

Creatures

gift MATTERS THAT MATTER BY BOB WIERSMA ON REFLECTION...

It has been told that Michelangelo, when asked about his sculpturing genius, responded that his work was simply about, “*Releasing the creature trapped within the rock.*”

He understood that he was not able to add anything what-so-ever to the rock; he could only remove that which obstructed others from perceiving and enjoying the creature that he envisioned within the rock.

His genius was in the removal of obstacles – the elimination of that which was superfluous - the discarding of the unnecessary.

His focus was on that which was relevant, and essential to his intent. Every chip of rock was either essential or worthless – that which would contribute to the truth of the *creature* or that which would belie the *creature*. The *creature* was a gift of the rock.

He began with intent. He knew what it was that he would bring forth; thus, not any rock would do. It needed to have characteristics that would be compatible with his intent – there were matters of type, size, color, density, and grain. In looking at the rock on the outside, he knew what to expect on the inside.

There was little room for error. Precision was critical – that which was removed could not be added back. Every cut of the saw and every strike of the mallet had purpose. Neither rock nor effort was wasted. His decision making skills and physical skills were practiced for hours, days, weeks, and months as each *creature* was painstakingly released and revealed.

His art was a matter of vision, decision, and precision.

Some thoughts...

What creature would you release? Are you learning to read the rock? Will you accept the gift of the rock? What obstacles need to be removed? What is ultimately essential and what is waste? What are the decisions to be made?

Will you persevere? Will your work endure?

Does it matter?

These are questions that touch the mind, the body, and the spirit of matters.

We are sculpting - our lives and those of others – family, friends, co-workers, clients...

What truths will we hold? What behaviors will we shape? What decisions will we make? What practices will we engage? What will be preserved and polished? What will be chipped away?

Too often we attempt to be a creature we are not. Too often we struggle to somehow put the *creature* of our imagination into others. Too seldom do we remove the obstacles that entrap us and them – obstacles of the mind, the body, and the spirit.

Each person has been gifted. Each person has hidden gifts and promise waiting to be released, and polished, then treasured.

All of this takes us back to Michelangelo. It would appear that our calling is similar to his

...we are sculptors. We work not with rock but with flesh and bone. We remove obstacles that imprison *creatures* to reveal their natural gifts. We polish them, place them in good light, and treasure them.

May you never forget that you are a *creature* gifted-of-God, shaped from the rock and treasured. And, may you bring that understanding to those touched by the artistry of your hands.

“You use a glass mirror to see your face; you use works of art to see your soul”

- George Bernard Shaw

“If you ask me what I have come to do in this world, I who am an artist, I will reply, I am here to live my life out loud.”

- Emile Zola