

“SINE DOCTRINA VITA EST QUASI MORTIS IMAGO”

VOLUME XXI NUMBER III

CLASSIS

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL & CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

SEPTEMBER, 2014

THE VISION HAND-OFF

by Douglas Wilson, New Saint Andrews College

WHY DOES BEAUTY MATTER?

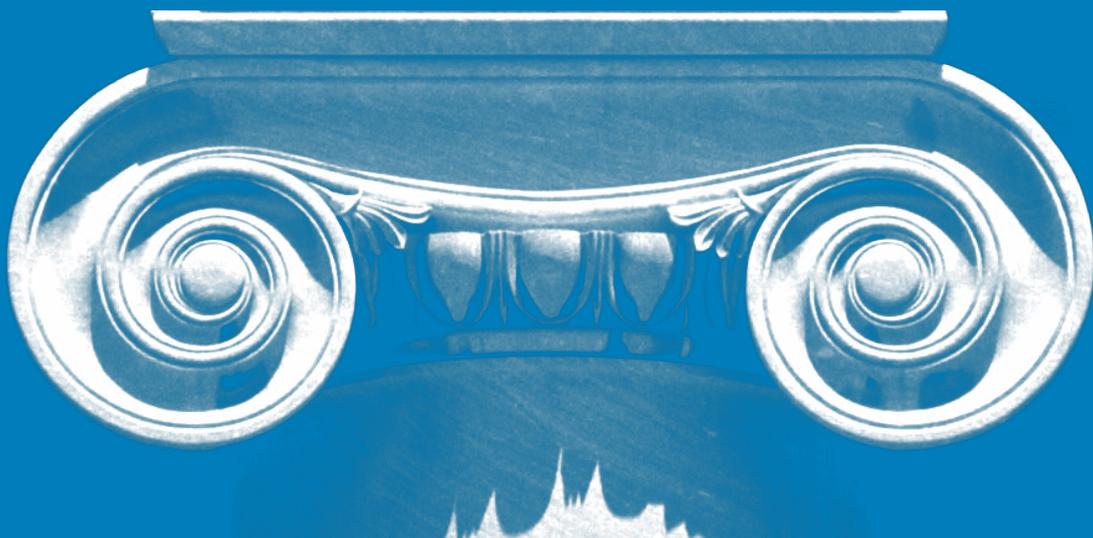
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CREATING A STICKY SCHOOL

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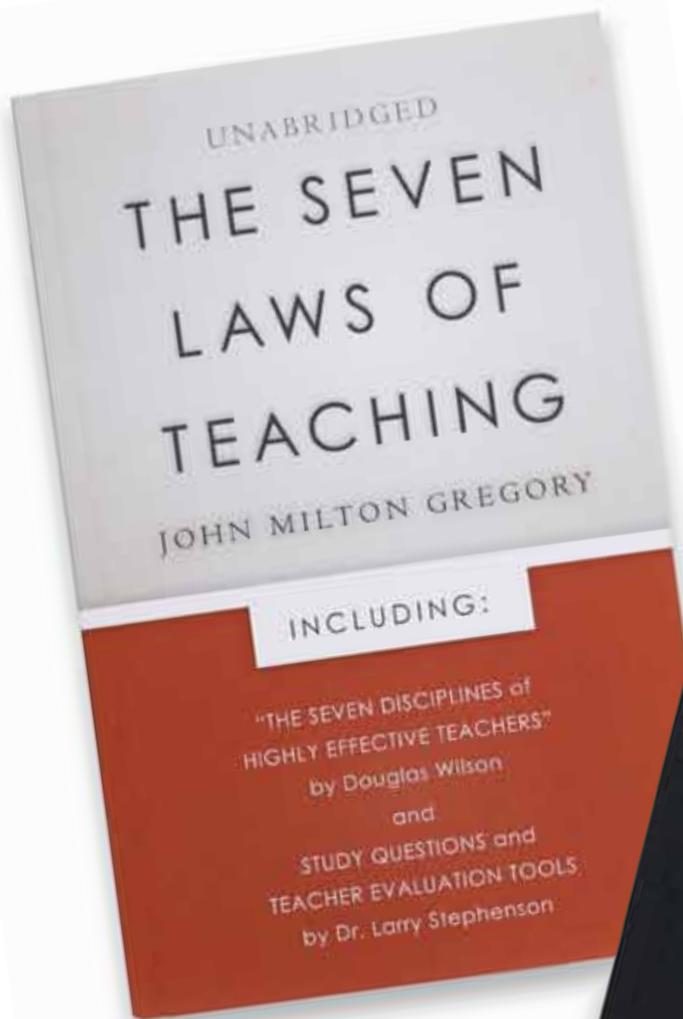
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CONTENTS

THE VISION HAND-OFF

by Douglas Wilson, *New Saint Andrews College* 2

WHY DOES BEAUTY MATTER?

by Gracy Olmstead, *The American Conservative* 8

CREATING A STICKY SCHOOL

by Leslie Collins, *Covenant Academy* 12

THE LOST TOOLS OF MEMORY

by Scott Welch, *The River Academy* 16

HIGHLY-RATED PRESENTATIONS FROM THE 2014 LEADER'S DAY AND REPAIRING THE RUINS CONFERENCES

Three of the articles in this issue (Wilson, Collins, and Welch) are based on presentations given at last summer's conference. Those who heard these presentations gave the speakers high marks on the post-conference evaluation. These articles are transcribed from audio recordings and shortened to fit space in *Classis*.

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THE VISION HAND-OFF

by Douglas Wilson, New Saint Andrews College

Note: This article has been prepared from an audio recording.

One of the central problems we see throughout the Old Testament and through Old Testament history is the problem of generational faithfulness. The people get into a bad jam, they are pressed, they cry out to the Lord, the Lord delivers them remarkably and you turn the page and they are right back to worshipping idols. Then they get in a bad jam and they cry out to the Lord and God delivers them and so forth and it recurs. This problem of generational faithfulness is a problem that they did not seem to be able to solve in the Old Testament. But Jesus came in such a way as to enable us to address this problem rightly. Jesus came in order that we might be delivered from our sins and this sin is one of the big ones, a root sin. Failing to pass on the vision is a bad deal and refusing to pick up the vision that your believing ancestors bequeathed you is even worse. Jesus came to address all that.

In Judges 2:7–10 it says,

And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that He did for Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being a

hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.

All of Joshua's generation died, and were gathered to their fathers. They went to be with the Lord, and there arose another generation in their place after them which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. What didn't they know? They didn't know the deliverances. They didn't know their *history curriculum*. They didn't know their history lessons. They didn't successfully ponder and meditate on what God had done for their grandparents and their parents. They were not owning these deliverances as their *own* deliverances. We see this problem happen over and over again in the Old Testament.

Now what I want to do is apply this to your school, to your institution, to your work. We might put this whole thing under the heading of mission drift. I want to list seven ways for you to accomplish this mission drift. These seven could actually be collapsed into one

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which is do nothing.

What do you have to do to get weeds to grow in your garden? Simply nothing. What do you have to do to let things get off course? Nothing. So these seven all amount to apathy or complacency or presumption. When you itemize what you need to do in order to accomplish mission drift, it will be helpful for you to do the difficult thing which is to go the opposite way, to stay mission true, to avoid vision slide, or vision veer. So, here are seven tips on how to screw it up. Don't do them.

1. Keep a death grip on your opinions. This is quite distinct from keeping a life grip on your vision. The only reason necessary for clutching at your opinions in that way is that you have gotten to the position where you *can*. What does it take for a sinner to hold to his opinions stanchly? Well, all he has to do is get into a position where he can. All you have to do is get into a position where you are a permanent board member and they can't get you out of there.

