

THE TRICORN

NEWSLETTER published jointly by the BOSTON +
LONG ISLAND + PHILADELPHIA GREAT BOOKS COUNCILS

AUGUST 1978

Mortimer Adler On The Art Of Communicating

A few years ago, Mortimer Adler gave a lecture (followed by a discussion) to a group of high-level corporate executives. The subject was communications or the process of effectively communicating ideas to people. It also involved the arts and skills of persuasion and motivation. While these are the tools of all commerce, they are also the instruments employed, consciously or unconsciously, in every area of human activity and human behavior. Adler's analysis proved so impressive that there were many demands for reprints, which were widely distributed. Because so much of what he said applies to the Great Books concept and the process of group discussion, we'd like here to cite a few highlights of his comments.

Aristotle's **Rhetoric** was perhaps the greatest book ever written on communication, on convincingly conveying ideas to others. He reduced communication down to three words: ethos, pathos, and logos. **Ethos** refers to the character of the speaker — the ability of one to gain the attention and confidence of others by establishing a favorable impression of himself. **Pathos** is the ability to touch the feelings and emotions of others. One is not moved by mind alone. **Logos** is one's capacity to use reason and logic to create acceptance for the idea.

In discussion or communication, if any one of those three vital elements is missing, the effect of the communicator or the idea is proportionately diminished. If the individual lacks ethos, we may feel hostile or resistant to him, despite the strong logos and pathos of his expressed thoughts. If he is strong on ethos and logos, we favor him and his idea but he leaves us unmoved or emotionally passive. And if he is strong on ethos and pathos but weak on logos, we are emotionally moved but the rationale of his idea or thought falls short.

The ethos-pathos-logos principle applies to **all** forms of communication — speaking, discussing, writing, etc. Even good communicators achieve only about a 50 per cent level of effectiveness in combining those three elements, and a small minority of superb communicators may reach as high as 75 per cent. But the vast majority falls below 30 per cent effectiveness. And right here is found the core of much of the misunderstanding, misinterpretation, argument and confusion so commonly found in exchanging ideas in discussion, including Great Books discussion.

The educated men of ancient Greece were superb communicators, both in conversation and in writing. The same applied to the educated people of 18th century England and America (the **Federalist Papers** by Hamilton, Madison and Jay are one example). Why was communicating skill better in the

past than today—because of the emphasis given to liberal education — an endangered species in today's education. The true liberal education strongly accentuated clarity of thinking, speaking and writing. It had a sound under-support of knowledge based on extensive reading of the classics; the study of Latin and Greek (from which over 50 per cent of the English language is derived); and involvement with the arts, a probing of the realms of ethics and morals; a universal view of religious principles; a concern with human rights and the human condition. A liberal education gave a mind elasticity and depth — and the ability not only to deal with ideas, but to communicate them effectively. This was possible because men had a common background, a common vocabulary, a common reference of ideas and values.

Today this is much less true. Today we are educationally splintered, divided and sub-divided into specializations. The scientists, doctors, businessmen, politicians, artists, etc., and even the educators themselves, speak a specialized language of their own, limited to specialized ideas. They communicate well among their peers, but are foreigners outside their own specialized realms. It is not only a language barrier, but often differences in value systems.

We commonly speak of a heart-to-heart talk, but rarely of a mind-to-mind talk. Most of our talk or communication is of the heart-to-heart or pathos kind, though we **assume** that it is dominated by logos or reason. But most of us are egocentric, concerned primarily with what **we** feel, and **our** values. When we say, "This is what I think," we are actually saying this is what I **feel**. And when thinking is governed by feelings, the thinking process loses credibility. The personal feeling is important, but not to the exclusion or subordination of the thinking. Objective and subjective must be in balance.

