

American Vocational Association Convention Speech
Jay L. Nelson, President, Utah Technical College at Salt Lake
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EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

[1-2] IN CONTEMPLATING THE PROBLEMS THAT BESET EDUCATORS, IT'S OFTEN CONSOLING TO LEARN THAT MOST OF OUR PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCED BY OTHERS BEFORE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE SCHOLARS AND PHILOSOPHERS OF ANCIENT TIMES GRAPPLED WITH SUCH QUESTIONS AS STATE SUPPORT OF EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL VERSUS LIBERAL EDUCATION, AND CURRICULUM METHODS. THEY EVEN HAD A TOE-HOLD ON OUR NEWLY REVIVED OLD GURU, INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY.

NOW YOU REALLY DIDN'T THINK THE IDEA OF ACCOUNTABILITY WAS UNIQUE WITH THIS DISPENSATION, DID YOU? ALL OUR PREDECESSORS DID WAS TO IGNORE IT OR TALK ABOUT IT IN HOPES THAT IT WOULD GO AWAY. WHICH REMINDS ME THAT JUST TALKING AND DREAMING ISN'T THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM. PERIODICALLY ACCOUNTABILITY GETS A SHOT OF ADRENALIN AND COMES CHARGING BACK, SO WHETHER WE CAN APPLY THE BIBLICAL AXIOM, "THIS TOO SHALL PASS AWAY," REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

TEACHERS AND PUPILS WEREN'T SO NUMEROUS A THOUSAND YEARS BACK, BUT WE DO HAVE SOME THINGS IN COMMON. LISTEN TO THE WAY SOCRATES RAPPED WITH HIS BEST LISTENER ABOUT WHAT SEEMS TO BE A THEME RELATIVE TO ACCOUNTABILITY: HE SAID, "WHEN YOU CALL IN AN ADVISER, YOU SHOULD BE CERTAIN HE IS SKILLFUL IN THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE END OF WHICH YOU HAVE IN VIEW." NOTE THAT THE WORD END REFERRED TO WHAT THE STUDENT HAD IN VIEW. NOT THE TEACHER'S END VIEW.

NOW IF SOME OF US ARE A BIT TICKLISH ABOUT BEING MORE ACCOUNTABLE, HOW MANY WOULD BE WILLING TO STICK OUR REPUTABLE NECKS OUT AS DID

PROTAGORAS WHEN HE BENT THE EAR OF THE GREAT SOCRATES WITH THIS STATEMENT CONCERNING EFFECTIVE AND RESPONSIBLE TUTORING, "A TEACHER OF THIS SORT I BELIEVE MYSELF TO BE. I GIVE MY PUPILS THEIR MONEY'S WORTH. AND EVEN MORE, AS THEY THEMSELVES CONFESS. AND THEREFORE I HAVE INTRODUCED THE FOLLOWING MODE OF PAYMENT: WHEN A MAN HAS BEEN MY PUPIL, IF HE LIKES, HE PAYS MY PRICE. IF HE DOES NOT LIKE, HE HAS ONLY TO GO INTO A TEMPLE AND TAKE AN OATH OF THE VALUE OF THE INSTRUCTIONS, AND THEN HE PAYS NO MORE THAN HE DECLARES TO BE THEIR VALUE." NOW HE MAY SOUND A TRIFLE EGOTISTICAL BUT YOU'VE GOT TO ADMIT PROTAGORAS WAS WILLING TO BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE.

FINALLY FOR THE EPIHOME OF DEDICATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY, I'M SURE THAT MANY OF YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE OATH TO WHICH THE BRILLIANT HIPPOCRATES ATTACHED HIS REPUTATION. I WON'T QUOTE IT ALL; IT'S RATHER LENGTHY. HE SAID, "WITH PURITY AND WITH HOLINESS I WILL PASS MY LIFE AND PRACTICE MY ART . . . INTO WHATEVER HOUSES I ENTER, I WILL GO INTO THEM FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SICK, AND WILL ABSTAIN FROM EVERY VOLUNTARY ACT OF MISCHIEF AND CORRUPTION; AND, FURTHER, FROM THE SEDUCTION OF FEMALES OR MALES, OF FREE MEN AND SLAVES . . . WHILE I CONTINUE TO KEEP THIS OATH UNVIOLATED, MAY IT BE GRANTED TO ME TO ENJOY LIFE AND THE PRACTICE OF THE ART, RESPECTED BY ALL MEN, IN ALL TIMES! BUT SHOULD I TRESPASS AND VIOLATE THIS OATH, MAY THE REVERSE BE MY LOT!" HE LAID DOWN SOME CRITERIA THERE, DIDN'T HE? ISN'T THAT THE GIST OF WHAT WE SHOULD BE DOING? ESTABLISHING CRITERIA FOR EXCELLENCE, TESTING THEM AND THEN WORKING FOR SOLUTIONS? [3]

