

Take Time to Read

- it is the fountain of wisdom

By Rob McKelvey

A wise man, journalist and politician Sir Richard Steele, once said, "Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body."

No matter what the subject, or interest, that someone has, there will be something written about it somewhere; either in hard copy print or on the internet. Think back to your school days and the many enjoyable projects that you had to do. Where did you go for your information and research? To the printed word.

Sadly more and more people are giving up the printed word for the talking head (TV) that sits in an exalted position in our home. Recent research indicates that more infants are being subjected to, on average, more than two hours of TV time per day as part of their development. It is after all a convenient babysitter. Over a period of years think about the amount of violence, and racial and cultural stereotyping that your children, will experience. Is it any wonder that society is becoming immune to the horrors of violence and prejudice?

Studies have shown that reading teaches us to think in a logically connected way and develop a sustained attention span. In contrast graphic imagery such as TV tends towards a shorter attention span and the need for constant graphical stimulation.

Reading encourages, thinking, imagination, reflection, and cultural diversification. It can be used as a form of entertainment or a form of learning. It can take you into a world of your own where the images you see in your mind are created by you and not dictated by a producer who needs to sell a program. Reading is an active process that actually makes you use both sides of your brain. And you can take a book with you wherever you go. As well as being pleasurable, you can also learn from reading and then keep the manual, or internet bookmark, for reference purposes.

Here are 7 reasons why reading is good for you:

1. It improves your vocabulary. When you read you can infer the meaning of one word within the context of a sentence.
2. It improves concentration. You need to use your whole brain when you are reading. Reading, unlike TV can't be background noise.
3. It is a way of becoming better informed. From a work perspective it is an excellent way of helping you in becoming an expert in your field.
4. It can help you to learn new skills. Even if you obtain a skill at a course there is a manual that goes along with the training.

5. It can help create new mental associations. In the process of researching one topic you may discover other things related to the topic.
6. It can help reduce stress. Picking up some light reading, as a break, can help you to unwind and relax and bring some quiet time to your life.
7. It can change your life. During an interview with some of significance, and we all are, how many times have you heard the question “What book changed your life?” or “What book influenced you the most?” Generally there is one.

Now I am not advocating the abolition of TV or movies. They do have their place in today's society. It may come as a surprise to you, or maybe not, but I actually watch TV. I am selective in what I watch however. For example the Australian Open tennis is taking place right now. If I can't be at a sporting event then I would much prefer to watch it on TV then read about it after the fact. I also like documentaries.

But when it comes to wanting to use my imagination, or be taken away on a journey, or learn new skills I tend to read. Reading is also a big part of my work and development. It keeps me informed and up to date.