

Education for Leadership and Survival

*Remarks of James B. Stockdale
To The Connecticut Headmaster's Association
At South Kent School, February 18, 1977*

I'm glad to have the opportunity to talk to such an influential audience as this group of Headmasters. I'm most interested in what happens to my sons and the rest of the young men in this country. I want it to be understood from the start: I'm not necessarily speaking to you as a military man; what I have to say has nothing in particular to do with politics or warfare or the profession which I happen to serve. George Bartlett has asked me to talk about Education for Leadership and Survival; I'm speaking about something very dear to my heart. It is a subject on which I have strong views, most of which were developed through the unique experiences that I have had in the past dozen years.

The flier George put out listed among my accomplishments the serving on a lot of Navy selection boards. This duty was one of the many new experiences I've enjoyed since I got out of prison. If you're running a big corporation, or a university faculty, or a military service, when it comes time to decide who in your hierarchy is ready for advancement, there has got to be a formalized system. I was impressed with the Navy's system. I didn't realize how seriously it had been taken, all those years that I was being promoted like everybody else. I'll walk you through it.

The first time you know the identity of the other members of the Board is when you walk into a certain Board room at 8:00 o'clock on the appointed morning. You are addressed by the man who emerges as the senior member, and the first order of business is to stand, raise your right hand, put your left hand on the Bible at your place and swear to make the best judgment you can, on the basis of merit, without prejudice. You're sworn to confidentiality regarding all board members' remarks during the proceedings. Board members are who they are because they have experience and understanding; they often have knowledge of the particular individuals under consideration. They must feel free to speak their minds. It's a very awesome responsibility and yet a comforting experience to know that you can speak your mind without fear of it being leaked. Board members read and grade dozens of dossiers, and of course there are extensive discussions about each candidate. When it comes time to vote, each member makes a secret and independent judgment. A member casts his vote by selecting and pushing a "per cent confidence" button, visible only to himself, on a console attached to his chair. When the last member pushes his button, a totalizer displays the numerical average "confidence" of the board. There's no way to find out who voted what. It's an absolutely democratic system. The Board makes its own rules. I'm always impressed by the fact that every effort is made to be fair to the candidates. Some are clearly out, some are clearly in; it's always the border line cases that are the tough ones. You go over and over those in the "middle pile" and usually you vote and re-vote until late at night.

One Sunday morning, I was one of those trudging from the "tank" (where the voting takes place), back to the Board Room to grade more "jackets". It was eight AM and we had been working for an hour. We nine members had been brought in from all over the world. I remember someone saying "If you told the average Army or Air Force officer that we have nine admirals from all over the world down here at 7:00 o'clock on a Sunday morning trying to decide who will have command of the aircraft carriers next year, they wouldn't believe you." I am proud of the seriousness with which this work is taken.

One aspect that I mentioned to George might be important to this audience. In all the Boards I've sat on, no inference or statement in a "jacket" is as sure to portend a low confidence score on the vote as evidence of a lack of directness or rectitude of a candidate in his dealings with others. Any hint of moral turpitude really turns people off. As you read the briefs, hear the remarks, and watch the totalizer, you get kind of a revealing glimpse of life. People don't like to deal with unknowns. When it comes down to the crunch they prefer to work with forthright plodders rather than devious geniuses. They don't want to deal with someone who's working two or three different problems at the same time. As articulate and clever as some of these slick operators are, generally speaking they're not worth the trouble to put up with them. I don't believe what I saw was in any way unique to a military ethic. In hierarchies where people's fates are decided by committees or boards, those who lose credibility with their peers and cause doubt to arise in the minds of their superiors regarding their directness, honesty or integrity, are dead. There is no recovery. You can quote me to your boys on that.

I've seen this truth manifested in selection board amphitheatres; I've also seen it manifested in prison camps, where people's fates are also determined in large measure by reputation. The contrast of men's fates is more vividly obvious in the latter case because in the extortion environment a perceptive enemy can get his hooks into the slightest chink in a man's ethical armor and drive him into a downhill slide that will ruin his self-respect and life in nothing flat.

