

In *Truth, Beauty, and Goodness Reframed*, Howard Gardner takes the reader on a trip through his brain as he breaks down his viewpoints and reasonings as to why educating for the virtues is essential. Within his argument, he brings to light contemporary challenges these virtues face. At the beginning of his book, Gardner states that "each (virtue) must be considered on its own merits" (9). We will look at each virtue individually and the contemporary challenges it faces and determine why Gardner feels it is important to educate for the virtues.

The first virtue Gardner introduces the reader to is truth. Gardner defines truth as "a property of statements...we can also speak of truths of practice" (xi). The idea of truth begins when we are a baby. When we are born, from our very first breath, we are given a tool that helps us determine the world around us. Gardner explains that tool is our senses, and they help us learn the "ideas" of what the world we live in is like, and not like. This is our first conception of what truth is, and this conception forms from common sense. However, challenges from postmodernism and the digital media only allow the formation of "truths" based on common sense to take us so far. The postmodern world tries to teach that truth is "an expression of power" and cannot be established without validity. The digital media tries to teach that the winner of a vote determines truths. Previous to the postmodern and digital media era, Gardner points out that we turned towards "established experts" to teach us what was true and false. However, today's youth turn away from those who are identified "experts" and turn towards posts on different social media platforms, where others share their perception of what is true. Although they have no formal training in the method used to form a truth, the young listen to them due to their similar viewpoints and likeness. As Gardner states, they swap authority and objectivity for authenticity and transparency when determining what is true.

The tricky part is, not everything that postmodern and the digital media have brought to the front of determining truth is negative. This is primarily why Gardner still, despite these contemporary challenges, feels educating for the virtues is essential. While Gardner still urges us to turn towards experts of the discipline and professionals, humans working together "carefully, reflectively, and cooperatively" can help us find truth within these challenges. Continuing to educate for the virtue will allow previous generations to teach the next their method and "experts" for determining truths. To use the digital media and postmodernism challenges for good, we need to establish a solid base in our "standards and stamina" to determine the validity of a truth confidently. Gardner explains that the younger generation will also teach the older generations, and new generations will discover truer versions of previous truths, as long as they have a solid base of standards- which is done through educating for the virtue.

The next virtue is beauty. Truth and beauty are very different. While truth is referred to as a property of statements, beauty is revealed through the course of an "experience with an object" (41). For an object to be deemed to have beauty, we must "indicate that we gain pleasure from it, we are satisfied to maintain a distance from it, and we have a desire to revisit the object to recreate the feelings of pleasure first experienced. In the past, Gardner points out that to do this, one would go to a museum and study the painting and sculptures, or one would go to a concert by a classical artist. However, contemporary challenges have influenced these notions of beauty and our experiences with the objects that elicit these feelings. Digital media has played the most prominent role in the challenges beauty faces. We all have different tastes and opinions of

preferences, which creates a difference in what we deem to poses beauty. Gardner points out that experiences of beauty that were once the result of God's creation are being replaced with the creation of works and experiences of beauty by computer and programming – brought on by postmodernism and the digital age.

If we all have our views of what beauty is, why is it so crucial to Gardner that we continue to educate for it? He points out that beauty "is continually affected by historical, cultural, and personal factors." While new ways to experience beauty have risen, the beauties from the past will not disappear. They not only disappear, but they invite the viewer in for further and more in-depth exploration. In order to recognize these opportunities, we must be able to recognize past beauties. While the way we come to experience these works of beauty may change, the encounter we have with works that are deemed beautiful will never disappear. This is why Gardner believes we must continue to educate for the virtues despite the challenges.

The final virtue is goodness. Gardner defines this virtue as "seeing the good as a property of our relations with others...those we know well and those we do not" (78-79). In early years people lived very closely together in communities that used ideas such as the Ten Commandments or the Golden Rule to determine "good." Everyone was so close that it did not take long for others to know you committed an act deemed "evil" by your community. He also believes that we have a "keen sensitivity to fairness and an acute alertness to those who cheat." We are born with an internal feeling, our gut, that inherently tells us that something may be good or evil. While we all have that feeling, it is believed that ethics also plays a vital role in determining the goodness of something. When we discuss ethics, it refers to the concept of responsibility. It is easy for us to decide high ethics when that decision will positively benefit us. The challenge of ethics, of responsibility, is when the choice we make will positively benefit someone else more than us.

The contemporary challenges in the world today are causing younger people to have less and less guidance on "an ethical compass." Today's challenges promote an idea creating our individual ethical or moral codes that we rely on to lead our life and create an environment where we are less open to judging the ethics of other people's choices. While postmodernism has made contributions to this, the biggest culprit lies in the creation of digital media. Media allows people to break the trust that was once present. We can take others' work and quickly make copies of it, or slightly alter it and claim it as our own. We can sit behind a computer screen and pretend to be someone that we are not. When we break this trust that a society has, we create a loss of clear ethics.

This is precisely why Gardner advocates to educate for the virtues. It is the elders' job to create a good example of what is ethical. It is not possible to hide youth from media in today's world. However, if we educate them for the virtues before their access to the media alone begins, perhaps their ethical compass will be formed on strong principles and not easily be swayed because they are behind a screen, so "it doesn't really matter."

We cannot stop the digital media and postmodernism from influencing how we think and the decisions we make. However, when we educate for the virtues, we build a firm foundation of the truths of the past, beauty, and notion of goodness to help the younger generations understand where we once were, where we are now, and find ways to take the contemporary challenges and use them to help advance us to the future.