The reason faithful men hold to the vision is because they must. They hold to the vision when they are reviled, and they hold to it when they are applauded. They hold to the vision when the sun is shining and they hold to the vision when it only looks like a crazy man would hold to this in the midst of the tempest and turmoil. So, faithful men hold to the vision and everybody calls them stubborn. Others, clutching to their own opinions, stubborn as the pope's mule, hold to whatever it is because it is *theirs*.

Why do you cling to this so tenaciously? Because it is mine. It is "my precious." Opinions grow stale and wearisome. Vision is constantly fresh. Vision refreshes. Vision encourages the faithful. Vision is something that puts backbone back into the people who are discouraged. You can tell by the fruit. Jesus says you are going to be able to identify this sort of thing by the fruit.

If every time anybody says to you, "Could we reconsider this?" If you automatically think mission drift, then you are in a bad way. In order to keep from

changing, institutions must change. The trick is *what* to change and *what not* to change. You don't avoid mission drift by never changing. You avoid mission drift by changing where you must change and refusing to change where you must not change and getting it right. Mission drift institutions are the ones who change. They give away the store over here and then they are tenacious about this particular teeny thing and that particular tiny thing. If you want to save your school, your school must change and your school must change in the right ways overseen by reasonable people. In order to keep your vision your school must not change. And that means that you have to know the difference between those things that are principles and those things that are methods, those things that are of first important and those things that are not.

2. Assume that you personally are ten feet tall and bulletproof; you are the thing holding everything together. But if you are the thing holding everything together, that is bad news for everybody. Charles de Gaulle put it well when he said that graveyards are full of indispensable men. We are all on this conveyer belt called time and the emergency stop button doesn't work and everybody in this room is going to be dead in a century from now. So graveyards are full of indispensable men and we all know that truth. But there is a difference between knowing it and knowing in a way that matters in your day-to-day decision making.

Here is a spiritual exercise: Not only will the day come when the school is getting along without you, it may well be that it gets along very *well* without you. Make your peace with God on this. We all know that there will come a day when they will get along without us technically but we still insist that they must stagger along. We insist that there has to be an appropriate period of crippling after we are gone.

Contrary to this, cultivate the demeanor that John the Baptist had: "He must increase, and I must decrease." Surrender this point in your soul. Assume

in the presence of God that future board members will associate the year of your demise with the time “we really took off.” And before you say “that’s sad,” keep in mind that those who cultivate this demeanor are not the ones it happens to. When John the Baptist said, “He must increase, I must decrease” we all know John the Baptist’s name. Jesus is the one who said there has not been anybody born of women greater than this man. So the people who cultivate this demeanor—“I am not indispensable, I want to prepare for the future, I want the school to be prepared for the future, I am not going to be here and this may be the time of the grand improvement,”—that is the kind of demeanor where the people are not crippled by your demise. They are saddened by it but you have been careful to equip them beforehand. They know what to do. They have been well taught and they have been instructed.

3. Allow the modern “professionalism” code to dictate to you a pretense of impersonal objectivity in board selection and in hiring. Let the word *nepotism* panic you. A pretense of objectivity doesn’t make anything objective but it does ensure a weird kind of hypocrisy. You do a national search for a headmaster when everybody in the room knows who it is going to be. Ever seen that happen? We have got to touch this base—we have got to do this—and some of you are thinking we all know it is going to be Schwartz here. Why don’t we just save ourselves the big expense and go talk to Schwartz? No, no, no, we have to do a national search. “But, Schwartz has taught for us for fifteen years; he is the best we have ever had—he is just fantastic! It is going to be Schwartz.” “But listen, we have to do a national search.” This is hypocrisy, or superstition, or *something*.

Now, there are times when we have to play cards with the hand that we are dealt. We have to function in the world that we are in, and there are times when you have additional pressures on you. There is an accrediting agency or some other people breathing over

your shoulder. They say, “Look, in order to keep your accreditation you have to pretend for three months it is not going to be Schwartz.” OK, suit yourself. But we close the door and say we all know it is going to be Schwartz. That is not hypocrisy; that is simply Gideon threshing in the wine vat. That is you making do with what you’ve got.

At the same time, the word *nepotism* was coined for a reason. It really is a problem. So what if the founder’s son really is a blockhead and everybody knows it except for the two of them?

Do not pretend that we somehow get the most qualified candidates by pretending we do not know anybody. In the Bible, knowledge is of a person’s character and abilities. It is not X-number of credit hours. In the modern pretense, we have this system built up where we have all of these state land grant universities, which are knowledge factories, and people come out of them with X amount of credits in sociology. What on earth is that supposed to mean?

When I look at a widget factory, I can count the widgets. But can I count the knowledge units of sociology? The point I want to make is that we want to believe that numbers are king when Jesus is king. And Jesus is a person. Our evaluation of our students, our evaluation of our teachers, our evaluation of who to hire to be the next headmaster, who to elect as the next board chair, those are *personal* decisions and you should, hell or high water, choose the best person for the job. If the best person for the job is this unknown, as opposed to the founder’s son, you go with the unknown. If the best person for the job is the founder’s son you go with him and you don’t care what people say. But this looks bad because this is the founder’s son and you know, what is this going to look like? Well, it is going to look like the founder who built a great school also raised a great kid. Nepotism can refer to a real problem, but don’t be spooked or superstitious in how you react to the word.

4. Forget how young you were when you started and

take an exceedingly dim view of any potential leadership for your school that is ten years older than *that*. Imagine that you are considering new board members and you are thinking, “I don’t know. He is kind of a young pup. He is almost 40.” The problem is not that he is a young pup. The problem is that you are an old geezer. This new board member has his kids in the *high school*. He is just five years away from being a grandparent.

Scripture says, the glory of young men is their strength, but if you want to wreck your school, ignore that resource—the strength of young men. Wait until the entire board is approaching 70 and then try to recruit some young blood by which you mean men in their fifties.

Recruit and train and do so with an eye on the future. Cultivate rolling recruitment. Keep a close eye on the average age of your board. If you have five men in their upper fifties and two men in their upper twenties, what are you doing? You are training two men, that is what you are doing. The glory of young men is their strength. They have that and you are giving them what you did not have back in the day which was wise counsel, a sounding board, someone who is able to be cautious when caution is needed, but who is able to be pressed when young men need to press.

If we have board members in their sixties, and we are training and developing board members in their thirties—which means that when they are in their forties they are recruiting and training people in their twenties—they have done it with ten years of mentoring from us. They have been mentored and now they start mentoring. What have you just done? This is one of the key elements in what I am talking about here. You have extended your stretch to perhaps four generations.

You can remember what your parents said to you. You can pass on to the people who are coming behind and they can pass it on—you can reach multiple generations. You can go well beyond one generation if you overlap it, if you treat it like a relay race. Don’t act

like this generation does it, and then everybody stops and you start over with the next generation. Hand the baton off and expect them to hand the baton off and make that part of the culture of your school. If don’t do this then you are setting your school up for mission drift.

5. Invest your ego into the school instead of investing yourself. There is a difference between giving yourself away and putting yourself into the school and putting your ego into the school. When you give yourself away, it goes away. It is a gift. You are not tracking it. When you invest your ego, it is tied up with thousands of little invisible tracer threads and you can yank on any one of them. You say, “After all I’ve done for this school, after all these years . . .” Every gift you ever gave the school has got a little bronze plaque with your name on it.

