

THE CLASSICAL ACADEMY EXISTS TO ASSIST PARENTS IN THEIR MISSION TO DEVELOP EXEMPLARY CITIZENS EQUIPPED WITH ANALYTICAL THINKING SKILLS, VIRTUOUS CHARACTER, AND A PASSION FOR LEARNING, ALL BUILT UPON A SOLID FOUNDATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

PALMARIUM

Our Philosophy, Our Passion

On Monday, October 8, all of our TCA teaching staff participated in five 60-minute conversations around *our philosophy* and some of the individual *passion* areas of our staff members. There were over 26 different sessions offered during the 70 breakout opportunities. TCA Core Values discussions included five focal areas: *Virtue and the Whole Person, The 4th R . . . Relationships, What is a Liberal Arts Education?, From Roots to Fruit, Awakening Wonder, and Idea Centered Instruction.* This in-service opportunity provided a great forum for discussion and cross-pollination of ideas for the nearly 250 TCA staff members that participated.



Beautiful Day in Colorado for a nice aerial photo of the recently completed construction at the North Campus. Students and staff have settled into the new spaces and are thankful for the great facilities the voters of District 20 enabled us to build.

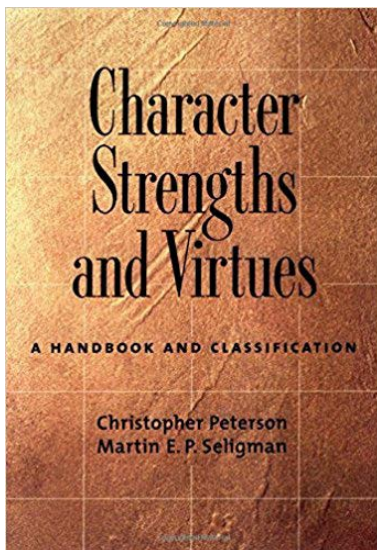
This month our feature articles are on the Character Strength and Virtue of **spirituality** written by Cheri Birkey, TCA's Compliance and Nondiscrimination Specialist. Author, motivational speaker and professor Leo Buscaglia wrote "*The fact that I can plant a seed and it becomes a flower, share a bit of knowledge and it becomes another's, smile at someone and receive a smile in return, are to me continual spiritual exercises.*" Seligman and Peterson in their book *Character Strengths and Virtues* write "Spirituality is universal . . . and posits rules and values that guide individuals' relationships, as well as their efforts to cope with the travails of life."

The Editor

SEVEN SCHOOLS • THREE CAMPUSES • ONE VISION
20 Years and Counting - Our Kids, Their Future, Our Challenge

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CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS

Beginning with Volume 11 of the PALMARIUM in August 2014 we started a dedicated focus on 24 different **Character Strengths and Virtues** as outlined in Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman's book by the same title. Their book forms a basis for the *VIA Institute on Character*. Published by the American Psychological Association the book is designed, as the subtitle states, to be *A Handbook and Classification* for those in the field to talk about the all important topics of character and virtue.

Over the past four years we have covered every character trait and virtue they list (some multiple times), but for one - *spirituality*. In today's issue we are going to cover this area for the first time. But before we begin, I must provide a very important note on this topic:

While religiousness is a part of spirituality, TCA, as a public school, does not support any particular religious belief, or non-belief.

TCA as a school has families, students, and staff of many different backgrounds and varied beliefs, and those that do not follow any spiritual practice or religion. The purpose of addressing *spirituality*, as the American Psychological Association notes, is because *spirituality* [defined as religiousness, faith, purpose] is a very important dimension of life for many.

In their work Peterson and Seligman write (p.602): "There are etymological, theological, and experiential grounds for distinguishing between religiousness and spirituality. The word *religiousness* (derived from the Latin word *religio*) refers both to a belief in the existence of a divine or

greater-than human force and to an individual's adherence to the beliefs and rituals that signify worship and reverence for this divine entity (Wulff, 1991). Spirituality is derived from the Latin word *spiritus*, which means the breath of life (Berdyaev, 1939; MacQuarrie, 1972). Berdyaev (1939) notes that at different historical moments, and in different cultural contexts, the word *spiritus* has been used as a synonym for wisdom, intelligence, the capacity to reason, and the soul or any nonphysical life force . . . [T]his breath is believed to be the source of the capacity for creativity, the ability to grasp the sacred, and the capacity for love, intimacy, harmony, growth, compassion, goodness, and optimism.

