

# HEART MATTERS

NON SCHOLÆ SED VITÆ

*Libraries of Hope Newsletter*



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## MONTHLY TOPICS

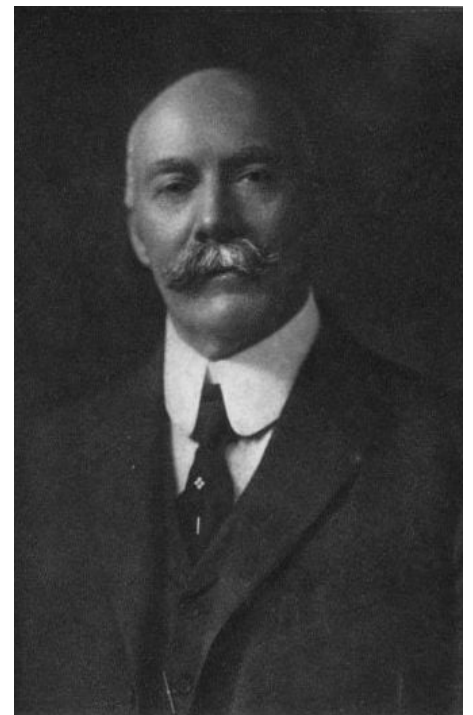
### WESTWARD EXPANSION:

--I frequently quote someone who has had a great influence on me -- Orison Swett Marden. I've referred to his story in presentations and even did a podcast on him. I finally got hold of a copy of his biography published shortly after he passed away nearly a hundred years ago. It so inspired my heart, I just had to share it with you.

If you are discouraged or just want an uplift, I invite you to come and hang out with him. Few of us have had to live through the kinds of setbacks he had in his life, yet he rose above them all with joy. His influence was felt by millions around the world, yet hardly anyone has heard of him today.

His story, for one thing, teaches us the power of stories in our lives. If you have read the Language Arts book in the Mother's Learning Library, he wrote the book on advice to young writers. I think you'll agree he knows what he is talking about.

The audio recording of his life story has just been added to [BelMonde](#) under Westward Expansion Great Lives. Do let your kids listen in, although it may not grab them until about chapter 3. I will be so bold as to say it may just change your life.



“ALL MEN WHO HAVE  
ACHIEVED GREAT  
THINGS HAVE BEEN  
GREAT DREAMERS.”

--Orison Swett Marden

(Monthly Topics cont.) --From a WEH group member on the Orison Swett Marden story: I just listened to the first half of the recordings yesterday... You are so right, Marlene! These stories do have the power to change you, if you open your heart to them.

What an inspiring, incredible man. And I just want to hug him as a boy. That sweet, tender young boy!

The same thing has happened to me with Opal Whitely. She has gotten into my heart. One day, I hope to meet her and thank her for how much she changed and softened my heart. I love the little girl and am amazed at her story.

I was trying to say more about my feelings about Orison and Opal and what they mean to me... But my feelings are so tender toward them and I can't find the words.

Thank you again, Marlene, for helping guide me as I work to fill my heart with goodness, warmth and light.

IMAGINATION:

--From a WEH group Member: Next month's MOI book is *Imagination*.

I started it today and I am already struggling with an odd anxiety that is really difficult for me to explain. A few years ago, I discovered a name for it: Aphantasia. "The inability to make pictures in your mind." ([This article](#) describes it pretty well.)

We adopted our daughter when she was eight years old and her imagination blew me away. I honestly thought something was wrong at first because I could be talking to her and she would zone out and be watching a replay of a children's show in her head. Or she could make pictures on a wall move and come alive. I couldn't even fathom these things.

I have always deeply treasured taking pictures of people, places, and trips...because they are the only way I can revisit those memories. I don't have the ability to store visual pictures of my children, my husband, or my parents in my mind. I can only revisit those times through pictures. I have noticed that if I look at the same picture over and over again (hanging it on a wall at home), I can very vaguely recall it.

