

Adopt the pace of nature. Her secret is patience.

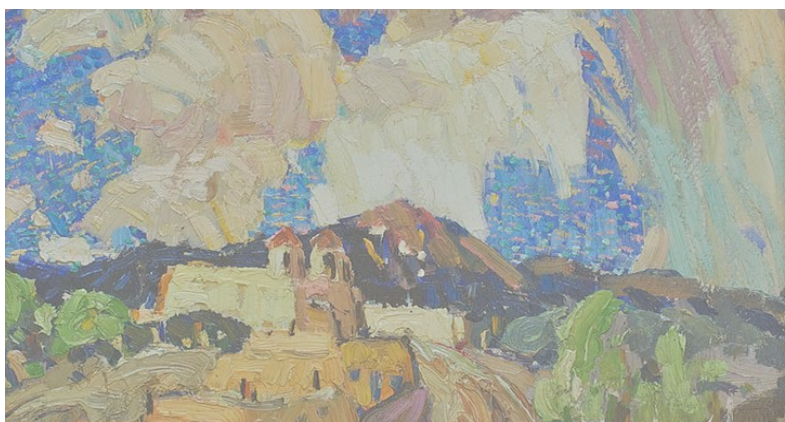
-Ralph Waldo Emerson



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A Contemplation on Hiking



In the beginning of October I backpacked the Knobstone Trail in Southern Indiana with my mother. When I walk I am often reminded of the inherent glory in hiking. Somehow, as the body is committed to movement and the mind develops a beautiful synergy and monism with the body, the multiverse is opened. People often ask, why would you pack a 35 lb. pack and hike, sleep outside, no shower, no bathroom, tiring, at times scary? Why, they ask, would you call this fun and take your vacation time to do this?

There is a Sufi parable that says “You can tell an individual how pleasing the taste of honey is, but if they don’t taste it themselves...” It is the hidden magic of the body and the mind having a single-minded mission that allows for the opening of an arcane space. There is magic hidden in this monism, this yaysaying. Thoughts that have been difficult to process are pulled from the dark and processed allowing for new thoughts to ascend. After the week of backpacking it is a mystery to me that there becomes a beautifully objective thought that surfaces as a comfort and a guide.

When you wake in the morning and tear down your tent, gather up your things, and meticulously pack your backpack, there is joy in knowing that the days work is just to hike. Its early and the mind and body commit to movement. Yet... there are the mountains. These mountains, or on the Knobstone they call them “knobs,” which is a lie, they are mountains, are challenging. There is a tension in being able to climb them. The mind betrays you and your body is breathed. Every switchback up the mountain and the eyes lie, “There’s the top;” nowhere near the top. There is another magic here. Transcendence. Movement has to, has no choice, but to transcend the eyes, the mind, and the body. When arriving at the top, mother nature summons the wind and invokes it to share comfort. The wind, arriving always on time, replaces the breath taken.

In this transcending of, or maybe it’s a darkening of the eyes, there is a strange continuum that opens. The first mountain of the day is the doorway to this continuum. The rest of the days hike is in a space where time is nonlinear. The only place for your energy to go is to the heart. A mystical place from where thoughts ascend. The tension of hiking the mountains and lugging a pack around, with minimalistically everything you need to survive, incarnates as a key to the door of your heart. Within the heart there is truth at every turn. Sometimes lovely truth, sometimes hurtful truth, but truth. No matter what you wish to learn, there will be tension. Tension is the challenge and often where people turn back. Don’t do that, move through it, transcend it, and a key will be granted you.



How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading

— COMPLETELY REVISED AND UPDATED —
**HOW TO READ
A BOOK**

The CLASSIC GUIDE to INTELLIGENT READING



**MORTIMER J. ADLER
& CHARLES VAN DOREN**

How to read a book? I have heard more cynical comments over the title of this book than I care to expound upon. These comments likely by people who assume reading is a skill that is simple. As an avid reader, I have passed through many different toll houses, each new understanding dissolving the previous.

Working in literacy I read everything I can get my hands on regarding learning, or pedagogy. This book has always been on my list, and I was finally able to carve out time to spend with it. This is a book that is a must read for educators, philosophers, anyone interested in depth of understanding, readers, writers, artists, people who live in a democracy, parents who are concerned with their children's liberal arts education, ok everybody should read this book. On every page there is an epiphany, a thought that guides and informs, questions and deepens our awareness of what reading is.

I found so many treasures in this book. I am going to take a moment to write the Table of Contents as a sort of bait and hook, hoping something catches your eye and you go in search of this book: *The Activity and Art of Reading*, *The Levels of Reading*, *Elementary Reading*, *Inspectional Reading*, *How to Be a Demanding Reader*, *Analytical Reading*, *Pigeonholing a Book*, *X-raying a Book*, *Coming to Terms with an Author*, *Determining an Author's Message*, *Criticizing a Book Fairly*, *Agreeing or Disagreeing with an Author*, *Aids to Reading*, *How to Read Practical Books*, *How to Read Imaginative Literature*, *Suggestions for Reading Stories, Plays, and Poems*, *How to Read History*, *How to Read Science and Mathematics*,

How to Read Philosophy, *How to Read Social Science*, *Synoptical Reading*, and lastly *Reading and the Growth of the Mind*. That was long, but a glimpse at the depth of this work. The book left me with a confidence that reading is as mysterious as I am persuaded it is. It also informed me architecturally how to engineer in reverse reading projects for *Learn*, though it also saddened me that reading is a skill people never mine the depths of. Reading is literacy and we all read differently. I believe reading is a ritual of darkness, an entering of the myriad, a kaleidoscopic intimacy, a dance with the nonlinear. What is reading to you?

