

A Thomas Jefferson Education Home Companion

This is a sample excerpted from A
Thomas Jefferson Education Home
Companion by Oliver & Rachel
DeMille and Diann Jeppson.
The complete book can be
purchased at:

<http://store.tjed.org>

Enjoy!

A Thomas Jefferson Education Home Companion

Oliver DeMille • Rachel DeMille • Diann Jeppson



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To Adam, Katy, Jenna, Leah, Macey, Oliver, Emma,
Sara, Eliza, Ammon, Hyrum, America, Abigail

“Inspire, not require.”
—*Tiffany Rhoades Earl*

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CHAPTER FIVE

Book Discussions and Family Reading

Diann Jeppson, with Rachel DeMille

Discussions about great books with your peers and your family members are some of the most satisfying and powerful facets of a Leadership Education. These discussions open new avenues and take participants to new frontiers as they challenge one another's assumptions, compare ideas, ask questions and articulate thoughts and conclusions about books read in common. New ideas spring forth as minds are open to ideas never before considered, and questions are answered, or left to be answered another day.

I have learned much from years of book discussions with family members, groups of children, and youth and adults.

Having a Successful Family Reading Time

In our family the children range from baby to youth. We have held family reading time nearly every evening since our youngest was old enough to look at baby books. These times have been some of the sweetest our family has shared together. It has been a real adventure to make this time as successful as it has become.

We laid the foundation for regular reading time at an early age. We started with picture books, narrating the story in our own words as we enjoyed looking at colorful pictures. Our first child would eagerly sit for

“And therefore Cebes, in his allegorical picture of human life, agreeably to the doctrine of his master Socrates, the greatest of mere mortal philosophers, pronounces all other sciences, when separated from the moral science, false learning, and seducers from true wisdom.”

.....
George Turnbull, 1742

hours to listen as I read. Our second child was extremely active and didn't seem able to sit through more than a minute or two. After thinking it over for some time, and being determined not to leave her out of family reading time, I decided to accustom her to the rewards of listening.

I would select four picture books each evening and put them next to our bed. Since she slept near by, I watched for the very moment her eyes opened in the morning. She usually bounced right up and went off to play. Instead, she saw before her still sleepy eyes an interesting picture. I would tell her the stories in the most engaging and dramatic style that I could muster, turning the pages rapidly, to keep her attention. She was four years old when I started doing this. I did it faithfully for two years. Over time, she became more and more willing to listen to longer passages before the page would turn. At age six, she was accustomed enough to listen to short readings from books with no pictures at all. Now she could join her older sibling and I for our evening readings.

As the children grew, family reading time needed to appeal to all ages. After the fourth baby was born, I couldn't just hold one in my lap and have one on each side of me any longer. It seemed that a child always ended up sitting on my head, or jostling with a sibling for position, to the point of terminal disruption! Something had to be done about the logistics problem. We needed better places for the children to occupy while I read.

We decided to arrange our house to support this activity. We built a large bedroom in the basement. We put up a day bed for each child, which worked well since our children are all the same gender. (We opted out of the bunk bed scene since we wanted to avoid the jungle gym temptation, which could prove detrimental to a thoughtful discussion of classic works!) We built shelves and installed bins, which we stocked with art supplies, Legos, Tinker Toys, yarn, crochet hooks, knitting needles, drop spindles and wool, small looms, sewing kits, clay, dry erase boards, beads, scraps of fabric, trim and stuffing, sewing cards, embroidery supplies, a huge stack of educational coloring books from the Dover company and a variety of other quiet handiwork projects. We carefully selected these items to keep hands busy (without requiring a child's full attention) so that each could be attentive. Before the advent of radio and television, families would gather in the evening

around a fire with one person to read and the others to sew, spin, knit, or repair a harness.

Of course, I had to teach the children to appreciate the materials I supplied for them. I taught myself to do these things first, and then just did them in the children's presence. They would come over to investigate. They learned much to keep them happily engaged for endless hours. This wasn't easy, as I didn't know how to do most of these things. I am not especially handy, but I had a larger purpose in mind. It was worth the effort.

As for the younger children: they would nurse, or play with dolls or toys on the floor. We would give them big beads to string on shoestrings or colorful sewing cards we made with poster board, brightly drawn and laminated, cut out, and punched with a paper punch. They would sew with shoestrings. Sometimes the little ones would begin to jump from bed to bed in an attempt to stir up some action. I would tell them gently but firmly that this was family reading time; they could play with anything they wanted, lay down by me and go to sleep, look at a book, or go out of the room. They would usually choose to get an activity and quiet down, because they didn't want to leave.

Choosing Worthwhile Books

I want my children to have some choice about what books they read and that I read to them. I am also interested in offering quality choices. I've become wary of too much time in the public library, where choices can be overwhelming. Many books on library shelves are not at all suited to the climate I am attempting to foster in my children's hearts. Instead, I prefer to take children one at a time to the library with a list in hand of the topics we are currently interested in studying. This way, we can walk through the shelves together, and I can guide them to books that will do just what we need.

To allow the children to browse freely, I keep a large bookcase at home full of great reads, with the children's books all shelved together. Since I have purchased the books, I am able to steer the children toward many worthy choices. They take great pleasure in browsing through the large collection of interesting titles. They frequently ask me to help them pick their next book. I run my finger over the spines of

"We are indeed at a great deal of pains to load the memories of youth; but very little is done to exercise their judgments or inventions."

.....
George Turnbull, 1742

“Children, earlier perhaps than we think, are very sensible of praise and commendation. They find pleasure in being esteemed and valued, especially by their parents...”

.....
George Turnbull, 1742

the books, stopping here and there to exclaim over the worthiness of this or that book, describing how it is just the perfect book for them. After a dozen or so books are left jutting out from the rest, the child has determined “the one” and taken it off to a quiet place.

I keep a list in my planner of books that I hope to buy and check them off as I purchase them. I think of buying books like I do buying groceries. Food is required for body and soul. I shop for bargain books just like apples or bread. I love the thrill of scanning the bookshelves at a thrift store and discovering a really wonderful book for only a few cents! My list reminds me of books I am hunting for, and helps me avoid buying the same book twice. I like to get the list out for review when I am waiting in lines, so that I can familiarize myself with the titles. It helps to know by heart the titles I want to add to my collection. I pick up book reviews and book lists whenever I come across them. I keep them in a file at home and use them, along with ideas I gain from discussing books with others, to determine which titles to add to my ever-growing list.

