

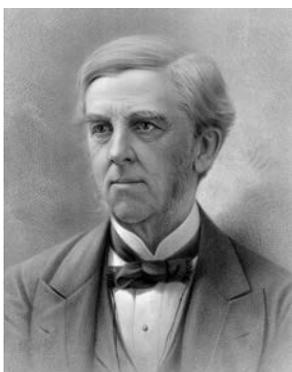
Palmarium

The Classical Academy exists to assist parents in their mission to develop exemplary citizens equipped with analytical thinking skills, virtuous character, and a passion for learning, all built upon a solid foundation of knowledge.



Reflections on Open-Mindedness

••••• Assorted Quotes



Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. (1809-1894)

Every now and then a man's mind is stretched by a new idea or sensation, and never shrinks back to its former dimensions. *Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. (1809-1894) in The Autocrat at the Breakfast Table [1858]*

It is a narrow mind which cannot look at a subject from various points of view. *George Eliot (1819-1880) in Middlemarch [1863]*

Your assumptions are your windows on the world. Scrub them off every once in a while, or the light won't come in. *Isaac Asimov (1919-1991)*

One of the best paradoxes of leadership is a leader's need to be both stubborn and open-minded. A leader must insist on sticking to the vision and stay on course to the destination. But he must be open-minded during the process. *Simon Sinek (1973-)*

One's opinion should only be as strong as one's knowledge on the matter. *Eric Hirzel (unknown)*

An open mind is better than a clenched fist. *Matshona Dhliwayo (unknown)*

Don't criticize what you can't understand. *Bob Dylan (1941-) in The Times They Are a-Changin' [1963]; included in recognition of Dylan receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature presented on December 10, 2016*

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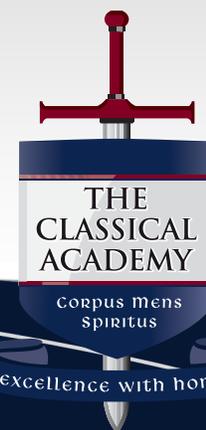
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- Whole Person Focused
 - Relationship Based
 - Classically Oriented
 - Idea Centered

Open-Mindedness

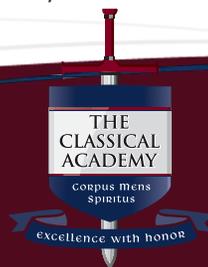
by Amy Nelson (East Elementary Principal)

Open-Mindedness and *Critical Thinking* come under the character trait of *Judgment* in the VIA 24 Character Strengths and Virtues. *Judgment* is defined as, thinking things through and examining them from all sides; not jumping to conclusions; being able to change one's mind in light of evidence; weighing all evidence fairly.

At TCA, this character trait is one we hope to instill in all our students. Our Core Values state: *We value an education that fosters rich creativity, complex analytical thinking, and discernment while exploring the marketplace of ideas.*

We want our students to be able to understand truth, so that they can weigh new ideas critically, against an objective standard. Aristotle said, "It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it." If a student is educated in the formative years on the ideals of truth, beauty, and goodness, that student is able to have a standard to measure new ideas against. We hope our students can entertain a wide variety of new thoughts as they go through life, without

[continued on the next page]



CHARACTER STRENGTHS CLASSIFICATIONS and in *Character Strengths and Virtues*, Peterson and search actively for evidence against one's favored when it is available. Its opposite has been called think in ways that favor one's current views (cf. mindedness arises from the massive evidence that people are biased in favor of ideas that are already strong in their minds. The term *bias* means that people's thoughts and judgments are compared to an ideal standard, a normative model. For most of the research in this field, the normative standard is one of fairness to ideas, regardless of one's initial views. Often this normative standard is difficult to define. For example, many of our beliefs are more likely to be true than false, so we have good reason – on this basis alone – to think that any given belief is likely to be true. Open-mindedness does not require us to believe in extrasensory perception on the basis of one statistically significant demonstration; nor does it require us to spend time examining the details of this demonstration. . . . The claim that open-mindedness is a strength of character is thus based on evidence that it counteracts a pervasive weakness in thinking, the tendency to favor ideas that are strong (Perkins, Bushey, & Faraday, 1986). Active open-minded thinking is an example of what virtue ethicists call a *corrective virtue*, and what it specifically corrects is the widespread *myside bias*" (144-145).