Does anyone else have this? Do you think it is possible to re-develop your imagination and ability to create pictures in your mind? (cont. on next page)



“Before me, even as behind,  
God is, and all is well.”

--John Greenleaf Whittier

Art credit: Apple Trees in Bloom by Nikolai Astrup

(Monthly Topics cont.) Interestingly, I think the same thing that shut mine off as a child, put my daughter's into overdrive: scary movies. My dad would watch them while I was in the living room sometimes and it terrified me. I would cover my eyes and plug my ears as best as possible. My daughter's biological parents would put her in a high chair, turn on a horror movie, turn out the lights, and leave her like that for hours! She learned to hold on to anything peaceful, fun, lighthearted and replay it in her mind.

It is amazing how the mind works.

--If you have tried listening to the Pam Barnhill podcast on why Fairy Tales matter on the Imagination page of the Mother's University and found the link to be broken, we have found it in another place and created a [new link](#). Try again! This has been a fairy tale game-changer for a lot of moms.

--Did you know all the Andrew Lang Color Fairy Tale books are linked on the Imagination page of the Mother's University?



Art credit: Innocence by Fritz Zuhber-Buhler

"The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."

-- Ralph Waldo Emerson

## WEH GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

*eBird*

Merlin Bird ID by Cornell Lab

A free app for identifying birds.

*Professor Noggin's Birds of North America*

Education Trivia Card Game for Kids.

On the recommendation of a group member, I have added [this amazing presentation](#) on how to inspire young writers by Brad Wilcox on the Language Arts page of the Mother's University. One of the big takeaways is to give them a real audience to write to. And sometimes writing contests can provide that opportunity. You can try googling options. Here is a list of a number of possibilities (<https://www.newpages.com/writers-resources/young-writers-guide-to-contests>). Others recommended checking with local Rotary Club-type organizations.

## WEH IN ACTION

--**This is my first** year homeschooling my children. They are 16, 14, and 7. When schools closed last year, I immediately felt impressed that I should homeschool them the upcoming school year. This was a very scary thought to me (especially with teenagers, like what do I know about educating at that level?) and I knew it didn't come from me but was higher guidance. As I watched them finish the rest of the school year online and seeing the stress and anxiety that came from it, I absolutely knew that it was the right choice. So I jumped in with the desire that if this is what God wanted me to do, I wanted to do it His way.

It's been a struggle and a learning curve for me. Many times, I've felt the pull of my own training and schooling and feeling that I wasn't pushing and accelerating their education fast enough and then I'd feel those small whisperings of "slow down, it's not a race, the desire is to help them learn to love learning and enjoy the process." I feel like I was lead to WEH and this group here. WEH and Marlene and all of you have been so helpful with this way and journey. I'm enjoying all I read, watch and listen to in the Catch the Vision section.

For science with my teenagers, I had found a wonderful human anatomy curriculum that we've been going through this year and sometimes my old self gets anxiety when I see that we are so behind (only on week 8) when we "should" be many, many weeks further on. But then I think about how we've really enjoyed learning about how amazing our bodies are and the wonderful discussions we've had and I can imagine the battle and anxiety that would be in our home if I were to force and speed up just

to keep up with where the curriculum says we should be.

I'm finding a deeper appreciation for this slower, more enjoyable way of learning. Right now we are learning about the nervous system and one of the books suggested by the curriculum is *Brain Rules* by John Medina. We are listening to the audio book read by the author. He has a great reading voice and keeps it very interesting. Yesterday as we listened, he was talking about how our brains pay attention or lose attention. He gives a great visual analogy on what not to do when educating. Here is what he says (WARNING, this may be disturbing to read as it describes the cruelty inflicted on geese to make pâté de foie gras):