If you are doing it before the Lord it really is potent. You may be aware of the plaque on Harry Truman’s desk that said, “The buck stops here.” One of my favorite things about Ronald Reagan is the plaque he had that said, “There is no limit to what a man can do if he doesn’t care who gets the credit.” Pour yourself into the school without caring who is going to get the credit. And if you need to be acknowledged, keep in mind that the Bible says we ought not to be fishing for the credit. We ought not to be fishing for the honor, we ought not to be doing what we do with one eye on the honor. It should embarrass us even to think about.

The Bible says to honor those who lead you and the Bible gives instructions to the school constituency. If you have given yourself away, and you have given yourself away for a generation, for a career, or a lifetime vocation, and you built the school, should they recognize it? Absolutely. *They* should recognize it. Should you be keeping track of how well they are doing in recognizing it? Absolutely not. It’s none of your business. Don’t have those little invisible threads tied to anything. Let it go. Invest yourself in the school—which is not the same thing as investing your ego.

6. Assume that mastering the cant and the buzzwords

is the same thing as perpetuating the vision. Think that attending conferences is the same thing as paying attention during them. I think that this is something that the classical Christian school movement, like every human movement, is in danger of. Eric Hoffer once said, "First a movement, then a business, then a racket." Education in North America is deep into the racket phase. Higher education is a joke; it is a racket. The government education system is a joke; it is a racket. When we get something successful going, the pressure is going to be movement, then business. The first half of the business is going upslope. Business means you learn how to pay the bills. You learn how to pay salaries. You learn how to get your act together. There is nothing wrong with it. But there is a pressure here. Movement, business, and then there is a business orientation that takes over and you are no longer serving people. You are serving the bottom line. You are no longer serving people.

You are worshipping at the altar of reputation. You become a tony prep school and that is the business that you have turned into; then it becomes a racket where you are taking people's money for nothing. Don't assume that this temptation is removed from us. Rather it is very much with us because we are *people* and you have got schools that struggle to make it. Cotton Mather once said, "Faithfulness begat prosperity and the daughter devours the mother." All you have to do to keep the ball rolling is to master the buzzwords in the classical and Christian and Socratic method and integrated classrooms. Buzzwords are one thing, actually doing it is another. Keep the vision. Keep your first love.

7. Come to believe that it is your school instead of Christ's. When you come to believe that it is your school, you begin to view everybody else who is contributing to the school as a potential threat to it being your school. Let's say someone comes alongside and they are really trying to pitch in, and they really begin to help the school, and then they begin to help the school almost as

much as you are helping the school. Then they begin to help the school as much as you are helping the school. Then they begin to help the school more than you are helping the school. You say, "*Mine*. I would rather the school fail as mine then succeed as his."

That is the spirit of envy. The spirit in us, it says in James 4, tends towards envy. It veers towards envy. You do not want to be throwing elbows. You do not want your position to be that of positioning. You are not positioning yourself. What you are doing is working with the team. This goes back to the earlier point of investing yourself and not your ego and wanting to be open to him increasing and you decreasing. All of these tie together. You are not competing.

The way to do it is to make sure that you are free of envy. Envy is one of those sins that hardly gets preached on anymore at all. We preach against all kinds of sins but churches are riddled with envy. Conservative Christian communities are riddled with envy. Any school or institution where some people get promoted and other people don't is full of envy. There are many faculty teacher lounges that crackle with envy. Just be done with it. Crucify it. Take it to the cross and be done with it, because that will destroy your school quicker than anything.

So the problem is that Israel had neglected the future by neglecting the past. They didn't know the Lord and His many works. What has God done for you as a school and who knows about that? Do you remind yourself? Do you remind your spouse? Do you remind your kids? Do you tell a story? And do you tell the story free of envy? Do you tell the story in such a way that Jesus is the hero and not you? Jesus is the hero and you are the recipient. You are the recipient of His grace and His mercy and His kindness and His provision and His deliverance.

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WHY DOES BEAUTY MATTER?

by Gracy Olmstead, *The American Conservative*



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Our lives are often happier when they are surrounded by beautiful things, according to a Friday article¹ by Cody C. Delistraty in *The Atlantic*. He references to a paper² written by Abraham Goldberg, professor at the University of South Carolina Upstate, in which Goldberg analyzed the tendencies and environments which tend to foster happiness:

The usual markers of happiness are colloquially known as the “Big Seven”: wealth (especially compared to those around you), family relationships, career, friends, health, freedom, and personal values, as outlined by London School of Economics professor Richard Layard in *Happiness: Lessons from a New Science*.³ According to the Goldberg study, however, what makes people happiest isn’t even in the Big Seven. Instead, happiness is most easily attained by living in an aesthetically beautiful city. The things people were constantly surrounded by—lovely architecture, history, green spaces, cobblestone streets—had the greatest effect on their happiness. The cumulative positive effects of daily beauty worked subtly but strongly.

In an attempt to measure this daily happiness, George MacKerron, now a lecturer at the University of Sussex, created an iPhone application called *Mappiness*⁴ when he was a graduate student at the London School of Economics. More than 45,000 people now use it, and the concept is

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simple: The app beeps twice a day and asks a series of questions, such as: How happy are you feeling? How awake do you feel? How relaxed are you? Then it asks another set of questions to contextualize your situation: Who are you with? Are you inside or outside? As you're answering these questions, the app tags your location via GPS, and the whole process only takes about 20 seconds. Deceptively simple, the answers to these questions⁵ provide a lot of information on happiness. The times that people recorded the highest levels of happiness and life satisfaction were during sexually intimate moments (on a date, kissing, or having sex) and during exercise (when endorphins are being released).

But the next three types of moments where people recorded the highest levels of happiness were all related to beauty: when at the theater, ballet, or a concert; at a museum or an art exhibit; and while doing an artistic activity (e.g. painting, fiction writing, sewing).

The results of these studies present a few different, interesting components worth considering. First, they continue to affirm what New Urbanists have been saying (both here at TAC,⁶ and elsewhere): that the places in which we live matter, and that the cultivation of beautiful spaces has a very immediate impact on the happiness and flourishing of human beings. All the beautiful, place-related things listed in Goldberg's study—"lovely architecture, history, green spaces, cobblestone streets"—are things that New Urbanists emphasize. Sadly, these sorts of spaces are currently limited to small portions of America. We have some cities that cultivate such an ethos—but living in these beautiful spaces is often egregiously expensive (Alexandria, Virginia, is perhaps one of the best examples of this: it is a "super zip" city, according to the definition presented by Charles Murray in his book *Coming Apart*).⁷ The very environment that

contributes most to the peace and happiness of human beings is only available to those who already have at least two other common attributes of happiness: wealth and career. And those who are not so well-established are often cut off, resigned to an ugliness that infiltrates and undermines their overall happiness.

It's true, however, that there are other more important components to happiness—as noted by MacKerron, romantic and healthful components of life also have something to do with overall happiness. Interestingly, though, both things can be seen as part of cultivating a "beautiful" life. They fit with Roger Scruton's definition of natural beauty, which he says is an item of intrinsic interest or value—something we can appreciate for its own sake. Cobblestone streets, for interest, are of little utilitarian value. They slow down and impede traffic, they're less efficient and expedient. Yet, for some reason, we enjoy them. They have a value that transcends the immediate and pragmatic: they're beautiful.

Similarly, romantic and healthful pursuits, though they often involve selfish motivations, are also usually sought and maintained for a greater good, out of a combined reverence and love that transcend the self. In his book on beauty,⁸ Scruton argues that pornography represents the "profanation" of the sexual bond, as it removes it entirely from the realm of intrinsic values, thus turning something inherently good into something inherently self-serving. But sexuality and romance that are sought as goods in and of themselves, to be cultivated and maintained with respect and reverence, can be seen as beautiful objects.