DEFINITIONS: In their chapter on OPEN-MINDEDNESS Seligman write: "Open-mindedness is the willingness to beliefs, plans, or goals, and to weigh such evidence fairly *myside bias*, which refers to the pervasive tendency to Greenwald, 1980). . . . The importance of open-mindedness arises from the massive evidence that people are biased in favor of ideas that are already strong in their minds. The term *bias* means that people's thoughts and judgments are compared to an ideal standard, a normative model. For most of the research in this field, the normative standard is one of fairness to ideas, regardless of one's initial views. Often this normative standard is difficult to define. For example, many of our beliefs are more likely to be true than false, so we have good reason – on this basis alone – to think that any given belief is likely to be true. Open-mindedness does not require us to believe in extrasensory perception on the basis of one statistically significant demonstration; nor does it require us to spend time examining the details of this demonstration. . . . The claim that open-mindedness is a strength of character is thus based on evidence that it counteracts a pervasive weakness in thinking, the tendency to favor ideas that are strong (Perkins, Bushey, & Faraday, 1986). Active open-minded thinking is an example of what virtue ethicists call a *corrective virtue*, and what it specifically corrects is the widespread *myside bias*" (144-145).

Peterson, C., & Park, N. (2009). Classifying and measuring strengths of character. In S. J. Lopez & C. R. Snyder (Eds), *Oxford handbook of positive psychology*, 2nd edition (pp. 25-33. New York: Oxford University Press. www.viacharacter.org

Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. New York: Oxford University Press and Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. www.viacharacter.org



CREATIVITY: Originality; adaptive; ingenuity
CURIOSITY: Interest; novelty-seeking; exploration; openness to experience
JUDGMENT: Critical thinking; thinking things through; open-minded
LOVE OF LEARNING: Mastering new skills & topics; systematically adding to knowledge
PERSPECTIVE: Wisdom; providing wise counsel; taking the big picture view

Open-Mindedness *[continued]*

feeling the need to accept them, unless those thoughts meet the standard of truth.

As we help students to develop in their critical thinking, we help them to recognize the voices in the culture that are trying to persuade them. Good judgment is persuadable in light of new evidence, not merely to emotion. It is right to yield to principle, but not simply to give in to pressure or emotional appeal. G.K. Chesterton stated, "merely having an open mind is nothing. The object of opening the mind, as of opening the mouth is to shut it again on something solid." Being open-minded is not agreeing with every new thought, but finding what is true, what is solid, in the new idea and closing your mind around that. Good judgment then allows you to incorporate the true idea as a new element of your thinking.



Open-mindedness can help us practice *civility* as well. How do we interact and converse with those with whom we disagree? Can we see things from another's point of view, even if we believe they are wrong? The first two *Palmarium* issues this year focused on this idea of *civility* in our culture. At times, it seems as if we have lost the ability to have a meaningful argument. Argument comes from the Latin word *arguere*, meaning to make clear or prove. An argument was a series of statements to present reasons for someone to accept a conclusion. How are you at arguing? Can you argue about an issue without attacking the person with whom you disagree? Can you respect the person while disagreeing with them?

In Washington's *rules of civility*, mentioned in previous articles, two of the rules speak to this point.

40. Strive not with your Superiors in argument, but always Submit your Judgment to others with Modesty.
69. If two contend together take not the part of either unconstrained; and be not obstinate in your own Opinion, in Things indifferent be of the Major Side.

These rules speak to the way we interact in matters of disagreement. They encourage us to be humble when sharing our judgment, and be ready to entertain the other's opinions.

Our 6th graders were recently discussing a topic where students were sharing different opinions. One of the young men said, "I don't agree with your opinion, but I can understand why you would feel that way." What a beautiful example of open-mindedness and good judgment.

