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TRUTH THROUGH PERSONALITY

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QUINTILIAN defined the orator as a good man skilled in speaking. Might we not paraphrase this and define the teacher of speech as the good man skilled in teaching? 'Longinus' declared, "Great utterance is an echo of greatness of soul." St. Augustine reminds us, "A man's character is to be judged not by what he knows but by what he loves." He also said, "What I live by, I impart." Phillips Brooks defined preaching as "truth through personality." For my theme let me borrow the words of this modern prophet and say that we as teachers of speech are trying to make the truth prevail through personality.

I have attended many of our conventions at which the President of the Speech Association of America spoke. Judging from past addresses the pattern for this talk should be on the state of the association, or the case for speech, or on the opportunities or dangers facing the profession, or speech at the crossroads. But I have noted that speech as

a department flourishes in an institution when its banner is held high by great teachers. Think for a moment of our illustrious dead: Thomas C. Trueblood, Robert I. Fulton, Ralph Dennis, George Pierce Baker, J. P. Ryan, Ray K. Immel, Robert Cumnock, Solomon H. Clark, John Dolman, Jr., and many others. All of you here today have been touched by a great teacher of speech, or you would not be here. Let me talk, therefore, about truth through personality.

Woodrow Wilson said the most important man on the college faculty is the philosopher. I wonder. I would say that the most important teacher is the speech teacher. If I were a college administrator, I would be more careful about the appointment of a teacher of public speaking than of anyone else on my faculty. The teacher of public speaking is more than a philosopher, for he stands at the point of integration of the student's ideas. The values that the public speaking teacher holds are likely to set the tone of the class, and, in the case of the small college, the entire campus. The philosopher contemplates ideas; the speech teacher energizes ideas; the student generates ideas.

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Let me list for you ten facets of the personality of the teacher of speech through which the truth shines; and then, let me comment upon each as time permits:

1. The good teacher of speech is a good man.
2. The good teacher of speech does not violate the personality of his student.
3. The good teacher of speech is sincere.
4. The good teacher of speech sees his student as a whole man.
5. The good teacher of speech teaches the student and not the subject.
6. The good teacher of speech sets the stage for self-discovery.
7. The good teacher of speech is an idealist rather than an experimentalist or a realist.
8. The good teacher of speech is interested in the community.
9. The good teacher of speech draws upon the accumulated wisdom of the past.
10. The good teacher of speech is a religious man.

1. *The good teacher of speech is a good man.* Goodness is hard to define, and yet we all know what the term means. The good teacher might be called a "disciple of the good." Dean J. Douglas Brown of Princeton University said it this way, "In liberal education no teacher is a better teacher than he is a man. It is harder to teach men than to teach a subject. Therefore, it is doubly hard to find the good teacher in liberal education, because he must be a good man who can teach well."

Perhaps Dick Kazmeier, the all-American from Princeton, came in touch with one of the good men sought by Dean Brown, for Dick Kazmeier, when asked if he was going into professional football, said, "I should say not. They

have nothing to offer me but money."

William James said that the aim of a college education was to teach the student how to tell a good man when he saw one.

2. *The good teacher of speech does not violate the personality of his student.* The teacher of public speaking stands in a peculiar relationship to his students. The student expects criticism but no teacher has a right to be sarcastic, mean, vicious, or trivial. Sarcasm, Stephen Leacock reminds us, "scrapes the flesh of human feeling with a hoe."

The good teacher of speech realizes that each student is different in his receptivity to criticism, and that public rebuke alienates the student. Like the physician, he does not violate the confidence of his students. He judges the student, in Burke's words, not only by what he is, but also by what he ought to be.

Cardinal Newman's definition of a gentleman would describe the good teacher of speech: "It is almost a definition of a gentleman to say that he is one who never inflicts pain."

3. *The good teacher of speech is sincere.* The good teacher never pretends to be interested. He *is* interested. Each student is his concern. The essential difference between the philosophy of Communism and that of Democracy is in the word *sincerity*. Charles Malik, delegate from Lebanon to the United Nations, put it this way, "The fault therefore is not with the inherent recalcitrance of our problems, but with the frightful dearth of love and care in the world today."

