

# Thoughts of a Passionate Teacher

## Charodic

I go nuts when people describe The Chandler School as laid back or unstructured. Those are terrible descriptions of us. Dee Hock, founder of Visa, talks about systems that combine order and chaos. Loose and tight. Chaos and order = chaordic. The two are complements. That's a much better description of Chandler. We hold certain values and practices as sacred (e.g. respect for all and daily personal concern for each student). We are not hung up on traditional school habits, which can make us look less structured to outsiders (e.g. headmaster's behavior). But we dare to combine tight order and allow for innovation/spontaneity simultaneously.

## Innovation

Coaching and teaching and conducting and parenting are about innovating, about originality, about freshness, or, as some like to say, about loose and tight. In this school you will not be fired for trying something innovative that doesn't work out. You might be fired, though, for lacking passion. Passion demands fixation. Passion demands living out loud. Passion demands telling the truth. We have systems. Some work for our kids, some do not. Don't settle for the ones that don't work on the projects you manage. Innovate. Find what will work. Be obsessive about it. It is all about serving students.

Every school needs: Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the preserver), and Shiva (the destroyer). We have shown remarkable abilities as Brahma and Vishnu. We have not been willing to use the eraser often, to act as Shiva, because we have been raised in an educational culture that abhors errors.

Jon Saphier explains that, "The total environment of a school has a powerful effect on student's learning. Therefore, I must participate with my colleagues as a sharper of the school-as-learning environment; I must learn how to play a role in strengthening for the institution; I must see myself as a player beyond the classroom and responsible for the "system" of the school." The Skillful Teacher p.583

All Chandler students can soar. Many of them haven't or are not there yet. Many have and are. Our job is to blow away obstacles. Once kids realize that they are loving learning, everything else falls into place. Kids who are feeling successful are more able to treat people well. Kids who are feeling successful are more able to find time for community activities. Kids who are feeling successful are successful.

*Everything flows from success in the classroom.*