As Winter Sets In . . .

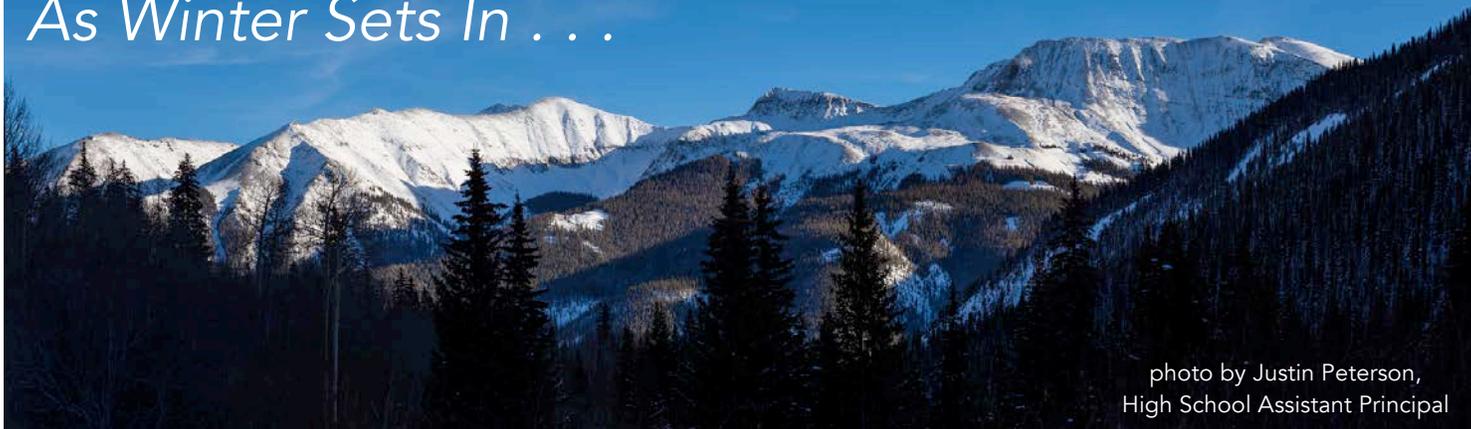
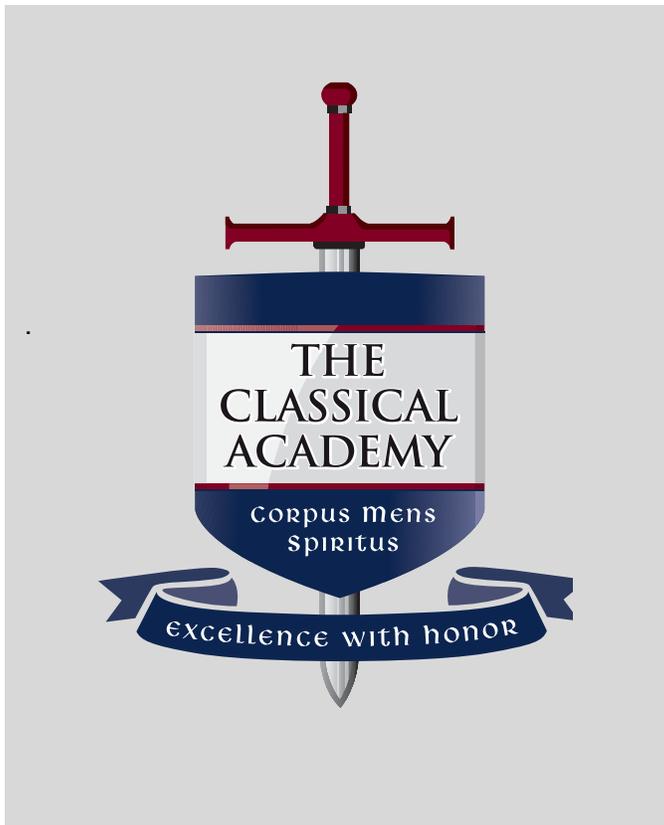


photo by Justin Peterson,
High School Assistant Principal

Dear TCA Community,

I ran across this quote the other day, "Real generosity is doing something for someone who will never find out." I couldn't help thinking of the 4 TCA families who committed \$50,000 as a December match that will ultimately help over 3,000 TCA students get the best education possible, and those students will never know! I am deeply moved by this generous community. Will you consider making a gift today that will be doubled? Click on the Strengthening OUR Core banner below to donate now!

