



Pushing the Limits: Tradition Suggested Readings and Additional Questions

Science in Everyday Life: Bob Boyer

- What did you think of Bob?
- What do you think is the value of tradition?
- Are traditions important for society?
- Do you have traditions in your life? Have traditions shaped your life and if so, how? Who brought them to you? Will you pass them along to others?
- In what way is practice and training a form of tradition?
- Is tradition more than repetition?
- Do traditions play a role in learning?
- Do you play a sport? If so, what kinds of moves do you need to practice? Are you able to feel “muscle memory” take over? Have you ever been injured and needed to retrain your muscle memory? If you work with your hands, is there a kind of muscle memory at play? How is muscle memory related to “being good at something”?
- How does Bob use tradition to motivate his players? Do tradition and psychology have a connection?
- Who have been the important mentors in your life and did tradition play a role in their mentorship?
- Are you a mentor? Do you try to use tradition in your mentoring?

Suggested Books with Discussion Questions

Friday Night Lights: A Town, A Team, and A Dream. (25th Anniversary Edition)
by H.G. Bissinger

Return once again to the timeless account of the Permian Panthers of Odessa—the winningest high-school football team in Texas history. Socially and racially divided, Odessa isn't known to be a place big on dreams, but every Friday night from September to December, when the Panthers play football, dreams *can* come true. [Book summary source: Amazon.com]





Discussion Questions

- What parallels do you see between the basketball traditions in Odessa and the football traditions in Beaverton?
- What traditions do sports bring to our community?
- What roles do these traditions play in the community?
- Bob Boyer, the football coach at Beaverton High School, says, “There’s a role for every kid in our program.” What is a similar key message communicated by the coach of Permian Panthers?
- The video and the book not only explore the role of sports in the lives of the players but also in the lives of the families and communities. What similarities and differences do you see in the two different settings?
- How do the traditions passed on by the coaches and teams affect the players and the other kids in the school?
- What roles do traditions play in personal development?
- How do the Eagles’ players prepare physically and psychologically for their games?
- In what way are the traditions of player preparation like the traditions of the team?

Eagle Blue: A Team, a Tribe, and a High School Basketball Season in Arctic Alaska.

By Michael D’Orso

Eight miles above the Arctic Circle, there's a village with no roads leading to it, but a high school basketball tradition that lights up winter's darkness and a team of native Alaskan boys who know "no quit." D'Orso (coauthor of *Like No Other Time* with Tom Daschle) follows the Fort Yukon Eagles through their 2005 season to the state championship, shifting between a mesmerizing narrative and the thoughts of the players, their coach and their fans. What emerges is more than a sports story; it's a striking portrait of a community consisting of a traditional culture bombarded with modernity, where alcoholism, domestic violence and school dropout rates run wild. . . . Among D'Orso's unusual characters are the woman who built a public library in her home, the families who adopt abandoned children, and, of course, the boys for whom "hard" has an entirely different meaning (e.g., regularly trudging through "icy darkness" to board flights to Fairbanks for games). With a ghostlike presence, D'Orso lends a voice to a place that deserves to be known. [Book summary source: *Publishers Weekly*, January 2, 2006.]

Discussion Questions

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- What roles do these traditions play in the community?



- Bob Boyer, the football coach at Beaverton High School, says, “There’s a role for every kid in our program.” What is a similar key message communicated by the coach of Eagles?
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The Chimes

By Anna Smaill

Simon is on a mission to find a person in London, and the only information he has is a song. Simon’s goal makes more sense when one understands that the England of *The Chimes* is one controlled by music and memory loss. Every day, the enigmatic elite ruling class known as the Order plays a particular kind of music to wipe society’s memory. To remember certain aspects of their past and daily life, citizens rely on their muscle memory and items they carry with them. Those that can’t make it from the day-to-day or lose their memory items become zombie-like creatures called the *memorylost*. Without the ability to retain any sort of history, collective memory, or even written language, the culture is one that revolves around the preservation of the few memories possible and music. . . . This imaginative novel from poet Smaill was longlisted for the 2015 Man Booker Prize. – [Book summary source: Emily Whitmore. *Booklist*. April 15, 2016]

Discussion Questions

- In the science fiction novel, writing is lost and music and objects take its place as a source to build muscle memory as a means to remember the past. How do music and objects successfully preserve history in the characters’ world?
- How does music help you remember events in your life?
- In *Coach*, Bob Boyer works with the football players to build muscle memory. Do you see parallels between this type of muscle memory and the muscle memory in the novel?
- In what ways do you use photographs and family objects to promote tradition?



Station Eleven

by Emily St. John Mandel

Kirsten Raymonde will never forget the night Arthur Leander, the famous Hollywood actor, had a heart attack on stage during a production of *King Lear*. That was the night when a devastating flu pandemic arrived in the city, and within weeks, civilization as we know it came to an end. Twenty years later, Kirsten moves between the settlements of the altered world with a small troupe of actors and musicians. They call themselves The Traveling Symphony, and they have dedicated themselves to keeping the remnants of art and humanity alive. But when they arrive in St. Deborah by the Water, they encounter a violent prophet who will threaten the tiny band's existence. And as the story takes off, moving back and forth in time, and vividly depicting life before and after the pandemic, the strange twist of fate that connects them all will be revealed. [Book summary source: Amazon.com]

Discussion Questions

(Adapted from LitLovers: <http://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/13-fiction/10022-station-eleven-mandel?start=3>)

- "Survival is insufficient," a line from *Star Trek: Voyager*, is the Traveling Symphony's motto. What does it mean to them?
- Certain items turn up again and again, for instance the comic books and the paperweight - things Arthur gave away before he died, because he didn't want any more possessions. And Clark's Museum of Civilization turns what we think of as mundane belongings into totems worthy of study. What role have museum played in your life to promote your awareness of traditions?
- Throughout the novel, those who were alive during the time before the flu remember specific things about those days: the ease of electricity, the taste of an orange. In their place, what do you think you'd remember most? Do you have similar "milestone" events in your life?
- On a related note, some characters—like Clark—believe in preserving and teaching about the time before the flu. But in Kirsten's interview with François Diallo, we learn that there are entire towns that prefer not to: "We went to a place once where the children didn't know the world had ever been different...." What are the benefits of remembering, and of not remembering?