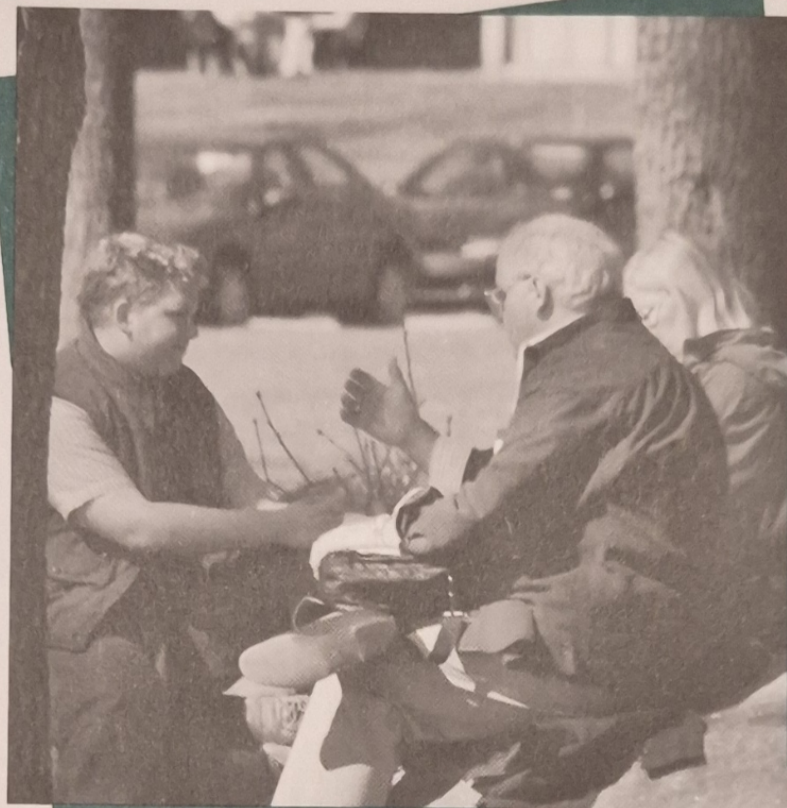




BUILDING BLOCKS
of the hyde education

HYDE
Education Character Family

BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE HYDE EDUCATION:

from motions-to-effort-to-excellence

Our 35 years as a school have found us engaged in a long process of trial and error. This has led us to some great curricular discoveries and has allowed us to discard other ideas that might not have panned out as originally intended. Sometimes we find that we adhere strongly to a basic philosophy, which we know how to *do* better than how to explain.

How does it work? What happens to a student and a family at Hyde School? Five years ago, in an attempt to explain the phases of development one experiences at Hyde School, I constructed a model diagram on one page of paper. I called it "Building Blocks." Three phases constitute the model: *motions*, *effort* and *excellence*. An explanation of these phases follows. The diagram (attached) provides a visual explanation to accompany the verbal explanation. This progressive continuum (motions-to-effort-to-excellence) applies to students, faculty and parents at Hyde in nearly all of our endeavors. The three terms can be defined as follows:

Motions: The individual is expected to follow the motions of responsible behavior.

Effort: The individual begins to take pride in meeting his or her given challenges.

Excellence: The individual begins to pursue his/her best. One discovers and acts upon a unique potential.

While all members of the Hyde Community travel through these phases within a myriad of activities, perhaps the model is easiest understood by following a specific group of students through the entire continuum of an actual case study.

CASE STUDY: an athletic team in the mid-'80s

I took over a Hyde women's soccer program long mired in a deep slump. The program was in shambles. The girls not only did not want to play soccer, they held great disdain for Hyde's mandatory sports policy. Since playing sports had been second nature for me since I was a kid, I had a difficult time facing the negative attitudes I encountered.

When I went out for the first day of practice and saw the girls who would comprise the team, all I could ask myself was: What's wrong with this picture? It was easy to determine the answer as I scanned the playing field. Many of the girls wore jewelry and make-up, and some wore punk rock outfits. Most did not have proper footwear. Many were attempting to outdo each other in terms of fashion. Some brought their purses out to the playing field. I wasn't sure where to start, but my experiences in teaching at Hyde had told me the immediate focus would not be on the fundamentals of soccer.