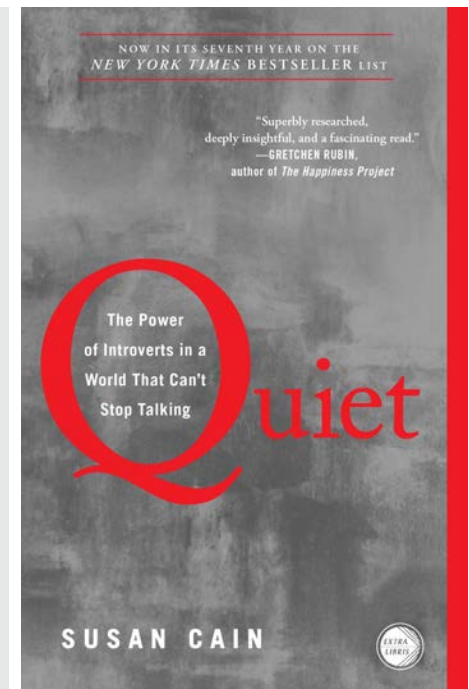
Today, we write about this topic to complete the coverage of all the character strengths and virtues. May you find Cheri Birkey's two articles on the next page cause for reflection.

ENGAGING MINDS:



The second book study of the new school year with staff will be *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking* by Susan Cain. Staff members will be given an

opportunity to RSVP for the 90-minute book study sessions via e-mail. Parents are also welcome to join. If you'd like to receive a reminder about future book studies send me an e-mail to wjolly@asd20.org and I will make sure to add you to the book club listing and send you a listing of the four titles we plan to read for this year. The sessions for Cain's book will be scheduled for two days between **Tuesday-Thursday, November 27-29** beginning at 4:00 pm (locations will be provided in RSVP e-mails).



Spirituality

What is meant by spirituality? Per the VIA Institute on Character, "Spirituality is believed to describe the private, intimate relationships between humans and the divine, and the range of virtues that result from the relationships." It gives a person "strong and coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe," including where one fits in the larger scheme. "Spirituality is universal. Although the specific content of spiritual beliefs varies, all cultures have a concept of an ultimate, transcendent, sacred force." VIA spirituality traits include faith, religiousness, purpose, and meaning.¹

Examples of spirituality include a regular practice of reflection and prayer, a nature walk, reverence for items with sacred or special meaning, looking for purpose or meaning in a difficult situation, and sharing family history and traditions.

In various psychological studies, there is a correlation between religiousness and youth demonstrating greater emotional self-regulation, engaging in fewer acts of aggression, having better records of academic performance, and having the tendency to avoid a range of antisocial activities. "Religiousness... is associated with lower levels of marital conflict, greater perceived spousal support, more consistent parenting, and less conflictual and more supportive relationships between adolescents and parents."²

¹ www.viacharacter.org

² Peterson, Christopher, & Seligman, Martin E.P. (2004). *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 609.

Thoughts from Cheri

TCA Compliance and
Nondiscrimination Specialist

Reflection. As a Type A personality, reflection is not something that comes naturally to me. However as I get older, I value it more than when I was younger. As a result of studying the VIA Character trait of spirituality, I discovered three take-a-ways on reflection. I hope they are an encouragement to you as they have been to me.

Reflect on a Strong Spiritual Person in Your Life

Who is a strong spiritual person in your life? What do you respect most about him or her? What do you see in their life that you wish you had in yours?

For me, it is my friend Deedra. Last April, Deedra passed away from amyloidosis, a rare disease. At her memorial service, both her sister-in-law and her sister started their eulogies with, "I know you believe **you** are Deedra's best friend, but she is **my** best friend." Everyone laughed at the statement, as Deedra had a knack to make everyone feel like a best friend.

Deedra was from Lakewood, Colorado. She enjoyed exploring the outdoors, camping, and hiking. She loved family, shoes, dancing, and a good laugh. She was a nurse by profession and a friend

A CALL TO REFLECTION

to all. Deedra had a strong faith that permeated everything she did. Her faith daily turned into acts of kindness, speaking up for what was right, and honest conversations, all done with gentle humility. When I left her funeral I was inspired to hold firm to my faith, be a better friend, and show character to all those who come across my path. Is there a Deedra in your life whom you would like to emulate? Remember them and let them inspire you!

Make Time for Reflection

It seems the practices of spirituality are ones that can be easily drowned out by the busyness of life. A nature walk or a regular practice of reflection and prayer takes time. I don't know about you; but for me, sometimes it is a challenge to find any quiet time between family, work, and friends. Yet when I take a quiet moment to reflect and pray, my spirit and outlook on life are renewed.

What is the best way for you to find quiet time for

reflection? Some people try to find daily or weekly moments, while others schedule a monthly or annual day of retreat. What works for you?