2,400 YEARS AGO LIBERAL EDUCATION WAS SUPPOSED TO BE AN END IN ITSELF, SOUGHT BY THE ELITE TO ENSURE PERSONAL INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM, WHEREAS ANY

OTHER EDUCATION WAS ONLY A LOWLY MEANS TO AN END, WHICH SUBORDINATED THE MAN TO HIS SPECIFIC SKILL. YES, WE'VE COME A LONG WAY. TODAY WE DO HAVE SOME ADVANTAGES. WE OPERATE ON ATOMIC TIME. EINSTEIN TOLD US THINGS WOULD PICK UP, AND THEY CERTAINLY HAVE. EVENTS TODAY HAPPEN PASTER AND MORE DRAMATICALLY. RIGHT NOW I SEE THE EDUCATION GIANT IN A CROUCHING POSITION; READY TO TAKE A QUANTUM LEAP INTO A MORE WELL-DEFINED DIRECTION-- THAT OF IMPROVED, RESPONSIBLE, GOAL-ORIENTED EDUCATION. AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, OR CAREER EDUCATION IF YOU PREFER, IS ABSOLUTELY NO EXCEPTION.

WE ARE NOT UNIQUE OR ALONE IN OUR DISCUSSIONS OF ACCOUNTABILITY AT THIS CONVENTION.

THE 55th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY AND HIGHER SCHOOLS HAS BEEN IN SESSION IN RENO, NEVADA, DURING THE PERIOD OF OUR AMERICAN VOCATIONAL ASSOCIATION CONVENTION. IN REVIEWING THEIR PROGRAM, I NOTED THAT THEY, TOO, ARE DISCUSSING EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY. THE TOPIC OF EVERY SPEECH AND THE SUBJECT OF EVERY SYMPOSIUM FOR THREE FULL DAYS IS ACCOUNTABILITY. THE KEYNOTE SPEECH WAS ENTITLED "ACCOUNTABILITY OF VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION." IT SOUNDS LIKE WE'RE STARTING TO COMMUNICATE. [4]

LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT INSTITUTIONAL AND TEACHER ACCOUNTABILITY. HAVE YOU THOUGHT, AS I HAVE, JUST HOW VAGUE A TERM ACCOUNTABILITY IS? WE HAVE A LOT OF RHETORICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF IT TODAY FROM PROMINENT EDUCATORS, SUCH AS "IT'S PUTTING THE DYNAMICS OF LEARNING IN AN ORGANIZED FORMAT FOR THE PUBLIC TO UNDERSTAND," AND "IT'S THE PATTERN FOR THE CONSCIOUS DIRECTION OF THE TEACHING EFFORT" AND ON, AND ON. BUT WHEN WE REALLY ATTEMPT TO ANALYZE THE MEANING OF ACCOUNTABILITY, WE FIND IT SIMPLY MEANS HAVING THE ABILITY TO BE ACCOUNTABLE; YOU AND I, THE

INSTITUTION, AND THE WHOLE OF SOCIETY. JUST TURN THE WORLD AROUND AND YOU HAVE IT. INDEED IT TAKES ABILITY TO BE ACCOUNTABLE AND THAT IMPLIES A MEASURE OF COURAGE TOO, WHICH IS PROBABLY THE VERY REASON WE'VE IGNORED IT FOR SO LONG. THE SAGES OF OLD HAD THAT ABILITY; THE GALILEAN HAD THAT ABILITY; JAMES, DEWEY, AND MANN, HAD THAT ABILITY; AND MANY TODAY ARE EQUAL TO THEIR ACOUNT. SO JUST WHY THE HANG-UP? I BELIEVE IT'S BECAUSE WE SIMPLY HAVEN'T HAD TO FACE UP TO THE ISSUES. THE PRESSURES HAVEN'T BEEN APPLIED. AND THEREFORE WE HAVEN'T HAD TO ASK OURSELVES, WITH ANY DEGREE OF SERIOUSNESS, JUST WHAT IS OUR STEWARDSHIP IN THIS COMPLEX EDUCATIONAL ENTERPRISE. THE CITIZENRY AND THE EDUCATORS HAVE NOT COMMUNICATED. [5]