Evening Reading and Discussion

In the evenings, around 8:00 p.m., we gather in the children’s room to read. The stories and ideas fill our minds and hearts, but equally wonderful are the discussions we have with each other. Sometimes I will read just two sentences and we will discuss them (along with a dozen or so interesting tangents) spontaneously for the next twenty minutes. These discussions have been some of the most sublime hours our family has spent together.

Some books are so engaging that we do not want to stop for discussion. While reading *Call of the Wild*, my husband put his finger to his lips to shush the children’s comments as he listened in rapt attention. When we came to the part when the worn out “Dave” refused to ride in the sled, and attempted unsuccessfully to resume his place in the traces with the other dogs, I looked out of the corner of my eye to see tears in my husband’s eyes. Sometimes I have to stop reading, too, because I am so choked up. My oldest daughter will take the book out of my hands and continue reading.

I want the children to know that, in addition to me, there are oth-

ers who value good books as well. We have cultivated a tradition of meeting monthly with other families for classic book discussions. We have committed ourselves to finish the book for each month's discussion. This helps to sustain our determination to keep our family reading time a regular habit.

To provide some motivation and excitement, our family standard is to finish each month's book before we read from another book. We can usually get through the book for the discussion in the first week. Sometimes I begin each reading time with a short selection from the life of a great person, such as a mathematician or a great inventor. Sometimes I read a couple of pages of Shakespeare and explain it. We will get into reading Shakespeare every night for a few months, then we will switch to a biography or a couple of pages each evening from a book by a religious leader. I do a little of this each time we read, before I begin the long reading time in an engaging novel. The children develop a taste for things that at first might seem foreign or tedious. We usually read for two hours. The evening hours work well, since the phone and the doorbell are usually quiet.

My four-year-old can currently be seen carrying around the large volume of Tolkien's works, begging for me to read. I cannot fathom how she can care so much, but she does. She sits on the floor of the children's room each evening drawing pictures of hobbits, dragons, orcs, and eyes. We're midway through our fourth Tolkien book, so she must be engaged in the story on some level, having listened to it in her own way for most of her little life. This is the wonderful thing about a family. Reading usually becomes exponentially easier with each new child. The traditions and structure are strong, the invitations warm and inviting. A sense of belonging pervades. Our time reading and discussing grows sweeter every year.

Holding Successful Group Discussions

While thoughtful discussion can be had reading aloud with our children, it can be altogether different to discuss books with those outside of the family circle. This is where the classic book discussion group becomes relevant.

This classic book discussion group can be as interesting and as beneficial as participants choose to make it. Optimally, each person will finish reading the book before attending. They write down what they liked and didn't agree with, questions that arose, insights and comparisons discovered as they read.

There may be a group already established in your community. If such a group is not available, you may decide to start one yourself. This was the case in my city, so I determined to initiate discussion groups.

I began by working to generate interest in the community, writing articles for homeschool newsletters, talking to people and giving presentations on the value of classics and group discussions. Over time, I learned how to generate commitment to attending discussion groups. Most effective is to inspire others to want a superb education through a long-term study of great works. Be engaged in it yourself and encourage others to attend seminars, conferences and classes, and to read books that describe and model this idea. The Face-to-Face with Greatness Seminar Series sponsored by George Wythe College is designed for just this purpose. (See www.gwc.edu for more information.) You may also decide to create a program with an enrollment fee, which includes regular book discussions. The enrollment fee manifests commitment and encourages regular attendance. Many work better when group discussions are part of a program that has several other components as well.

When you set it up, provide interested members with the reading schedule for the year or term, the location, dates, times, and directions to the location. It helps to include descriptions of the books. You could simply incorporate the blurb from the back of the book and the summarized author bio into your program description. Invite people you want as peers not only for yourself, but also for your children. Something wonderful happens when children see so many other families enjoying reading great works too!

I use Socratic-style questions when discussion tapers off. These questions probe underlying reasons for events in the book and choices made by the characters, or what the author is trying to say. The Appendix to this volume contains suggested questions, as does the book *A Thomas Jefferson Education*. I don't pepper the group with ques-

tions. Give them time to think and bring up their own topics, questions or observations. Sometimes let the group sit quietly and ponder. Encourage discussion by using active listening techniques. For instance, you might say, “Oh, she thinks that the main character’s action is perfectly justified.” The participant would feel her comments are important. Others would be tacitly invited to agree or rebut.

Socrates always insisted that he was not an authority on anything, but was simply trying to understand the essence of the issue or question being discussed. Therefore, the Socratic method of discussion is a conversation in which two or more people assist each other in answering difficult questions. Asking “why” is favored over asking “what.” One may be able to describe something, but explaining *why* is the real goal of Socratic discussion. A successful discussion encourages the participants to answer questions on their own (especially questions they ask themselves) to ponder the validity of what others have said or written, and to give reasoned support for their opinion. Participants learn the meaning of the saying, “with all thy getting, get understanding.”

There are three basic levels of learning. The first is memorization. The second, the acquisition of intellectual skills such as reading. The third is gaining understanding. Understanding can be gained through participation in a principled discussion among group members who challenge one another to think as they search for truth together. The classics are the perfect vehicle for this type of principled discussion. Jesus employed discussion in like manner through parables. He asked His disciples to think for themselves by returning question for question. He encouraged the questioner to discover the sought-after answer, as when he asked “But whom do you say that I am?”

Enjoying Discussions with Children

When holding a book discussion with children, you should begin by setting a safe and friendly atmosphere in the room; exude love for everyone that comes to the discussion. Go out of your way to greet each person and learn his or her name. Children relax and open up when they know they are loved. I have sat in many wonderful discussions that were facilitated by the atmosphere created in the room. Hearts and minds open in a caring setting.

“The rebukes and chidings which their faults will sometimes make hardly to be avoided, should not only be in grave, sober, and compassionate words, but also alone and in private. But the commendations children deserve, they should receive before others.”

.....
George Turnbull, 1742

“Aristides, says Plutarch, was not always in office, but was always useful to his country. For his house was a public school of virtue, wisdom and policy.”
.....
George Turnbull, 1742

As an icebreaker, ask the children to share a part of the book they thought was particularly interesting. Sit back and enjoy the give and take, and help everyone to have a chance to be heard. You could go around the circle, or if you sense hesitancy, let a child volunteer his favorite or intriguing part when he is ready. Using the word “favorite” may stop a child from bringing up parts of the book that were disturbing or catastrophic. The child may really want to talk about that intriguing episode, however. You might instead ask for incidents or characters that made them think, or that did things that didn’t make sense, or that they didn’t like, etc.

