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Thick As Thieves

I slightly wish this were the Oscars. If that was so then I'd only have 45 seconds to speak, and if I went over that time the microphone would cut out. Sadly for you though this isn't the Oscars. And as much as I'd like this to be a completely wonderful spontaneous culmination of all original work...I'm gonna have to say that that is not what this is. I must tell you now before it's too late...that I am a thief.

Now, if I had created something completely original...it would likely be complete nonsense. Because we're *all* thieves. Whether you notice it or not you steal every day. Our specific brand of thievery encompasses everything in our lives. The only difference is this: you and I...*we*, steal ideas. While you may have come up with an essay topic that no one has ever written before, that idea came from somewhere else and was influenced by something else. The design behind all of the clothes we wear, the book plots we read, the plans we have for our lives, nothing around us is ever perfectly original. And that's why you can steal it. Now please, see this in the metaphorical sense, I'm not telling you to steal a car because illegal thievery is bad for a reason, but if you can take an idea or a trait and weave it into something that is your own, then you can steal...like an artist.

Throughout our lives, we've picked up habits, traits, and personality quirks that have created who we are today. While Austin Kleon went over this idea in his Bestselling book he

centered his topic on physical art. The ideas that I'm imploring you to think about deal with who you are and who you want to be. Do you want to be an athlete? Do you want to be a singer? A straight-A student? Or even just a better student? Do you want to be a kinder person, more humble, more creative? You name it. There are so many avenues to get where you want to go. But if any of you are like me, then you might get stressed out at the very thought of trying to become the person you aspire to be. My advice is don't try and start from square one, instead, try thievery. Find others who model those things you want to become. Study the people and things you look up to in life, take an idea, and transform into your own - don't imitate, emulate, and make sure to give credit where credit is due.

Through my years at Maeser, one of the most important things I've learned is how to be me. While I did learn things like science, sentence diagramming, really good insults from Mr. Watabe, and how to properly say "Gea" from Mr. Harmor - I've also learned how to make friends, create habits, do research, and...steal. That is how I learned to be myself. Stealing like an artist was taught in Mrs. Slade's class when she sang and danced to teach us about covalent bonds and I learned how to enjoy learning. Stealing personality traits was taught when Mr. Dowdle yelled, "Get in uniform!" because I learned respect. And stealing a habit was taught every day when I learned what it meant to truly care about others. When my teachers would stay late just to help me with one math problem, when I overheard print comm talking about what they did at 3 a.m. in the morning while putting together *our* yearbook. Or when my coach pulled me aside just to ask if *I* was doing ok. These kinds of behaviors are worth taking.

I'm so grateful that humans are "thieves" because it means that even if I didn't know it, I was being influenced one way or the other into becoming a better person and what more can we

hope for out of life? So I tell you now, whether you be a 7th grader, a freshie, a senior, or even a graduate, become the person you want to be by thievery. You emulate rather than imitate and you take ideas and attributes and you make them your own because, in the end, the only original work in the world is you. But you get to decide what creates you - and Maeser has been, and still can be, the best place to start your masterpiece.