I THINK MY CONCEPT OF THE FULL SCOPE OF ACCOUNTABILITY IS QUITE DIFFERENT THAN THE CONCEPT OF MANY OF MY COLLEAGUES. I BELIEVE THIS: I BELIEVE WE HAVE HAD THE THREE R SYNDROME WITH US TOO LONG. THE THREE R's WERE CONCEIVED AND SPAWNED IN LITTLE RED SCHOOL HOUSES ALL ACROSS THIS FRONTIER, BUT THE PROBLEM WAS THAT OUR EDUCATORS THOUGHT THE CUTE LITTLE MAXIM SUCH A CLEVER MODEL FOR EDUCATION THAT THEY'VE BEEN LOATHE EVER SINCE TO LOOK FOR NEW LETTERS TO EXPLOIT. IT'S 1971 NOW; ALMOST TWO THOUSAND YEARS SINCE THE MASTER TEACHER SOFTLY SPOKE ABOUT THREE OTHER LETTERS--THE THREE S's, OF WHICH HE SAID, IN ESSENCE, THAT IF WE MASTERED THEM WE COULD SOLVE SOME OF OUR PROBLEMS; ACHIEVE MORE OF OUR OBJECTIVES, AND UPLIFT OUR INDIVIDUAL STATIONS. HE SAID THE THREE S's WERE FIRST, SERVICE, WHICH IF UNDERSTOOD AND PRACTICED WOULD BRING ABOUT THE SECOND S, SUCCESS, THAT EXHILARATING REINFORCEMENT ELIXIR, WHICH WOULD THEN UNPAILINGLY RESULT IN THE THIRD S, SATISFACTION, ONE OF MAN'S STRONGEST INNER NEEDS. SERVICE, SUCCESS AND SATISFACTION. LET ME CHEW ON THOSE PRINCIPLES FOR A FEW MOMENTS.

NOW I REALIZE THAT I'VE LEAPTROGGED THE MORE RUDIMENTARY ASPECTS OF ACCOUNTABILITY; LIKE INSTITUTIONAL PRODUCTIVITY, CURRICULUM EXPLORATION, DEFINITION OF GOALS, STUDENT FEEDBACK, THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING STUFF. THOSE ARE OBVIOUSLY ACCOUNTABILITY FACTORS REQUIRING A GREAT AMOUNT OF EMPHASIS; AND INDEED IT SEEMS THAT PUBLIC PRESSURE MAY SOON BE BROUGHT TO BEAR ON THE SCHOOLS TO DEMONSTRATE THE RESULTS OF THESE REQUIREMENTS, BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE ALLOCATES THE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT OUR ENDEAVORS. WE'VE HAD FUN DOING OUR LITTLE SHOW AND TELL THING, BUT NOW THE PUBLIC WANTS US TO SHOW, TELL AND PROVE. THEY WANT TO MEASURE THE OUTPUT. BUT WHAT KIND OF OUTPUT? OUTPUT LIKE--"DOES THE STUDENT UNDERSTAND THE FORMULA?" "CAN HE REALLY SPEAK FRENCH AFTER TWO YEARS?" "CAN HE ORIGINATE A MEANINGFUL MODEL WORTHY OF SOMEONE'S ATTENTION? IS THE LESSON MATERIAL INTERNALIZED?" ARE THESE THE ONLY OUTPUTS WE'RE INVESTING IN? I BELIEVE OUR ACCOUNTABILITY TRANSCENDS THESE CONVENTIONS. I BELIEVE IT ENCOMPASSES MORE THAN CURRICULUM PROFILES, MORE THAN STUDENT SKILLS, AND MORE THAN HIGH JOB-PLACEMENT STATISTICS WHICH WE OFFER UP TO THE LEGISLATURE FOR BUDGETARY SUPPORT.

