

President's Update - June 8, 2017



This is the last column I am writing as President of MLA, so I am going to wax philosophical.

"People say that what we're all seeking is a meaning for life. I don't think that's what we're really seeking. I think that what we're seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonances with our own innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive." - Joseph Campbell 1904-1987

"Understanding the world better often entails going against intuition. If this were not the case, understanding would be easy." - Reality is Not What It Seems by Carlo Rovelli

My recent readings have included the book by Rovelli cited above and the works and interviews by and with Joseph Campbell, who is most noted for his book *Hero with a Thousand Faces* and many more on comparative religions and mythology as well as his *Power of Myth*

television interviews with Bill Moyers in the 1980s, which are still referenced and available today. Campbell was a compelling writer and interviewee. Rovelli is a theoretical physicist who, through beautiful narrative, leads the reader to be awestruck by the universe and the world of

physics.

Both Campbell and Rovelli challenge conventional thinking with enthusiasm. Their passion is contagious and delightful.

As people and librarians, we are a part of a bigger community and can be influential to awaken a sense of wonder in life in that larger arena. To do so we must challenge our own intuition and conventional ways. This can be very uncomfortable - sometimes downright painful - because many people around us won't like questioning the status quo and will negatively push back. To stay in the game and retain our passion for the work, we need to find ways to foster our "grit" as described in the book, *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance* by Angela Duckworth - working on something that you love and staying in love with it because it feels so meaningful. Through the cultivation of specific practices and by surrounding ourselves with the right people who support and challenge our "grit", we can sustain the courage to continuously move forward and "feel the rapture" as Campbell describes. MLA offers many opportunities to practice as well as people to encourage and support us.

It has been my pleasure to serve as President this past year surrounded by colleagues who have encouraged and inspired me. Thank You.

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