

Appendix:

Biannually from the middle of June to the end of August, a Karl May Festival takes place in Bad Segeberg in Northern Germany.

#150656

MOTIVATION: WHY PEOPLE LEARN?

March 13, 2000

Edward S. Gleason

Edleff Schwaab grew up in a small town in Nazi Germany. In 1936, when his family gathered for the very first time around their large, mahogany table radio and turned it on, out came the voice of Adolph Hitler. Later, when the Fuehrer came to town, Edleff climbed a tree that grew right next to the parade route. Hitler stood in an open car; as he passed beneath Edleff's tree, he looked up. Their eyes met.

Conscripted into the infantry, just as his unit was to be dispatched to Stalingrad, Edleff's life was saved by orders sending him to officer's candidate school quite near Berlin. The war over, caught in the Russian sector of Germany, Edleff fled, alone, by night, across the border, and finally made his way to Boston University, where he undertook and completed his Ph.D. in clinical psychology. For twenty years, as professional colleagues and friends at two different independent schools, Edleff and I conferred weekly.

More than once Edleff would say to me, "Motivation, Ted, motivation, the ultimate question is motivation. Why do people learn? Figure it out. Bottle it. Market it. You will never have to work again."

Motivation: why people learn?

During my two-year tenure as a naval officers, no one knew of my intention to study for the ministry; nonetheless, I was appointed Character Guidance Officer, equipped with printed lectures to deliver to young, untutored men on the subject of moral values. What I learned is that a young officer, fresh out of Harvard College, standing before a group of sailors from Arkansas and Mississippi, lecturing them on how to behave properly, inspires only one thing: ridicule. It is a futile exercise. A great deal happens, but no learning takes place.

Although I remember very little from the sixteen courses I took at Harvard College, I retain a vast amount, most, of the material covered in three years at Virginia Theological Seminary. But the most significant course I did take at Harvard was taught by Sam Beer, Professor of Government. Thirty years later, Beer and I chanced to meet at a dinner in Boston. I cornered Beer to tell him how much his course had meant to me. Beer then recounted stories of former students, who had offered similar testimony. Half an hour later, wanting to escape, Beer framed an exit line and then he was gone. What he said as he departed was:

"How I envy you. You teach in secondary school. You teach yourself. I have to teach my discipline."

Sam Beer did teach his discipline. But what countless former students remember is the person: Sam Beer.

Motivation: why people learn?

The founding document, the deed of gift, of The Phillips Exeter Academy contains this memorable statement: "But above all, it is expected that the attention of instructors to the disposition of the minds and morals of the youth under their charge will exceed every other care; well considering that though goodness without knowledge is weak and feeble, yet knowledge without goodness is dangerous, and that both united form the noblest character; and lay the surest foundation of usefulness to mankind." (repeat).

The Academy asserts year in year out, that while it does well with the knowledge curriculum, more work is needed to meet the Founder's intentions for goodness. One of those efforts, an important gathering of educators in Exeter's Bicentennial year, 1981, focused on how people learn goodness. The conference report appeared in an excellent book, edited by Charles L. Terry, Knowledge Without Goodness Is Dangerous. The conclusions should surprise no one. Goodness is taught, it concluded, by engaging faculty members who embody such goodness. They teach themselves, but first they must have a self, a good self, to teach.

Teachers are found in classrooms, to be sure, but they appear in other places, other contexts.

Motivation: why people learn?

William Howard Warren, Billy, attended our eldest daughter's third birthday party. Each of them is now over forty. I have known Billy for his entire life, officiated at his wedding and his wife's funeral, after her death from cancer.

When Billy was nine, his family realized he needed to get out of their small New Hampshire town, and he attended St. Thomas Choir School in New York City. After graduation in the eighth grade, it was still best for Bill to attend a school away from home. They telephoned me, in my first year as Headmaster. Mid-summer, the only faculty member in residence, I conducted the admissions interview.

Billy Warren looked around the office. "Well, Rev. (my Exeter nick name)," he said, "What do you do around here, I mean, other than being school minister, or whatever they call it?"

"Actually, I'm headmaster."

"No, no," said Billy. "You can't be headmaster. No. Not you. You're too real to be a headmaster."

Naturally, Warren was admitted and spent four years at Noble and Greenough School as my advisee and two as my student. Senior year, Billy told me that

Nobles was to be the end of his formal schooling. No college for him; he'd go to work as a carpenter and builder. I arranged for an internship with a young graduate, quite like Steve McCord in this city, who managed a construction business, building and renovating houses. Bill was a natural. One small problem, however, remained. Bill needed to pass French to graduate, and French was not going well. Monsieur Marie Michel Bevillard, his teacher, was a French Roman Catholic, who attended a pre-Tridentine Roman Catholic parish, where Mass was said in Latin, the Pope believed a heretic, the Vichy government the salvation of France, Petain a national hero, the holocaust a Jewish invention.