SOMETIME AGO WE DISPLAYED A POSTER ON OUR CAMPUS THAT READ SOMETHING LIKE THIS: "NINE OUT OF TEN PEOPLE LOSE THEIR JOBS, NOT BECAUSE OF TECHNICAL INCOMPETENCY, BUT BECAUSE OF THEIR INABILITY TO GET ALONG WITH OTHER PEOPLE." THEY SIMPLY DON'T KNOW HOW TO SERVE IN THE WORLD OF WORK. THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT EVEN THOUGH THEY MAY BE WELL TRAINED, THEY CAN'T POSSIBLY BE SUCCESSFUL UNTIL THEY UNDERSTAND THAT THE WHOLE STRUCTURE OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INTERCOURSE IS BASED ON THE PROVISION OF WORTHY SERVICE. MANKIND MAY BE A BIT HAZY ON HIS ROLE AND PROFESSION IN LIFE, BUT THE PROFESSION OF LIFE IS SERVICE; ALWAYS HAS BEEN AND ALWAYS

WILL BE. THE LOUD VOICE OF MAN CRIES OUT, "SERVE US! SERVE US!" AND THE SUBDUED VOICE OF THE AGES WHISPERS, "PROVIDE SERVICE AND SUCCESS WILL BE YOURS." I ASK WHAT GOOD DOES IT DO TO GIVE A PERSON HIS THREE-DIMENSIONAL COGNITIVE, AFFECTIVE, AND PSYCHO-MOTOR TRAINING IF HE ISN'T PARENTHETICALLY TAUGHT THE MEANING OF SERVICE? [6]

I UNDERSTAND THE MASTER TEACHER WAS ALSO A MASTER SERVANT; A SERVICE-ORIENTED TEACHER AND CARPENTER. HOW WOULD YOU LIKE HIM TO BUILD YOUR HOUSE? I BELIEVE YOU COULD COUNT ON A GOOD JOB. HE PROVIDED SERVICE AND WAS THEREFORE ACCOUNTABLE. YOU KNOW, THERE'S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WORK AND SERVICE. PLENTY OF PEOPLE PERFORM WORK, BUT IF IT ISN'T THE BEST THEY'RE CAPABLE OF, THEN THAT'S ALL IT IS, WORK, NOT SERVICE. PLENTY OF PEOPLE ARE ON THE PAYROLL BUT NOT ON THE SERVICE ROLL. IT'S NOT SERVICE WHEN A CAT OPERATOR HIDES TEN TONS OF TRASH UNDER TWENTY TONS OF FILL DIRT WHEN HE BACKFILLS THE FOUNDATION OF YOUR HOUSE, KNOWING FULL WELL THAT YOU'LL HAVE A GROUND-SINKING PROBLEM LATER ON; NOT TO MENTION THE SLEDGE HAMMER IN YOUR HAND FOR THAT CAT OPERATOR. THAT'S NOT SERVICE---JUST WORK. IT'S NOT SERVICE WHEN AN ELECTRICIAN DOES A SHODDY UNSAFE WIRING JOB, KNOWING THAT THE CIRCUIT BREAKERS WILL BE POPPING OUT BY THE NUMBERS WHEN A HEAVY LOAD IS LATER FED INTO THE SYSTEM. HIS EFFORT IS ONLY LABOR. IT'S NOT SERVICE WHEN A WELDER SPARES THE RODS ON A SHOVEL BLADE THAT HE KNOWS WILL CRACK WHEN IT HITS THE FIRST LARGE BOULDER. NOT SERVICE, ONLY WORK.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE BARBER WHO SAYS TO HIS CUSTOMER, "DOES THAT PLEASE YOU?" "LET ME KNOW IF THAT'S NOT EXACTLY THE WAY YOU LIKE IT CUT; I'D BE GLAD TO TRIM THOSE SIDES A LITTLE MORE." I DARE SAY THAT BARBER HAS PLENTY OF REPEAT CUSTOMERS.

WOULDN'T IT BE WELL TO TEACH OUR STUDENTS THAT INTEGRITY, HONESTY, DEPENDABILITY AND CONSIDERATION FOR OTHERS WILL EVENTUALLY RESULT IN A GREATER VOLUME OF BUSINESS - MORE REWARDS? WHEN'S THE LAST TIME A TRADESMAN MADE YOU FEEL LIKE YOU WERE DOING HIM A FAVOR INSTEAD OF HIM DOING YOU THE FAVOR? WHEN'S THE LAST TIME YOU HAD A TRADESMAN CLEAN UP HIS MESS AFTER COMPLETING A JOB. WHEN HAVE YOU EVER HEARD ONE SAY, "CAN I BE OF FURTHER SERVICE TO YOU?" "WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO CORRECT YOUR PROBLEM?" "IF YOU NEED ME, HERE'S MY TELEPHONE NUMBER; PLEASE CALL." I'M TALKING ABOUT AN OFT-NEGLECTED ASPECT OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM, AND THAT IS TO PUT A WHOLE MAN ON THE JOB INSTEAD OF HALF A MAN. SHOULDN'T THE STUDENT UNDERSTAND HIS COMPLETE SERVICE ROLL? WE'RE MISSING THE BOAT IF WE DON'T TEACH IT TO HIM. LISTEN TO THIS STATEMENT FROM A STUDENT WHO GOT THE MESSAGE.