Thirdly, these findings on beauty's connection to human happiness interestingly parallel modern literature, specifically the study's emphasis on artistic pursuits. Two of the most popular books published in the past couple years, *The Goldfinch*⁹ and *The Fault in Our Stars*,¹⁰ revolve around this premise. Donna Tartt's *Goldfinch* tells the story of Theodore Decker, a boy whose mother dies in a terrorist bombing at a New

York City museum. Theo survives the catastrophe, but carries emotional and psychological scars away from the ruins—as well as a small, priceless painting. The rest of Theo’s life, in all of its twists and turns, centers around this secret: that he carries a museum masterpiece with him wherever he goes, burdened yet blessed by it. As I wrote for *Acculturated*,¹¹ the book is about beauty, despair, and our desperate search for meaning amidst the chaos of life. Tartt suggests that the only things that last are “beautiful things,” pulled from the wreckage and the fire of life. *The Fault in Our Stars* presents a similar dark nihilism and obsession with art (though in *TFiOS*’s case, the artistic object is a book). Both point to art as our key to happiness in an ugly world.

It’s an interesting concept, especially in a world that so often feels frayed and grotesque. But while beauty may be a necessary part of happiness, it is not sufficient for it. Though one of the first and most important ingredients in human flourishing, other important values must follow in its footsteps—namely, goodness and truth.

Alexandr Solzhenitsyn explained this in his 1970 Nobel lecture.¹² In his youth, he read Dostoevsky’s words, “Beauty will save the world,” and was skeptical. But with time, he realized that beauty plays an essential role in cultivating our understanding of goodness and truth:

There is, however, a certain peculiarity in the essence of beauty, a peculiarity in the status of art: namely, the convincingness of a true work of art is completely irrefutable and it forces even an opposing heart to surrender. It is possible to compose an outwardly smooth and elegant political speech, a headstrong article, a social program, or a philosophical system on the basis of both a mistake and a lie. What is hidden, what distorted, will not immediately become obvious.

Then a contradictory speech, article, program,

a differently constructed philosophy rallies in opposition – and all just as elegant and smooth, and once again it works. Which is why such things are both trusted and mistrusted.

In vain to reiterate what does not reach the heart.

But a work of art bears within itself its own verification: conceptions which are devised or stretched do not stand being portrayed in images, they all come crashing down, appear sickly and pale, convince no one. But those works of art which have scooped up the truth and presented it to us as a living force – they take hold of us, compel us, and nobody ever, not even in ages to come, will appear to refute them.

So perhaps that ancient trinity of Truth, Goodness and Beauty is not simply an empty, faded formula as we thought in the days of our self-confident, materialistic youth? If the tops of these three trees converge, as the scholars maintained, but the too blatant, too direct stems of Truth and Goodness are crushed, cut down, not allowed through – then perhaps the fantastic, unpredictable, unexpected stems of Beauty will push through and soar TO THAT VERY SAME PLACE, and in so doing will fulfill the work of all three?

In Solzhenitsyn’s conception, ideas that are not true or good will be ugly when we try to represent them artistically—and thus, their real force shines through. We see this very practically in our towns and cities, our art museums, our plays and films: there are many ugly, incongruent ideas in today’s culture. Their effect on the human person is not one of flourishing, but one of decay.

Solzhenitsyn believed our yearning for beauty is more than a mere aesthetic itch: it’s a siren call of the true and good, the other two trees we have decimated and ignored in modern society. Beauty is

pointing us to them, and beckoning us onward. Our desire for New Urbanist cities, with their beauty and community, are part of a larger desire for the goods of community, love, fellowship, rootedness. Our desire for romantic and sexual love reflects a deeper yearning for companionship, camaraderie, unity, love, belonging. Our love of art reflects a deeper attraction to order, loveliness, and—as Delistraty puts it in his article, “surprisingly, hope.” Hope is what emerges out of art: which is why Donna Tartt and John Green (the author of *The Fault in Our Stars*) vest so much in it.

Beauty is a multi-faceted, mysterious thing that somehow brings happiness to humanity. Yet if we merely absorb its aesthetic pleasures without considering why we enjoy it, we only receive bestial satiation from its presence. A deeper, more fulfilling realm of inquiry awaits us. We must plunge deeper into our understanding of the beautiful: to ask why it is necessary to human happiness, yet not sufficient. We must consider why beauty calls us “further up, and further in.”

NOTES:

Article reprinted from The American Conservative: <http://www.theamericanconservative.com>.

URL to article: <http://www.theamericanconservative.com/why-does-beauty-matter/>.

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1. according to a Friday article: http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/08/the-beautyhappiness-connection/375678/?single_page=true

2. paper: <http://www.icevirtuallibrary.com/content/article/10.1680/udap.11.00031>

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CREATING A STICKY SCHOOL

by Leslie Collins, Covenant Academy

Note: This article has been prepared from an audio recording.

Every school wants to see inquiries become applicants who become enrollees and re-enrollees. We want to move parents from liking us to loving us, to partner and produce with us. A classical and Christian education is the best possible education not because of our test scores, our websites, or our effective administrative or marketing strategies. A classical and Christian education is the best because it is transformative in its nature and connects the child, as a whole person and a unique image bearer to the person of Jesus Christ in the context of a community of other image bearers and believers. Students are disciplined, mentored, and encouraged on a journey that leads them towards transformation through the work of the Holy Spirit. This article addresses how to make the transformative nature of our paradigm the very thing that makes your school “sticky” (hard to leave).

CIRCUMSTANCES

When considered rightly, every circumstance and conflict, academic concern and parent conference becomes—rather than an interruption—a means to our goal: transformation. The primary difference of a classical education is that we view curriculum as a means to an end. That end is transformation into the likeness of Christ. This transformation is also accomplished through our circumstances; our perspective is biblical. This perspective changes our focus from bemoaning to ministering. Ministering to our families, speaking the truth in love, believing that God has placed both them and us in a relationship brings each of us to a greater understanding of His grace. Paul Tripp often reminds us that our greatest problem is not the circumstances we find ourselves in, it is our hearts. The very challenges that concern us are opportunities for redemption individually and culturally. I believe that the key component in creating a sticky school is the key mission

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of every believer: to become Rescue Ambassadors as we encounter our circumstances.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (II Cor. 5:20)

If we see our purpose as ambassadors of rescue in pursuit of redemptive opportunities, then the hardest aspect of our school life (conflict and circumstances) becomes the most reflective of God's grace. The parts of our job that have the greatest potential for shame and embarrassment and pain will become the greatest areas for beauty and truth and goodness to be revealed. Isn't this the way of the cross? If we move towards those who are struggling, then we will demonstrate that ultimately we are about seeking a transformation in our students and their families. Every school seeks to educate. Few schools are working toward transformation. That gives your school stickiness.

IMAGO DEI

The words, "Let us make man in our own image" were spoken in the context of the ancient Near East, where images of royalty were prominently displayed throughout a kingdom and told the subjects who to fear and who to follow. What were the original hearers of those words thinking about this concept? Hebrew slaves were being told that they were royal image bearers representing the King of kings. Humble Hebrew slaves were mirrors of God to the world. A robust understanding of *imago Dei* is the stickiest thing your school can provide for your students. This is what gives us the ability to relate, and learn and love. We're living in a culture where people don't know who they are. Finding out that you are an image bearer, when you've been told you're a cosmic accident means that you have hope and potential. Learning that God's desire is to transform you even more into the image of His Son is overwhelmingly

hopeful. Making the significance of *imago Dei* one of the foundations of your school's culture will create more stick than any marketing plan you could dream of.