Communication is the single most important human activity because it is the root of all learning — and without learning, man may as well re-settle in his prehistoric cave. The quantity and quality of our learning is in direct proportion to the quantity and quality of our communications — both how we convey and receive communication. Most of us find learning difficult or slow to absorb, not because of the learning materials themselves, but because of the shortcomings, in the communications — belonging either to those trying to communicate with us, or our own inabilities (semi-blocked ears, semi-closed minds, etc.) Thus the ethos-pathos-logos principle must be possessed not only by the communicator but by the listener if there is to be genuine understanding, learning and personal growth.

Alternatives To The Great Books, For Discussion:

Aaron Bechtel, long a Great Books activist in the Philadelphia area, has advanced an interesting proposal as alternative readings for discussion for Great Books — especially in the light of the declining availability of Great Books sets from the Foundation in Chicago. He has set his sights on a fresh field: Science. Here are selected excerpts from his proposals.

Does your group have the problem of selecting readings for the next year? You should consider a series of readings in science. The American Foundation for Continuing Education (AFCE) has prepared three courses for adult study-discussion groups, designed to assist in developing a deeper understanding of science as a basis for sound judgments on public policy. The lack of scientific literacy among otherwise informed laymen is one of the most critical problems confronting education in the United States today.

Today's challenge is to justify the basic right of the people to govern themselves. In the past, this right was based on the conviction that well-informed and thoughtful men are competent to do so; that the citizen can understand issues, evaluate conflicting opinions, and make intelligent decisions on matters of public policy. In our time, when public policy has become increasingly intermeshed with science and hurtled forward by the accelerating rate of scientific discovery, unless the lay citizen develops an adequate understanding of the nature of science, he becomes less able to understand a growing number of significant public policy issues and less competent to make sound judgments about them.

In the AFCE series, each course consists of selections from the best available writings in the particular area of science, grouped to provide 11 discussion sessions. Thus the three available volumes could be used over a two-year period, with 16 sessions or discussions each year.

Exploring the Universe is designed to provide a background of understanding of the principles on which the Space Age has been built, giving the reader a glimpse of the mystery and majesty of the universe which man has begun to explore – and to suggest the methods and nature of the search itself.

The Mystery of Matter deals with the very smallest features of the physical world and shows how scientific concepts were developed to account for the nature of both living and non-living matter. It examines some of the philosophical implications of man's investigation of the nature of matter, such as the rise of materialism and new non-mechanical aspects of reality which are beginning to emerge from modern physics.

Evolution of Man, the third series, focuses on the nature of man and his role in the evolutionary process. It provides insights concerning man's control of man and his environment through science – involving such problems as eugenics, birth control, pollution, ecology, city planning, etc., as well as the total direction of human development.

The AFCE, like the Great Books Foundation, began its work in 1947, with financial support from the Fund for Adult Education. In 1958, the emphasis was shifted to programs in the arts, the humanities, and the social and natural sciences. Their series of readings in "**The Ways of Mankind**" has been widely used with great success in adult discussion groups, I myself have used it with Great Books and other groups and found it excellent discussion material. It is available in paperback (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, \$8.95). It provides topics for 11 sessions.

Concerning the other three selections cited above, they are published by the Oxford University Press, with prices of \$10.50, \$7.50 and \$7.00 for each of the sets respectively. The sets need not be used in any particular order. Incidentally, the content of these books is not exclusively by scientists, but also by novelists, philosophers, statesmen, and others – providing "outside" views of how the sciences are relating to so many of the public issues of the day.

Self-Selection and Self-Determination In Choosing Books For Discussion:

Philadelphia's **Dave Perelman** has sent us a "personal experience" story of how his group resolved the problem: Now that we've completed the nine sets of Great Books readings, where do we go from here? It is even more pertinent today because of the drastic decline in the availability of Great Books sets from the Foundation. But here we'll let Dave tell the story himself:

Some ten years ago our group found itself at a crossroads. We'd finished all of the nine years of Great Books readings then published by the Foundation. We now had to decide on our future. After lengthy and anguished (and occasionally acrimonious) debate, we agreed to develop our own reading list, relying on our trust and experience to make suitable choices. We can now look back with pride and gratification in those choices, for today our group is perhaps more cohesed than ever before. For the past ten years we've retained the Great Books principles and their continuing enrichment.

