

International Conversation Cafe

Lifestyle Topic: Talents and Abilities

Read the following story, stopping to define unfamiliar words. Then tell the story in your own words.

Bertoldo de Giovanni is a name even the most enthusiastic lover of art is unlikely to recognize. He was the pupil of Donatello, the greatest sculptor of his time, and he was the teacher of Michelangelo, the greatest sculptor of all time. Michelangelo was only 14 years old when he came to Bertoldo, but it was already obvious that he was enormously gifted. Bertoldo was wise enough to realize that gifted people are often tempted to coast rather than to grow, and therefore he kept trying to pressure his young prodigy to work seriously at his art.

One day Bertoldo came into the studio to find Michelangelo toying with a piece of sculpture far beneath his abilities. Bertoldo grabbed a hammer, stomped across the room, and smashed the work into tiny pieces, shouting this unforgettable message, "Michelangelo, talent is cheap; dedication is costly!"

Inrig, Gary, 1985. *A Call to Excellence*. Wheaton, Ill. Victor Books

How would you summarize this story in your own words?

What do you think is the main lesson from the story?

Do you agree with that main lesson? Why or why not?

What is talent?

What is ability?

Do you think there is a difference between talents and abilities? How so?

What are some talents in your home country that are regarded as special?

Where do you think gifts, talents, and abilities come from?

Do you think it would be harder or easier to believe that your gift is from God?

What does it mean "to coast rather to grow"?

Do you agree that people who are gifted "are often tempted to coast"?

What are some gifts and talents that you wish you had?

What are some gifts and talents that you have?

What situations can you think of where gifts can be the cause of hardship?

If you were able to chose one gift or ability to have, which would it be?