"HELLO, MY NAME IS DALLAS OLSEN . . . I GRADUATED IN 1970 FROM THE AUTO MECHANICS PROGRAM AT UTAH TECHNICAL COLLEGE AT SALT LAKE. MY TRADE INSTRUCTOR--ROBERT NIELSEN--WAS JUST GREAT, NOT ONLY BECAUSE HE KNOWS ALL THE TECHNICAL MATERIAL AND CAN REALLY PUT IT OVER, BUT ALSO, PERHAPS EVEN MORE, BECAUSE HE KNOWS THE REAL WORLD OF WORK. HE TAUGHT ME, AND EVERY OTHER STUDENT IN HIS CLASS, THAT BEING A SUCCESS IS BEING A REAL PERSON. WE LEARNED ABOUT THE VALUE OF RENDERING SERVICE, OF DEVELOP-^{//}ING A POSITIVE AND KINDLY ATTITUDE, AND OF BEING WILLING TO GO THE EXTRA MILE.

"WHAT BOB NIELSEN TAUGHT IS TRUE. I DON'T HAVE MY OWN BUSINESS YET, NOR AM I MAKING AS MUCH MONEY AS I HOPE TO, BUT -D'YOU KNOW WHAT? I'M A SUCCESS! DOES THAT SOUND FUNNY? WELL, I'VE LEARNED MY TRADE, I'M SERVING CUSTOMERS WELL, AND I'M GETTING GREAT SATISFACTION OUT OF IT."

SERVICE IS THE ENNOBLING PRINCIPLE OF LIFE. IF NINE OUT OF TEN PEOPLE REALLY LOSE THEIR JOBS BECAUSE OF POOR ATTITUDES FOR SERVICE, SHOULDN'T WE BE STRESSING THIS MAGNIFICENT QUALITY FAR MORE THAN WE DO? IT SHOULD BE A CLASSROOM CREDO--THE SOLVENT WITH WHICH BRAINS SHOULD BE LUBRICATED. WHEN WE THINK OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, WE USUALLY REGARD IT AS TRAINING SOMEONE TO BE OCCUPATIONALLY PROFICIENT. I SUBMIT THAT THIS IS NOT ADEQUATE TRAINING. A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY DEMANDS THAT ITS CITIZENS DEVELOP PERSONAL, SOCIAL, AND CIVIC COMPETENCE AS WELL, AND SERVICE IS THE EXPLICABLE REQUISITE TO ATTAINING THAT COMPETENCE.

THE SECOND S, FOR SUCCESS, MAY NOT SEEM TO WARRANT SPECIAL EMPHASIS BECAUSE IT TENDS TO BE REGARDED AS AN END IN ITSELF. BUT AGAIN, I FEEL THAT OUR SCHOOLS OUGHT TO BE MORE CONCERNED WITH IT IN VIEW OF THE 90% FAIL RATIO WE PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED. PERSONALLY I'M A GREAT BELIEVER IN LUCK--THE HARDER I WORK THE MORE OF IT I SEEM TO HAVE. INDIVIDUALS OF RENOWN REPEATEDLY SAY, SUCCESS IS 90% PERSPIRATION AND 10% INSPIRATION. YES, SUCCESS IS WANTING SOMETHING BAD ENOUGH TO WORK FOR IT.