Before leading a discussion, I prepare about thirty questions. After reading the book carefully (usually out loud to my children) I skim through it again, focusing my attention on the key ideas or themes in the book. I consider what is of most worth. I avoid questions that are trite or leading. I may not use the prepared list at all; it is there to assist me if I feel moved to use it. My cardinal rule is *never* to answer my own questions during the discussion. Let a question hang in the air; look into the children’s eyes. Ideas are forming inside them. Some ache to speak, but don’t. Some burst forth with passionate responses. Children who want to speak but hold back usually only do so for a time before they realize that it is rewarding to speak up when you have something valuable to say. It is quite a thing to watch unfold! Sometimes it feels like I am engaged in a dance with the children. I am constantly feeling the mood in the room and looking at the children’s eyes as we have this experience together.

Expect the first few discussions to be *very quiet!!!* It really is very charming! They *want* to speak, but they are timid. It is a new frontier for them. After a few months the same children will be talking so much you will become a moderator. Children will have raised hands and be politely asked to wait until another is done with his comment, or has had a turn.

Likewise, expect new members to sit in awed silence while old members hog airtime. New members will jump in after a couple of months. Tell moms of new members (privately of course) not to expect Junior to say anything the first time or two and to lay off pressure to contribute. Junior’s silence is normal, like a four-year-old at her first

ballet class, sitting like a stunned deer in the headlights, watching the other children. After a few weeks, the four-year-old jumps up and dances. Really—and so will Junior.

Relax, laugh, have fun, and don't criticize, judge, correct or preach. It isn't a lecture or an activity group. It's a discussion. Don't bring big projects. It is appropriate to occasionally bring a bit of biographical stuff, a short activity or related works to show; but not for more than five minutes, or it will eclipse the real purpose of your meeting: to get them to think about and respond to the literature itself in a personal way.

You may want to limit discussion to half an hour the first few times. After a while, they won't want to stop and you can extend to an hour. You may watch a movie of the book after the discussion. The movies about classic books are easy to find. Families can bring lunch. I always make popcorn for everyone. It's fun to watch a movie together after you've finished a book!

Book discussion groups work well for children as young as six. For young children, a parent reads the book aloud to the child or, better yet, to the entire family. Then the family attends the discussion all together. It works to put quiet toys in the center of the circle for very young siblings.

Facilitating Discussions Among Older Youth

Special care should be taken in selection of books for discussion by youth. Those with any themes that you would not wish discussed without some parental input should obviously be avoided in a youth-only discussion group. Youth, especially over age fourteen, do well without an adult in the room. A helpful adult could suggest a structure or agenda for their group, such as writing a group mission, developing a schedule of books and discussion leaders, and being prepared with written ideas for discussion. Youth enjoy bringing refreshments to share and holding a social hour after the discussion. One young woman with leadership qualities brought an extremely large list of classic books to her youth book discussion planning meeting. She distributed copies to each person and suggested that the group select books from the list

“...keep them to the practice of what you would have grow into a habit in them by kind words and gentle admonitions, rather as minding them of what they forget, than by harsh rebukes and chiding, as if they were wilfully guilty.”
.....
George Turnbull, 1742

for most of their discussions. Young people also love to rotate homes each month, to become better acquainted. One group of youth had a party a few weeks after discussing Tolkien’s *Fellowship of the Rings*, where each person came dressed up as a different character from the book.

Discussion questions for a large number of books are included in the Appendix. You may also use these questions for writing. For instance, after you have inspired your child to write about a certain book, you may want to suggest answering these questions to think about important ideas. Invite him to bring his writing to you for discussion or a written critique. Be gentle; use questions to guide him as you discuss his answers. After all, it is his *desire* to know the answers that makes the answers valuable in the first place.

The Adult Book Discussion Group

Cathy Duffin, a dear friend of mine, started a book discussion group with some friends while attending college. Now, some seventeen years later, it is still going strong with the original membership relatively intact. During a visit to her home, she took me to see the collection of books her group has discussed over the years. She has purchased each one, and written the number of the book on the spine, in chronological order, with the first book discussed being number one. The books now number over one hundred. The books are arranged in order on her shelves. They sit like old friends, whispering reminders of friends who shared the books with her as they met to discuss them each month. The collection is as astonishing in size as it is in quality.

As I contemplated the truly magnificent education Cathy has received in the course of her readings and discussions, I wondered how her group managed to sustain its remarkable longevity. I inquired and was fascinated to discover that many years ago the group created a constitution. They have observed it carefully. It has been amended and expanded over the years to handle such issues as new members, hosting, book selection, socials and rules for conducting its business.

Included in the Appendices of this book is a worksheet for creating a constitution for your new book discussion group. This worksheet

resulted from studying Cathy's group constitution and applying the general format for bylaws found in *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, Tenth Edition*. By looking over the worksheet, you can see that the rules help raise the quality of the group and create a sense of privilege and stewardship for members.

From my experience over the last seven years working with adult book discussion groups, I recommend that you start without any constitution or bylaws. A mission statement, written at the first get together, will assist in the selection of books and target people who will most benefit from and support the objective of the group.

Before you meet, suggest a book for discussion at the first meeting. Invite prospective members to read the book and come prepared to discuss it. Ask each person to be prepared to recommend two or three other books for future discussion. At your meeting, elect one person as coordinator to handle the creation and distribution of the schedule of books to be discussed, as well as the list of people wishing to attend. The group will grow in size and the people who really want to do it will show their desire by coming often. Encourage members to invite others. After six months have passed, you will know who is serious about attendance. That is an appropriate time to begin laying the structure to sustain the membership long into the future.

Adults do not typically need much leadership during the actual discussion itself. It is helpful to have a facilitator. The coordinator can ask each member to lead scheduled discussions. She should include each discussion leader's name on the schedule. The discussion leader may wish to raise topics for discussion, or simply direct comments and questions in an orderly manner, depending on the size of the group.

Adult book discussions thrive in a variety of settings. Some groups enjoy a quiet corner at their favorite restaurant, discussing the book until the manager begins to turn out the lights. Others meet in homes on a rotating basis, or in the same home every time. Some incorporate a potluck dinner and time for sharing talents or group singing into their evening. When your group works together to fashion the structure for your experience, you develop a sense of ownership and belonging within your group. Discussions are exponentially enhanced.

The Colloquium

The colloquium is a higher-level discussion, where serious students gather to address one another and answer questions. The colloquium facilitator may provide attendees with a list of questions. Rachel DeMille developed the following list of questions which can be used for most great works.