The good teacher of speech inveighs against "pleasure without conscience, cleverness without character, science without humanity, wealth without work, industry without morality, politics with-

out principles, and religion without reality."

4. *The good teacher of speech sees his student as a whole man.* In other classes the student may be regarded as a partial man, as a student of physics or government, but in speech classes he is a total man. Everything the student is and hopes to be up to the time of standing at the focal point of his audience and occasion is of concern to the teacher. The student is the product of his home, his church, and his community, as well as the classroom. He is the product of his hopes and fears, his prides and his shames. The teacher of speech, to paraphrase Robert Frost, helps his charges to look back upon their past with pride and forward to their future with hope. Personality is the indestructible part of the student. I like the story of the professor who always tipped his hat to his students, for, he said, he never knew when he was in the presence of genius.

5. *The good teacher of speech teaches the student and not the subject.* Lee Emerson Bassett of Stanford University said:

It isn't the particular technique that you are teaching; it is the individual and what you can make of him, how can you draw him out—what kind of man can you make of him, how can you free him from his frustrations, free him of impediments, of fears, help him to declare himself and feel that he is a man among men, one who can develop himself and do his part in the civilization we are trying to preserve. Ours is a high calling, one that we can be proud of; let no one apologize for being a teacher of speech, because we are doing work that no other department can do. We are getting at the individual.

In every phase of speech we get at the individual; remedial speech and hearing, oral interpretation, public address, debate, discussion, dramatic arts—all coax into being latent personality traits.

6. *The good teacher of speech sets the stage for self-discovery.* Our colleague Gail Densmore once wrote, "The learning speaker in taking the platform is venturing into an entirely new experience wherein he is beset with fears and thrilled with pride. In these crucial periods, a boost from the instructor can give the student the needed courage and inspiration to outdo himself." In no other class is there such a struggle for self-hood.

Not only in speaking techniques but in the student's thought life the teacher stands as a friend and guide. The good teacher of speech aids the student in his mental growth. For example, in religion the teacher does not take the iconoclast's pleasure in poking fun, in making cynical jibes at infantile religious beliefs of a former age, but leads the student to a mature faith of awe and reverence before an expanding universe.

The student is led through a study of invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery to a larger realization of himself and what he might become.

Teaching can never become humdrum to the teacher who is always standing on the threshold of a student's search for and realization of himself.

7. *The good teacher of speech is an idealist rather than an experimentalist or a realist.* Paraphrasing the outline of idealism by J. Donald Butler of Princeton Theological Seminary in his book *Four Philosophies and Their Practice in Education and Religion*, we might postulate these ideal qualifications of the teacher of speech:

1. He should be an excellent technician.
2. He should be a specialist in the knowledge of his students.
3. He should command the respect of the student.
4. He should be a personal friend of the individual student.

5. He should awaken in the student the desire to learn and to excel.
6. He should be a master of the art of living.
7. He should be a co-worker of God in the perfecting of man.
8. He should capably communicate his subject.
9. He should appreciate the subject he teaches.
10. He is always learning.
11. He is a maker of democracies.
12. He is acutely sensitive to the developing self-hood of his students, always ready to give latitude for expression and growth and hoping that the students will go beyond himself in accomplishment.

8. *The good teacher of speech is interested in the community.* You may remember the insistence of Dean Ralph Dennis upon this point in his "One Imperative Plus." The good teacher of speech knows the great people and issues of his day; he also knows the local men and local issues of his community. We teachers of speech are proud of Wayne Morse, Karl Mundt, and Josh Lee; they are serving their generation.