CURRICULUM

A classical education is one that is fully integrated. It matches development, design, and dignity as students walk the course or curriculum that schools set. Curriculum is the means by which you disciple your students in how to think biblically and how to move towards wisdom and virtue. Curriculum is connecting your students with their identity in Christ and how truth, goodness, and beauty reflect Him even if written by an unbelieving author. If your students are learning that their life experience can be exponentially increased by reading great books, then your curriculum is in pretty good shape. If your students are loving to learn while at the same time being challenged to work diligently and faithfully as unto the Lord, then your curriculum is accomplishing its greatest purpose which is to produce awe and wonder, the fear of the Lord. If you're doing this, your school is developing stickiness because almost no one else is. But curriculum is only one aspect of your school. Hopefully you are offering so much more.

COMMUNITY

We are made in the image of the Triune God: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Trinity exists in complete unity, harmony, and fellowship at all times. There is submission and love and honor. This is the model for how we are to relate to one another. When God made Adam, He said that it was not good that Adam was alone. This was not merely marital concern. It was a community concern. It is not good for humans to be alone. We were made for community. We function best when we are in community. Returning to the mirror analogy, what happens when you put two mirrors face to face? The reflections are multiplied and the light is magnified. This is what our communities are supposed

to be accomplishing. Teach this to your students of all ages. Teach them every single aspect of what this means and your school's stickiness will grow. Teach them that they were made for community because they were made to speak truth into each other's lives. Teach them how to encourage one another, bring the best out in each other, respect one another, not merely because they should as part of your code of conduct but because it is part of their royal identity. This is powerfully sticky stuff.

CULTURE

Teaching students how to serve one another in love is also an aspect of this. Our older students serve our younger students in several ways. For example, they spend 15 minutes each day serving the school doing various necessary tasks throughout the campus. The little ones see this. They also see these students come out during their break to have recess with them. We encourage the older students to care for and love the little ones, looking for those who are isolated and giving them instant fame because an upper school student played with them. For both sets of students, this is the highlight of their day. Redemptive relating as a pillar of school culture is transformative and inherently sticky. Do it for the gospel and you will very likely get enrollment thrown in as well. As we embody the heart of Jesus to others, we will have the privilege of watching God use all things to transform us and keep us together in community.

INTERPRETING OUR OWN HEARTS

God's Word tells us that He ordered our days and determined the good works we are to do before the world began. He is most concerned about our hearts and He uses the circumstances of our days to peel back the busyness and reveal to us where our hearts are, what our hearts worship. The Bible uses the word heart to refer

to our inner life, our thoughts, our motives, our ruling desires. How we respond to our circumstances tells us what's going on in our hearts.

Are you, as a school, attentive and aware of this? Do you, as a faculty, observe how your students respond so that you can see what rules them? And are you attentive about your own responses? Do you know what rules you? Are you able to see the ways that others need to help you be transformed into Christ's likeness? I submit to you that the big picture of our lives is for our hearts to be exposed through circumstantial community interactions. We were made to be instruments of grace in each other's lives. Have you ever tried to look at yourself without a mirror? You can't see yourself. In the same way, you can't see your own heart. You need another person to reflect it to you. That is the point of community. Teach your students how their hearts are being revealed through their responses to circumstances. Keep their parents in the loop and be ready when they ask you for advice about what to do to shepherd their child's heart to follow Jesus. Parents are looking for your help and your perspective. This is not the time to run; it's the time to rescue. Yes, I know it's hard (that's why they need to be rescued). Few schools are doing this kind of redemptive relating. This is why they will stick with you.

CONFLICT

Our students aren't going to one day live in community; they are living in community now. We should be teaching them how to live in community as part of discipleship. What does it look like to teach students how to live in community as they experience conflict? It means that we teach them how to resolve conflict biblically, not just by quoting Matthew 18 but by incarnating the most important part of that chapter, "behold, I am there with you." Walking with students of all ages through the process of lovingly confronting, confessing, and forgiving one another is one aspect of community.

Parents often decide to look into other schools because they believe that Johnny is not fitting in, successful, happy, appreciated, respected, or loved. Are you doing all you can to cast a vision for those families? How is God using Johnny's situation to work on the hearts of His people? Are you taking advantage of the teachable moments of conflict to help them become better equipped to support your mission and shepherd their child's heart? Or do you hold the door for them as they leave?

If you learn nothing else from this article, please learn these four words: run, cover, hide, and blame. No matter what culture, language, or time period, this is how humans react when their sinful hearts are exposed. This is what Adam did in Genesis 3 in his four attempts to cover, minimize, and avoid the truth. When you see others doing these four things, your calling at that point is to move towards them in love, (as God did with Adam)

believing that God has an agenda for this person's heart, that this circumstance is revealing it, and you are His representative image bearer. You and I are all guilty of being ruled by our desires. We have needed others to speak the truth to us in love. It is the mercy of God that reveals that to us and He is seeking to use us to be His ambassadors in the lives of our parents, students, and teachers. He desires to use them as ambassadors, too. As you disciple them relationally, they will do the same for others. Ambassadors are very sticky people.

How do we create a sticky school? Relationally connect with parents in such a way as to move them from liking to loving to partner and produce. How do we create a school that no one wants to leave? Connect students and their families to their identity in Christ through culture, curriculum, and community as you experience circumstances together.

DID YOU KNOW?



AS AN ACCS MEMBER, YOU RECEIVE THESE (AND OTHER) BENEFITS

- **Access to school enrollment marketing webinars**
- **Document exchange with other member schools**
- **Custom listing on the Google map on our website to help prospective parents find your school**
- **Reduced registration rate for the annual conference**

THE LOST TOOLS OF MEMORY

by Scott Welch, *The River Academy*

Note: This article has been prepared from an audio recording.

“There are, then, two kinds of memory: one natural, and the other the product of art. The natural memory is that memory which is imbedded in our minds, born simultaneously with thought. The artificial memory is that memory which is strengthened by a kind of training and system of discipline.” –*Rhetorica ad Herennium*

“The only real difference between the middle-aged executive who has forgotten to phone someone he was supposed to phone and who has left his briefcase at the office, and the seven-year-old child who realizes on returning home that he’s left at school his watch, his pocket-money, and his homework is that the seven-year-old does not collapse into depression, clutching his head and exclaiming, ‘Oh God, I’m seven years old and my memory’s going!’” – *Use Your Perfect Memory*, Tony Buzan

In this article, I will present some of the very practical memory techniques that we are using at the River

Academy, in Wenatchee, WA.

The *Ad Herennium* is a first century B.C. rhetoric manual written by Cicero that goes through the five faculties that every speaker should possess: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. Every year when I teach the *Ad Herennium*, one of the things that I realize is that I do a great job of teaching invention, arrangement, and style. Then, every year I would skip the memory section. I just never did get it. It wasn’t until a few years ago that I picked up the book *Moonwalking with Einstein* by Joshua Foer. A lot of the ideas in this article come from this book. It helped me realize that what’s in this book was really in Cicero all along.

