



Monday Matters September 2, 2013

Is Your Picture Worth A Thousand Words?

There is an old adage that says "A picture is worth a thousand words." In researching this adage I found that as early as 1911, it appeared in a newspaper article quoting newspaper editor Arthur Brisbane discussing journalism and publicity. It is believed by some that the modern use of the phrase stems from an article by Fred R. Barnard in the advertising trade journal *Printers' Ink*, promoting the use of images in advertisements that appeared on the sides of streetcars. The December 8, 1921, issue carries an ad entitled, "One Look is Worth A Thousand



Wonderful Words of Life

Words." The phrase has also been attributed to being a Chinese Proverb.

This phrase or one similar to it conveys the notion that a complex idea can be conveyed with just a single still image. It also aptly characterizes one of the main goals of visualization, namely making it possible to absorb large amounts of data quickly.

Most of you who read this post experience each day the need to paint a picture with words. You might be a pastor, a professional speaker, a teacher, a salesman, management personnel or a customer service representative. You don't usually have the opportunity to paint a picture for someone. You must use words to provide the true essence of what you are saying and not leaving anyone's interpretation of a picture. You can only use words to bring forth the truth of your message.



Paul Harvey, the most famous commentator on radio for decades, once asked the question, "You say one picture is worth a thousand words? Let's see about that."

Paul continued by listing several items to comprise his list of a thousand words. It included:

- The Lord's Prayer
- The 23rd Psalm
- The Hippocratic Oath
- A sonnet from Shakespeare

Quote of the Week

"There is something about words. In expert hands, manipulated deftly, they take you prisoner. Wind themselves around your limbs like spider silk, and when you are so enthralled you cannot move, they pierce your skin, enter your blood, numb your thoughts. Inside you they work their magic."

~ Diane Setterfield ~

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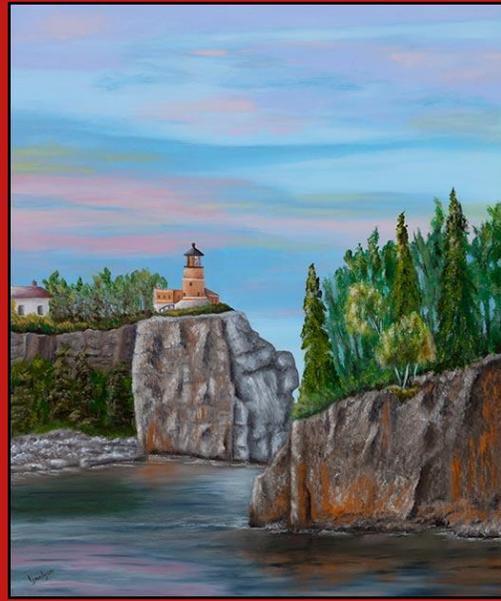
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- The Preamble to the U.S. Constitution
- Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

There are still words that can be added to this wonderful list to make up to a thousand words. I would add a verse from the Bible - "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." - John 3:16. And as Paul Harvey said of this list, "And I wouldn't trade you those things (words) for any picture on earth."

As we communicate every day by using words, we need to choose those words carefully so we paint a picture of exactly what we want others to hear. I doubt a picture can always say what we want people to understand. By choosing words wisely, we can paint a picture for them.

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