Thanks and Happy Holidays!
Russ Sojourner



Strengthening
OUR Core

← **CLICK HERE**

Dr. Scott Poland

Parenting in Challenging Times



In October, Dr. Scott Poland, nationally recognized expert on youth suicide, school crisis, and prevention addressed the TCA community on the topic "Parenting in Challenging Times." Click the following link

to view the video of his presentation: <http://tcatitans.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=765275&pageId=6493618>

The presentation slides can also be found on our website:

<http://tcatitans.org/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=6432400>

Each month I plan to highlight one of the slides from his presentation in this section of the PALMARIUM. This month's focus **Current Issues: Technology / Internet / Social Media.**



Current Issues: Technology/Internet/Social media

- ❑ There is something dangerous and largely unguarded in almost every home!
- ❑ Children today view being connected as a birthright but it is a privilege
- ❑ What are sexting and cyberbullying all about?
- ❑ Technology access very likely interferes with your child's sleep

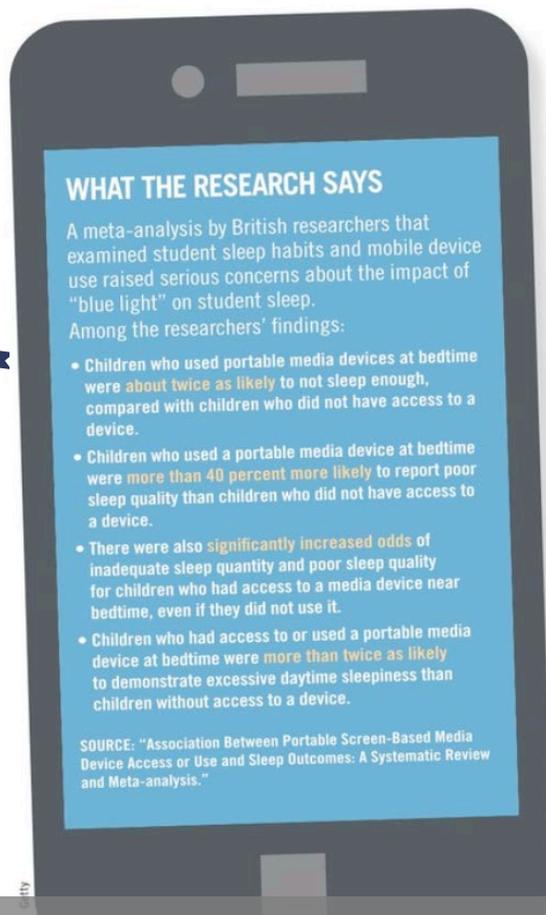
Upcoming TCA Board Meetings

- Monday, January 9 @ 6:00 pm**
- Monday, February 13 @ 6:00 pm**
- Monday, March 13 @ 6:00 pm**

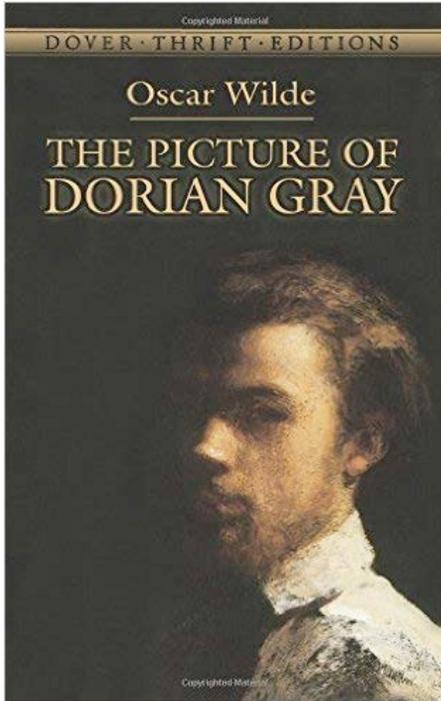
all meetings are held in rooms 2213/14 at North Secondary

