

As a child, I saw the direct impact my mother had as a teacher. She inspired her students. She helped change their lives, and they often came back to see her or would write to tell her so. I was in awe of the impact she had on them.

I yearned to have that type of impact on the world.

Flash forward a decade. As a college student, I saw *Dead Poet's Society* starring Robin Williams. I was mesmerized. I loved how he inspired his students to think for themselves, be passionate learners, and challenge the status quo. I can still close my eyes and hear him talking about Robert Herrick's poem and exhorting his students to imagine the impact they might have on the world: "Did [these former students] wait until it was too late to make from their lives even one iota of what they were capable? . . . Carpe diem, seize the day, boys, make your lives extraordinary."¹

Was I going to go through life without making an impact? Certainly not!

Every August I watch *Dead Poet's Society* to ground and motivate me for the challenges I will face during the upcoming school year, asking myself: *What will my impact be on this year? How can I best help the children and the teachers in my school? How can I help change the world each and every day, knowing that tomorrow I might be gone?*

Carpe diem is my mantra. For almost twenty-five years, this poem has shaped me and pushed me to be my very best for my students, my staff, and my family.

—*Cordell Jones*

Principal
Alamo Heights Junior School
San Antonio, Texas

1. "Carpe Diem." *Dead Poets Society*, directed by Peter Weir (Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Studios, 1989), film.

To the Virgins, to make much of Time

Gather ye Rose-buds while ye may,
Old Time is still a flying:
And this same flower that smiles today,
To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious Lamp of Heaven, the Sun,
The higher he's a getting;
The sooner will his Race be run,
And neerer he's to Setting.

That Age is best, which is the first,
When Youth and Blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times, still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time;
And while ye may, goe marry:
For having lost but once your prime,
You may for ever tarry.

—*Robert Herrick*