Today, with the Foundation publishing ever fewer titles, many groups are confronted with our earlier dilemma – how to continue? Having by now developed an extensive reading list, our group thought it would be helpful to share our experiences with you. The list we are presenting here is by no means all-inclusive. Inevitably, some are lost to memory. But they include most of those we remember well. Also, the absence of an annotation or comment beside some of the books is a reflection on memory rather than the book. On an appraisal rating of 1 to 5, we have deleted those with a 1 or 2 rating, including only the 3-to-5 group (good to excellent, as we found them for discussion). In subsequent issues of the Tricorn we'll submit further titles to the list. Also important, our group would appreciate receiving similar lists from other groups who have prepared their own (please send such information to Dave Perelman, 8214 Marion Road, Elkins Park, Pa. 19117). Here, now, is our list:

Rating	Author	Title	Comment
5	Unknown	Zen Flesh, Zen Bones	Another way of looking at life. Fascinating reading and discussion.
3	Ovid	The Art of Love	Delightful, enjoyable.
3	Moore	Utopia	Is there such a place?
3	Calderon	Life Is A Dream	Grist for lively discussion.
4	Mann	Death In Venice	The author has a gift for putting things in clear perspective.
4	Shaw	Heartbreak House	Shaw's talent for posing an intriguing problem entertainingly.
5	Veblen	Theory of the Leisure Class	An economist making sense of the world from its psychological underpinnings.
5	Camus	The Myth of Sisyphus	Camus deals with some of mankind's age-old problems.
3	Nietzsche	Twilight of the Idols	
5	Kafka	The Trial	Considered one of the great works of our century, and rightly so.
3	Woolf	To the Lighthouse	
3	Pirandello	Six Characters In Search of An Author	
5	Ibsen	An Enemy of the People	Moral right versus civic good.

4	Fanon	The Wretched of the Earth	Rooted in Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience."
3	Trotsky	Literature and Revolution	
4	Sartre	No Exist	Exciting. A confrontation.
3	Tawney	Religion and the Rise of Capitalism	Tough but rewarding reading. A genuine education.
4	Marcuse	One-Dimensional Man	If he's right, a damning indictment.
4	Jung	Modern Man In Search of A Soul	
3	Langer	Philosophy In A New Key	
5	Kafka	The Castle	Compares in quality with the Trial.
5	Hesse	Steppenwolf	One critic says the second half of this book is the most beautiful piece of writing in our century.
4	Freud	Moses and Monotheism	A fascinating look at the exodus – led to splendid discussion.
4	Orwell	Collection of Essays	A spraying fountain of ideas.
4	Rand	Virtue of Selfishness	A challenge to much of our traditional morality.
5	Krishna Murti	The First and Last Freedom	One question went two hours. The book virtually leads itself.
3	Dewey	Art As Experience	
4	Hansbery	The Sign In Sidney Brustein's Window	Provocative reading, provocative discussion.
5	Kafka	Metamorphosis	Unpeels like an onion, revealing deeper and deeper insights.
5	Ortega	Revolt of the Masses	Challenges the brain cells, but inspired excellent discussion.
4	Gogol	Diary Of A Madman	What is madness?
3	Pinter	The Birthday Party	
3	Cleaver	Soul On Ice	
5	Eiseley	Immense Journey	Truly exciting. An anthropologist who looks outside, sees inside.