This chink in the ethical or moral armor thing is one that I expect you Headmasters have given much thought to. There are some uncharted aspects to this—some traits of susceptibility that I don't think psychologists yet have words for. I am thinking of the tragedy that can befall a person who has such a need for love or attention that he will sell his soul for it. I use tragedy with the rigorous definition Aristotle applied to it: the story of a good man with a flaw who comes to an unjustified bad end. This is a rather delicate point and one that I want to emphasize. We had very, very few collaborators in prison, and comparatively few Aristotelian tragedies, but the story and fate of one of these good men with a flaw might be

instructive. He was handsome, smart, articulate and smooth. He was almost sincere. He was obsessed with success. When adversity commenced closing in on him, his instinct was to approach the managers of the adversity (his captors in this case) and make a deal. In other words, when the going got tough, he decided it expedient to "rise above principle". Now perhaps those striving for acceptance or success may shortcut principle without arousing universal ire in some situations, but in prison both virtues and flaws are high lighted and people known to benefit from self-serving one-way flaws grow to live in infamy. This guy was an opportunist. He befriended and worked for the enemy to the detriment of his fellow Americans. He made a tacit deal; moreover he accepted favors (a violation of the code of conduct). In time, out of fear and shame he withdrew; we could not get him to communicate with the American prisoner organization.

I couldn't get through to him or learn what made the guy tick. One of my best friends in prison, one of the most wise people I have ever known, had at one time in the distant past been in a squadron with this fellow. I tapped a question to my old philosophical friend: "What in the world is going on with that fink?" "You're going to be surprised at what I have to say", he replied. "In a squadron he pushes himself forward and dominates the scene. He's a continual fountain of information. He's the person everybody relies on for inside dope. He works like crazy; often flies more hops than others. It drives him crazy if he's not liked. He tends to grovel and ingratiate himself before others. I didn't realize he was really pathetic until I was sitting around with him and his wife one night when he was spinning his yarns of delusions of grandeur, telling of his great successes and his pending ascension to the top. His wife knew him better than anybody else; she shook her head with genuine sympathy and said to him: "Gee, you're just a phoney."



In prison, this man had somehow crossed the boundary of self respect to where he was willing to sell his soul just to satisfy this need—this immaturity. The only way he could get the attention from authority that he demanded was to grovel and ingratiate himself before the enemy. As a soldier he was a miserable failure, but he had not crossed the boundary of willful treason; he was not written off as an irrevocable loss as were the two patent collaborators with whom the Vietnamese soon naturally arranged that he live.

As we American POW's built our civilization, and wrote our own laws (which we leaders obliged all to memorize), we also codified certain principles, which formed the backbone of our policies and attitudes. I codified the principle of compassion, rehabilitation and forgiveness with the slogan: "It is neither American nor Christian to nag a repentant sinner to his grave." (Some didn't like it; thought it seemed soft on finks.) I'm trying to tell you that we really gave this man a chance. Over time, our rehabilitation efforts worked. After five years of self indulgence he got himself together and started to communicate with the prisoner organization. I sent the message: "Are you on the team or not?"; he replied "yes" and came back. He told the Vietnamese that he didn't want to play their dirty games any more. He wanted to get away from those willful collaborators and he came back and he was accepted, after a fashion.

I wish that were the end of the story. Although he came back, joined us, and even became a leader of sorts, he never totally won himself back. No matter how forgiving we acted, he was conscious that many resented him—not so much for the reason that he was weak as for the fact that he had broken what we might call a gentlemen's code. In all of those years when he, a Senior Officer, had willingly participated in making tape recordings of anti-American material, he had deeply offended the sensibilities of the American prisoners who were forced to listen to him. To most of us it wasn't the rhetoric of the war or the goodness or the badness of this or that issue that really counted. The object of our highest value was the well being of our fellow prisoners. He had turned the corner and broken that code and hurt some of those people. Some thought that he indirectly hurt them physically as an informer. I don't believe that. What indisputably hurt them was his not having the sensitivity to realize the damage his opportunistic conduct would do to the morale of a bunch of middle American guys with middle American attitudes, which they naturally cherished. He should have known that in those solitary

*Official U.S. Navy photograph
Rear Admiral Stockdale receives the Medal of Honor
from President Gerald R. Ford at White House
ceremonies on March 4, 1976, awarded for "con-
spicuous gallantry and intrepidity. "during his eight
years of isolation, torture, and deprivation as a prisoner of
the North Vietnamese. Admiral Stockdale is the husband
of Sybil Stockdale, a trustee of South Kent School, and
they are the parents of four boys; Jim, Sid '73, Stan '79,
and Taylor, entering the Third Form this Fall.*

cells where his tapes were piped were idealistic, direct, patriotic fellows who would be crushed and embarrassed to have him, a senior man in excellent physical shape, so obviously not under torture, telling the world that the war was wrong. Even if he believed what he said, which he did not, he should have had the common decency to keep his mouth shut. Nobody cares if you sit there and think anything you want, but when you cut down with insensitivity, those who really want to love and help you, you cross a line. He seemed to sense that he could never truly be one of us.