Bevillard was a problem for both Gleason and Warren, and Bevillard declared that Warren had no facility for language and would flunk. Fortunately, Bevillard also honored hierarchy, and the headmaster declared that Warren would pass, which he did, despite Bevillard's continued assertion that Warren had no facility, none, for language, foreign or his own.

Ten years passed, now an independent entrepreneur, Billy's fortunes had increased. He had just been entrusted with a large contract to supervise construction of twenty four condominiums in Majorca. Tradesmen were engaged, workers hired, all business conducted in Spanish; moreover, on his trips to Barcelona, he met a brilliant young female lawyer, and they fell in love. Bill went to Berlitz. Bill worked on Spanish. Bill built the condominiums, made a significant amount of money and proposed to the young woman.

When Billy and Anna were married in Barcelona in the midst of Ana's large family compound, person after person, family members and family friends, congratulated me as Bill's headmaster. In halting English, they told me that he spoke Spanish so well, so very well. Why, it was as if he had been born in Spain. I never told them of M. Bevillard.

Motivation: why people learn?

Edleff was right. If we could just figure it out, bottle it and market it, we'd be rich and famous. Each of us knows more than a little of how and why we have learned on our very own what we know to be most important, central and life-giving. But sometimes it's a mystery, and sometimes, it's even a miracle. Despite the prevailing wisdom that the male of our species is not monogamous, or as it is more crassly described, "carries his brains in his balls," when I left the nest where I was raised, I realized that my parents had taught me, engrained in me, some very basic, central truths. Among these was the profound conviction that life-long, monogamous marriage is rooted to fidelity. Fidelity: a charming, old-fashioned idea that just happens to be universally valid. My parents gave me that conviction.

I can neither diagram nor document how my parents did it, but I have an idea. Once a day, every day, all of us, living under one roof at 55 Farlow Road, gathered around the family dinner table. There, in the context of a meal, there was conversation, give and take. There, I learned most of those things I hold dear: the use of language, the joy of writing, the Book of Common Prayer, the importance of worship and preaching, the value of education, the centrality of the professions - law, medicine, education, the church.

During my years as headmaster, 1971-1987, the custom of the daily family meal became increasingly less frequent. That trend continues today, but even then, as parent and educator, the prevalent absence of the daily family meal concerned me. Quite while this was happening, the presence of Asian students in our schools and colleges grew markedly, and the number of Asian names on lists of those who had achieved academic excellence increased dramatically. In 1984 the Christian Science Monitor reported a study explaining this phenomenon. It cited Asian family cohesiveness and family structure, but even more important, the study asserted, there was one fact, one consistent daily reality that set Asian children apart from their counterparts: the daily family meal. Once a day,

without fail, the study concluded Asian families gathered around the table, as a family, to eat, to talk, to listen, to learn. The family meal created a marked difference in academic skill and achievement.

Motivation: why people learn?

Anne and I moved to Cincinnati nearly five years ago. The transition, has been full of new experiences, new people, warm and welcoming. We have been blessed. One of the most significant new friends I have met since moving to Cincinnati, however, lives in Oklahoma, surrounded by razor wire. His name is Bo Don Cox, known to the Oklahoma Department of Corrections at #150656.

Bo writes for publication. He and I correspond regularly, weekly. We reflect on mystery and motivation - why people learn.

My regular visits to see #150656 all begin with razor wire. Razor wire is the first thing you see - shining, glinting, glaring in the Oklahoma sun - rolls and rolls and rolls of it, filling all the space between high wire fences. Behind and beyond, are buildings, block concrete, unwelcoming, forbidding.

Through the main door. You wait, and then you wait some more. You wait for as long as an hour. Slow down. Let's be clear about who's in charge, and who is not. You have no rights, not if you come to see #150656. Visitors are not welcome. It's hard, very hard, to get into prison, unless you're a reject, an outcast, brought here to become invisible. Inmates are worthless. So too are those who visit them. Staff is terse, not polite; civil, not helpful. No warmth, no humanity, no decency abide here. Prison is graceless, mean-spirited, and so too are its people.

As I wait, I say, silently, over and over, to myself, "I shouldn't have come. No, that's not right. I'm here for one reason, one reason only - Bo Cox, #150656."

Six times - or is it seven or eight, I lose track - I've made the long journey to the desolate State of

Oklahoma and Joseph Harp Correctional Facility in Lexington, to meet and talk with Bo Don Cox. More than thirteen years he's been in prison, ever since that night, July 26, 1986, after a long day of drinking and smoking dope - the usual - when he and Bart Innis, his brother's best friend, days shy of his eighteenth birthday, got into a fight. The fight ended. Bo drove toward home, but before he got there, he made a grave mistake. He turned off the road, swung around, and went back. "No one's calls me chicken," he shouted out the window, as he drove, fast, too fast, back, back to where Bart and the gang still gathered.

