

Master Outline Rotary Speech

PARENTS, HEROES AND COMPETITION FOR MORAL AUTHORITY Current 4/1/11

My title:

PARENTS, HEROES AND COMPETITION FOR MORAL AUTHORITY

Add in : Aristotle: excellence, then, is not an act but a habit
Virtue is always the same: doing good for others

1. Told I have only 25 minutes or so... for a lawyer, that's cruel and unusual punishment
2. give an elevator speech... quick.. for me, I'll choose the elevator at the Burj Al Arab hotel in Dubai.. it has about two hundred floors.. I've got some time
3. three take away key points:
 - a. children want their parents to make them stronger
 - b. parents are competing against the world for moral authority
 - c. it's doable – it takes a little skill but it's doable
- 4.
5. tell you what I mean, share some stories and insights regarding moral reasoning in young children that I learned during 21 years in the classroom, offer some skills and techniques for enhancing parents' reasoning skills and their moral authority and share an analysis of the Rotary 4 Way Test and offer some ideas on how to advance those principles
6. parents as heroes... class 75%... MLK, Escher..
 - a. why? They help me, they feed me,

- b. Here is an intriguing statement; “My dad, because he gets up every morning to do a job he doesn’t want to do. I also respect my mom for the same reason, and I will respect anyone else who does the same.”
 - c. but if there is two categories that trump all other categories, once you talk to the children, they say my parents helped me grow up; they helped make me stronger
- 7. parents are competing against the world and they teach me to be good
 - a. authority, credibility, integrity, moral leadership
 - b. mind space.. like shelf space
 - c. Nature abhors a vacuum: if your children do not get their moral values from you, they will get them somewhere else.
- 8. Your character, your integrity, your honor, is intimately woven into what you stand for, what you represent, what you value and what you do not; what you take seriously and what you do not, across all platforms, how you treat yourself; how you treat others.
- 9. parents must be community organizers, and the smallest community is the family
- 10. Some things I have learned: children want strong parents... they expect moral guidance... students: we sit at the dinner table and my parents tell me what is good; what I that was right and what I did that was wrong
 - a. Asked to write an article in Colorado Parent: Moral authority and rudeness: can a parent establish moral authority by allowing him or herself to be treated rudely?
 - b. Not just communicate but to persuade
 - c. A culture of conversation
 - d. A dialogue: a word derived from the Greek dialogos, and its roots dia-, meaning through, and logos, meaning word and reason. A dialogue

seeks truth through words and reason. A dialogue is a deliberation process of rational inquiry where questions and answers guide toward education, insight and self-awareness.

11. Talk about serious things

- a. Children want that: you know what I like about your classes? You don't treat us like kids
- b. Yeah, it's like kids menus. I hate kids menus

12. What is good?

- a. Why is good good?
- b. Why are ethics ethical?
- c. Students: gee, I never thought of that
- d. It makes life go easier... and then your parents don't have to hire lawyers
- e. Was there ever a profession more misunderstood?
- f. By the way, I admit: any subject can be taught unethically, including ethics
- g. I am a fiduciary to the children.. the highest standard of care, like a trustee.

13. Parents should learn the skills and techniques to stretch.. broaden their children's reasoning capacity – integrate more information and values within their thinking

- a. to give a structure for reasoning, thinking, analyzing, reaching conclusions
- b. weave moral reasoning into every day life
- c. lady who drove car into S Platte River a few winters ago
- d. what person do you want to be?
- e. What person is most helpful?

- f. Dad, after speech: I had the same information. It never occurred to me to tell a story that way

14. What do I mean: make the children stronger?

- a. Drunk friend who wanted to drive
- b. Begin rationalizing; doing the devil's arithmetic, how many blocks, time of night, road is straight...
- c. Outsource morality
- d. Do the right thing. Worry about feelings later.
- e. Don't worry about being popular
- f. And what kind of person is threatening not to be your friend? Angry with you? A person who is willing to kill and or injure innocent people.
- g. That's how you create stronger children
- h. Chicken soup for the soul... well and good.. with a matzo ball, of course... but need more... need tempered steel for the mind; something they can count on; something that will hold an edge
- i. Give them a template; give them a structure;
- j. Moral challenges.. things happen in more or less the same way
- k. Help them think things through to a moral conclusion
- l. This is how parents gain moral authority

15. It is better to make your child stronger than to try to make the world easier

16. skill #2 Go from the emotion to reasoning.. not just reasoning, but moral reasoning;

- a. Steal money to buy medicine ...
- b. What is dying?