"My parents hated the film *Mondo Cane* because of one disturbing scene: farmers force-feeding geese to make pâté de foie gras. Using fairly vigorous strokes with a pole, farmers literally stuffed food down the throats of these poor animals. When a goose wanted to regurgitate, a brass ring was fastened around its throat, trapping the food inside the digestive tract. Jammed over and over again, such nutrient oversupply eventually created a stuffed liver, pleasing to chefs around the world. Of course, it did nothing for the nourishment of the geese, who were sacrificed in the name of expediency. My mother would often relate this story to me when she talked about what makes a good or bad teacher. 'Most teachers overstuff their students,' she would exclaim, 'like those farmers in that awful movie!' When I went to college, I soon discovered what she meant. And now that I am a professor who has worked closely with the business community, I can see the habit close-up. The most

common communication mistake? Relating too much information with not enough time devoted to connecting the dots. Lots of force-feeding, very little digestion. This does nothing for the nourishment of the listeners, whose learning is often sacrificed in the name of expediency."

My teenagers quickly reacted to that part saying how much they felt that they were being force-fed and overstuffed in public school.

I feel such gratitude for the WEH way, for all Marlene has put into this wonderful resource and for this amazing group and the support it provides. I feel I'm being walked by the hand and helped to see a better way. It is overflowing into all areas of my life and soul and I thank God for it.

--**This is so beautiful!** I was reading a thread in another group where a mom was wasking about college options and advancing her young teen through college faster. As I read it, I realized how much my paradigm has shifted. I have zero desire for my children to be on the fast-track to adulthood. I want them to experience every single year, every single moment. And when they leave my care, I want them prepared for ALL of adulthood, not just college coursework. I want them self-sufficient and purposeful and alive! I honestly wonder if I even want them going to college--and if you know me and my education background, that sentiment would really surprise you! But I think more and more on what it means to create a life that is focused on God and being and doing what He calls you to do without all of the noise of "normal" or "expected" social endeavors.

(cont. on next page)

“DOES THOU LOVE LIFE?  
THEN DO NOT SQUANDER  
TIME, FOR THAT IS THE  
STUFF LIFE IS MADE OF.”

--Franklin

Art credit: A Fun Summer's Day by Carl Von Bergen



(*WEH in Action cont.*) I actually listened to a few interviews yesterday as we drove--one from a guitarist and one with Jon Schmidt of the Piano Guys. Jon Schmidt's was so beautiful as he spoke about coming to feel that God was leading him to create a life of music. But even after all of that, he talked about he and his wife being completely open to stepping away from all of it at any moment and creating a different life, if that's what God calls them to do. It was so powerful, and I realized that loving learning as well as LIVING and being led to serve and create and add light however he is called is what I want my children to be about, have the habit of doing when they leave my home. And for the first time ever, I'm open to the possibility that this might not mean college or advanced degrees as I have always thought/intended.

--**We watched Mr. Smith Goes to Washington** this morning, because of Marlene's recommendation. I may have seen this movie as a kid, but had completely forgotten what it was about. We all really enjoyed it...especially my 4-year-old. When it got [to a certain part], I happened to be texting my husband back right at that moment and my 4-year-old got my attention and said, "Mommy! Look! You're missing the best part!" I thought it was so cute that she had felt something touch her so deeply that she just couldn't bear to see me miss it. I asked her afterward why that was the best part and of course she couldn't really tell me in words...which I had expected.

Reminded me of what I read recently in *Catch the Vision Volume 1*: "These heart educators taught first impressions, then expressions. It's a later step in learning, not the first." (pg. 52) It's often difficult to fully express what we are feeling in our hearts...and this is even more difficult for children.

Another example of this is from a few days ago when some family members were asking my son about what his favorite subject in school is. He replied, "Piano." They asked him why he likes piano so much and I could tell that he was thinking about his response but he just couldn't figure out how to formulate its feelings into words. My guess is that he loves the piano because learning and playing the music fills his heart with beauty and joy and a sense of accomplishment.

