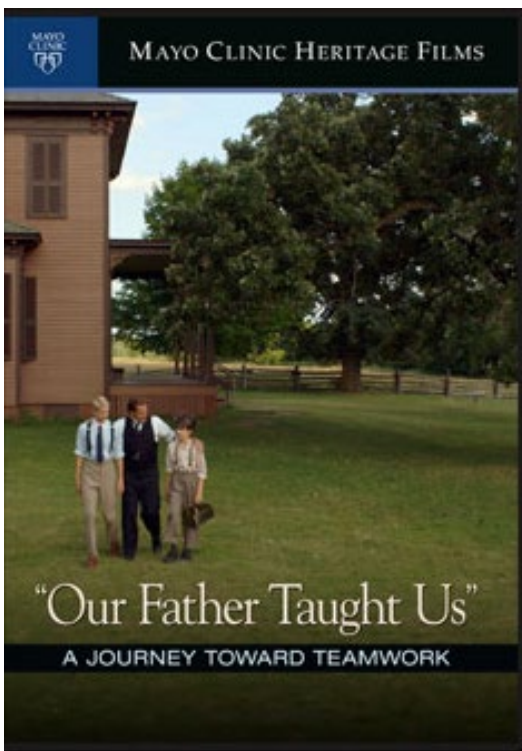




Mayo Clinic Heritage Films Discussion Guide

Our Father Taught Us: A Journey Toward Teamwork



The medical practice that became Mayo Clinic began with a country doctor and his sons—two boys raised to be doctors “the way farm boys are taught to be farmers.”

This film imagines one of those sons, Dr. William J. Mayo, now at the end of his career, counseling a young surgeon who undervalues his colleagues. To illustrate his point, “Dr. Will” recounts a formative event from his childhood when he and his brother Charlie accompanied their father on a journey to perform a difficult operation.

On that memorable day, Will and Charlie learned about compassion, teamwork, and dedication to the needs of the patient—values that became the foundation of Mayo Clinic.

Discussion Questions

1. Dr. Will said he and his brother were “taught to be doctors, the way farm boys are taught to be farmers.” How does a parent draw the line between offering a child opportunities and imposing expectations?
2. Dr. William Worrall Mayo was faced with performing a difficult, dangerous operation in the patient’s kitchen with the help of two children, a family member, and a country doctor inexperienced in giving ether. How did he make the best of the situation?

3. Dr. Will said that in hiring, "character comes first." Do you think an adult's character can be changed? If so, how?
4. What characteristics do you think a doctor should have? Can those be taught?
5. Dr. Royce said, "If someone interferes with the safety of my patient, they're going to hear about it." What's the best way to deal with mistakes and shortcomings in the workplace?
6. How can managers encourage mutual respect and teamwork?
7. What was one of the formative learning experiences of your life?