EDWEEK ARTICLE ON SCREEN TIME AND IMPACT ON STUDENT SLEEP

The following graphic was included in the article *Warning Sounded on Tech Disrupting Student Sleep* in the November 30, 2016 edition of *EdWeek*.

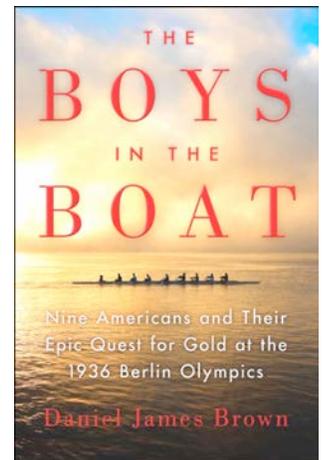


a link to the article can be found by clicking [here](#)



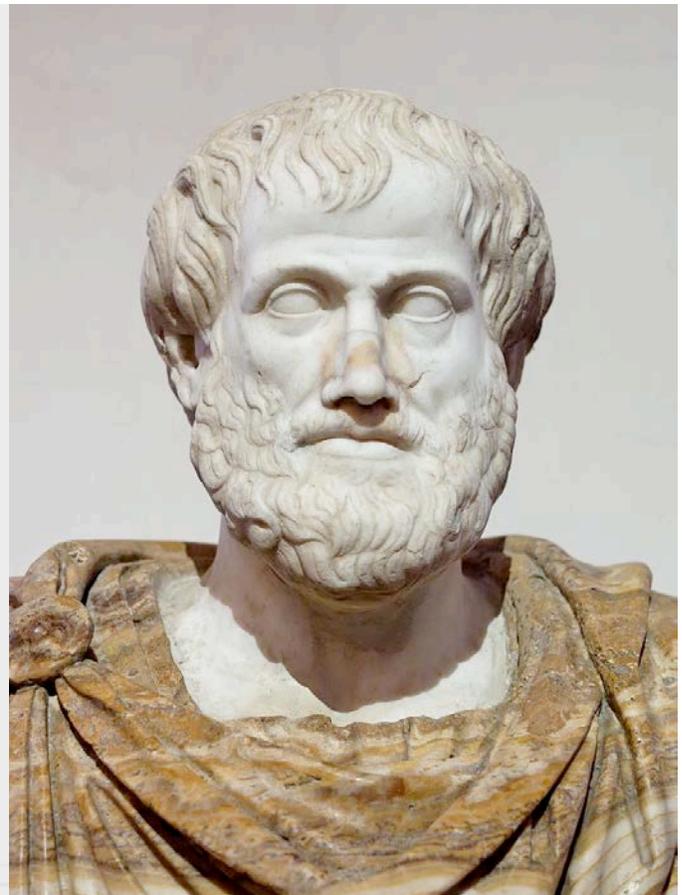
BEYOND THE BOOK CLUB

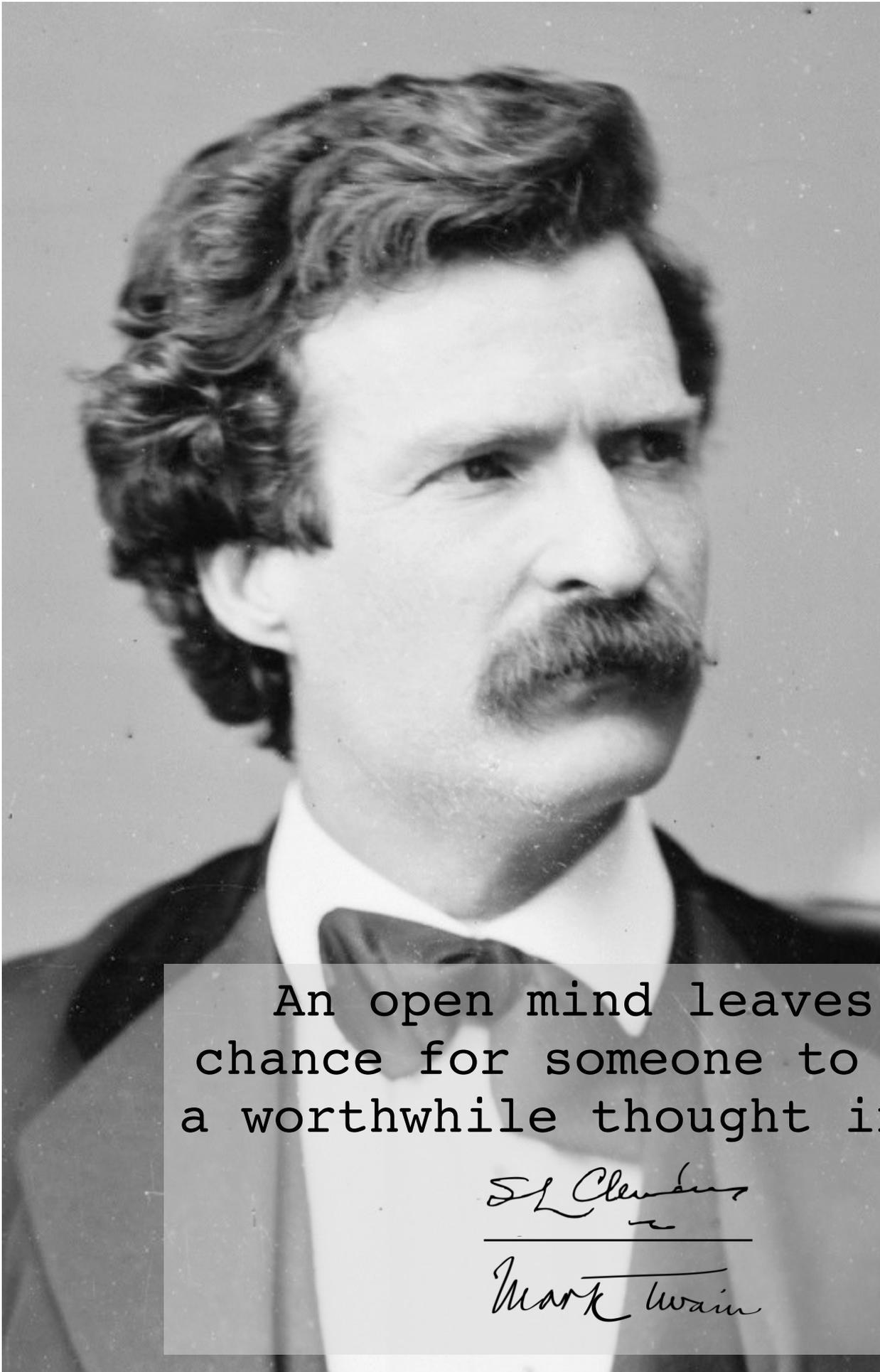
As part of our continuing *Engaging Minds* theme this year we will have our third meeting of the **Beyond the Book Club** on *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde (a selection read by our seniors each year) **during the February 20th-22nd timeframe** at TCA's North Campus. If you would like to join us for one of the sessions please RSVP to me at wjolly@asd20.org. Our book study meetings will each last approximately 90-minutes. The final studies of the 2016-2017 academic year will be held in April 2017 on *The Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown – a story about the 1936 men's Olympic rowing team.



It is the mark of an
educated mind to be
able to entertain a
thought without
accepting it.

Aristotle
(384 B.C. -322 B.C.)





Mark Twain

An open mind leaves a
chance for someone to drop
a worthwhile thought in it.

S. L. Clemens

Mark Twain