I love that my children are filling their hearts with so many impressions through art, poetry, story, music, and nature. I see how these impressions are blessing their lives because I see the fruits. This is especially true with my 4-year-old. I found WEH two years ago and have been implementing the principles (slowly at first, but much more naturally and consistently as time has gone on) so my 4-year-old has been immersed in WEH principles for nearly half of her life, as opposed to her older siblings. I love seeing how much her heart is naturally drawn to beauty and goodness. She has loved listening to all of the *My America Story Book* stories throughout the past 6 months. She always draws pictures on her notebooking page (often copying the artwork that is on the page) and she often asks what our next story is going to be about. She is very into paper dolls and is often asking (after the story), if we can find some paper dolls of the people from the story so she can act it out. Sometimes the internet is helpful with this and other times we just make it up. She loves the stories from our nation's history and I love that they are sinking deeply down in her heart. The impressions are being made now and as she gets older, she will layer the learning and come to understand the principles intellectually and be able to better express her thoughts and feelings about what is inside her heart and mind...but for now, the impressions are what matter most.



Art credit: Ensi Opetus by Karl Emanuel Jansson

(WEH in Action cont.) --My 7-year-old is a very advanced reader. He goes through several chapter books a week, so I thought last year that I'd have him do a very simple book report every week on a book he chooses. And he could work on some writing. He hated it. Writing one sentence caused him tears. BUT...he absolutely loves doing My America Story Book. He loves to record the stories in his own words. I am blown away by how much he writes and the work he puts into it. Just today he sat down and browsed through his book again, rereading stories and even adding to some of them. It truly is becoming his very own America storybook.

## MOI MINUTE

I have a theory that you should never own a piece of art unless it speaks to you. A few years ago this painting fairly shouted at me.

If you have time, I hope you can stop and look at it for a minute.

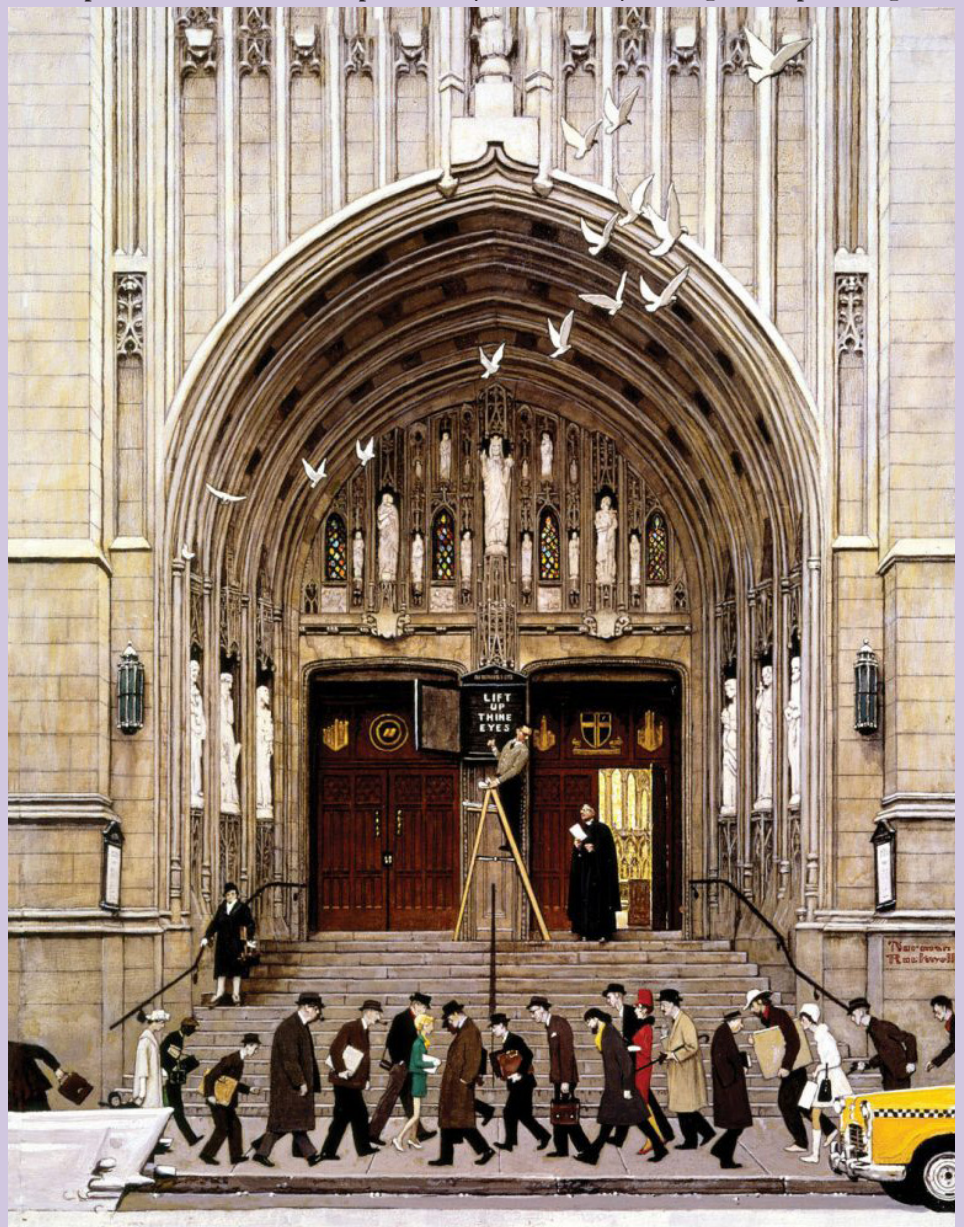
I started by looking at the people. I wondered what was going on -- what were they looking at? I thought if it had been painted today they'd all be looking at cell phones. Did your eye follow the line to the ladder, too? I realized that there was something on the sign. -- It took a second to see what it says.