He pulled up with a screech of tires and spray of gravel, took his baseball bat from the truck, squared off with Bart. Then it happened. Bo hit him with the bat. It was all over in an instant. No idea what he'd done. All he meant to do was win the fight. But it was over now, and Bart didn't move, not a muscle. When morning came, Bo was in jail, charged with murder. Three months later, the trial ended; Bo was convicted and sent to serve a life sentence: Oklahoma Department of Corrections number 150656.

Bart has never been outside the State of Oklahoma, spent most of his life in Coalgate, a small town where he went to school, played ball, served as an acolyte in St. Peter's Episcopal Church, began to drink beer and smoke marijuana at the same time his parents divorced. Bo's life fell apart. Bo is able in every way. There is virtually nothing he does not do well. During his crucial adolescent years, however, Bo's life was marked exclusively by potential and not accomplishment. What he did best - all he did in fact - was to get drunk and to get high.

Without warning, my wait is over. I'm summoned, by name, to surrender my Ohio Driver's License, issued a Visitor's Pass to see #150656. The massive steel door clicks open, I enter an airless chamber; the first door clicks shut. I wait, minutes, endless minutes. No reason. Just wait. I see Bo on the other side of the window, standing in the Visitor's Room. We wave. The second door clicks open; I walk through. Clang. We are locked in together. Bo steps forward. We embrace. It makes me uncomfortable. In the days of my

youth, men did not embrace in Boston, but not to do so here and now would be impolite.

The very first time Bo and I met, five years ago, we were in this same room. Those were days of less restriction in Joe Harp, and Bo and I were allowed to wander here, and there, out through the prison yard, stop in the ceramic shack or the tiny newspaper office, hidden away in an attic space, visit Bo's two-man cell, the Mess Hall, and the Chapel. Everywhere there were small groups, Bo's friends. We met and talked, easily. I tried to appear comfortable, but I was new, from away, back east, older, and I could never forget that we were all locked in here together. During every one of those conversations I was aware of the faces and the men who wore them - bright, responsive, straightforward, clear-headed. Most had killed another man, drugs and alcohol always involved. Terrible crimes, once committed, kept them in prison, perhaps forever, crimes made possible by drugs and alcohol.

Motivation: why people learn.

But it came to pass that these men, all the ones I met, sought sobriety. Vintage French wine is not available in prison, but virtually any other mind-altering substance is. Lifeline, a program sponsored by the Episcopal Church, was their path to sobriety, and on April 6, 1990, Bo became clean and sober. He has used no drug since. He and his friends attend an AA meeting every day.

Times have changed in the Oklahoma Department of Corrections and today there is a new regime. My visit with Bo will be confined to the Visitor's Room. No one else is present; we are completely private. I have come all these miles to talk with Bo, to hear him speak, and to offer words of my own. I relax.

Bo is clean, fit, handsome, open, easy, responsible. Face-to-face, he is just as intense as he is in writing. His intensity inspires confidence, clear thought, good communication. We have nothing in common. We have everything in common. We have come to know one another through words, through prayer, through Christ, through bonds deeper than love and family.

After achieving sobriety, Bo began to write, won third place, \$3000, in a writing contest. He sent \$50.00 of his prize money to Forward Movement, saying that DAY BY DAY had been part of his life, all of his life, and asked to write a month of meditations. Bo's meditations in November 1995 produced a torrent of response - six hundred letters. Just as Bo appeared in print, I made my first trip to Oklahoma, not an easy journey. Prison is smothering, life-denying. I hate everything about it and the realities it presses upon me. But I go to see Bo.

Bo is a miracle. Thirteen years in a world that stifles, where meaning is absent, a place whose goal is to demean and dehumanize. Here, right here, Bo has found sobriety and purpose, abiding friendship and God. And so, as we sit and talk, I marvel, enveloped in awe.

Motivation: why people learn?

When Bo first arrived at Harp, the warden was an unusual, some would say exceptional, even spirit-filled man, ahead of and out of step with prevailing prison management mentality, named Jack Cowley. He believed his task as warden was to help restore men to humanity, decency, freedom. Jack Cowley gave inmates as much freedom as was available in prison. He gave them all the freedom he hoped they could manage, which was more freedom than any of them had ever known. Jack Cowley also offered friendship, support, new ways to be with and for one another and with him.

There were abuses, to be sure, but there was also growth. Once the men were allowed make some of their own choices, a ground swell of enthusiasm emerged from them to create a clean and sober prison - 100% clean and sober. The movement took root and grew and grew, especially among the more thoughtful, engagable inmates.