And yet he was likeable—particularly back in civilization after release—when tension was off, and making a deal did not seem so important. He exuded charm and “hail fellow” sophistication. He wanted so to be liked by all those men he had once discarded in his search for new friends, new deals, new fields to conquer, in Hanoi. The tragedy of his life was obvious to us all. Tears were shed by some of his old prison mates when he was killed in an accident that strongly resembled suicide some months later. The Greek drama had run its course. He was right out of Aristotle’s book, a good man with a flaw who came to an unjustified bad end. The flaw was insecurity; the need to ingratiate himself, the need for love and adulation at any price.

He reminded me of Paul Newman in the old movie that I remembered all the way through prison, *The Hustler*, about the pool bettor, George C. Scott, who watched Newman showing off. It was Newman who couldn’t stand success. He knew how to make a deal. He was handsome, he was smart, he was attractive to everybody, he had to have adulation, and therein lay the seed of tragedy. He was playing high stakes pool against old Minnesota Fats (Jackie Gleason). Newman was well in the lead, and getting more full of himself by the hour. George C. Scott whispered to his partner: “I’m going to keep betting on Minnesota Fats; this other guy (Newman) is a born loser—He’s all skill and no character.” And he was right, a born loser, so I think that’s the message.

How do we educate to avoid these casualties? Can we stop this kind of a tragedy that occurs from time to time by education? In addressing Education for Leadership and Survival, I’m not going to be limited to the physical kind of survival which we have all faced from time to time. What we prisoners were in was an intense extortion environment, that is to say we were in a one way leverage game in which the other side had all the mechanical advantage. I suppose you could say that in a sense we all live in a leverage world to some degree; we all experience people trying to use us in one way or another. The difference in Hanoi was the degradation of the ends (to be used as propaganda agents of an enemy, or as informers on your fellow Americans, etc.), and the power of the means (total environmental control including solitary confinement, restraint (leg irons, handcuffs), and torture). Extortionists always go down the same track: the imposition of guilt and fear for having disobeyed their rules, followed in turn by punishment, apology, confession, and atonement (their payoff). Our captors would go to great lengths to get a man to compromise his own

code, even if only slightly, and then they would hold that in their bag, and the next time get him to go a little further. Some people are psychologically, if not physically, at home in extortion environments. They are tough people who instinctively avoid getting sucked into the undertows. They never kid themselves or their friends; if they miss the mark they admit it to both and never put their head in the sand. But there’s another category of person who gets tripped up in it and he makes a small compromise, perhaps rationalizes it, and then this leads to another one and then he gets depressed, and full of shame, and lonesome, and then he loses his will power and self respect and becomes a tragedy. Somewhere along the line he realizes that he has already turned a corner that he didn’t mean to turn. All too late he realizes that he has been worshipping the wrong gods and discovers the wisdom of the ages: that life isn’t fair. And thus we have these derelicts who could have done so much more for their country or for society or their families.

I want to draw on this to show that the schools of the sort you run are the best hope of attacking this problem. You see, in sorting the story out after our release, we found that most of us had come to combat this constant mental and physical pressure in much the same way. One of the things is that when a person is alone in a cell and only sees the door open once or twice a day for a bowl of soup, after a period of weeks in isolation and darkness he realizes he has to build some sort of ritual into his life if he wants to avoid becoming an animal. Ritual fills a need in a hard life and it’s easy to see how formal church ritual grew. For almost all of us, this ritual was built around prayer, exercise, and communication. The prayers I said during those days were good prayers. They weren’t shopping lists about wanting to go home, etc. They were prayers of quality with ideas of substance. We found that over the course of time our minds had a tremendous capacity for invention and introspection, but had the weakness of being an integral part of our bodies. I remembered Descartes and how in his philosophy he separated or bifurcated, mind and body. One time I cursed my body for the way it decayed my mind. I had decided that I would become a Gandhi. I would have to be carried around on a pallet and in that state I could not be used by my captors for propaganda purposes. After about ten days of fasting, I found that I had become so depressed that soon I would be risking going into interrogation ready to spill my guts just looking for a friend. I tapped to the guy next door and I said, “Gosh, how I wish Descartes could have been right, but he’s wrong.” He was a little slow to reply; I reviewed Descartes’ deduction with him and explained how I had discovered that body and mind are inseparable.