PHILADELPHIA NEWS

Spooky Spring Institute:

Visiting out-of-town participants were hosted by the "Great Spooks" Leaders Club on the dreary night of Saturday, May 20, as a horrible preamble to the Philadelphia Spring Institute weekend of shudders. The "Fiendish Frankenstein Frolic" at Annabel and Phil Lindy's house of ghouls and ogres featured clips of famous monster oldies from Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi to Wolfman, all mood-tuned to the next day's discussions of Ortega's **Revolt of the Masses**, and Mary Shelley's **Frankenstein**. A more cheerful atmosphere will surround next year's event. For those local bookies who'd like to put up Institute weekend guests at their homes – they'll be asked to notify a committee soon to be named.

Lancaster County Summer Institute:

The Lancaster County Great Books Committee will hold its 20th Annual Summer Institute on Saturday, August 19, at Franklin and Marshall College in the new air-conditioned Steinman Center, Lancaster, Pa. The two readings will be: **All the Strange Hours**, by Loren Eiseley, and **Dr. Rat**, by William Kotzwinkle. The charge is \$12 per person, which includes books, luncheon and refreshments. Final registration date is August 6. Make checks payable to Lancaster County Great Books Committee and send to Susar. Bowser, Elizabethtown Public Library, No. Hanover and Oak Streets, Elizabethtown, Pa. 17022.

New Philadelphia Area Coordinator:

Fran Jacobs, a long-time Great Books enthusiast who has served as group leader, board member and leader trainer, will now assume the post of Philadelphia Area Coordinator. She replaces **Norma Oser**, who has had to resign this position which she filled with exceptional competence and dedication, because she has now undertaken a new business project that will consume much of her time. Norma, who was in the coordinator post for the past three years, comments, "Having Fran replace me removes any guilt I might have felt about bowing out. Fran brings verve and sparkle to her new job, and everyone will find her delightful to work with."

Fall Institute Weekend:

The Philadelphia Council will run its Eighth Annual Fall Institute Weekend on November 17-19 at Pocono Manor. The weekend discussion theme is Power. The readings: **Power and Personality**, by Harold Laiswell; **All the King's Men**, by Robert Penn Warren; and **Woman in the Dunes**, by Kobo Abe.

Double rooms are \$90 per person, which covers lodging, meals, books, entertainment and gratuities. A deposit of \$30 per person, made payable to the Fall Institute Committee, must accompany each registration. The balance of \$60 is payable at check-in time. In case of cancellation, the deposit, less charge for the books, will be refunded if notified by October 20. Registration also means a commitment to read the books. When sending in your registration, indicate if you want a room with or near someone in particular. Also indicate if you want a non-smoking group and we will try to accommodate. Here is the registration form for clip-out (send registration and deposit check to David Perelman, 8214 Marion Road, Elkins Park, Pa. 19117):

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS(ES) _____ Zip _____

PHONE(S) _____

BOSTON NEWS

Report on the Spring Institute:

One June 10, nearly 80 Metropolitan Boston Great Bookers spent a delightful day at the annual Spring Institute, held at Regis College just outside of Boston. The day's two readings — Hegel's "The Philosophy of History," and John Gardner's "Grendel" — proved highly discussable. The Grendel reading was especially popular, a charming re-telling of the Beowulf legend from the viewpoint of the monster (monsters tend to become less monstrous once you hear their side of the story). The Institute's sponsors pre-visited the Oracle of Delphi and, as promised, a beautiful day was delivered for the event. The popularity of this Institute is demonstrated by the appreciable number of participants who were in attendance for the 10th consecutive year, as follows:

Carol Batchelder
Dorothy Broberg
Esta Cimo

Lorna Feeley
Gertrude Fishtine
Annie Gould

Anne Howe
Ann Levison
Mary McCarthy
Jean Sudhalter

Louise Mulloy
Marion Marder
Rose Weinstock
Louise Wye

Upcoming Annual Fall Institute:

It'll be another Great Books Weekend and Fall Institute sponsored by the Metropolitan Boston Great Books Council, October 6-8, again at the Red Jacket Inn, Bass River (South Yarmouth), on Cape Cod. An ideal autumn setting, 85 miles from Boston. Here are the details:

Theme: Moral Issues.

