which were written in Greek and Latin," when, "professors [are] unlikely to be interested in ideas" and more "interested in philological details" the liberal arts "degenerate into meaningless drill."[8] Hutchins admonishes educators not to take for granted that "interest is essential in education," reminding us that "the art of teaching consists in large part of interesting people in things that ought to interest them [by discovering] what an education is" ourselves and inviting our students along for the journey.[9]

In terms of external confusion, Hutchins explains how the traditional liberal arts education has declined because of the great technological advancements driven by the experimental method. Culturally, we have become "fascinated by the marvels of experimental natural science" and are "convinced that any results obtained in [the humanities] by any other

[6] Ibid. 3, 5.

[7] Ibid., 26.

[8] Ibid., 27.

[9] Ibid., 27, 49.

methods [are] not worth achieving."[10] We have confused the epistemologies unique to literature, history, and philosophy by trying to make those branches of learning conform to the epistemology of natural science, thereby severely limiting them. But they are called the *liberal arts*, not the *liberal sciences,* for a reason. Science is one of the liberal arts, but it has come to dominate as the only liberal art and the only culturally accepted way to find truth. Faced with this dilemma, we should not dismiss the scientific method for its modern tyrannical tendencies but strongly insist that it take its proper place in the Great Conversation as only one of many methods of discovering truth and transmitting it.

The Great Conversation is an important contribution to classical liberal education. In my estimation, it ranks alongside other seminal works of that era including Dorothy Sayers' *The Lost Tools of Learning* and C.S. Lewis' *Abolition of Man.* It lays out the intellectual and moral tradition of the West and argues in no uncertain terms that the continued freedom and prosperity of the West lies in our commitment to the tradition of liberal education. It establishes a vision to make liberal education universal in the West, transforming our nation into a "republic of learning" that makes "education responsible to humanity."[11] It is my hope that we may continue the great conversation and make it universal in the West as Hutchins envisioned.

[10] Ibid., 28.

[11] Ibid., 64.

Call for Submissions

The Editors of *Mentor* graciously invite all John Adams Academy faculty to contribute submissions to this journal. As educators we appreciate how your actions and words contribute to our academic community; as writers, we admire how you see the good in things beyond our view. Whether your main vantage point is a Kindergarten classroom, an administrative office, or places beyond or between, you have valuable perspectives on the ways our Core Values intersect with the curricula of our Academy.

On a rotating basis, *Mentor* will focus on a particular Core Value. The substance of this volume has explored our 8th Core Value: Abundance Mentality. In the upcoming issues, the theme will be our 9th Core Value: Building a Culture of Greatness.

Contributions to the journal can take many forms, including research essays, book reviews, or creative writing pieces. All submissions should aim simply to explore the 8th Core Value of Abundance Mentality or other themes related to our American Classical Leadership Education model (ACLE model).

All proposals are due by January 12th, 2024, and should be emailed as a word document to Ross Garner at ross.garner@johnadamsacademy.org.

Articles: Write an essay of 1000-5000 words regarding some aspect of John Adams Academy's 9th Core Value, Building a Culture of Greatness or theme related to our ACLE model, using classical texts to inform your analysis. Cite and credit all sources according to *Chicago Manual of Style*, including footnotes and bibliography. If citing sources is not your strength, please contact Ross Garner for assistance.

Book Reviews: After choosing a book from John Adams Academy's curricula or other book related to classical education, summarize and assess the book's relevance to the Academy's 9th Core Value, Building a Culture of Greatness or related theme to our ACLE model in 500-1000 words. Cite the book according to *Chicago Manual of Style.*

Creative Writing: Write a short story, poem, fable, or creative non-fiction piece exploring the Academy's 9th Core Value, Building a Culture of Greatness or related theme to our ACLE model. Submissions may vary in length but should not exceed more than 5000 words.

MENTOR

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Appreciation of Our National Heritage

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