



David Hicks: Commentary on Hospitality, Education History, and Classical Architecture

Lesson 7: David's Life
Story: Part Two

Outline:

What is one memory of your mother in connection to your education?

- David describes his mother as exceptionally engaged.
- While he was studying English in college, she would request a copy of his syllabus to know what he was reading that semester.
 - She would try to read some of the same works so she could engage him in discussions about them during his term break.
 - Her perspective always differed from his but brought an element of realism from her own life.
- She also had a deep faith and prayer life which enabled her to entrust her son to Jesus and not be an overly critical mother.

Can you share more about your travels in Greece?

- David claims that his lifelong interest in Greece took root in college, including the summers he spent working in the Ontario Steel factory to make money for school.
 - During breaks, he would read aloud Greek plays from Richard Lattimore's translation to his fellow union workers.
 - David decided that since the universe is infinite and he could only expect to know a small fraction of it, he would focus on learning all about 5th century B.C. Greece.
- Beginning in 1970, David would make countless walking trips (he estimates 70 or more) throughout Greece.
 - He became enthralled by his encounters with ancient and contemporary (i.e. World War II) history in the places he visited.
 - He was also impressed by the hospitality he received everywhere he went, noting that the Homeric epics *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* are ultimately stories about the breakdown of *philoxenia*.
- Citing Richard Verdery's memoir *Partial Recall* about his life as a headmaster, David recommends the practice of "adopting a second country."
 - It allows you to appreciate another culture while increasing your sense of pride in your own.
 - Core ideas

How did you end up translating Marcus Aurelius?



- David first encountered Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* translated by George Long, in high school and was immediately taken with its strong, masculine message.
- After being dismissed from St. Paul's School, David regrouped by creating a list of personal goals he wanted to achieve during his life.
 - One of these goals included translating Marcus Aurelius' famous work.
 - He enlisted the assistance of his brother Scott, an exceptional classicist, who was then head of the American School in Paris.
 - They completed it over 4 years, communicating and exchanging their work over email.
- David says the popularity of their translation, *The Emperor's Handbook*, has only increased over time, indicating the attraction of stoicism as the "secular default religion" in the wake of declining Christianity.