

# Wyoming Music Educators Conference Keynote Address

*The Journey of a Million Notes...*

Monday, January 19, 2026 | 9:30 AM

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Life is what happens to us...

...while we're making other plans.



**CAUTION**

LIFE DOESN'T ALWAYS WANT TO BE GRABBED BY THE HORNS.

# Another Expert? Who am I?

- ↵ The Ohio State University – BME (drummer!)
- ↵ Elementary School/Middle School – Wisconsin
- ↵ University of Wisconsin-Madison – MM
- ↵ High School – Cleveland, OH
- ↵ The Ohio State University – PhD
- ↵ Syracuse University
- ↵ Morehead State University
- ↵ Kansas State University
- ↵ Retirement 6/30/2026!!!

# Our World...

All of Us:

- ✚ Are a mess
- ✚ Are at fault
- ✚ Are responsible for the mess and the solution

Music Teachers:

- ✚ Are true hope
- ✚ Are true examples
- ✚ Are owners of “better”

# Our Purpose...

Providers of:

- ↳ Hope
- ↳ Optimism

"Teaching is the greatest act of optimism!"

# What we do...

We provide:

- ↳ Structure
- ↳ Discipline
- ↳ A Path Forward

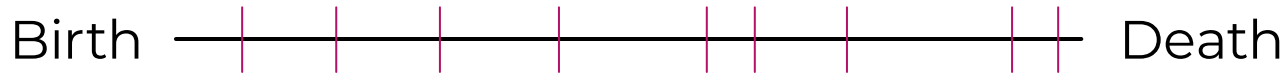
# Opportunities to teach growth and change

- You answered a calling.
- You are dedicated to change.
- You plant the seed, water it, fertilize it, and harvest it.
- Every day is a second chance.
- Every day, you affect change for the positive.
- You create your own opportunities to create growth and change.

# Provide a timeline of movement...

A plan for...

- Kindergarten – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade (College and Beyond!)
- Life





# Teach for...

↳ Goals/Outcomes???

↳ **NO!!!**

↳ Teach the Process!!!

# We use Goals as a Tool

What Is



What Could Be

# Teach a “Vision”

- ↳ Stand
- ↳ Point
- ↳ Turn
- ↳ Etc.

Arnold Palmer – Create YOUR Vision!

# What Have I Learned? (Almost 50 Years of Teaching)

↴ Body joints don't last!!!

**THE BAD NEWS IS,  
I ACCIDENTALLY TOOK  
THE WRONG  
MEDICATION TODAY.**

**THE GOOD NEWS IS, I'M  
NOW PROTECTED FROM  
HEARTWORMS AND  
FLEAS FOR THE NEXT  
THREE MONTHS.**

# What Have I Learned? (Almost 50 Years of Teaching)

- ↴ My family and friends do last!



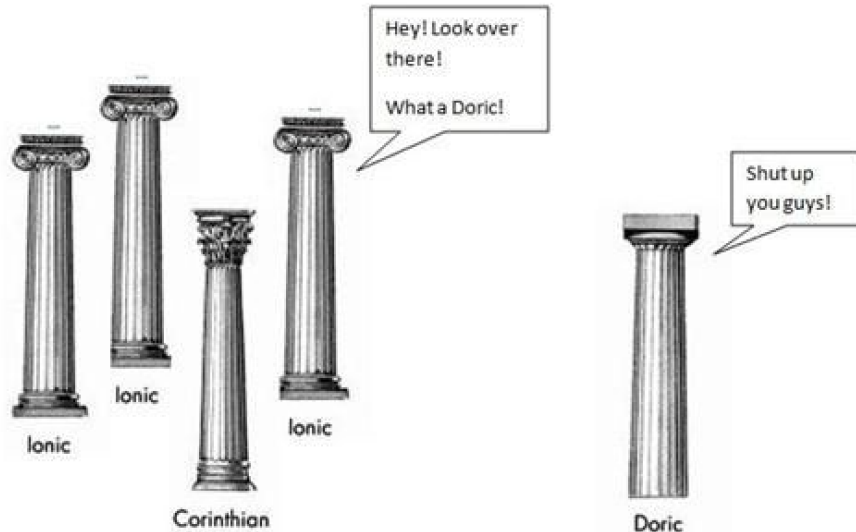
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# What Have I Learned? (Almost 50 Years of Teaching)

- Integrity and goodness are pillars of the foundation.