I began by calling these girls together. I said:

Okay, I know that many of you would prefer not to be out here. I'm not going to waste my time explaining why this will be good for you, or why I think you could begin to develop a love for soccer or athletics. For the next two months, we are simply going to do the things that true soccer players do. What do soccer players do? They show up on time. They bring their cleats and leave their purses at home. They don't wear make-up; they don't wear jewelry. All of you will be expected to wear special Hyde Soccer t-shirts, which I will order. In short, I expect you to behave like soccer players and keep your attention on task while you're out here on this field.

motions

During that initial meeting I didn't talk about win-loss records or strategies of soccer. I did institute what we came to call the "no tee-hee" rule. This was after I noticed that several of the girls would flub a kick or completely miss the ball and then laugh about it. I outlawed this reaction without bothering to define it as the defense mechanism that it was. I told them I didn't care if they were completely uncoordinated or if they looked ridiculous trying to kick the ball; I only demanded that they take soccer practice seriously. I informed them that we would be done at 5:00 if the practice was taken seriously, but that I would add increments of five minutes of extra running or calisthenics if I felt there was a lack of seriousness. It was clear that they still weren't taking me seriously. Even the threat of a special Saturday practice didn't seem to inspire acceptable attitudes.

That was where we started. These "athletes" despised me and routinely called home complaining to their parents about me. I was the butt of jokes emanating from different corners of the campus, and I received scowls from these players when I met them in the hall. I suppose I was engaging in indoc-

trination. Simply put, I made the consequences of failing to follow the "motions" of a responsible soccer player less palatable than those resulting from following them. In other words, the reason these girls were following the *motions* of a responsible soccer player was because of the "axe" that would fall on them if they didn't. It was hard for me to play this unpopular role as I had always had positive relationships with the teams I coached. My teams had done well. We had won a fair number of championships, and I had always been able to engage in friendly give-and-take banter with the athletes I coached. In short, I was in a new role and at this early phase I didn't like it very much. My players didn't like it or me at all.

This unpleasant relationship lasted for a good part of that initial season. Our record was 0 and 8. We failed to win a single game! We didn't score a single goal until midway through the season, and it was clear that other schools wanted to schedule us on their Parent Weekends so they could be assured a win for the home crowd. As a coach, I found it humiliating. I don't believe the athletes cared. They didn't perceive themselves as athletes in the first place. I did not like the feeling at all. Nevertheless, I believed that the approach I was taking was the only one possible under the circumstances.

effort

Midway through the season a group of the girls did take the step from the *motions* to the *effort* phase. Perhaps one experienced the euphoria of scoring a goal. Perhaps another was stopped in the lunch line and complimented on her fine play in a game. Perhaps one's parents were coming for a visit, and she wanted to surprise them by playing in a game for the first time. For many, it was simply a case of the lesser of two evils. Many realized, "Well, this guy seems to have us beat. If we have to play, I have to admit it's more fun being out on the field than sitting on the bench." Thus, many found themselves competing for starting positions only because they didn't like sitting on the bench. They would probably still have said at the time that they would rather not play at all. (It is a common phenomenon at Hyde for newer students to sometimes "catch" themselves before outwardly demonstrating that they like it at Hyde and/or even that they are benefiting from it. The rebel must always surrender reluctantly!) Nevertheless, they seemed to be working harder in spite of themselves.

excellence

That first season ended with several of my players disliking soccer and me, but a core of them did begin to at least go out on the field every afternoon and exhibit positive enthusiasm, even if the motivation for this varied. That winter, when I was in the middle of my boys' basketball season, three of my soccer players came to see me in my office. They had heard about a local indoor winter league for women and wanted to know if I could enter them in it. The league was to consist primarily of former high school and college players. I was both ecstatic and stunned by the request. It was clear that these three wanted to move from the *effort* phase to the *excellence* phase. They wanted to begin to pursue their best in the game of soccer. I was able to enter them into this league, and they had positive experiences and developed a desire to improve even more as soccer players. I wondered, "Could we have some positive momentum starting here?"

synergy = motions plus effort plus excellence

The next fall I agreed to return as soccer coach and began to steel myself for what I perceived would be another tooth-pulling first week of trying to convince students with negative attitudes to play a game they didn't want to play. I was surprised in several ways. For one, these three players at the *excellence* level began to serve as role models (two of them are accomplished college players today). Secondly, a core of kids at the *effort* level wanted to compete for starting positions. There was actually a "critical mass;" that is, the number of players who wanted to do well out-numbered those who didn't want to be out there at all. The girls with the negative attitudes fell into step with a more positive norm. The norm was to go out there and hustle and work hard for a couple of hours, and that's what 90% of the players did.