An iceberg is the best illustration for the problem we see with memorization. We teach all sorts of things. We have worksheets, pet projects, tests, and other important educational stuff. That is the entire iceberg. The problem is that if you ask kids about a week later what you asked them to memorize last week, the tip of the iceberg is about all they remember. And it’s not that they haven’t studied hard. Sometimes we think that if someone

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forgets something in a week it's because they crammed. Unfortunately, I think that's just a teacher's way of saying "I didn't help you." FACT: most students cram. So how do we help them? We tell them to cram over three days. We are not giving them a tool to help them memorize things. We tell them to memorize something and that there's going to be a test on Friday. We remind them not to cram and to break up the studying over a few days, then we send them home. But we still find that at the end of the year, or even at the end of about three weeks, most of what we taught them is completely gone from their mind. As classical, Christian educators we know that it is not our job to give them material just to stick in their head to pass a test at the end of the week. I find (and I've been doing this for fifteen years), that I still have trouble teaching tools. It is easy to fall back to that worksheet/test mentality.

FACT: Memorization, memorizing, is an essential tool of learning. We claim to teach tools. And I find that it's actually much harder to teach tools than it is to say that I teach tools. Ask most classical and Christian educators what tools they are teaching, and you will usually hear something like, "Well, grammar and all the logic and stuff that goes into it." I am here to tell you that memorization is an essential tool of learning. Teachers need to teach how to do it. Teachers need to dedicate classroom time to having students memorize things. Sending kids home Monday and telling them to memorize something for a test on Friday is not teaching them a tool of anything, other than to cram.

I teach logic and one of the things that I teach every year is the square of opposition. I feel that I do a pretty good job. Students all get good grades. At the end of the year I have a cumulative final. I take five days to review everything that we learned throughout the first two trimesters of our school year. When I say that we are going to talk about the square of opposition the puzzled looks, on even the smartest of my kids, is very disheartening. The look isn't "oh yeah, I remember

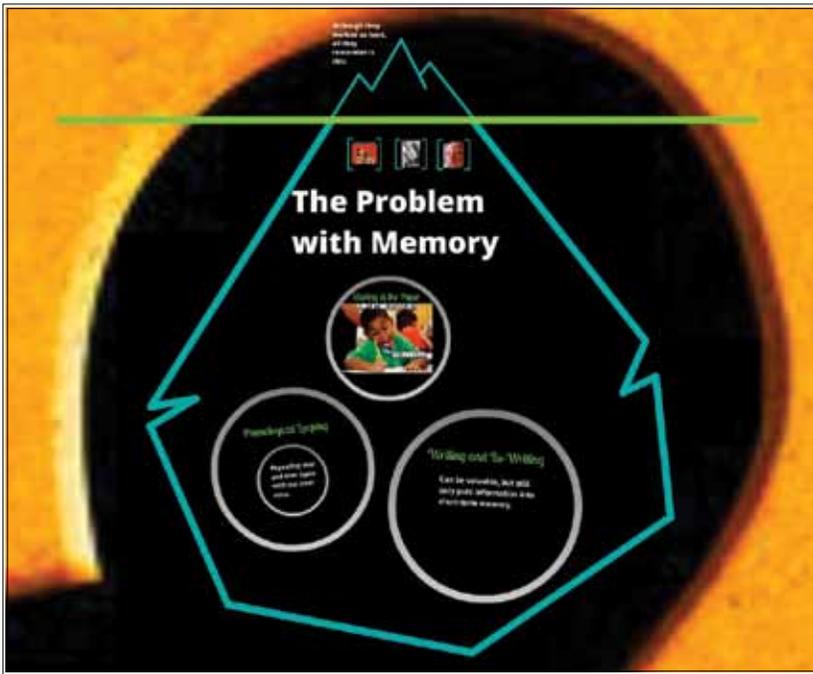
those." The look is literally "what is that?" There are kids that look at me and I'm honestly worrying that they have never heard of the square of opposition before. Fortunately, after a couple minutes, they remember.

There are scientific explanations for why this happens. Those who study memory consider seven—plus or minus two—to be the magic number in memory. They find that all people (including students) tend to hold between five to nine items in memory over the long haul—that is, if you don't help students put it into some sort of long-term memory.

How do students tend to memorize something? Let's say that we haven't given them any tools whatsoever. Students were told, "Here's your list, have them done by Friday; there's going to be a test that's not multiple choice." So, how do students memorize? Well, one way is that they stare at the paper. I know this because I see students doing it. I'll say, "Johnny, what are you doing?" He says, "Well, I'm studying for the test." I don't think that there is a worse possible way to memorize anything than staring at a sheet of paper. It uses the least possible senses to memorize something. But that is one way that students tend to memorize if you give them no instruction.

Another way is called "phonological looping" which is just a creative way of saying that they repeat it over and over again in their head. That's phonological looping. Some teachers—I know that I have done this—say, "I want you to write it over and over again." That is a very good way to put something into short-term memory. It's not going into long-term memory; it's going into short-term memory, but it's creative and it sounds like we are teaching some sort of tool. But even if they do this, you are still dealing with the magic number seven.

What are some solutions? What are ways that we have tried to create tools in our school? We believe in the grammar stage. Grammar students are really good at memorizing. In the grammar stage we do a really good job teaching them how to memorize things. We



give them chants and songs; we give them lots of ways to memorize. In the secondary, I feel like we literally kick them off the boat into the water. Part of the reason is it isn't real cool to see a 16-year-old going: "A sentence, sentence, sentence, is complete, complete, complete . . ." They don't think it's cool, I don't think it's cool, so they're not going to do it. Secondary students are not going to say chants. They might say them in their heads or sometimes they might jokingly say them in some type of ironic way. But they are not going to say things like that on their own.

One way of memorizing in the elementary is with rhyming funny sayings and chants. How about this one? "In 1492 . . . (Columbus sailed the ocean blue.)" That was easy. This one is a little harder: "I before E . . . (except after C, or when sounded as 'a,' as in neighbor and weigh.)" Good! Another one, "Thirty days hath September . . . (April, June, and November, All the rest have 31, Except for February.)" See how easy those are? This is one from when I was in sixth grade. I don't know what kind of teacher I had but for some reason she was making us memorize some of the two-letter designations for the periodic table. My mom sat down with me and walked through this; these are two of them

that I learned in sixth grade. "AU want some gold?" "Want some salt? NA!" But funny sayings, rhymes, those things are memorable. Obviously, we are still remembering some of them now. And we hear them coming down the halls in our schools. I have six kids; five of them are in our school. I can tell you a bunch of their chants. They come home chanting them. They are very helpful.

Chants are definitely helpful. In a way it's kind of out-loud, phonological looping. You are using more senses. You are using both your voice and your hearing. There are more senses involved.

It is helpful to put it into your head. It can make it more "sticky" for remembering. That is one way of helping students. In secondary, if you come up with a chant, it's got to be awfully cool. I don't know if you have tried, but coming up with chants that are cool enough to want to get up in front on Grandparent's Day and chant is not easy, because I have tried. Raps work a little better. But then the grandparents don't want to hear them.

Chanting can use things like "Gilligan's Island" or "Happy Birthday." I'm not going to spend a long time on chants because all of you have heard them. Another technique is word takeaway. For example, say you want students to memorize the St. Crispin's Day speech. I first put the whole speech on the sheet. Then I would write it with some words missing. And then I would put it with just the first words and then . . . I'm trying to do something to help them put it into their brains. And it was helpful—well, a little bit helpful.

Using acronyms is a method which our students are already doing. They know more acronyms than about anybody, anywhere. Here are a few of theirs: BTW = by the way, BRB = be right back, TTYL = talk to you later, and LOL = laugh out loud.