Reflect and Show Reverence to American Heroes

The VIA Institute on Character includes, "a reverence for items with sacred or special meaning," as an example of spirituality. "Reverence is showing respect. It is being careful to honor the gifts of life, including other people."¹

At first, I was surprised to find reverence listed as a trait of spirituality. However as I reflected on the concept, I thought of TCA's Veterans Day celebration. It is a beautiful, patriotic ceremony honoring the men and women who have served our country, as well as honoring our American heritage through music and recitations.

Before being a TCA employee, I had never attended the event even though my daughters were TCA students. Now I look forward to the ceremony every year. Through the celebration, I have learned more about reverence and have a better sense of who I am as an American. Plus I love seeing the veterans enjoy the program! If you have never attended TCA's Veterans Day celebration, I invite you to join me this year.

May a moment of reflection help us all - Striving to be our best, do our best, and give our best in mind, body and spirit! We are Titans!

¹Popov, Linda Kavelin. (1997). *The Family Virtues Guide: Simple Ways to Bring out the Best in Our Children and Ourselves*. New York: Penguin Books USA Inc., p.229.



safe²tell
Colorado

1-877-542-7233
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Available on the App Store | ANDROID APP ON Google play

COLORADO'S SAFE2TELL

Recently the *Denver Post* published an article on the Safet2Tell program which began in Colorado in 2004 after the deadly shootings at Columbine High School. Colorado's efforts are gaining national recognition and other states are starting similar programs. The program provides an avenue for students, parents, and other community members to share anything that concerns or threatens you, your friends, your family or community. Reports can be made by phone, online, or via mobile app (see phone numbers and web address above).

In the 2017-2018 school year Safe2Tell received 16,000 total reports. In the first school year the program was active (2004-2005) there were only 102 total reports.

The *Denver Post* reports that "the number of suicide-related reports coming into Safe2Tell has *increased ninefold in six years*, with suicide surpassing bullying as the leading reason students contact the program." Although the program was created in an effort to deal with school violence - suicide threats have been the leading reason for students filing reports since the 2013-2014 school year. The other top reasons for reports are bullying and drugs.

This trend in reporting mirrors the nation-at-large. The leading cause of death for individuals aged 10-24 in the state of Colorado is suicide.

safe²tell
Make a Call. Make a Difference.

SCREENAGERS
-- Controlling Screen Time --

The organization that produced the film *Screenagers* which we watched as a community last year also publishes a "Tech Talk Tuesday" blog that touches on topics of interest for parents dealing with the assorted issues we face with children growing up in a digital age. At the end of September Dr. Ruston published a blog titled **Finally, Apple Releases Screen Time Controls**. Click here for a link to the full article: <https://www.screenagersmovie.com/tech-talk-tuesdays/finally-apple-releases-screen-time-controls>

Dr. Ruston gives step-by-step instructions on how to better manage the time **we** and **our kids** spend on our devices. She also touches on Google controls for Android devices for those not in the Apple ecosystem.

WE'RE ADDICTED TO CHECKING OUR PHONES

58%
OF SMARTPHONE USERS

DON'T GO 1 HOUR
WITHOUT CHECKING THEIR PHONES



AGE 18-34:	68%
AGE 35-44:	61%
AGE 45-54:	55%
AGE 55+:	36%



PSAT and SAT at TCA HS & CP

TCA truly appreciates the benefits a K-12 school offers us in educating our students. This long-term approach allows us as to prepare students with analytical thinking skills, virtuous character, and a passion for learning with pacing and focus designed to develop our graduates in **how to be**, not what to be. In our philosophy we value a liberal arts education, based upon the classical ideas, Socratic approach, and Charlotte Mason philosophies. While test scores and rankings are not the foremost measures of our success, as stated boldly on the cover of our Core Values, it is beneficial to reflect occasionally on how our students are doing academically compared with other students in Colorado. As of last year our 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students are taking a test in the PSAT and SAT sequence. At **every grade level** in our High School and College Pathways, TCA students rank **#1 and #2** amongst District 20 schools. Of the over 475 high schools in the state TCA ranks as follows on the particular grade level tests: **PSAT 9** - CP (#17), HS (#28); **PSAT 10** - CP (#15), HS (#23), **SAT 11** - CP (#17), HS (#19).



In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks. John Muir

Nature holds the key to our aesthetic, intellectual, cognitive and even spiritual satisfaction. E. O. Wilson



May obedience conquer disobedience within this house, and may peace triumph over discord here, and generous giving over avarice, reverence over contempt, speech with truthful words over lying utterance. Yasna 60:5

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things. Philippians 4:8 NIV