1. What was the author's meaning?
2. Did the author make allusions? If so, explain.
3. What was the structure of the story and why?
4. Was there imagery and what did it accomplish?
5. How does the book make you feel?
6. What pictures came to mind? Tell us how they affected you? Draw them.
7. Why did the characters act the way they did?
8. Did the author portray natural cycles of life? If so, were they ideal?
9. Was the main character strong or weak?
10. How is the character like you?
11. What is the origin and purpose of the book?
12. Can you compare this book with other books that you have read? If so, which and how?
13. What is the main message of the book?
14. Does the book relate to technology, current affairs, the cycles of weather, time, and seasons, or to your religious beliefs?
15. What do you disagree with?
16. Is there any symbolism? Explain.
17. List key ideas or a summary of each chapter. Analyze these ideas.
18. What are key lessons learned?

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Calm Before the Storm

Oliver DeMille, with Rachel DeMille

In a recent seminar, during an interesting discussion about the writings of John Adams and how much we need to apply today the things he taught, one of the participants raised a poignant question: “So what do we DO about all this?” Others expressed the same concerns: Theory is okay, but what can really be done to impact society the way the Founders did? Or the way other great statesmen did? So much needs to be done in society, what can we do to make a difference?

This concern is widespread. For at least the past fifty years, the classroom experience has been widely separated from “the real world.” Reading, studying, discussing and writing are things done by students and academics—in a place not quite part of the real world of business, family, law, politics and current events. So it is natural to ask what we can do—as if studying itself is not *doing* something.

Yet this was not the case for the great statesmen and stateswomen of history. Each spent a significant portion of their lives reading, studying, writing and discussing—particularly in the classics. Yes, they *did* other things; but it is doubtful that they could have done them without the scholarly preparation.

To be blunt, there are storms ahead—for our nation and for other nations. I do not know what they will be, nor do I believe that the future is ominous or doomed. I am an optimist. I believe that the best America and humanity have to offer are still ahead. So mark these

“And when this point is gained, how quickly will youth be reared up into men equally capable and disposed to promote the general happiness of mankind?”

.....
George Turnbull, 1742

“And thus the culture of our minds is much more dependent upon us than that of our gardens and fields. So true is this, that steady resolution to conquer the most inveterate bad habits is sure of victory.”
.....
George Turnbull, 1742

words well: *every generation faces its challenges*, and ours will be no different. Our children and grandchildren will face their challenges. This is what I mean when I say that storms are ahead.

Despite a hectic and challenging world, made more complex by 9/11, we are today in a relative era of calm. It is a calm before the storms that will inevitably come to our generation, just like they have come to all past generations and will come to those in the future—until God and mankind create a better world.

Arguably, the most important thing we can and must *do* in the calm before the storm is to prepare. Secondly, no type of preparation is more important than character and knowledge preparation—both of which are impacted by reading, writing, discussing and studying.

In 1764 George Washington didn't *do* anything big to make a difference in society—except read and study and write and discuss great ideas. In other words, he prepared. He had been at it for over five years by then, and would spend five more years just reading, studying and discussing great ideas before he would *do* the “big” things. But when the storms came, he was prepared.

Nor did James Madison, Thomas Jefferson nor John Adams *do* the big things to make a difference in 1764. All three spent most of the year reading, studying and discussing the great ideas—in addition to the basics of making a living, going to school, raising families or living life. But in addition to regular life, while most of their peers just made a living or went to school, *they* choose to do more: they read, studied, wrote, and discussed great ideas from the classics.

When the storms came their peers wondered what to do. But *they* already knew. It was still hard, it still took everything their generation had to give, it still tested them to the depths of their bodies and souls—but they knew what to do because of what they had done in the calm: read, studied and discussed classics and history, in addition to living their normal lives.

Find a crisis or time of challenge in history, and you will find one of two things: either a nation with at least a few people who read, studied and discussed the classics in the calm before the storm, or a nation that failed to pass its tests, trials and storms. I have found no exceptions.

Winston Churchill and Abraham Lincoln are examples. They pre-

pared by reading, studying and discussing the great classics during the calm periods; when storms came they knew how to handle them. Can you imagine the outcome of the American Revolution if the Founders hadn't read and discussed classics? Or of the Civil War if Lincoln had just done business and politics but never spent hours and hours reading the great works? Or of World War II if Churchill hadn't read the classics but just been a successful businessman or politician? And the same applies to lesser known leaders and statesmen at the community and local levels. Application is essential; preparation is *vital*. And in the calm before the storm, preparation is even better than application.

Churchill even titles his history of 1919-1939 *The Gathering Storm*. And arguably the greatest folly of this period was that the leaders of the time were ignorant of or ignored the lessons of history and the classics. Churchill himself spent much of this time trying to convince the leaders that the lessons of history needed to be heeded—lessons he had learned in the calm before the storm, lessons he learned in over a decade of reading, studying, writing, and discussing.

Reading, studying, writing and discussing is doing something. At certain times in history, it is the most important thing.

The real question is, are we doing it as well as the Founders? As well as Lincoln, Washington, Churchill or Gandhi? If not, we must improve. We must *do* better. If we are doing as well as Lincoln or Churchill or Madison in our "calm" period of reading and learning, then we are doing something indeed! And it will have consequences.

This is what Thomas Jefferson Education and George Wythe College are all about. Good government worldwide is a natural result of a world where people read, write, study and discuss history and the classics. If we do not do these things well, then our "calm before the storm," our preparation time of the early 21st Century, will likely be the same as other periods of history where reading, writing, studying and discussing classics was ignored—the beginning of failure in the storms ahead.

"It will not be unpleasant to observe to them the analogy between our power over natural things and our moral power: That neither extends to the making of properties or laws, but that both consist in producing effects in consequence of fixed properties and laws; and both of them chiefly lie in separating and mixing or compounding."
.....
George Turnbull, 1742

Mentoring Genius

Oliver and Rachel DeMille

During Scholar and Depth Phases of Thomas Jefferson Education, there are few components that have a greater impact than the quality of mentoring. A widespread myth in modern education is that “bigger is better.” Ironically, for many practitioners of Thomas Jefferson Education, the myth is “smaller is better.” The truth is much simpler: *Better* is better. And better is defined in three ways: vision, scope and method.

Vision

First, the vision of a mentor is quite different than that of a tutor. Looking at the same student, the tutor sees the student as ignorant and needing to be taught, or as broken and needing to be fixed; the mentor sees a seed in need of nurture or, more to the point, a genius in need of guidance. Great mentors think everyone is a genius, and they are right.