Perhaps the most momentous event occurred in the first game: we won. You would have thought we had won the Super Bowl. The players who had returned from the previous year were ecstatic. They clearly liked the feeling, and it was obvious they wanted more of it. Well, they got more of it. We went on to win our league championship that fall. Several of the girls entered that same winter league and there developed this amazing peer pressure on the team to attend summer soccer camps. Several of our players did attend and others played in summer leagues.

Success evolved into a tradition. In the four years that followed, the Hyde girls were league champions three times and twice went on to participate in

the New England Soccer Tournament. Competition for starting positions was very keen as there was a great deal of pride associated with going after one's best on the women's soccer field at Hyde School. Indeed, there is now a great deal of pride associated with simply being on the team. These young women proved that personal progress in individuals and in groups is exponential. The contention that nothing can stop the person with the proper attitude was supported. When we first set out on our soccer odyssey, I was already convinced that nothing can help the individual with the wrong attitude.

One can observe this continuum from *motions* to *effort* to *excellence* at Hyde School in many endeavors: a French class, a performing arts production, a dormitory, in the student jobs program, etc. There will be a group of students who are struggling to follow the *motions* of responsible behavior; there will be a group of students who will pursue their tasks with a positive enthusiasm; and there will inevitably be a group of students pursuing excellence who will provide the leadership.

Hyde School works best when this chain reaction operates like a well-oiled machine. The process of adolescence serves as a metaphor for the growth that the school has experienced. When Hyde School was a teenager, it flailed about in an aggressive attempt to develop a curriculum that would foster true character development in its students. Hyde had no blueprint because very few schools have tried what we have attempted to do. With Hyde School having passed its quarter century mark, it has matured and its program is more advanced than it was a decade ago. Our program will continue to evolve in order to best meet the needs of our students and their families.

Experience has been a key for Hyde and has enabled us to grow more adept at fostering a productive continuum of motions-to-effort-to-excellence. The one variable that cannot be controlled is the timetable of growth of our students. Students progress through the curriculum at different rates of speed. It has been said "you can't open a rose with a chisel." This applies to the students at Hyde. We urge students and parents to avoid searching for techniques and strategies that will somehow speed up the process or direct its emphasis to a particular area. Trust the process. The Hyde philosophy works if you let it.

Malcolm W. Gauld 1991

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BUILDING BLOCKS of the hyde education

- a chain reaction
- an evolutionary process
- culminates with a hyde graduation
- ultimate goal: the hyde diploma

EXCELLENCE giver

- Concept of one's BEST.
- Student is *majority shareholder* in student-faculty partnership.
- *Prime the pump*: givers assume responsibility for the growth of the takers.
- Graduation — A commitment for the DIPLOMA.
- Faculty & Parents *let go* of the student.

EFFORT doer

- Beginnings of a positive attitude.
- *If I have to do this I might as well do it well.*
- Expectations are shared.
The student-teacher bond is formed.
A partnership begins to evolve.
- Creativity begins.

FOUNDATION

MOTIONS taker

- The *motions* of responsible behavior.
- *Move the body and the mind will follow.*
- Expectations are set almost exclusively by the faculty.
- Sometimes an unpleasant phase.
- The foundation for the discovery of unique potential is set.

FOUNDATION

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HYDE

Education Character Family

www.hyde.edu

Bath, ME Campus

616 High Street

Bath, ME 04530-5002

Tel (207) 443-5584

Fax (207) 443-1450

Woodstock, CT Campus

150 Route 169

P.O. Box 237

Woodstock, CT 06281-0237

Tel (860) 963-9096

Fax (860) 963-0164

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