SOMEONE ONCE SAID THAT SUCCESS IS THE PROPER RATIO BETWEEN WHAT ONE CONTRIBUTES AND WHAT ONE DERIVES FROM LIFE. THAT'S WHY I'VE POSITIONED IT BETWEEN SERVICE AND SATISFACTION; IT RECEIVES FROM THE ONE AND GIVES TO THE OTHER. YOU KNOW, WHEN THE CREATOR FASHIONED HIS CREATURE, HE EXPECTED HIM TO SUCCEED. MAN WASN'T MEANT TO FAIL, BUT TO SUCCEED. AND ALSO AS THE CREATURE FASHIONS HIS EARTHLY DEVICES, HE TOO EXPECTS THEM TO SUCCEED IN THEIR FUNCTION. YES, IT'S TRUE; SUCCESS HAS TO BE EXPERIENCED, BUT THE MORE WE KNOW ABOUT IT, THE MORE WE ARE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE IT. AS THE OLE SAYING GOES--NOTHING SUCCEEDS LIKE SUCCESS. PERHAPS A COURSE IN HUMAN ENGINEERING OUGHT TO BE AS IMPORTANT A PART

OF THE CURRICULUM AS PHYSICS IS FOR ELECTRONICS. WE TEACH A FASCINATING CLASS AT UTAH TECHNICAL COLLEGE CALLED ZOOM DESIGNED TO TEACH THE PRINCIPLES OF GENERATING SUCCESSFUL, CONFIDENT ATTITUDES THROUGH REINFORCED ACHIEVEMENT. WE'RE HOPING TO LOWER THE FAIL RATE OF OUR GRADUATES BY TEACHING THEM MORE ABOUT SUCCESS TECHNIQUES.

NOW THE THIRD S, SATISFACTION, REQUIRES THE LEAST AMOUNT OF COMMENT; SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT IT MUST UNFAILINGLY AND INEVITABLY FOLLOW ITS TWO FORERUNNERS, SERVICE AND SUCCESS. SERVICE IS GRATIFYING, SUCCESS IS SWEET, BUT SATISFACTION IS SATISFACTION; THAT WHICH GIVES US PRIDE IN HAVING SERVED AND SUCCEEDED; AND WHICH MOVES US ON TO SERVE AND SUCCEED AGAIN. YOU WILL RECALL, EVEN HIPPOCRATES EXPECTED SATISFACTION UPON HIS PROVIDING THE SERVICES HE ALLUDED TO. REMEMBER, HE SAID, "WHILE I CONTINUE TO KEEP THIS OATH UNVIOLATED, MAY IT BE GRANTED TO ME TO ENJOY LIFE AND THE PRACTICE OF THE ART, RESPECTED BY ALL MEN, IN ALL TIMES."

MANY YEARS AGO IN GREECE THERE WAS A MAN WHO KNEW ALL THE ANSWERS. HE WAS CALLED THE ORACLE. IT WAS HIS RESPONSIBILITY TO ADVISE THE CITIZENS OF GREECE. BUT IN THOSE DAYS, AS NOW, THERE WERE MANY YOUTHFUL DOUBTERS WHO DIDN'T BELIEVE MISTER ANTHONY KNEW ALL THE ANSWERS. TWO DECIDED TO FIND OUT JUST HOW WISE THE OLD PHILOSOPHER REALLY WAS.

I'M GOING TO POOL THE ORACLE, I'M GOING TO PROVE THAT HE IS WRONG NO MATTER WHAT HE SAYS.

HUH, HOW ARE YOU GOING TO DO THAT?

I'M GOING TO THE ORACLE, AND I'M GOING TO HOLD A SMALL BIRD IN MY HAND, AND I'LL SAY, OH ORACLE, IS THIS BIRD DEAD OR IS IT ALIVE? AND IF HE SAYS IT'S DEAD, I'LL OPEN MY HANDS AND IT WILL FLY AWAY. HE'LL BE WRONG.

AND IF HE SAYS IT'S ALIVE, I WILL CRUSH IT IN MY HAND. AND AGAIN HE WILL BE WRONG.

AND SO THE BOYS APPROACHED THE ORACLE AND THE SPOKESMAN SAID. OH, ORACLE, WHAT DO I HOLD IN MY HAND? AND THE ORACLE COULD SEE THE FEATHERS STICKING OUT AND HEAR THE BIRD CHIRPING.

"WHY, MY SON, YOU HAVE A BIRD IN YOUR HAND."

THE YOUNG MAN SAID, "YES, I HAVE A BIRD IN MY HAND, BUT TELL ME, MR. ORACLE, IS THE BIRD ALIVE OR IS IT DEAD?"

AND THE WISE OLD ORACLE WITHOUT HESITATION REPLIED--"THAT, MY SON, DEPENDS UPON YOU."

COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS OF VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL EDUCATION, ACCOUNTABILITY IS THE MAJOR CHALLENGE OF OUR TIME. SUCCESS IN MEETING THIS CHALLENGE DEPENDS UPON YOU--AND YOU AND YOU! GOOD LUCK!