On the positive side, I discovered the tremendous file cabinet volume of the human mind. You can memorize an incredible amount of material and you can draw out of your memory remarkable recall from the past by easing slowly toward the event you seek and not crowding the mind too closely. You’ll try to remember who was at your birthday party when you were five years old, and you can get it, but it takes months. You can break the locks and find the answers, but you need time and solitude to learn

how to use this marvelous device in your head which is the greatest computer on earth. The great value of education in all this was, in my case, the history and classics I'd studied which really came back to serve me well. So many of the things we recalled from the past were utterly useless to us as sources of strength or practicality. Events like the cocktail party or the insincere social contact were almost repugnant to us, not out of guilt but because they were of no value as memories. Historical perspective which enabled one to take himself away from all the agitation, not necessarily to see a rosy lining, but to see the real nature of the situation you faced, was a thing of value.

Just one little yarn to show you how this historical perspective helped me see the reality of my own situation and better cope with it. In some of the literature I obtained, I learned that the same cells we occupied had in years before been lived in by many of the leaders of our captors' country. I marvelled that the cycle of history which prompted Hitler's rise in turn prompted the rise of the Popular Front in France. When that had happened the cell I was living in was vacated. When metropolitan France permitted Communists in the government in 1936, the Communists who occupied Vietnam's cells were set free ("perhaps Pham Van Dong lived here"). I came to realize what tough nuts these people were. I was willing to fight them to the death, but I grew to realize that hatred was an indulgence, a very inefficient emotion. I remember thinking, "if you were committed to beating the dealer in a gambling casino, would *bating* him help your game?" In a pidgeon English propaganda book the guard unwittingly gave me, they had talked about their communication in prison and how they could beat down the enemy if they were united. It seemed comforting to realize we were united against the communist administration of Hoa Lo prison just as the Vietnamese Communists had united against the French administration of Hoa Lo in the 30's. Prisoners are prisoners, and there's only one way to beat administrations. We resolved to do it better in the 60's than they had in the 30's. You don't base system beating on any thought of political idealism; you do it as a competitive thing, as an expression of self respect.

Education in the classics teaches you that all organizations since the beginning of time have used the power of guilt, that cycles are repetitive, and that this is the way of the world. It's a naive kid who comes in and says, "Let's see, what's good and what's bad". Boy, that's a quagmire. You can only get above that quagmire with a reference as to how wise men before you accommodated the same dilemmas. And I believe a good classical education and an understanding of history can prepare you to best determine the rules you should live by. They also give you the power to analyze reasons for these rules and guide you as to how to apply them to your own situation. All my education helped me. Naval Academy discipline, and body contact sports helped me. But I want to tell you that the specific education which I found myself recalling and using most was that which I got in graduate school. I'm an advocate of graduate school, but this is not a plug for it. The messages of

history and philosophy I used were simple. I probably would have gotten them in a school like South Kent, but I didn't have the privilege of attending a good private boys' school. Very likely they are in your curriculum now. If not, why not these?

The first one is this business about life not being fair. That is a very important lesson and I learned it from a wonderful man named Philip Rhinelander. While at Stanford University as a Commander in the Navy studying Political Science in 1961, I went over to Philosophy corner one day and an older gentleman said, "Can I help you"? I said, "Yes, I'd like to take some courses in philosophy." I told him I'd been in college for six years and had never had a course in philosophy. He couldn't believe it. I told him that I was a Naval officer and he said, "Well, I used to be in the Navy. Sit down." He became a great influence on my life. We hit it off well. I found him to be a real Renaissance Man. He'd been a Harvard lawyer and had pleaded cases before the Supreme Court and then gone to war as a reserve officer. When he came back he had taken his doctorate under Whitehead at Harvard. He's also a music composer, had been an Academic Dean at Harvard, head of the School of Humanities and Sciences at Stanford, and by the time I met him had by personal choice returned to teaching in the classroom. Thus, I found him preparing for one of his graduate classes surrounded by great piles of books and papers. He said, "The course I'm teaching is my personal two-term favorite—The Problems of Good and Evil, and we're starting our second term. I'm going to have you in for tutorial sessions. I'll take you an hour a week." In my department across the quadrangle, graduate students were waiting outside professors' doors for hours for a five minute consultation, so that was pure gold. He said the message of his course was from the Book of Job. The number one problem in this world is that people are not able to accommodate the lesson in the Book. He recounted the story of Job. It starts out by establishing that Job was the most honorable of men. Then he lost all his goods and he also lost his reputation which is what really hurt. His wife was badgering him to admit his sins, but he knew he had made no errors. He was not a patient man and demanded to speak to the Lord. When the Lord appeared in the whirlwind, he said, "Now Job, you have to shape up! Life is not fair." That's my interpretation and that's the way the book ended for hundreds of years. I agree with those of the opinion that the happy ending was spliced on many years later. If you'll read it, you'll see that the metre changes. People couldn't live with the original message. Here was a good man who came to unexplained grief, and the Lord had told him, "That's the way it is. Don't challenge me. This is my world and you either live in it as I designed it or get out." This was a great comfort to me in prison. It answered the question "why me?". It cast aside any thoughts of being punished for past actions. Sometimes I shared the message with fellow prisoners by tapping through walls, but I learned to be selective. It's a strong message that upsets some people.