We have used some acronyms. I taught Latin for a few years. The Latin word *moneo* means: warn, advise, remind. The first letters in warn are WAR, an acronym for warn, advise, remind. That's a pretty easy one. Here is an acronym for logic teachers: "Any student earning Bs is not on probation." This shows the rule for distribution: If you have an "A" statement, the subject is distributed; in an "E" statement, both are distributed; in an "I" statement, nothing is distributed; and in an "O" statement, the predicate is distributed. This comes from rhetoric: "Theory, imitation, practice—which is a good TIP." Another rhetoric acronym is "I Ate So Many Deliverymen" which helps remember invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. Science teachers could use "My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas," which stands for the planets. Of course, now that should say, "My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nine . . ." (Pluto is no longer considered a planet.) "Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally" for our math teachers, stands for parenthesis, exponents, multiplication, division, addition, subtraction. For the geography teachers, "HOMES" designates the Great Lakes (Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior.) For the music teacher (since I'm a football coach, I put "football;" I know other people have said other things), an acronym is "Every Good Boy Deserves Football," which are the notes on the lines of the treble clef (E, G, B, D, F). And one more for science, ROY G BIV, which stands for the colors in the rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet.

I believe that the memory palace is the most powerful way to memorize anything. It is helpful in every subject. Why spend time on these other methods? These methods help organize information to be able to put it into a memory palace. It's much easier to put one word into a memory palace, than having to put every item in. Using acronyms helps organize information if you use a memory palace. I believe that it is the teacher's job to help students do this—whether it's coming up

with acronyms for them, or helping them come up with acronyms on their own. Give them some sort of tool. Sending them home with a big sheet of paper, telling them to memorize this for Friday, when you haven't taken the time to possibly look for acronyms that you could help them with, is just not helpful.

Before we move on to a memory palace, here are more methods for organizing information. With ROY G BIV, you'll notice that one of the things that we do is separate it out: ROY – G – BIV. This leads us into our next technique, called chunking.

Chunking is taking things and breaking them into groups, so that there are less things to remember. An acronym is a sort of chunking. When you chunk, you take, for instance, ROY G BIV instead of ROYGBIV. It makes it a lot easier. In chunking, you group items to decrease the number of things to memorize.

At Carnegie Mellon, they did a case study on chunking. They had an undergrad come in every day, five days a week. They started with one number and he would have to repeat it back. Then they would give him two numbers and he would have to repeat them back. When it got to the point where he couldn't remember the numbers anymore, they would decrease the number and give them to him again. He did this between one and two hours every day for two years. At first, he was hitting the magic number of about seven items. Five to nine items he could remember pretty well and then he would just kind of fall off from there. By the end of two years, he was able to remember 79 numbers per day, on average. How did he do it? He started to chunk the numbers into groupings. What he would do (there is a way to memorize long strings of numbers called the major system) was to break the large number into chunks of three and four. With chunks of three he would make ages. For instance he would see 8-9-3 and he would say 89.3, that's a pretty old man. And that's how he would remember 8-9-3. He was a track guy. He would do four-digit sequences by connecting them with

track times. So, he would remember 3-4-9-3 as 3:49.3 and he would say “that’s pretty close to the world record for a mile.” He would do that and he was able to expand the amount of information he was able to remember up to 79 items.

Every year on Pi Day (March 14), we have a competition to see how many digits of Pi students can remember. Last year was the first year that I ever taught the major system to students and we had a student remember 185 digits, but he made a mistake in the middle. So, it really only got them somewhere in the 90s but they had up in the 180s memorized. This year, a girl memorized 151 digits by chunking three digits together. She created a rhythm, 437, 549, 862. She was able to get up to 151. That’s another form of chunking.

We do this already; we see this in social security numbers. Why do we separate them out like that? It makes them easier to remember: phone numbers, ROY G BIV, and SOH COH TOA (a way to remember how to compute sine, cosine, and tangent.)

There are a couple different ways of chunking. The first is sequencing, which is creating some sort of order. Let’s say you take these six words: chair, door, pen, mail, letter, and desk. You can categorize them pretty easily right? They are things that you would find in an office. But if you wanted to help someone remember this, you could create a sequence out of them. You walk in the door, you sit down in a chair, pull up to a desk, pick up a pen, write a letter, and mail it. Creating a little story is one way of doing sequencing.

Another is categorizing or grouping like items. Take this list: small child, hockey stick, candy cane, teenager, cane, and old lady. These words can easily be grouped into two sections— what would they be? People and things would be kinds of a bigger group. We also have the shape of a thing, right? A cane, a candy cane, and a hockey stick all have kind of the same shape. And then we have kind of a sequence of people: we have small child, teenager, and old lady.

Now someone might ask, “Well, it’s easy to do if you are given words like this, but how could you do this in the classroom?” Here is an example: We read the *Iliad* every year. I used to give the students a huge, four-page sheet of all of the characters in the *Iliad*. And of course, the best way to organize them for students to remember was alphabetically (I’m saying this sarcastically). So, you have Achilles, right next to Aeneas, who of course have nothing in common whatsoever. What I discovered, whenever I took that same list and separated them into Greeks, Trojans, and gods and goddesses, then separated them into male and female, and then separated them into where they appeared in the book, was that it was much easier for them to remember who everybody was. It took me ten minutes to organize the list and it revolutionized my kids’ ability to remember the characters in the *Iliad*.

So, now we have worked on some methods for organizing information; now let’s work on remembering it. As I said earlier, the memory palace is the most powerful tool of memory and every student will benefit from knowing how to do it.

A memory palace is also known as the method of loci, the journey method, or the Roman room method. This method is found as far back as the first century B.C. (It was all in Cicero, so all of us classical chaps get warm fuzzies.) It’s old. The goal of the memory palace is to take the things that are in short-term memory and put them into long-term memory. One way of doing that, the most creative way of doing that, is to put them into visual memory. I could give you lots of reasons why I think that this is a good way to memorize. It works. But more than that, students absolutely love doing memory palaces. I have students all the time wanting to tell me their memory palaces.

How do you do a memory palace? We are going to memorize a list of 20 words. First, choose a place. It can be a real place or an imaginary place. It should be a place that you know pretty well: house, school, or video game

map. Some of you might think you don't want your kids playing video games. Well, that's great, tell them not to and maybe they won't. But I can tell you right now, my students who play video games—and I don't promote it—are killers at memory palaces. They have hundreds of maps, and houses, and cities, and towns in their heads, that they can stick things into in seconds. I've never seen anything like it. So you might as well think of video games as a tool of learning.

At the Oaks in Spokane, Washington, they use paintings for memory palaces. They have a painting in the room. You look at the painting, say the *Mona Lisa*, and use items from the painting—one of her eyes, the other eye, her nose, mouth—and you “place” your items to remember there.

Your palace also needs to have rooms and checkpoints. It's nice to have smaller sets of rooms.

I want you to close your eyes. Some people, those who have been doing this for awhile, can do it with their eyes open. But I find that most people, especially with a lot of distractions, need to close their eyes. Picture in your head your front door. I want you to walk up to your front door and put your hand on it. If it's metal, you know what it feels like, hot or cold depending on where you live. If it's wood, you can feel the grain. You can look down and see the door handle. Open the door, walk in, and close the door behind you. Start looking in whatever your front room is. If it's just a little entry room, go into your first main room. Look at all the furniture in the room, look at each item. Pay close attention to it. Look at the fabrics.

Now I assume there's a chair in the room. Imagine a *pink camel* sitting down with his legs crossed and petting a *black cat*. How many of you can see this? Can you actually see the pink camel? Next to the pink camel with the black cat you see your *headmaster*. He opens up a briefcase and he begins handing you *large sums of money*. (This might be hard to envision!) But can you picture him standing there, handing you large sums of

money? OK, go ahead and open your eyes; you just did a memory palace.