# What Have I Learned? (Almost 50 Years of Teaching)

- ↴ Every day is a fight!





# What Have I Learned? (Almost 50 Years of Teaching)

- Teaching beats the hell out of working for a living.



# Be a "Sponge"

- ↵ Dr. Robert Petzold
- ↵ Fall 1978
- ↵ Madison, Wisconsin
- ↵ University of Wisconsin

The biggest lie I tell  
myself is  
“I don’t need  
to write that down,  
I’ll remember it.”

# “Adopt and Adapt”

- ↳ Path to Kansas State
- ↳ Call from Gary Mortenson
- ↳ “Build a Band Program”
- ↳ Where’s Kansas?
- ↳ President John Wefald interview
- ↳ School of Music interview

**KANSAS**



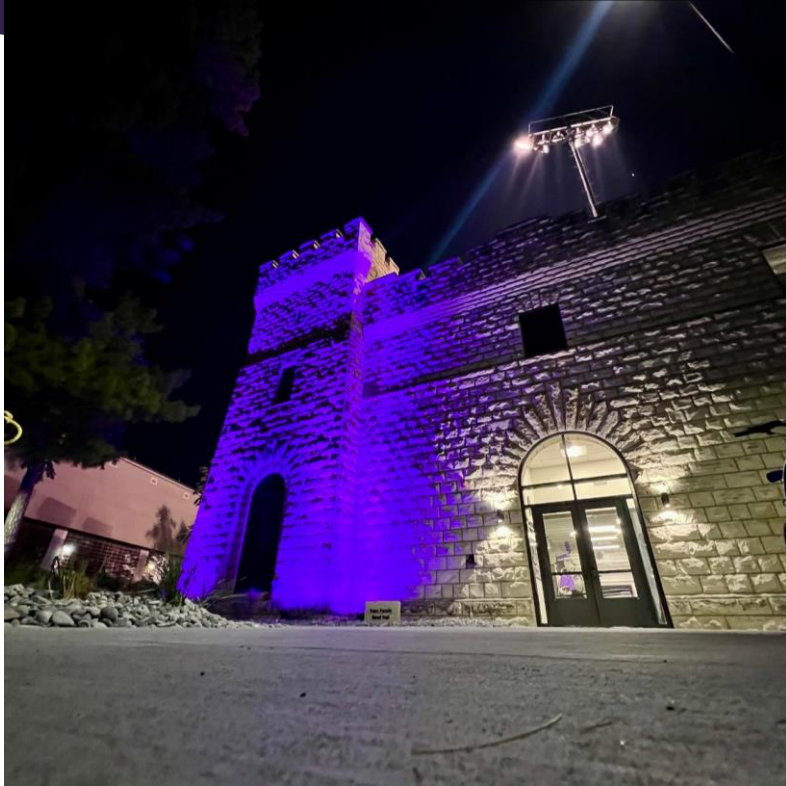


# “Got the job!”

- ↴ Now what?
- ↴ Plan?
- ↴ Path to tenure and promotion?
- ↴ Consumed by the possibilities

"Find a Home...

...Build a Kingdom"





“Leave it better than you found it.”

- ↳ Simple task
- ↳ Easily accomplished
- ↳ Little victories (basic to complex)
- ↳ Expect the same from others

# I've learned...

- ↳ That the best classroom in the world is at the feet of an elderly person.
- ↳ That when you're in love, it shows.
- ↳ That one person saying to me, "You've made my day!" makes my day.
- ↳ That being kind is more important than being right.

# I've learned...

- ↳ That having a child fall asleep in your arms is one of the most peaceful feelings in the world.
- ↳ That I can always pray for someone when I don't have the strength to help in any other way.
- ↳ That it's those small daily happenings that make life so spectacular.



# I've learned...

- ↳ That no matter how serious your life requires you to be, everyone needs a friend to act goofy with.
- ↳ That sometimes all a person needs is a hand to hold and a heart to understand.
- ↳ That we should be glad God doesn't give us everything we ask for.

# I've learned...

- ↳ That simple walks with my friends around the block on summer nights when I was a child did wonders for me as an adult.
- ↳ That under everyone's hard shell is someone who wants to be appreciated and loved.
- ↳ That when you plan to get even with someone, you are only letting that person continue to hurt you.