But not everyone chooses to develop the genius we all hold inside. What the great mentor is always looking for is a person who is willing to tap his genius, to put it through the refiner’s fire, to do the hard work to develop it. Indeed, mentoring is the medieval art of alchemy—turning plain old human steel into hearts and minds of gold. Like a good marriage, a 50/50 arrangement just won’t do—both the student and the mentor must give 100%. The student must give his all to the work of study, but the mentor knows that his or her role is vital. Without guidance and inspiration, greatness is seldom achieved.

“For they who are acquainted by practice with searching into established connexions and general laws of nature, and their good ends here, are by such use qualified for continuing the same research...”
.....
George Turnbull, 1742

“...our appetites are governed by our opinions of objects: And therefore, that in order to direct them we must have adjust apprehensions of things, and inure ourselves to deliberate and compute, before we yield or give way to the solicitations of any affection.”

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George Turnbull, 1742

So where the tutor sees various levels of talent, ability and potential, the mentor sees undeveloped genius made up of varying combinations of gifts.

The mentor also defines genius differently from everyone else. Where the average person often sees genius as the ability to perform or achieve naturally, without practice or extensive preparation, the mentor sees it just the opposite—genius is nature’s demand that you reach inside and rise to your highest self. As leading neuropsychologist Steven Pinker put it: “The typical genius pays dues for at least ten years before contributing anything of lasting value. (Mozart composed symphonies at eight, but they weren’t very good; his first masterwork came in the twelfth year of his career.) During the apprenticeship [after a solid liberal arts education], geniuses immerse themselves in their genre. They absorb tens of thousands of problems and solutions, so no challenge is completely new and they can draw on a vast repertoire of motifs and strategies. They keep an eye on the competition and a finger to the wind....They work day and night, and leave us with many works of subgenius....They do not repress a problem but engage in ‘creative worrying,’ and the epiphany is not a masterstroke but a tweaking of an earlier attempt. They revise endlessly, gradually closing in on their ideal.”*

Scope

Second, tutors limit their scope to a given area of expertise, such as piano, karate, or math, while mentors work with the entire person. A mentor may well be a piano instructor or karate teacher, but the mentor treats the whole person and the whole of life as opposed to putting in the time for the lesson, collecting the payment, and then moving on.

Method

Third, and this is the least understood of the three differences, tutors and mentors use an entirely different methodology. Most people consider it tutoring only when a tutor and student are meeting one-on-one, and indeed most people who have never been deeply mentored in the

* Steven Pinker. *How the Mind Works*. 1997. W.W. Norton & Company. p.361.

classics believe that the one-on-one approach is the best. The truth is that one-on-one interaction is a vital part of mentoring, but only one of the vital methods that great mentors use.

In a nutshell, great mentoring occurs when the mentor consistently delivers Five Environments and 5 Pillars to the student or protégé.

The Five Environments are:
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1. **lecture** (where a true expert shares important information)
2. **colloquium** (where two to seven people discuss something they have all read or experienced, with the mentor serving as the guide)
3. **group discussion** (where a mentor guides a larger group through discussion of something they've all read or learned)
4. **examination** (both formal and informal, where the student and mentor discover just how much has been learned and what remains to be learned)
5. **coaching** (where the mentor praises or reprimands the student and gives corrective assignments or direction)

The 5 Pillars are:
.....

1. **Classics**
2. **Mentors**
3. **Simulations**
4. **Field Experience**
5. **God**

The rule of thumb for leadership mentoring is this: When the student needs a course correction, such as a reprimand and assignments to get him moving, dropping him from mentoring because he hasn't performed, or a praising and extra help or new opportunities due to outstanding performance, it is best to meet with him one-on-one and break the news. This is *coaching*. Other learning almost always takes place in groups larger than two.

Strength in Numbers

Size is an issue in all of the 5 Pillars and Five Environments. Classics

“Freedom and strength of mind consist in this command of reason over our appetites and passions, which can only be gained by steadily accustoming ourselves to think and compare maturely and fully before we choose, and not suffering every fancy that may assail our minds, instantly to kindle an ardent impetuous desire.”

.....
George Turnbull, 1742

are best studied alone and discussed in groups. Mentors help the students get the right-sized format for each experience. Simulations and Field Experience are best done in groups—and should include small, intermediate, large and sometimes huge groups to round out the experience. Like with Classics, God is often experienced alone and applied in group settings.

By “larger groups,” we don’t mean the six hundred student classrooms of modern universities or even the one teacher with thirty-nine second graders that characterize our many public schools. What we mean is that the old adage that a great education is a student on one end of the log and Johns Hopkins on the other isn’t nearly as accurate as C.S. Lewis’ half-dozen people sitting around a table arguing late into the night.

It is true that Thomas Jefferson read the classics alone—not with a mentor and not with a group. It is also true that his discussion of the classics was almost entirely in groups established by George Wythe: the original William & Mary class with approximately thirty students; the William & Mary moot courts and mock congresses with fifteen to forty-five members; the small dinner group of four; and finally the Wythe boarding student groups of three to six at a time.

Note that for Lewis, the people he worked with knew each other very well because they held such discussions several times a week for at least one academic year. Also note that any system that emphasizes just one of the Five Environments is an inferior model. Great mentoring means that you engage in all five environments routinely and consistently—sometimes a large group lecture of hundreds, perhaps with attendees from numerous other institutions, families, states and countries; sometimes simulations with a group of eight and other times with 120; sometimes colloquia with your central group of six and other times invite three additional guests; sometimes examination by asking questions in an office or while driving together, and other times in front of a formal board with an audience; sometimes classes of thirty with lecture or group discussion, and other times the same class broken into small groups of five where deeper discussion can occur; sometimes one-on-one tutoring to focus on a student’s individual need.

In short, the mentor sees that he is working with genius, knows that

every facet of the student's life must change if she is to accomplish her potential, and offers numerous and ongoing opportunities for learning, discovery, growth, mastery, thinking, re-trying, and so on. The mentor keeps a watchful eye on each protégé, notes what is needed and provides the environment for it. And, along with the other environments, when a one-on-one meeting is needed he holds one.