But Jack Cowley was swimming up stream, against the system. It took more than a decade, but he was removed and discredited. Cowley now works in another state for Chuck Colson's organization, teaching restorative justice. Gradually, inexorably, Harp has regressed, conforming increasingly to rigid state-wide

norms. Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating discovered it is politically expedient to get tough on crime. Only 25% of the Oklahoma inmates, who are granted a parole hearing, receive parole, and the Governor signs the release of only 7% of those who have been voted parole. During Keating's years, the increase in the Oklahoma prison budget is equivalent to the decrease in state funding for education. The annual cost to keep an inmate in the Joseph Harp Correctional Facility is the same as the yearly tuition at The Phillips Exeter Academy.

Three hours have passed. A guard appears; our visit is over. No reason. It was over. We embrace. I walk out of the room, not looking back. Bo doesn't look back. He well might - at all those misspent years. "I needed to come to prison," he had said to me that day. Bo would not say that God's hand directs his every act, but Bo is clear about God's presence. As our visit concluded, Bo said: "If I weren't married, I could stay right here. There's so much work to do. Some of it I do well."

I am wordless, with no idea what to say. He means it; the evidence abounds. When Bo speaks in person and in writing to the many thousands who read his words written from an Oklahoma prison, people listen. You can't help it. Bo speaks with authority, with clarity, with honesty. God is in his words, words spoken by a man who serves a life sentence, a recovering addict and an alcoholic.

What Bo Cox has learned about himself and about the presence of God in his life, he articulates powerfully. Countless people, who respond to him, live in other places, prisons of their own. Bo's words, and convictions cut through barriers, words spoken from inside one prison to persons living in their own prisons. Prison could be defined as the world where we find ourselves. Bo's is called Joseph Harp Correctional Facility. Once the prison is named and understood, then, and only then, is there a way out. The way out may not be what we hope or plan. It may mean staying and doing the work that has been given.

Driving away from Joe Harp to Oklahoma City, I refuse to look back at the razor wire: ugly, omnipresent representative of division and separation. I hate it. The problem is it's there, and those who manufacture it are wealthy.

Motivation: why people learn?

Bo Cox hopes that he will not spend the rest of his days wearing a blue work shirt with "Department of Corrections" stenciled in black letters across his back. Bo Cox wants to do more than follow a regimen prescribed by others who are too often his inferiors. How ironic - Bo has learned more inside prison than outside. In prison he has been given the confidence and motivation to take charge of his own life.

Late last year, Forward Movement published a book by Bo Cox, God Is Not In the Thesaurus: Stories from an Oklahoma Prison. State Senator Ben Brown sent a copy to Governor Keating, who wants to meet Bo and ask his help in establishing a recovery program for the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. What Bo has learned may soon be available to others.

As an Episcopal priest, who has spent twenty years as schoolmaster and headmaster, former students often ask me to officiate when they are married. This involves a weekend together in conversation in Cincinnati. Ten hours of conversation reaches a depth and intensity not easily achieved in the usual three hour-long sessions. Topics range widely. A great deal is said and heard.

Last spring we were visited by a couple, each thirty years old. He had been my student and advisee, his grandfather one of my dearest friends. When the boy applied to the school where I was headmaster, his test scores were well below our standards, and I informed the Admissions Committee that they need not bother reviewing his application. They were to prepare an acceptance letter for my signature, and I would assume personal responsibility throughout this student's four year career. I well remember our conversations as advisor and advisee, and during his

recent visit to Cincinnati, I was surprised to discover how well he remembered them as well.

All human beings at age fourteen have strengths and weaknesses. This young man was not different. In ninth grade he first took the prescribed course. The first semester did not go well, and he came close to failure. Then our long conversations and negotiations led to adjustments. Two years later he was an honor student, then graduated with a B average and attended a fine college.

At the conclusion of our first day of pre-marital conversation here in Cincinnati we stood in the front hall making arrangements for the coming day. My former student recalled ninth and tenth grade. "In the beginning, I had no confidence," he said. "My grades were terrible. I thought I couldn't make it. You said to me, 'Tim, I want you to concentrate all your energy in those two courses where you do well and which you most enjoy. Get A's in those courses. Do that. Everything else will take care of itself.'"

It shouldn't have been so simple, but it was. What Tim said last May was this: "What I needed was confidence, and I found it. You believed in me, and then I discovered I believed in myself. Everything took care of itself."

Motivation: why people learn?

Learning comes with confidence, self-confidence, the confidence that others believe in you, trust you, honor you. We learn because we are affirmed. Just ask Bo Don Cox #150656, and he will tell you this is the source of motivation. But Edleff Schwaab, dear friend, you can't bottle it.
