

## Words of Wisdom

CB: [00:00] Oh, thanks very much. I—I—I'm sure you all appreciate having had Marlene do the main presentation.

[Laughter]

It's more than just that she talks faster than I do. She puts more passion into the talk and talks more directly to the audience. I'm a little more, you know, academic. But you—you ...

[Laughter]

You've been exposed to a lot of ideas here in the last hour, and I'm reminded of a—the basketball coach who told me that when he sends this one athlete out onto the floor, he tells him one thing to remember, because he said, "If I tell him two things, he'll forget both of them."

[Laughter]

And—but so there's a rule that says it—introduce one new idea and that's it. Unfortunately, with knowledge building, knowledge creation, it's just not that simple because it's a system and all of the ideas are interconnected, and if you pull out one, it doesn't stand on its own. A lot is lost because of the connections.

Nonetheless, I do want to talk about one idea because it ties back directly to a lot of practical things, and that's the one that Marlene mentioned, which is we succeed when all succeed. Now, the reverse is also true. All succeed—that is, the individuals succeed—when we as a group succeed. This is a principle that, yes, of course it applies to things like understanding difficult concepts, that we as a group succeed when everybody's eyes have finally lit up and the shades have been removed. But it applies to very practical, down-to-earth things, too.

Take the learning of the multiplication facts. This is an individual achievement, of course. They're in your head. But—and a normal way is to put stu—students through a series of activities and drills and whatever, out of which 80% of the kids will learn those facts, and then 20% don't, and they're in trouble. Well, I(?)—and next year the tea—next year's teacher tries again and maybe succeeds with a few more, but there are always a few who don't get it. Changing that into an activity in which we as a group succeed when every single one of us has mastered those facts, they're going to come easier to some than others, but we're all going to get together and help, and I've seen this work. It's a—I don't want to be extreme about this, because you're all—all a lot more experienced than I am in this, but I would venture to say that this is the way to teach those rote facts: make it everybody's responsibility to help them out.

But flip it around. The—we, the individuals succeed when we, the core group, succeeds. That's true of a—school athletics, competitive athletics, generally. The whole—there are, you know, there are a couple of dozen athletes on the varsity team, but the whole school succeeds when they get out there and—and win a game. And that's—that's part of the spirit. That's a spirit that could apply(?) to work with ideas. We don't expect everybody to come up with the original idea, but we expect everybody to be part of the culture, the climate, in which those idea advances take place.

And then we flip it around, that these [sic] whole class advances when everybody has got it and has a part in it.

So that's one—one just simple part of the notion of pervasive knowledge building. And there's a lot more to it, but really, you find out **[05:00]** by trying it, by—by working at it. And as with everything else, the easy part—the ideas, complex as they are, are the easy part. The hard part is the working it out in the lives of the students.

And so, I—I hope the effect of today is not to give you ten ideas so that you forget all of them, but rather to get—to communicate a kind of enthusiasm for the possibilities of students as knowledge creators. Thank you.

[Applause]

[END OF RECORDING – length, 05:50]