In contrast to all this, the tutor announces the time of the lesson for the given topic, holds the lesson and collects his compensation. Or, as classicalist Hugh Nibley put it, describing how the schools of ancient Greece and Rome maintained their business edge in times of moral decay and rampant materialism:

1. "Free the student from the necessity of any prolonged or strenuous mental effort.
2. Give him a reasonable assurance that the school is helping him toward a career.
3. Confine moral discipline to the amenities, paying special attention to dress and grooming. The student will have his own sex life anyway.
4. Keep him busy with fun and games—extracurricular activity is the thing.
5. Allay any subconscious feelings of guilt due to idleness and underachievement by emphasis on the greatness of the institution, which should be frequently dramatized by assemblies and ceremonies: an atmosphere of high purpose and exalted dedication is the best insurance against moments of honest misgiving.

"Here, then, was the secret of order and stability in the ancient schools."

It should not be surprising to anybody by now that most of our schools have adopted the tutorial approach to education. The paradox is that tutoring is more and more done on campus in groups of two hundred or more.

Mentors, on the other hand, see that each student is a genius in the making, and that hard work is needed in order for the student to truly master self, train the character, and acquire the skills of leadership.

"And wisdom consists in having just ideas of pleasures and pains, true notions of the moments and consequences of different actions and pursuits, whereby we may be able to measure, direct or controul our desires or aversion."

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George Turnbull, 1742

“One able to oppose desires, and to call his opinions to account, and furnished with the knowledge of the effects and consequences of actions requisite to shew him how he ought to behave in every case, is qualified for life.”

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George Turnbull, 1742

The Power of One

Coaching is the place where one-on-one flourishes. Some coaching can be done in groups, but some of it is almost always best person-to-person: identifying mission and how to prepare for it, making specific plans and assignments for how to accomplish goals, and reprimanding or inspiring. Such coaching occurs under three main circumstances: 1) a student asks a question and receives initial feedback with assignments or recommendations; 2) the mentor and mentee are in a situation where conversation naturally arises, such as traveling or working together, and the mentor takes the opportunity to share wisdom and make recommendations; 3) the mentor sees the need for planning, focus, criticism, changes, or input and calls the student in for a chat. All these are usually more effective as short, focused sessions. The rambling, leisurely discussion of concepts and ideas is much more effective in groups.

Another powerful one-on-one experience is not part of the first four Phases. It comes during the seldom-discussed fifth phase, the Application Phase of real life. One of Jefferson’s great joys in life was one-on-one discussion, either in person or by letter, with George Wythe, James Madison, John Adams, and others.

This is not mentoring in the sense of a mentor helping a mentee, but really just what Aristotle called advanced friendship, where peers share ideas, debate, disagree, question, and learn from each other. Bloom noted that modern Americans need to think together more often. We don’t usually include this in mentoring, though it is the second highest level of mentoring.

The highest level of mentoring is also one-on-one, and it entails having the constant companionship and direction of the Spirit, being in touch with the eternal, with the Tao. Indeed, all other types of mentoring may be just practice for this true mentoring.

EPILOGUE

Educational Pioneers

Oliver & Rachel DeMille

So we come to the end of this Thomas Jefferson Education Home Companion. The selections have been eclectic—some philosophical, some specific in advice on how to mentor, others practical for everyday use in the home. Hopefully all of them are helpful to each reader, just as a manual full of numerous tidbits, experiences, stories and suggestions would have helped the pilgrims who crossed the ocean or the pioneers who crossed the plains.

The pioneer analogy is relevant and poignant. As Oliver wrote:

When I first decided to make the leap of faith to found George Wythe College, I consulted closely with my mentors. Dr. Sills had fabulous advice about leadership and administration, Dr. Skousen’s help on academics was invaluable, and many other mentors provided wonderful insight and direction. Some of the most important advice came from a man I consider a great mentor, even though we only met and talked a few times. He likely has no concept of the importance I place on his role in my education. Dr. Neil Flinders had seen numerous private schools start and either flourish or fail over the course of his thirty years in education, and he told me one thing that really stayed with me.

As I remember it, he told me that you have to decide right off if you’re going to be an educational pioneer or work within the exist-

“In truth, when the deliberative habit, the patience of thinking before we choose, and the power of resisting fancy till we have brought it to the test of reason and truth, is firmly established in the mind, there will be little hazard of mistaking or erring.”
.....
George Turnbull, 1742

ing educational establishment. If you want to be a pioneer, you've got to be willing to push a handcart and live in a dugout for a time. He went on to explain that many of the American pioneers had left large, comfortable homes and beautiful farms to spend sometimes many years living in caves walled off at one end with a few logs—in the middle of deserts or snowy plains. Eventually they built something new, something great; but they had to be willing to go through the growth years. Most educators who try to start something new want to have all the benefits of establishment funds and facilities right away—but those who manage to get such funds quickly find out that they still work for the establishment. You can't carry a mansion across the plains; you have to leave everything behind except the bare essentials if you want to effectively pioneer something new.

I never forgot this lesson, and I've come back to it many, many times in building George Wythe College. But beyond that, everyone doing Thomas Jefferson Education is an educational pioneer. In other words, it's hard.

Every week at least one person asks us a question about Thomas Jefferson Education which is really a plea for help. The questions come in different words and packages, but they boil down to: "So, really, what's the easy way to do this?" So far, we have no answer for this question except "there isn't one. You'll just have to do the hard work to get a great education."

But really, isn't it worth it? If we pioneer for our children, they'll get to do it an easier way. If we don't, if we let another generation drift further from the leadership path, it will just get harder and harder for our children and grandchildren. Consider the following letter we recently received from a mother who is doing an excellent job applying Thomas Jefferson Education in her home:

Some people won't do the hard work to get the education they need. Why? Others are putting in the sweat and tears to get their education, but at what cost to themselves and their families? I am concerned about mothers carrying the load they do, plus adding the expectation for them to be in degree programs....

I asked a question during the Question & Answer section [of a recent seminar] and Diann responded to it....My question was something like this: Is there a time when it is right for an active scholar mom of six, because of the myriad of needs, to pull back in her studies? Diann answered (knowing that I am expecting a new baby) that it is a matter of seasons.

But I struggle with this answer, because I have felt a real conflict for at least 6 months or so—long before the possibility of child number seven came into the picture. I am willing to consider that maybe I could restructure my time and priorities. But there is a challenge between really doing what a mom needs to do and at the same time getting an education. To have my 9-year-old daughter say to me at the end of a day, “Mom I need more time with you...I don’t think I am getting enough love,” (and this after I had been home all day with her and the other children), is a problem. Most likely she was busy reading and I was busy studying....