# I've learned...

- ↳ That life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer it gets to the end, the faster it goes.
- ↳ That to ignore the facts does not change the facts.
- ↳ That everyone you meet deserves to be greeted with a smile.
- ↳ That no one is perfect until you fall in love with them.

# I've learned...

- ↳ That life is tough, but I'm tougher.
- ↳ That opportunities are never lost; someone will take the ones you miss.
- ↳ That when you harbor bitterness, happiness will dock elsewhere.
- ↳ That a smile is an inexpensive way to improve your looks.

# I've learned...

- ↳ That I wish I could have told my mom that I love her one more time before she passed away.
- ↳ That one should keep his words both soft and tender because tomorrow, he may have to eat them.
- ↳ That everyone wants to live on top of the mountain, but all of the happiness and growth occur while you're climbing it.

# I've learned...

- ↳ That money doesn't buy class.
- ↳ That love, not time, heals all wounds.
- ↳ That the less time I have to work with, the more things I get done.

I've learned...

That when your  
newly born  
grandchild holds  
your little finger in  
his/her little fist,  
you're hooked  
for life.



I've learned...

That you should  
never say no to a  
gift from a child.





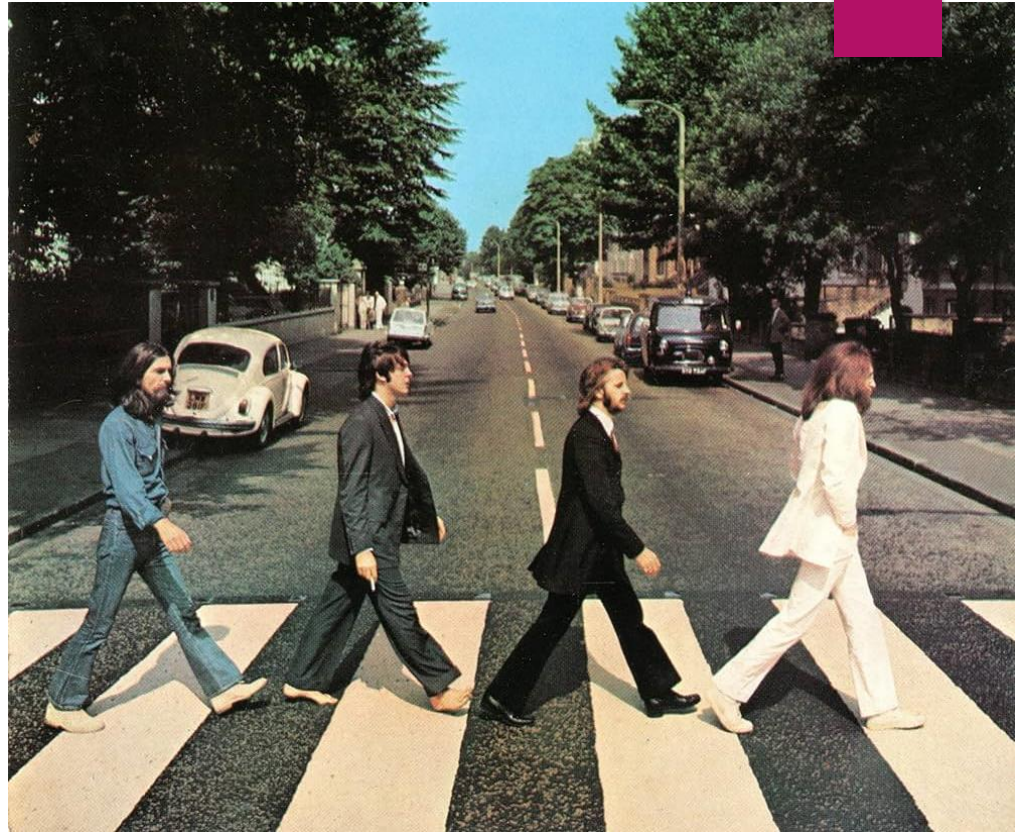
I've learned...

That the easiest way for me to grow as a person is to surround myself with people smarter than I am.



“And in the end...”

The love you take...  
...is equal to the love  
you make.





“Gonna be a good day for the good guys.”

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