

the talon

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from the Head

For all of us, the world is competing for our attention. On an hourly basis, we are bombarded by notifications, short videos, and endless scrolling designed to grab our attention and pull us from what we were doing to what it wants us to do. These constant interruptions take us out of the now. But it can also feel that anything outside of this bombardment of attention-grabbing dings, hums, and chimes is not worth our time.

Even reading has become gamified, digital, and easily digestible. While I encourage reading in whatever form, personally, when I read on a tablet like an iPad, the glass is a barrier, and I inevitably get distracted by notifications. Almost all students should be reading more. C.S. Lewis, one of the great writers of the twentieth century, captured the importance of reading when he wrote, "In reading great literature I become a thousand men and yet remain myself" (*A Reading Life*). Reading allows students to step outside their own bubble and into the lives, cultures, and experiences of others, while still forming their own sentiments about the world around them. Few activities can do that.

Reading strengthens the mind in ways that no shortcut can replace. For the auditory learners out there, I challenge that the listener loses something essential when eyes and mind are busy with other tasks while listening. Self-admission, I might just be one of those who have no strength for multitasking. Reading builds vocabulary, sharpens critical thinking, and improves writing and communication. Students who read regularly don't just perform better academically; they learn how to follow complex ideas, weigh perspectives, and think deeply. Those skills are crucial to life outside of the academic world.

Just as important, students should not just be reading more, they should be reading widely. In C.S. Lewis' *A Reading Life*, he focuses on the importance of reading a children's book, fantasy, epics, science, history, theology, etc. Reading widely challenges our attention and thoughts, and it's not about escaping reality, it is about applying the lessons learned through a book to our reality. Reading is about preparing for the crucible moments we will face. We can learn about courage by reading about Sam's unwavering dedication to Frodo. We can learn about faith by reading about Abraham Lincoln's newfound trust in God during the latter part of the Civil War. We can learn how to handle power and responsibility by reading about a wall-crawling teenager named Peter.

So, on this cold and icy day, pick up a book. Any kind. Let it challenge you, delight you, and shape you. For a time, ignore the dings, hums, and chimes, and let a story unveil itself to you and allow yourself to be changed. As C.S. Lewis understood so well, a reading life is a larger life, and it's one every person deserves.

In Christ,



Jared D. Tilley

The **ROARING** **TWENTIES**

OUR 8TH-GRADE STUDENTS STEPPED BACK IN TIME FOR OUR 4TH ANNUAL ROARING '20S-THEMED MURDER MYSTERY PARTY, AN EVENT THAT COMBINED HISTORY, CREATIVITY, AND CRITICAL THINKING. DRESSED IN PERIOD-INSPIRED ATTIRE, STUDENTS TOOK ON CHARACTER ROLES, ANALYZED CLUES, AND WORKED COLLABORATIVELY TO SOLVE THE MYSTERY WHILE IMMERSING THEMSELVES IN THE CULTURE AND ATMOSPHERE OF THE 1920S. THIS EVENT HELPED REINFORCE SKILLS SUCH AS TEAMWORK, PROBLEM-SOLVING, AND HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING, ALL WHILE GIVING STUDENTS A FUN AND MEMORABLE WAY TO ENGAGE WITH THE ERA. IT WAS AN EXCITING HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR AND A GREAT EXAMPLE OF LEARNING COMING TO LIFE BEYOND THE TEXTBOOK.

-MATTHEW MULLINS



FUTURE focus

“Our business is people; we just sell houses,” said Mrs. Victoria Tilley, when she came on Wednesday, January 21st, to visit the 11th grade class and tell us about her career. When it comes to loving people and being present for them during the most important moments of their lives, that is where Mrs. Victoria Tilley and her career as a realtor truly thrive. Regardless of how comfortable someone is with constant interaction, the heart of real estate is service. It isn’t just selling houses; it’s laughing, crying, and creating opportunities for meaningful moments, because the most important part of life is connection.



If building, guiding, understanding, and caring for people is your specialty, real estate is an option. I never realized how much client interaction is required. You aren’t just working with someone who needs to buy a house; you are helping a family that needs more space for a baby on the way, someone making a big move away from everything they know, or someone starting completely fresh. You are helping create stability for others.

With over 20 years of experience, her personal connection to real estate was beautiful to hear about because it never revolved around her. Everything she shared focused on genuine connection in its rawest form. From negotiating with other realtors, discussing terms that work best for her clients, and managing endless paperwork and phone calls, everything is centered on the impact of her work. Ninety-five percent of her clientele comes from referrals from past clients who return, which speaks volumes about the impact she has on people. She even shared that she views her work as relational rather than transactional.

A few tips she shared were influential in many aspects of life and leadership. One was that 20% of the effort leads to 80% of the results, also known as the Pareto Principle, encouraging us to focus on what truly makes us productive. She also shared an acronym for communication that helps deepen conversations and build connections. F.O.R.D. stands for family, occupation, recreation, and dreams.

Overall, her message emphasized the importance of connecting with others and building genuine relationships.

-Aryah Eslinger, 11th Grade



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