

PATRIOT

PRESS

MARCHING TO THE DRUMBEAT OF FREEDOM

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OUT OF THE WATER

Every now and then something happens. Something bad. A family member dies. There's a bad break up with your girlfriend or boyfriend. Your parents get a divorce. You fail the class you desperately needed to pass. You get fired from a job. The possibilities are endless and all bad. You end up like a fish on dry land, mouth gaping open, trying to figure out what it will take to get submerged again.

The step between gasping for air on the bank and swimming merrily along your way can act as a definition for your life, your faith, your character. Sometimes you will handle it well, others you won't.

The first thing to acknowledge is that you have a choice in how you respond to life's adversities. You can lash out instinctually in anger or denial and make the situation even more unsavory or you can take a deep breath and remember the things you have learned from parents, mentors, clergy. Remember the character traits Mama Seay tries to impress upon you. Listen to the Word of God and know deep in your heart and down to your marrow that God will never leave you nor forsake you. When you have that to fall back on, anything is possible to bear. That doesn't mean it's easy, just that you can make it through.

Once you know you have a choice, you have to make a decision on how you're going to flop your way back into the river. There's a saying that goes '*Practice makes perfect.*' It's a cliché that is heard all the time because it is true. If it weren't, it wouldn't be a cliché. You've gotta like how that works. So how do you practice for the minor and major calamities in your life? Its not like you get a dress rehearsal or mock challenges to go through. Unless you consider life itself to be the run through. You make a hundred choices a day that test your character. You can choose to pressure your honor, duty, honesty, respect in every decision you make. If making the correct decision is ingrained within you through your every day choices, when the time comes that you are the fish out of water, your choices become habit, second nature, automatic.

The choices we make in the times of difficulties are seeds that germinate and direct the evolution of our lives. You can put two people in the same situation and end up with vastly different results. I have a good friend who got a single tattoo in the midst of a fight with cancer who now makes a success of creating living art. I have a grandmother who is so scared of what *might* be wrong with her that she refuses to discuss her symptoms with family, friends, or physicians. I had a grandmother who was so embittered by the cards she was dealt in life that she drove away the people who should have loved her

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**THE TORCH OF FREEDOM FOUNDATION
PO BOX 586, DRIPPING SPRINGS, TX 78620**

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and been there for her. I have a friend who was thrilled to be a surrogate for a couple who could not have children of their own; she gave them a beautiful baby boy, made them a family.

Life is not fair. Bad things happen to good people and bad people. Fate isn't choosy. Something bad happening in your life is not an excuse to revert from the training and faith that you have had and practiced. The fire of a kiln is what makes pottery beautiful.

You'll do it right and you'll do it wrong. I've handled situations so wrong in the past that I feel a little guilty trying to instruct you on how to do it right. The great thing is that even if you mess it up this time, you'll be provided with another chance to handle a difficult situation sooner or later. You can change things the next time and handle it in a manner worthy of your faith and training.

To wrap it up, situations happen that you are not expecting and they will be bad. You will sit there, mouth gasping in the unfamiliar, and not know what to do. The great thing is that after that minute of blind terror, you'll remember something: God is with you; you have the training you need from your parents, mentors, friends. You can handle this and you can handle it well with honor, tact, honesty, poise. You can do something to be proud of. You can take a deep breath, shrug off that looming panic, and move forward with a life that exemplifies the traits you've worked so hard to develop.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BOARD

In the last Recommendations From the Board, Mark Cole suggested four of Plato's Socratic dialogues, *Euthyphron*, *Crito*, *Apology*, and *Phaedo*, because of their importance to our literary and philosophical tradition. I must admit I was surprised to find how much they moved me when I read them.