Readings: Milton — Paradise Lost, Books I and II.

Golding — Lord of the Flies.

Becker — Escape From Evil.

Cost: \$92 per person, double occupancy. Includes two nights lodging, six meals, books taxes, gratuities, use of many facilities.

A special program has been designed for Friday evening. Following the buffet dinner, several rooms will be available for group discussions of several poems — a different poem discussed in each room, each discussion headed by a moderator. The poems are short and will be given to each participant as he or she enters the room, with time for a 5- or 10-minute pre-reading. Participants will be free to move around to different rooms and different discussions of different poems. An unusual format, and ideal for mood-setting for the discussions to follow over the next couple of days. Those interested should fill out the registration form below and mail to Ann Mogan, 317 Grove Street, Wellesley, Mass. 02181.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ ROOMMATE PREFERRED _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____ SPECIAL REQUESTS _____

(add \$10 extra per night if single occupancy wanted)

NUMBER IN PARTY (additional names to be attached) _____

LONG ISLAND NEWS

One-Day Institute:

The Long Island Great Books Council held its Annual Spring One-Day Institute on Sunday, May 7, at the Bryant Library in Roslyn. Despite having to run an obstacle course of unexpected problems, the event proved one of the most successful in recent years. The Institute's theme: Voices and Visions. The scheduled readings were Shaw's **St. Joan** and **The Koran**. Unfortunately, The Koran was never delivered — the books were lost in shipping and weren't available in time for a reorder. As a substitute reading, Blake's **Marriage of Heaven and Hell** was mailed to all registrants. The additional reading also entailed recruiting extra leaders. But the combination of hellish confusion and heavenly participation somehow created a compatible marriage of stimulating discussion and an enjoyable day.

The Long Island Council is scheduling reorganization meetings after accepting the resignations of two of its most valuable members. Paul Harrison is resigning as Treasurer, and Victor Gough is leaving Long Island. Both have given us yeoman service for many years and will be missed. The Council expects to have its new program ready by fall.

Fall Institute:

On Sunday, October 29, Jesse Plutzer and the Ladies Guild of the West End Temple in Neponsit will hold the second annual One-Day Seminar on the dual themes of "Unresolved Echoes of the Holocaust," an "Ecumenism — Christian Overtures At Reconciliation." The books to be discussed are: **The Sunflower**, by Simon Weisenthal, and **Faith Without Prejudice — Rebuilding Christian Attitudes Toward Judaism**, by Eugene Fisher. Send registrations with \$12.50 per person to Jesse Plutzer, 314 Beach 148th Street, Neponsit, N.Y. 11694.

Where Does The Great Books Program Go From Here?

Gus Soderberg, President of the Metropolitan Boston Great Books Council, a professional in leader training, and formerly associated with the Great Books Foundation in Chicago, expresses the following views concerning the future of the Great Books program and the Foundation itself:

"A long time ago I fell in love with the Great Books program. It's assumptions were that reading the Great Books (Adlerian/St. Johnian format) brings us to consider what is demonstrably man's most enduring thought: that discussing these books with others multiplies their effect through the stimulation of the dialogue; and that this activity is suited particularly to mature adults. My love persists, but I fear for its object.

"The Great Books Foundation was formed in 1948 to provide national leadership for the program. But since the early 1960's it has increasingly neglected the adult program and has directed most of its dwindling energies into the junior program. It has permitted the quantity of Great Books sets to shrink until now only four sets are available. Further, it has now produced three new collections, each with a somewhat presumptuous title, and each with "reader-guidance" material — and each composed solely or mostly of contemporary fiction and drama. Popular it may be. But Great Books it isn't.

