

Success and Happiness after Graduation

Graduations provide us with much excitement and celebration. As you graduate and move on in your journey of life, you may feel as millions of previous graduates, nervous, fearful and curious, as to what the future holds for you.

In 1955 high school graduating seniors were asked their two greatest fears. Would it surprise you to know that 55-years later graduating seniors gave the same two responses of what they feared? Will I be successful and will I find someone to love me?

Each person has their expectation and definition of success and love, however, as you experience your graduation, remember these fears are a natural feeling as you think about your future and prepare to take your first steps as a graduate.

Edwin Chapin said "every action of our lives touches on some chord that will vibrate in eternity." Remember life is a progression of experiences which must be lived to be understood. Until you have walked across the stage and experienced graduation you have not truly felt the vibration or experienced the chord of celebration that comes with this life experience. Each new phase in life will be less stressful if we step out in faith and trust that "I can do this!" Every life does have purpose, and with God's help, you will achieve a meaningful life.

As you think about your future consider what it takes to be successful in today's world. Think about what characteristics and skills you will need in today's fast pace world to compete and to reach your potential.

Successful and happy people have certain characteristics in common, certain personal traits and experiences that improve an individual's probability of success and happiness. It is important for graduates to determine their personal strengths and identify characteristics they may need to develop to reach their full capability in life and improve their road to success and happiness, and throughout their life be able to fan the tiny spark of possibility within them into the flames of achievement.

To test your Profile for Success and Happiness, answer these 12 questions.

1-Adaptability – Do you have the ability to cope with new situations and find creative solutions to problems?

2-Competitiveness – Are you willing to compete with and test yourself against others?

3-Confidence – Do you believe that you can do what you set out to do?

4-Drive – Do you have the desire to work to accomplish goals?

5-Honesty – Are you committed to be truthful and sincere in dealings with other people?

6-Organization – Do you have the ability to structure your life and keep task and information in order?

7-Persuasiveness – Do you have the knack for convincing people to see your point of view and to get them interested in your ideas?

8-Discipline – Do you have the ability to stay focused and adhere to a schedule and deadlines?

9-Perseverance - Do you refuse to quit and have the willingness to keep goals in sight and work toward them, despite obstacles?

10-Risk-taking - Do you have the courage to expose yourself to possible losses?

11-Understanding - Do you have the ability to listen to and emphasize with other people?

12-Vision – Do you have the ability to see the end results of goals while working to achieve them....to not see things as they are, but how they can be?

When you can answer yes to these 12-questions you will be well on your way to achieving success and happiness after graduation. Congratulations to all 2010 Graduates and their Families, and may you enjoy much success and happiness.

Doug Hovatter is a WVU Association Professor and 4-H Agent in Berkeley County. He can be reached at 304 264-1936 or Doug.Hovatter@Mail.WVU.edu