These four works cover the time of Socrates trial for his corruption of the youth of Athens through his death in jail. *Euthyphron* deals with defining piety and questions how appropriate it is for Euthyphron to prosecute his own father over the question of murder. *Apology* comes next. Socrates stood before a jury of fellow Athenians and defended himself against the charge but was found guilty and sentenced to death. He never grew angry with his accuser or the jury that put him in prison. In *Crito*, he refused to escape jail even though his friends were willing to aid him in any way to save his life. He chose to stay because he lived within the boundary of the law, and to run would be to flout that law. *Phaedo* is a drama of the last hours of Socrates' life and his subsequent death in the Athenian jail.

These four dialogues portray a man of honor and philosophy that are an excellent tool to learn from.

Our next recommendation, *The Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, also comes from Mark Cole. Enjoy!

Please feel free to send your comments, thoughts, suggestions, or opinions to tof.patriotpress@gmail.com.

WORK ETHIC

A long, long time ago, William informed me that I had a work ethic that would drive a normal person into the ground. I held back the reply about his work ethic – or lack there of. (Just so you know his has vastly improved over the years and I am proud to announce he will be getting his doctorate within the next few months.)

I've never really considered the pros and cons of a good work ethic because it was something my father instilled in all of his kids as we grew up. It was always understood that you did your chores and any other assigned tasks in a timely manner and without complaint. Then you went and asked what else you could do. I didn't always manage the no complaining part; I hated folding socks. There was no allowance in our house. You worked because you were part of the family. If you wanted spending money you babysat, you got a job, you found mistakes in books (me). You worked for every penny you made.

I never really thought to thank my dad until I was full time in the workforce. Managers were impressed by the ability to take on an assigned task, complete it, and move on to a new one.

So here is a formula to impress parents, teachers, and managers. Do a task, do it right and with efficiency, then move on to the next task. That's how you create a work ethic that can drive others into the ground.

Many of the great achievements of the world were accomplished by tired and discouraged men who kept on working.

Anonymous

FOUNDING FATHERS

In 1726 in Elizabeth County, Virginia, a seeker for knowledge, an educator was born. George Wythe was born into a wealthy agricultural family. His father died when he was three. His mother was the provider of his education up until the time he went into law school. She died while he was still in his teens. His older brother inherited the family property and Wythe continued his education at the college of William and Mary. Due to financial reasons, he was forced to leave school. Despite that difficulty, he pursued his education in the law office of Stephen Dewey. He was so successful in his studies that he was admitted into the bar at the age of twenty.

He practiced law with skill because of the time he put into his studies after he left his formal education. He thoroughly studied the origins of English law. By the time of his death, he was fluent in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. He often read the classics in their original language in order to ensure he took in all the nuances that can be lost in translation.

He began educating others as a one on one legal tutor. In 1789 he was appointed to a professorship at William and Mary. He became the first professor of law. He educated many of the leaders that followed after him, one being Thomas Jefferson. The men had a bond so close that Jefferson referred to Wythe as a second father.

Wythe split his estate three ways in his will. It was shared between Lydia Broadnax and her son Michael Brown (freed slaves and allegedly his mistress and son) and his great nephew, George Wythe Sweeney. In an attempt to remove the other two from the picture, Sweeney attempted to poison Broadnax and Brown. They lived, but Wythe was an unexpected casualty. He managed to change his will before he passed so Sweeney, who was acquitted at his trial, got nothing. One other significant bequest in his will was his extraordinary book collection to Thomas Jefferson. Many of them ended up in the Library of Congress when Jefferson turned over his personal library.

KATHI'S QUOTES

*Every saint has a past
and every sinner has a future*

Oscar Wilde



JOHN
WITHERSPOON
SEMINARY



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PATRIOT ACADEMY 2009

The countdown to Patriot Academy has begun. The Board of Trustees and the government elect are excited by the number of young people who have already submitted their applications. So far the count is at seventeen. The application is available both at the Patriot Academy website and blog. Get yours in so you can join what promises to be one of the best sessions of Patriot Academy to date.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If there is any information you would like to see in the Patriot Press, contact us at tof.patriotpress@gmail.com.

We would love to hear your suggestion, stories, opinions, and notable achievements throughout the year.