A story about Thomas C. Trueblood illustrates my point. Although a Quaker, Professor Trueblood served on the pulpit committee of The First Methodist Church throughout his Ann Arbor days. Once when the church was seeking a new pastor, Professor Trueblood reported to the committee that he thought a young man by the name of Arthur Stalker, preaching in Madison, Wisconsin, was their man, but he was frail. However, Professor Trueblood advised the committee to call him if he would agree to keep in condition by playing golf with him every good day. So for twenty-five years of a beautiful ministry in the Ann Arbor pulpit Arthur Stalker and Thomas C. Trueblood could be seen out on the golf links. And more recently, when Professor Trueblood was in his eighties, he was instrumental in calling Charles Brashares from a great Dayton pulpit to Ann Arbor to guide in

the building of a new million-dollar edifice. From this task Charles Brashares went on to become Bishop of the Methodist Church in the Chicago area.

9. *The good teacher of speech draws upon the accumulated wisdom of the past.* The teacher of speech knows he is a part of a noble discipline. He is proud to be the channel through which his intellectual forebears make their influence felt. The theatre, public address with its rhetorical background, remedial speech and hearing with their dependence upon physics, audiology, anatomy, acoustics, radio, and television, speech pedagogy, and oral interpretation are fields with respectable bodies of information which the teacher of speech knows.

The good teacher of speech is a person of substance; he has earned degrees; he is a student. He is no quack. He has not sought short cuts. He is one of the best educated men on the faculty. He has high standards of scholarship.

The teacher of speech will be careful to lead the student to a body of knowledge upon which he can draw for wisdom when his practice outruns his theory.

10. *The good teacher of speech is a religious man.* In the same sense that Maxwell Anderson found his religion in the theatre, so the teacher of speech finds his religion in his classroom. He sees there the spirit of man struggling with good and evil, and he knows the good man must triumph.

The good teacher of speech sees in the following religious experience of Judge Harold R. Medina an experience that parallels his own. Substitute teacher for judge in the following:

It was not long after I became a judge that I began to feel a new sense of responsibility. It is something very difficult to explain. It was not simply that I wanted to be right and that I took my duties seriously. There came a

feeling that everything I did, even the decision of nice questions of interpretation of mere rules of procedure, was in some way becoming a part of a huge fabric which on the whole was part and parcel of the moral law governing mankind and which must of necessity be of divine origin.

As a religious man the teacher denies the validity of many worldly precepts. He denies with Wordsworth that getting and spending is the end of life. He denies the philosophy that nothing is right or wrong; thinking makes it so. He denies the principle that the only wrong is in getting caught. He denies the theory that one should treat men as means rather than as ends. He denies that loyalty to one's friends transcends loyalty to an ideal, that might makes right. He denies the principle of every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost, of get while the getting is good. He denies that religion is the opiate of the masses.

On the contrary, he affirms the principle that we are our brother's keeper, that we must do unto others as we would have them do unto us. He believes that truth crushed to earth will rise again, that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He accepts the principle, what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul. He believes that man does not live by bread alone, that all men are created equal. He realizes that the heart of the universe is spiritual and perceives that life has meaning.

You may remember some essentially religious ideas of William Faulkner about the place of the writer in society. May I adapt what he said to the teacher of speech:

I believe that man will not merely endure; he will prevail.

He is immortal, not because he alone among the creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance.

It is the teacher's duty to teach about these things.

It is his privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past.

The teacher's voice need not merely be the record of man, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail.

The good teacher of speech has a mission in the same sense the preacher and the physician have. We profess, we stand for something as they do. In these days when Truth is being crucified by the Communists, the good teacher of speech hears Truth cry out, "Who will speak for me?" And the good teacher of speech answers, "Not only will I speak for you, but I shall train others to be your advocate!"

In our classrooms the repeated and incessant query must be accentuated for students, "Is it true?" From our classrooms they should emerge sustained with the promise, "The truth shall make us free!"

For we know the sobering truth of Wallace Stevens' lines:

How simply the fictive hero becomes the real;
How gladly with proper words the soldier
dies,

If he must, or lives on the bread of faithful
speech.

The need of the free world in her peril reminds the teacher, who would utter the truth through personality, of that dedicatory quatrain of Robert Browning:

Round the cape of a sudden came the sea,
And the Sun looked over the mountain's rim;
And straight was the path of gold for him,
And the need of a world of men for me.