Rhinelander also passed on to me another piece of classical information which I found of great value. It was

the day of our last session together and he said, "You're a military man, let me give you a book to remember me by. It's a book of military ethics." He handed it to me, and I bid him good-bye with great emotion. I took the book home and that night started to read it. It was the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus, his "manual" for the Roman field soldier. As I began to read, I thought to myself in disbelief, "Does Rhinelander think I'm going to draw lessons for my life from this thing? I'm a fighter pilot. I'm a technical man. I'm a test pilot. I know how to get people to do technical work. I play golf; I drink martinis. I know how to get ahead in my profession. And what does he hand me? He hands me this book that says in part, "It's better to die in hunger, exempt from grief and fear, than to live in affluence and with perturbation." I remembered this later in prison because perturbation was what I was living in. I'd left that land of technology. When I jumped out of that airplane, I had entered the world of Epictetus and it's a world that few of us are far away from. In Palo Alto, I had read this book, not with content, but disbelief. Statement after statement: "Men are disturbed not by things, but by views that they take of them." "Demand not that events should happen as you wish, but wish them to happen as they do happen and you will go on well." This is stoicism. It's not the last word, but it's a viewpoint that comes in handy in many circumstances and it surely did for me. Particularly this line: "Lameness is an impediment to the body but not to the will." That was significant to me because I wasn't able to stand for the first couple of years I spent in solitary confinement. With all of this extortion, the idea was, "if you are just reasonable with us we will do this for you. You get your meals, you get to sleep, you won't be pestered, you might even get a cellmate", and so forth. Epictetus had said, "If I can get the things I need with the preservation of my honor and fidelity and self-respect, show me the way and I will get them. But, if you require me to lose my own proper good, that you may gain what is no good, consider how unreasonable and foolish you are." Again, when I say that was not good, I don't mean whether the war was right or wrong. From where I sat that was immaterial. If I disillusion conscientious and patriotic shipmates and destroy their morale so they in turn will be destroyed, that's no good. That's a violation of my trust and honor.

What attributes serve you well in the extortion environment? What we learned is perhaps good advice for any extortion or "leverage" environment—maybe even that of the business world. We learned there, above all else, that the best defense is to keep yourself clean. Don't cut ethical corners. It was obvious that that was the only way they really got to you where you lived. When you did something you were ashamed of, and they realized you were ashamed of it, you were in trouble. A little white lie is where extortion and ultimately blackmail start. In 1965, I was crippled and I was alone. I realized that they had all the power. I couldn't see how I was ever going to get out with my honor and self respect. The one thing I came to realize was that if you don't lose integrity you can't be had and you can't be hurt. Compromises multiply and build up when you're working against a skilled extortionist or a good manipulator. You can't be

had if you don't take that first shortcut, or "meet them half way", as they say, or look for that tacit "deal", or make that first compromise.