That was a short one, it was an easy one. But you can see the power, and the fun, of being able to do visual memory. If I were to ask you what four items you saw in there, I think all of you could quickly say you saw a pink camel, a black cat, your headmaster, and large sums of money being handed to you. If we had four items, you just did it in less than one minute.

[Note: In the next example, Scott leads the workshop attendees through a memory palace where they place 20 random items. The audio recording of this section of Scott's workshop is available here on the ACCS website: [http://www.accsedu.org/school-resources/classis-\(journal\)-and-forum-\(newsletter.\)](http://www.accsedu.org/school-resources/classis-(journal)-and-forum-(newsletter.))]

Here are some of the uses that we have found with memory palaces at the River Academy. My goal was to go to every classroom and say, “What do you have to memorize?” Whether it was pre-calculus, or whatever class it was, what do you memorize in your class? I collected everything and started putting them into a memory palace to see if it was possible.

The peg system can be added to your memory palace. The peg system is a system of making numbers visual. There are two ways to do it. One is to take them and put a rhyme to them. For instance one = bun, two = shoe, three = tree, four = door, five = hive, six = sticks, seven = heaven, and so on. When you get to eleven, you do the same exact images, but you put them all on ice. For example, you have a bun that is encased in ice, or a shoe that is encased in ice. You have a tree that is encased in ice. For instance, if we were doing our list of 20 words, you would somehow take that apple and incorporate a bun. Put hamburger buns on both sides of the apple. It would remind you that the apple is number one in your list. If you were to get to number nine (in my peg it's wine), you would go to the second room and peg wine with the second to the last item (paint).

PEG SYSTEM

Rhyme

- 1 – Bun
- 2 – Shoe
- 3 – Tree
- 4 – Door
- 5 – Hive
- 6 – Sticks
- 7 – Heaven
- 8 – Gate
- 9 – Wine
- 10 – Hen

Shape

- Pen
- Swan
- Heart
- Sailboat
- Wheelchair
- Elephant head
- Cliff
- Snowman
- Balloon
- Bat and ball

After 10

- 10–19–Frozen
- 20’s–Burning
- 30’s–Dirty
- 40’s–Wearing shorts
- 50’s–Tipsy (bubbles popping above it)

We memorized the presidents with their numbers. There were 44 presidents and their numbers. If you gave the students a number they could tell you the president. If you gave them the president, they could tell you the number, in just a couple of seconds. We did that by putting pegs so if someone said 13, or whatever it is, I picture a frozen tree. And I picture a frozen tree on top of the little bust that’s in cars that says Fillmore. 13 is Millard Fillmore. That is the peg system. That is one way to do it.

You can also use a link system with memory palaces. When you have different items, you can connect them all together. When we memorized the states of the United States, the first state is Alabama, so we pictured an album. In the album, you have a bunch of cars going by, then you really pay attention to “a last car” the last one, Alaska. Above the last car there’s this air zone that has the red and blue little spikes like you see on a meteorologist’s map. That’s the air zone or Arizona. You have Alabama,

Alaska, and Arizona. And you can do all the states by connecting them and by using associations.

You can use memory palaces for lists of words, presidents, or states. Strings of numbers, those are more for fun. We do that for Pi Day. You can memorize those pretty fast. Use it for definitions for science and for short summaries. I teach the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. On the final test for the *Iliad*, the front page is just a blank sheet of paper with lines. Students write out 24 summaries, one summary for each book of the *Iliad*. We make them rhyme. We make them fun. For instance, I think that this year number one was “Apollo’s plague is bacon and Achilles’ babe is taken”—pretty easy to put into a memory palace. I actually give two class periods to help them put them into a memory palace. We do it together, especially early on. You send them home with no help and it doesn’t happen. That is why I think that this is a tool of learning. You actually need to assist students through it.

I teach logic. We study logical fallacies—24 of them and they memorize all 24.

Memory is a tool of learning. There is no claim that just because you put something into a memory palace that you are going to have it forever. Nothing creates memory stuff that lasts forever. We choose carefully the things that I have them put in memory palaces. A lot of times, we memorize the tools of learning. For instance, in my hermeneutics class, I give them a really big list at the beginning of the year of things to observe in Scripture. The list includes contrast, comparison, cause and effect, figures of speech, nouns, pronouns, questions and answers, all those things. At the beginning of the year we put them into a memory palace and use them all year. So, I’ll say that I want them to do an observation markup. They take their Bibles, circle the words and make connections. And I don’t give them the list back. They go through the memory palace and they do this. The same works with the logical fallacies and with the Veritas history flashcards. I’ve worked through with

each one of my kids helping them put the Veritas cards into their heads. You can fill a whole house with Veritas flashcards. We've done it.

In regards to precalculus functions, if I can do that anybody can do it. Remember, I went to every classroom, no discrimination at all and one of the first things that I came to was "Oh, we memorize these things; they are called functions." So I had these: a line on the ear for linear; square root, a square with a root coming off of it. There's cube root; you can picture a cube and the root goes off in a different direction. You can create visual things out of even the strangest things.

Here's an example with Scripture. My oldest son is somewhat of a crammer, always has been. He came to me, about 9:00 p.m. Thursday night. Of course, the teacher just told him that day to memorize that entire chapter of Proverbs (not really). So, he came to me and he said, "I need to memorize Proverbs, chapter 13." I said "OK, let's sit down and do it; how long do you have?" "Well, it's due tomorrow." So, we took about an hour and we put the book of Proverbs 13 into a memory palace. The interesting thing is, because we put it into a memory palace, was it cramming? Technically, yes. We waited until the last minute. But in a very strange way, he still knows it because it was a visual memory. In some ways, it is still cramming but it stays in there.

Whenever you are memorizing something like Proverbs, how do you get the "As" and the "ans" and the "ands" in there? You have to be somewhat familiar with the work. You have to have read through it a couple times before you can put it into a memory palace. A memory palace acts as a link to the knowledge that you have. We had to read through the passage a few times. My son had already been taught through Proverbs 13. He didn't have it memorized but he had been taught through it. So, whenever I would say, "A wise man does . . ." he would be able to kind of give it back to me. In some ways, you are just creating two or three images that really remind you of the proverb verse that you

have read through a few times. It is harder with things that need to be verbatim. You have to really be familiar with the work. The memory palace creates the link to the knowledge.

So that is how a memory palace works. For further understanding of this method, consider reading *Moonwalking with Einstein* by Joshua Foer, or watching his TEDx Talk on YouTube. If we really seek to teach tools to our students, finding ways to help them remember them would be a great place to start.

RESOURCES:

1. Joshua Foer, *Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything* (New York, NY: The Penguin Press, 2010).
2. Joshua Foer, "Feats of Memory Anyone Can Do" (TEDx talk, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6PoUg7jXsA>)
3. Tony Buzan, *Use Your Perfect Memory: Dramatic New Techniques for Improving Your Memory* (New York, NY: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1984).
4. Harry Lorayne and Jerry Lucas, *The Memory Book: The Classic Guide to Improving Your Memory at Work, at School, and at Play* (New York: NY, Stein & Day, 1973).
5. Joan Minninger, *Total Recall: How to Boost Your Memory Power* (Emmaus, PA: Rodale Press, 1983).
6. Ronnie White's Brain Athlete YouTube Channel, <http://www.youtube.com/user/rwhite73>.
7. Scott Welch, "Memory Tools," Prezi presentation from 2014 ACCS Repairing the Ruins Conference: http://prezi.com/xnhmt6bjpo1h/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy



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