I am not looking for an excuse not to do the work. I am looking to understand “what is seen and what is not seen.” Doesn’t there come a time when these stewardships ARE my education coupled with a smaller amount of classics that support the growth needed in each area as well as adding breadth and depth? There really shouldn’t be a division, but an actual interconnectedness in all of it.

Looking at the 35 parenting tips [from the Transition to Scholar seminar], if I really do these and do these well, they will make a tremendous difference in my family’s education. But to really do them with a large family, a huge portion of my time is required. I am looking for the balance....

The incredible discovery of TJEd for so many people is that they can get their education...that they can self-educate and they begin to experience a long-lost desire and enthusiasm for exploring the classics....It happens in surges or waves, naturally and unforced. For a time they might study a regular, say, 60 minutes a day. Then a wave will come and they will immerse themselves for hours a day. The wave or tide will fill its purpose, lift them to a different level and they

"...the principles and dispositions which are engraved upon the heart by education, remain firm and unshakeable, as being founded on inward conviction, and the bent and inclination of the will, which is a much stronger and more lasting bond than constraint, and therefore becomes a law to youth, and holds in their minds the quality of a legislator."

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George Turnbull, 1742

might resume a schedule with fewer study hours, while actively applying what they just immersed themselves in.

I want to study at a pace that allows me to digest and apply what I am learning....I want the space to do what I didn't get to do in all my conveyor belt years and that is to dig deeply into what I am studying and not be pushed and rushed right past and through it....

My purpose for going to the Transition Seminar was to better understand Scholar Phase and how a person (both adult and child) transitions to Scholar. Your focus was parenting skills that really work for all Phases of Learning, but that facilitate transition. They are much needed and the seminar was so helpful. But what I want to know is about Scholar Phase for adults...what helps them to transition to Scholar and really dig into getting their education. What hinders people...Where are the GAPS? How can we get more adults to transition? REALLY transition? I guess I am looking for a better understanding of the inner and outer workings of Transition and Scholar Phases. My Scholar Phase has blessed our family for the most part. I want it to bless the homes and families of millions. What can I do to facilitate this?

I am not sure if I have made any sense at all. I am not sure if I have even identified the problem or issue that is really troubling me. I am still working through the issues and am concerned for mothers trying to get a liberal arts education. How do we inspire and assist them to both get the education and at the same time fill their responsibilities and roles? No question, my 5 Pillar and Masters studies have made me a better mother and wife and have helped me become more efficient and capable. No question, my studies have helped me lead and inspire other mothers.

I am so concerned about mothers...they need to get a liberal arts education, but in the context of life with their families. A mother with young children has an intense day-to-day involvement and it takes much of her time and energy. Those years are great for getting an education...but they cannot be replaced if she focuses too much on her education and loses the opportunity to connect with her

children in ways young children need.

This also includes marital issues and concerns. I have begun to wonder if my studies have created a distance or strain in my marriage. Am I alone in this? Most likely not. It seems that in many homes either husband or wife but not both are “gung ho.” What is the answer here to getting both on board?

Aren't these issues, though personal to my family, also part of the bigger picture of the GAPS that hold back the larger impact TJED could have in homes and families?

We hear these same thoughts from so many people. What is so poignant about this woman's stream-of-consciousness expressions is the evident struggle between opposing forces. She is pulled in so many directions, and at the same time looking to synergize these forces into a forward trajectory. We hear these sentiments echoed over and over again by mothers and fathers all over. And we very clearly tell them that there are times and seasons for things, times for intense focus and times to relax. But so many people have these concerns in our generation. Here is the reply Oliver sent:

What you are expressing is the same thing I am trying to say when I ask, “how does a generation that wasn't mentored in the classics pass on a true Leadership Education to the next generation?” The problem is that the ideal time for a Scholar Phase is in our youth. There is just no getting around this. If we don't have it by the time we leave college, we aren't doing the true ideal. We have to do it when we are so focused on family, work and career.

The other variable is that if some generation doesn't do it the non-ideal way soon, then we'll just keep on passing worse and worse education to our children. That is, if our generation doesn't do it as adults, even though it isn't ideal, then the mediocrity spreads and becomes even more “normal” and institutionally ingrained. That's the rub. How does a generation of “conveyor belt” train a generation of leaders?

In truth, it takes pioneering. We have to cross the plains. Now

note: how many mothers and fathers were lost in crossing the plains? Or the oceans before, in the time of the pilgrims? Or fighting the War of Independence?

Was it worth it?

If not, then our generation should just emphasize having good, solid relationships with our kids and hope the conveyor belt is okay for them.

If it is worth it, then we need to have a Scholar Phase. And since the children won't do it without adult help, and most adults don't have it, we need a generational Scholar Phase. That's just as hard as crossing the plains—maybe harder. But we must do it.

Now, while we do it, there ARE seasons. The pilgrims went from Holland to Britain, then rested for several years, then did the next part of the journey. All pioneers did that—a season of focus, then a season of rest.

If your children need more time, perhaps your Scholar reading needs to coincide with their interests. Perhaps you need to give it an hour a day instead of more. Children come before Scholar Phase; and in our generation Scholar Phase is a vital part of parenting.

We should always teach the ideal—get the best Scholar Phase possible, in the hardest way; do the full degree program if you can and if it's right. And we should always teach that what's right academically differs with each person, family and situation.

There is an ideal, and a right; and right is much more important than ideals. Here's the thing: when a person knows what's right for her and she is doing it, two things happen. First, she gets positive and focused and gets the job done. Second, she naturally tends to think the same path would be right for pretty much everyone else.

The first point is right on, the second is often false. Teach the ideal, and support what people feel is the right thing for them. Also, realize that what is right will eventually bring them back to the more ideal.

In your case, and this of course includes everyone else, I have no idea what's right. But you know how to find out.

In general, I know that getting Scholar Phase in youth is the ideal. It's natural, and it's fun. It's not the ideal for adults. I also know that at some point a generation of adults will have to do it at a less ideal time, and I am convinced that that time is now—ours is that generation. That means it's right for many adults in our generation to get a Scholar Phase, even though it's not ideal (and therefore not as fun or natural).

It takes greatness to be pioneers. But consider the alternative: telling our children that they'll have to be the pioneers, because it's just too hard for us. Because it just takes too much courage, effort and hard work. How cowardly is that? It will be harder for them!

Now, with all of that said: if it is right, then God will make us up to the task, and it can even be made natural and fun for us—as long as we use balance and do it at the right time in the right seasons.

