

The Makeup of Education

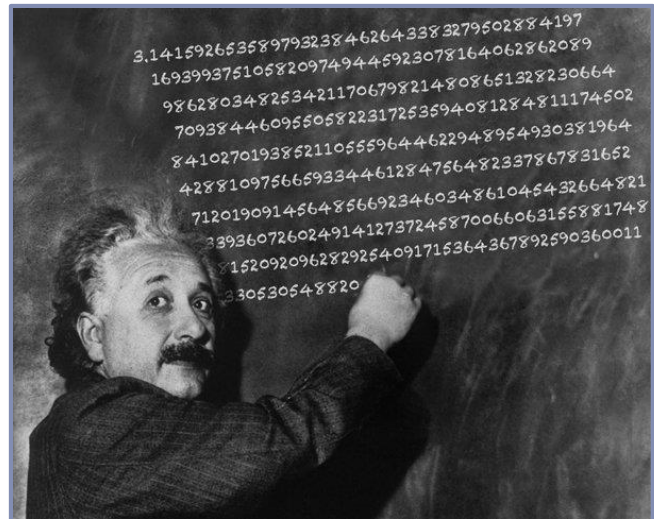
All of us would agree that education is important and much to be desired. It is defined as the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits.

We frequently think of education taking place under the guidance of teachers, but learners may also educate themselves. Beyond the academic pursuits afforded in a school or college, continuing education in the workplace is necessary if we are to achieve success in our chosen professions.

And on the personal level, we should seek to learn from events, relationships, circumstances – and, yes, crises – that we encounter. We grow in strength and intuition through the process. But education is more than facts and figures.

Albert Einstein, German-born theoretical physicist who developed the general theory of relativity, said this:

“It is essential that the student acquire an understanding of and a lively feeling for values. He must acquire a vivid sense of the beautiful and morally good, otherwise he – with a specialized knowledge – more closely resembles a well-trained dog than a harmoniously developed person.”



Daniel Webster, who was one of the highest-regarded courtroom lawyers of his era, served twice as United States Secretary of State and at various times was elected to the U.S. Senate and to the House of Representatives, offered this observation:

“Knowledge does not comprise all which is contained in the large term of education. The feelings are to be disciplined, the passions are to be restrained, true and worthy motives are to be inspired, a profound religious feeling is to be instilled, and pure morality inculcated under all circumstances. All this is comprised in education.”

James Truslow Adams, American writer and historian whose three-volume history of New England is well regarded by scholars, said there are obviously two educations: One should teach us how to make a living and the other how to live. In order to acquire both educations, three things are necessary – information, knowledge and wisdom, he said. We get information out of newspapers, magazines and television. We acquire knowledge through good books, encyclopedias, lectures and seminars.

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The third dimension of education, wisdom, is the correct use of the truth in the knowledge we have. Wisdom enables us to take information and knowledge and use it to make good decisions.

My mother and father were deprived of the formal education they desired in the years of the Great Depression. My father had to drop out of school after the third grade to help his father on the farm, and my mother completed the eighth grade before she had to halt her education for a similar reason. As they married and established a family, they needed wisdom to use the knowledge they had to make right decisions to successfully raise three sons and earn the respect of their community.

Fortunately, they had the wisdom that comes from God, which James speaks of in his epistle:

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him (James 1:5 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter