

A Pentad of Imperatives

This Pentad started as a Tetrad that I encountered in my reading of fiction:

- Know.
- Think.
- Choose.
- Do.

No point in getting emotional about anything. Being emotional didn't help with survival. What mattered was to learn everything, analyze the situation, choose a course of action, and then move boldly. Know, think, choose, do. There was no place in that list for "feel." Not that Bean didn't have feelings. He simply refused to think about them or dwell on them or let them influence his decisions, when anything important was at stake.

...

But in the end, Bean suspected, character mattered more than intelligence. In Bean's litany of survival — know, think, choose, do — intelligence only mattered in the first three, and was the decisive factor only in the second one.

— Orson Scott Card, *Ender's Shadow*

I prepended the imperative *Read* so as **to begin** with what I consider to be an excellent but underused avenue to knowledge acquisition.

There is so much of wonderful reading available. We are not likely to ever get too much of it.

— Gordon B. Hinckley

(His conference talk this short excerpt comes from I think merits frequent reading and re-reading.)

Another short excerpt comes from a teaching of the Prophet Joseph Smith, where his voice of experience said that

[one who can] mark the power of Omnipotence, inscribed upon the heavens, can also see God's own handwriting in the sacred volume: and **he who reads it oftenest will like it best**, and he who is acquainted with it, will know the hand [of the Lord] wherever he can see it. (emphasis added)

The Prophet was speaking of the Bible, which he loved to read, and read and re-read all his life, but it also applies to all the scriptures (more especially for us as Latter-day Saints the Book of Mormon) which should be our primary **written** source of spiritual nourishment.

Books fall open,
you fall in,
delighted where
you've never been;
hear voices not once
heard before,
reach world on world
through door on door;
find unexpected
keys to things
locked up beyond
imaginings.
What might you be,
perhaps become,
because one book
is somewhere? Some
wise delver into
wisdom, wit;
and wherewithal
has written it.

True books will venture,
dare you out,
whisper secrets,
maybe shout
across the gloom
to you in need,
who hanker for
a book to read.

— David McCord

Four Principles of Psycholinguistics and Reading

1. Reading is a process (that I believe should be fun — turn a **read** into a **ride** :-).
2. In order to learn something new, you have to be able to “hook” it onto something you already know. (Making these connections is absolutely essential to knowledge retention.)
3. In order to read we make predictions about what the writer meant.
4. Predictions are not precise, hence the importance of seeking clarification, which if the author is not accessible, is not easy!

Writing is meant to be read, to give readers something to process. To read is to “riddle” (figure out) what the writer meant.

Learning is Like Eating

The Pentad of Imperatives (Read, Know, Think, Choose, Do) is intended to foster Learning. Learning is for nourishing our minds. Eating is for nourishing our bodies. No analogy is perfect, but here goes:

1. Reading is like Smelling. It's a precursor to knowledge, like smelling precedes tasting.
2. Knowing is like Tasting. The Prophet Joseph Smith also said:

This is good doctrine. It tastes good. I can taste the principles of eternal life, and so can you. They are given to me by the revelations of Jesus Christ; and I know that when I tell you these words of eternal life as they are given to me, you taste them, and I know that you believe them. You say honey is sweet, and so do I. I can also taste the spirit of eternal life. I know it is good; and when I tell you of these things which were given me by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, you are bound to receive them as sweet, and rejoice more and more.

And let's not forget what Alma 32:34-35 says about this!

3. Tasting food would be very unsatisfying if that's all we did with it. Knowing something without pondering its implications, without "chewing on it" for a while, would be likewise unprofitable.

So, like cows (or other **ruminants**) who chew their cud and look deep in thought while so doing, we profitably **ruminate** on the delicious knowledge we taste:

verb

1. think deeply about something. "We ruminated on the nature of existence."

synonyms: think about, contemplate, consider, meditate on, muse on, mull over, ponder on/over, deliberate about/on, chew on, puzzle over; cogitate about.

4. After Chewing, it's decision time. We must Choose — Do we spit out what we've been Chewing, or do we Swallow it?

And even after Swallowing, if we decide (for whatever reason — possibly involuntarily) to regurgitate, the food/knowledge we Swallowed will not be assimilated into our bodies/minds.

5. So after Swallowing we must Digest what we swallowed to gain the benefits of Eating. Just like after Choosing we must Do something with our new-found knowledge to gain the benefits of Learning.

In a nutshell:

1. Read ↔ Smell
2. Know ↔ Taste
3. Think ↔ Chew
4. Choose ↔ Swallow
5. Do ↔ Digest

Like Nephi, we must *liken all scriptures [and other good books] unto [ourselves], that it might be for our profit and learning.* (1 Nephi 19:23)

Likening is making analogies, finding similarities with and applications to our own lives and situations of God's dealings with His children. It's **Imperative!**