

Summer Reading

Greetings,

Although you may be taking no classes over the summer, I encourage you to use your time to explore some seemingly unorthodox (and certainly atypical) pathways to leadership. These pathways are far from the oft-traveled roads of finance, management and legal studies. There are no certificates along these paths and sometimes even the milestones are covered by the forest or the mist. Like climbing mountains, these paths sometimes go for long periods where it seems like there is not much progress. Then suddenly, a rare glimpse through the trees behind us, shows that we have climbed much farther than we knew.

The corporate, legal and medical professions are slowly beginning to realize that students who read classical literature, poetry and history, and who think about and experience art and music are – better thinkers: they have broader perspectives, see problems in multiple dimensions, they are better problem solvers. So I urge you to explore these pathways over the summer. Discover a museum, enjoy a play, attend a concert. And, during your travels, keep one (or more) of these companions with you. Set aside some time each day for reading them.

Books

Acknowledged by many to be the greatest novel ever written, “Moby-Dick” by Melville may simply thrill you or, it may inspire you. If you read nothing else all summer, read Moby-Dick.

“Gilgamesh” may be the human race’s oldest story. There are many translations but my favorite is by Herbert Mason.

“Beowulf” is another ancient book and, like Gilgamesh, has many translations. You can read it in verse or narrative form but personally, I think the verse format is much more powerful. My favorite translation is by Burton Raffel – note particularly how he describes the eerie depths of Grendel’s mother’s home.

“The Aeneid” by Virgil

“Walden” by Henry David Thoreau

“Seven Habits of Highly Effective People” by Stephen Covey

“Man's Search for Meaning” by Victor Frankl

“Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance” by Robert Pirsig

“Sophie's World: A Novel about the History of Philosophy” by Jostein Gaarder, Paulette Moller (Translator)

“One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich” by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

“Huckleberry Finn” by Mark Twain

“The Power of Myth” by Joseph Campbell

Poetry

“We don't read and write poetry because it's cute. We read and write poetry because we are members of the human race. And the human race is filled with passion. And medicine, law, business, engineering, these are noble pursuits and necessary to sustain life. But poetry, beauty,

romance, love, these are what we stay alive for. To quote from Whitman, "O me! O life!... of the questions of these recurring; of the endless trains of the faithless--of cities filled with the foolish; what good amid these, O me, O life? Answer. That you are here - that life exists, and identity; that the powerful play goes on and you may contribute a verse." That the powerful play goes on and you may contribute a verse. What will your verse be?"^[i]

Consider what these poems mean to you:

"Ithaca" by Constantine P. Cavafy. <http://www.cavafy.com/poems/content.asp?id=74&cat=1>. Accessed August 14, 2010.

"Journey" by Mary Oliver. http://www.poetryconnection.net/poets/Mary_Oliver/3124. Accessed August 14, 2010.

"The Opening of Eyes" by David Whyte. http://www.davidwhyte.com/english_opening.html. Accessed August 14, 2010. *For more from David Whyte go to:* <http://www.davidwhyte.com>.

"The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost. <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-road-not-taken>. Accessed June 2, 2008.

"A Psalm of Life" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. http://www.online-literature.com/henry_longfellow/942/. Accessed June 2, 2008.

"Desiderata". <http://www.desiderata.com/>. Accessed June 2, 2008.

"Ulysses" by Alfred Lord Tennyson. <http://www.eecs.harvard.edu/~keith/poems/Ulysses.html>. Accessed June 2, 2008.

What will your verse be?

Brian

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^[i] From Dead Poets Society. <http://www.generationterrorists.com/quotes/dps.html>. Accessed May 7, 2003.