"I do not know what effect the Foundation's withdrawal and apostasy has had nationally. But I do know that many participants in the three eastern Councils with which I am familiar have reacted with varying degrees of depression, anger and distress. All three Councils have set up leader training

courses of their own. And some effort, notably in Philadelphia, has been made to formulate reading lists corresponding to the original Great Books sets and made available in paperback editions. The Colby Institute Committee has channeled money to the Councils to support local fund-raising efforts. And the Tricorn has been established to further cohes a strong sense of mutual community within the program.

"What will now happen to the regional Councils with the apparent abandonment by the Foundation? Presently, much is in a state of conjecture. The Councils may produce viable reading lists in the Great Books tradition, thus providing a sound base for years of discussion. They **may** aggressively recruit new leaders and participants to the program. And possibly they **may**, as a community of the faithful working together, build a continuing and enduring foundation for the program.

"However, if the Councils are to do this on their own initiative, it is vital that they restore the original Great Books principles. We have arrived at a time to examine our faith and our works, as would Socrates with his friend Crito. And if we are to believe in all those principles we were professing before that trial, then we cannot abandon them now and expect to uphold our moral integrity. Now is the time to proclaim that we **know** what is worth loving – and to demonstrate our love for it."

The Strange Occupation Of Thinking

A few years ago, an interesting experiment was conducted among seniors at St. Johns College at Annapolis, Md., America's only "Great Books College." They were asked, during the summer vacation period in their respective home cities, to apply for jobs at various employment agencies and corporations. They were to specify that their occupational skill or experience was "professional thinker." Many of the students reported similar responses. One senior's report was typical:

"For the most part the interviewers thought I was mad, or pulling their leg. For example, one would say, 'Yes, I know you think. We all do. But what do you **do**?' Others were more sympathetic: 'We like our people to think. But you can't earn a living at it.' A few even thought I was being insolent. One personnel manager asked with brittle politeness, 'What does a professional think about?' I replied, 'He thinks about whatever the matter is at hand – but does so with skill.' This brought a sneer and a retort, 'In this company the executives do the thinking and the rest follow orders.'"

Almost needless to say, not one of the seniors reported finding a job opening for a "professional thinker." It is obviously an occupation as outmoded as the buggy whip and button hook. Bernard Shaw may not have altogether had his tongue in cheek when he once quipped, "Most people in the world think only once a year. I have made an international reputation by thinking once a week."

But there is hope. In June, some 50 think-oriented scientists in a variety of fields met at Amhurst College for a "Conference On Cognitive Process Instruction." The whole idea: how to launch how-to-think courses in colleges. It is believed to be the start of a "new" discipline, Cognitive Science. The stated objective is to "engage in a renaissance of the 19th-century belief that education can improve the functioning of the mind through training." Why do some people think better, clearer, deeper than others? What unique process goes on in their heads that makes them different? The scientists have already introduced a mind-boggling label for their objectives: "Heuristics," or "discovery procedures" that open and stimulate the mind juices. They are following Galileo's precept: "You cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him to find it within himself."

Thinking is essentially a process of sequential problem-solving. Throughout history the supreme thinkers have been the philosophers and theologians because they confronted the most profound of problems – such ideas as morals, God, virtue, the state, evil, love, truth, war, soul, immortality, reason, will, and many other abstractions that govern our lives. The average person attempts to follow the same process. But what is missing is the depth, the skill, the process of the art itself.

One conclusion arrived at by the cognitive scientists at the Amherst meeting is that thinking cannot be taught by lecturing, or even only by reading. Says one of them, Robert E. Sparks of Washington University, St. Louis, "During a lecture, the only mind working at reasonable efficiency is that of the lecturer." So these scientists are advocating "loud thinking" or verbalization in groups. And essentially, what else is this but the Great Books group discussion process in action? It is the intermixture and by-play of ideas that forces one to utilize thinking to cope and deal with ideas. And the richer the ideas, the more stimulative the thought processes. In short, an idea is a wonderful thing – but it won't work unless you do.

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