Bob North was a political science professor at Stanford who taught me a course called Comparative Marxist Thought. This was not an anti-communist course. It was the study of dogma and thought patterns. We read no criticisms of Marxism, only primary sources. All year we read the works of Marx, Lenin, etc. I really understood more about Marxist theory than my interrogator did. I was able to say to that interrogator, "That's not what Marx said; you're a deviationist." One of the things North talked about a little bit was brain washing. A psychologist who studied the Korean prisoner situation, which was somewhat parallel to ours, concluded that there were three categories of people involved there. The first was the red-neck Marine sergeant from Tennessee who had an eighth grade education. He would get in that interrogation room and they would say that the Spanish-American War was started by the bomb within the Maine, which might be true, and he would answer, "B.S." They could show him something about racial unrest in Detroit. "B.S." There was no way they could get to him; his mind was made up. He was a straight guy—red, white, and blue, and everything else was B.S.! He didn't even give it a second thought. Not much of a historian, perhaps, but a damned good security risk. In the next category were the sophisticates. They were the fellows who could be told these same things about the horrors of American history and our social problems, but had heard it all before, knew both sides of every story, and were optimistic and not gullible. They thought we were on the right track and they couldn't be bamboozled. They weren't ashamed of the fact that we had robber barons at a certain time of our history; they were aware of the skeletons in most civilizations' closets. They could not be emotionally involved and so they were good security risks. The ones who were in trouble were the high school graduates who had enough sense to pick up the innuendo, and yet not enough education to properly accommodate it. Not many of them fell, but most of the men that really got entangled, started from that background. The psychologist's point is possibly over simplistic, but I think his message has some validity. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

Generally speaking, I think education is a tremendous defense—the broader, the better. After I was shot down Sybil found a clipping glued in the front of my collegiate dictionary: "Education is an ornament in prosperity and a refuge in adversity." We both agree with that. I've talked about extraneous material we prisoners found cluttering up our memories. We cast past insincere relationships aside, and also the content of the "How-To" courses. These so-called practical academic exercises in how to really do this or that, which I'm told are proliferating, were useless. I'm not saying we should base education on training people to be in prison, but I am saying that in stress situations, where you're trying to get up off the canvas to win, or perhaps even grappling with "civilized" extortion environments, fundamentals, hard core classical subjects, are what serve best.

Theatrics were also a great part of that which helped sustain me: My mother had been a drama coach when I was young and I was in many of her plays. In prison I learned how to manufacture a personality and live it, crawl into it, and hold that role without deviation. During interrogations, I'd check the responses I'd get to different kinds of behavior. They'd really get worried when I'd do things irrationally. And so ever so often, I would play that "irrational" role and just come completely unglued. When I could tell that pressure to make a public exhibition of me was building up, I'd stand up, tip the table over, attempt to throw the chair through the window, and say, "No way. God dammit! I'm not doing that! Now, come over here and fight!" This was a risky ploy, because if they thought you were really in control of yourself, in other words, acting, they would slam you into the ropes and make you scream in pain like a baby. You could watch their faces and read their minds. They had expected me to behave like a stoic. A man would be a fool to make their job easy by being conventional and predictable. You could feel the tide turn in your favor at that magic moment when their anger turned to pleading: "calm down, now calm down." The payoff would come when they would decide that the margin of risk of my going haywire before some such audience as a touring American professor on a "fact finding" mission was too great. They didn't want a bunch of war protesters sitting around when I started throwing tables at them. More important, they had reason to believe that I would tell the truth—that I had been in solitary confinement for four years and tortured fifteen times—without fear of future consequences. So theatrical training proved helpful.

Can you educate for leadership? I think you can but the Communists would probably say no. One day in an argument with an interrogator, I said, "You are so proud of being a party member, what are the criteria?" He said in a flurry of anger, "There are only four: you have to be seventeen years old, you have to be selfless, you have to be smart enough to understand the theory, and you've got to be a person who innately influences others." He stressed that fourth one. I think psychologists would tell us that there are people who innately do lead the pack. They would say that leadership is innate. I think there is some truth in it. But, I also think you can learn some leadership traits that naturally accrue from a good education: compassion, I think, is a necessity for leaders, as are spontaneity, bravery, self-discipline, honesty, and especially integrity.

These are not new ideas but I want to reaffirm the value of mature consciousness of the lessons of the classics and to emphasize the relative uselessness under stress of some of the functional things we are told are so important. After having learned all these lessons, I remember being disappointed about a month after I was back when one of my young friends and prison mates came running up after a reunion at the Naval Academy. He said with glee, "This is really great, you won't believe how this country has advanced. They've practically done away with Plebe year at the Academy and they've got computers in the basement of Bancroft Hall." I thought, "My God, if there was anything that helped us get through those eight years, it was Plebe year, and if anything screwed up that war, it was computers!"



Official White House photograph

The Stockdale family with President Ford; from the left, Sidney, Taylor, Stanford, Mrs. Stockdale, RAdm. Stockdale, President Ford, Marina Stockdale and her husband, Jim.