I know that's not very comforting. But here's the thing—if this is our role, our mission, and it's right, then it will always be hard, but we'll have the strength to keep at it and cross those educational oceans and plains. If our generation doesn't do it, it will be probably twice as hard for our children, and at some point the odds for success will be virtually insurmountable.

Here's the good part: we get to do the pioneering with air conditioning, indoor plumbing, soft beds, and libraries close by. We just have to be sure to both get the Scholar Phase and put our families first. Both can be done, but it's a tightrope. When it feels overwhelming, it's time for an inventory: know what's right for this season, and do it.

Her reply showed that she really is a pioneer:

I really appreciated your response to my long-winded wanderings last week. Actually your response touched me very deeply because of one word PIONEERING. Last year our family did a handcart trek...on the pioneer trail in Wyoming. I consider myself to be fit

“And the misfortune is, that bad habits last longer than good ones.”
.....
George Turnbull, 1742

"It must be owned that the spirit of man, even in the tenderest age, is impatient of the yoke, and inclines to what is forbidden. But what ought we to conclude from this, but that the art of managing youth requires great prudence and address; and that youth yield more readily to mild methods than to violence?"
.....
George Turnbull, 1742

and physically strong. The experience was exhausting to me and I was near tears by the time we finished. That was only a three day trek. The hot wind blew, we ate dirt in our dinners, we were fatigued and hot and sweaty...Our experience was so mild compared to the real pioneers, but having had a taste of what they experienced I cannot think of them without weeping at what they suffered and what they persevered through. They had a cause and a vision so much bigger than themselves...I am deeply inspired by them and the symbolic similarities between their quest and ours are important to me.

I am well into Coulson's *Market Education* and am incredulous at the history of education in our world. It seems for so much of history, education has been a mess. I am certain that our youth and our grandchildren must have a different preparation than any other generation in history. I am convinced, like you, that we are the pioneers to make that different preparation possible. A key to that preparation is not only reclaiming the parents' right and duty to direct their children's education, but also preparing the parents for that job.

That is where the pioneering comes in. It is where I find myself along with many others. I have wondered this last week what I can do to help support fellow pioneers or perhaps those just a bit behind me on the trail. I can counsel them on what to put into their handcart—what is and is not needed. They may or may not listen to me, but the rigors of the trail will teach them the realities of having unnecessary items or the painful lack of what is really needed. I cannot foresee what difficulties, even tragedies, they/we will encounter.

Probably the most important thing I can do is to assist them in getting and deepening their vision of the cause they are pioneering. This is the only thing that keeps me going. It is the only thing that gives me the courage and the strength to keep going. You reminded me of that vision in your e-mail and renewed my determination to keep going. The reality is that many pioneer women pushed

their handcarts alone either because their husband had died or because he was unable to walk due to illness of frozen feet—and in that case these women pushed not only the weight of the handcart but also their husband. They had to keep going. It was a matter of physical survival and growth that could not come in any other way. Ours is a spiritual/moral survival and every bit as real. We must keep going.

In preparing for our family handcart trek, I thought a great deal about the symbolism of the handcart and what we placed in it. Carrying items that are extra and unneeded cost the pioneers dearly. They cost us too. Where I find myself is in a place of symbolically looking at what I have in my handcart today and discerning what is truly needed and what needs to go. To discontinue the journey is not even an option, but what I carry with me may be.

One item I chose to put in my cart this last year is the 5 Pillar [Certification] program. This is an added weight in one respect, but I cannot imagine my journey without it. For now it is right to have it in my handcart. It is one way I can help others along the path, though it appears to slow my own journey. In reality it enriches it and the idea is not to get to the destination alone. NO impact can be made alone. It is arriving with multitudes that will make the difference. Often my interaction with 5 Pillar participants inspires me and reminds me of my own journey and why I am doing it at all...

Another thought from your e-mail helped a lot. “There is an ideal, and a right, and right is much more important than ideals.” I have emerged from my wanderings and your response with three things: 1) a deeper vision and a renewed courage to keep going; 2) increased faith that I can discern what is right and do it; and 3) that by doing the right things at the right times and in the right ways I will enjoy both the hard and the fun of the journey.

Another mother recently wrote in a paper for her 5 Pillar Certification:

After many years of feeling unaccomplished and empty inside, and seeing many of my peers finishing college with various degrees, I knew I was

“For young people are naturally open and simple: But when they imagine they are observed, they are fettered, and this puts them upon their guard.”

.....
George Turnbull, 1742

missing my education and began searching for something. I had a deep rooted desire to learn, yet a formal education did not seem right to me and I couldn't declare a major. I always felt unsure about it. I even, on a few separate occasions, went to our local community college to enroll, yet each time something held me back. One year ago a copy of A Thomas Jefferson Education fell into my hands. Since then I have been ignited like a rocket off to space. I have found my destination. I am soaring to new heights and here it begins with phase one of my 5 Pillar Certification.

“...the master's first care ought to be to find out the genius and character of his trust: For accordingly ought he to regulate his management.”
.....
George Turnbull, 1742

We share this because we are concerned for this mother. We know that this woman is in for some hard pioneer challenges. She will cross plains, ford rivers, face difficulties, ask dozens of questions, wonder constantly if there isn't some easier way, want to give up at times, and bravely put on a smile when those who depend on her struggle. But hopefully she, like thousands of others, will keep going. If she keeps putting one foot in front of the other, working with good guides to stay on the trail, taking occasional stops to reassess her progress, saying “no” to the distractions and extras that weigh her down, and clearly inventorying what her next steps should be at each major turn—all with one hand placed firmly in the hand of God—she will reach her destination. Of such mothers it is often said in the preface to a biography of some great leader, “His mother...” or “Her mother...”

We have illustrated in previous chapters what it has required of those who engaged the challenge in previous generations. But our generation, with its culture of entitlement, struggles to conceive of such things being required of them. It seems wrong to them that individuals and families should give so much for a true education—especially when they could seemingly opt a life of relative ease. Leadership Education will not likely come to their doorstep—they must purposefully choose to engage it. Why, then, should they prefer the road of Public Virtue, of pain and excellence, of service and greatness, of trial and leadership, of Steel to Gold?

Such are the mothers, and fathers of this pioneering generation. The war is for the family. The battle for their children's education and their grandchildren's freedom is as real to them as if they could witness the clang of bayonets on the field or hear the blasts of mortars in the har-

bor. They are themselves great, along with their children and communities—as they train the leaders of the 21st Century. If you are such a father or mother, we want you simply to know that you can do it. Your children need it, and, by the grace of God, you are up to the task. There is no more important role in the 21st Century than being a great parent.