"Lift Up Thine Eyes" -- which is also the name of the painting.

That caused me to do just that. My eye found the beautiful church (which is a depiction of St. Thomas' Church in NYC) and the apostles and then the birds, until my eyes lifted up and my gaze moved right off the painting.

As soon as it happened, I laughed out loud. Norman Rockwell and his painting had literally caused me to "lift up my eyes."

(cont. on next page)



Art credit: Lift Up Thine Eyes by Norman Rockwell

(MOI Minute cont.) I kept thinking and smiling about it for days. I wanted to look up the reference and found several -- especially in Isaiah -- but I especially connected to this one:

Isaiah 40:26 (talking about the stars in heavens): *“Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.”*

That has become my motto.

Over and over again, since Marlene has helped me see the pattern for learning, I’ve had opportunities to put my trust in one of two places. The first is to lean on other people, on structure, in the familiar mapped-out paths and in the things I can build myself.

The other has been to pioneer my way with God as a guide. Marlene calls this flipping the tower. This means turning to Him first and waiting on His direction when we don’t know what to do. I’ve learned that sometimes the most challenging part is getting out of the way and simply letting God customize answers and experiences. Pioneering isn’t for the faint of heart -- but I supposed that’s the point.

So what does this have to do with MOI? We hope you’ve sensed by now that the strength of MOI doesn’t come from all the good advice we’ll give each other. It comes from the shared growth experience.

It’s been said that the world works from the outside in, but that God works from the inside outward. Everything magnifies under His care. As MOIers we’re women learning how to let God work inside of us even more. With His help, we’re deepening our roots, increasing our inspired growth, and cultivating an encircling reach.

Love, Marley



**“The destiny of the nation lies far more in the hands of women -- the mothers -- than in the hands of those who possess power or those who are innovators, who seldom understand themselves. We must cultivate women, who are educators of the human race, else a new generation cannot accomplish its task.”**

**--Friederick Froebel**

Art credit: At the Garden Bank by H.A. Brendekilde