17. Get beyond clichés, get beyond the superficial

- a. As I discuss: your rhetoric illuminates your values: here's a favorite

- b. Tolerance: not saying much.. becomes indifference and then aiding and abetting
 - c. Sincere: Fred Stocking; a cockroach trying to get out of a flooding bathtub is sincere
 - d. Deeply held... immoral thoughts and immoral actions do not become moral just because they are deeply held
18. Rotary 4 Way Test: the importance of your organization: DeToqueville's Mediating Institutions: a group of individuals, the town commons....
19. Of the things we think, say, or do:
- a. 1. Is it the truth?
 - b. 2. Is it fair to all concerned?
 - c. 3. Will it build good will and better friendships?
 - d. 4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?
20. Analysis:
- a. Let's see an example of a practical application of moral clarity and reasoning. Let's analyze the Rotary 4-Way Test
 - b. Of the things we think, say, or do: Is it the truth?
 - c. How know? Need Intellectual skills, Research, analysis, Is it self evident? What if someone disagrees? What if someone offers a competing 'truth'?
 - d. Function of rhetoric: more than communicate.. but to persuade...
 - e. And if it's the truth, so what? What do you do with it? What actions do you take?
21. Way 2. Is it fair to all concerned?
- a. What if disagreement about what is fair?
 - b. Do you outsource your morality just because someone disagrees?

- c. What skills and principles and virtues do you draw upon to make the argument that something is or is not fair?
 - d. What do you stand for?
 - e. Do you slither into moral relativism just because someone disagrees?
Well, I think it's fair but you don't so there really is no fairness at all!
 - f. Do you give someone else the power to define your morality?
 - g. Whether one person disagrees with you or whether one hundred million people disagree with you is absolutely irrelevant as to whether something is moral or immoral, fair or unfair.
22. Way 3. Will it build good will and better friendships?
23. Way 4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?
- a. What if it cannot be beneficial to all concerned?
 - b. What if some challenges you that the anticipated action is not beneficial?
 - c. Do you abandon your position?
 - d. What if it's beneficial to only 80% of the concerned? Do you not take the action?
 - e. What if there are irreconcilable differences? A drunk driver injured your child. You want justice but the drunk driver wants the charges dropped because the police officer didn't perform the blood test within two hours of arrest?
24. My point:
- a. how do we give life and vitality to these noble tests?
 - b. How do you translate noble beliefs and principles into action?
 - c. How do we go from the abstract to the concrete?
 - d. How do we teach judgment?
 - e. How do we teach analysis?

- f. these words mean different things to different people.
- g. Do we have the courage to implement those tests?
- h. It takes skill, analysis, thought, hard work....

25. Summary 4 Way Test analysis: Doing good is not easy. Anyone that teaches a child that doing good is easy or that it happens naturally is weakening that child.

- a. If you are going to teach these four way tests to youngsters, how will you do it?
- b. My suggestion: you must teach moral character; you must teach honor; you must teach pride; you must teach self discipline and mental toughness,

26. Here's the thing.. the rub... if you believe in virtue, you have a moral duty to pursue virtue. Otherwise, you violate your own beliefs, your own standards, your own values. You run the risk of falling short, in essence, failing.

- a. Far safer to believe in nothing.. to have no values... for then you can never fail. Other than having lived a valueless life.
- b. Here's another way of phrasing the issue: if these are Rotary's values, then Rotary should make the case why those values have value.
- c. How do we teach character, how do we teach mental toughness, how do we teach the analytical skills that are necessary to implement The 4 Way Test?

27. Incentives and disincentives

- a. That which is rewarded is repeated
- b. That which is taxed or made costly is diminished

28. Don't worry about skills;

- a. Children don't demand perfection.. you may feel like a hybrid between a silent movie and The Rain Man: don't worry.

- b. Children want you..
 - c. How does a child spell love? T I M E
29. You don't have to own the children, as one speaker told me.
- a. Aunts, uncles, grandparents, anyone that engages with children
30. The joy
- a. Erik: Teddy Roosevelt's "The Battle of Life"
 - i. Those who throw their bodies into the ring, get them bloodied, and if lose, lose honorably for they have tried.
 - ii. Those cold and timid souls that taste neither victory nor defeat
 - b. Erik: I had so many words in my head I couldn't get them out... but now I know what I wanted to say. Courage is like the fire, and character is like the wood, and the more you add wood, the brighter the flame. You can have those moments. Erik was in third grade.
 - c. If I can do it, you can do it.
31. Nothing is more powerful an influence than putting your arm around your child or caressing her face and asking, "What do you think?"
- a. It makes them valued; honored;
32. Students tell me, in often poetic terms, what they hope for.. what they value
- a. "I want to know if I can feel proud of what I do."
 - b. "I want to make the world better."
 - c. And virtue is always the same: doing good for others
33. I hope my book solves problems; offers solutions
34. Spencer: my head hurts
- a. We were talking about the qualities of a good friend. I gave examples of good and bad friends
 - b. Little fellow, Spencer, approached me after the class. My head hurts.

- c. You don't understand: you made me think so much you made my head hurt.
 - d. So, hurt some heads, but do so with purpose, with grace and with love
- 35.speech will be downloadable on my website

Thank you

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