

TALK FOR PARENTS DAY

18 NOVEMBER 2007

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I was so happy with Frédéric's choice of the theme this year and then when he told me I could speak for 5 minutes! So let's go...

I want to read to you from one of my favourite books, a book I first read in my mid-20's when I was more mature, and have re-read many times. I thought and thought about this and realized that I could not say it any better.

From Scott Peck

*Life is difficult.*

*This is a great truth, one of greatest. First of four noble truths. Once we truly see it we transcend it. When accepted life no longer difficult.*

*Most people moan and expect that life should be easy. Their difficulties are somehow exceptional.*

*Life is series of problems. Moan or solve them? Teach our children to solve them?*

*Discipline is the basic set of tools we require to solve life's problems. without discipline we can solve nothing. With some disc., some probls. With total discipline we can solve all problems.*

*Tools, means of exper'g difficulties constructively*

1. *delaying gratification*
2. *acceptance of responsibility*
3. *dedication to truth*
4. *balancing*

*not complex but simple tools. Presidents and kings often forget to use them. Problem*

*they are tools with which pain is confronted not avoided and if one seeks to avoid legit suffering, then one will avoid the use of these tools.*

*- The Road Less Travelled by M. Scott Peck*

What I realized is that these four tools comprise exactly what the Ecole does.

We delay gratification in not allowing electronic appliances (they at least have to wait until we are gone and they can pull it out from under their pillow), or having to be 16 before going to Meiringen, or 18 before having certain freedoms with responsibilities.

We ask that every single student take on responsibility for their learning, for their contribution in service to the community, cleaning the school, and in many other ways, large and small.

Living in such a small and intimate community is in itself a dedication to truth. One cannot hide and this often causes suffering and anguish. Our favourite masks and party faces cannot work 24/7. That is humanly impossible. We see each other at 7:10 in the morning for gosh sake, when we are sick and well, in our many different moods, when two people get together as a couple and when they break up. It is a house of mirrors. We get confronted on our behaviour, our clothes.

And balance – ask any MA here and many of the older students. It is our constant challenge. How do you work in the place you live and find the time and the ways you need to take care of yourself and still give to the community whose demands are unceasing and bottomless?

We hope, therefore, to make your child's life a bit more difficult so she can learn enough discipline to face life's challenges.