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Michigan Edition • Fall 2012

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# Passion or Profit

Is your dream more important than dollars?

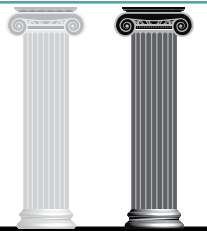
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## Campus visits — by Kathleen King

Trip tips help you find the good, the bad and the ugly.



In September of 1968, my grandparents put my father on a plane, wished him well and told him they'd see him at Christmas. My dad was headed to begin his freshman year at Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H. He had never been on an airplane, lived away from home or set foot on Dartmouth's campus before that day.

Over 40 years later, I am shocked anyone would choose a college having never seen it. Many teens spend the summer before and the fall of their senior year as visiting colleges.

These trips are an important aspect of selecting a place to live and learn. I had visited some colleges in summer, and picked up valuable tips to help me with the rest of my visits.

### More than brochures

The college life and atmosphere cannot be summed up in a brochure: The grass is not always green and the buildings are not always freshly painted. Most students catch on to that and want see for themselves what a college is like.

Getting on a tour isn't hard; just look at the school's Web site for times, then call ahead. The tours—typically given by college students—usually take about two hours and cover a good amount of the campus by foot. You will visit the cafeteria, dorms, and other important offices and buildings.

The student tour guides are a fantastic resource. I asked them about the school's social life, activities, teachers, workload, food and other topics. For the most part, it seemed that they told me about the reality of life at their college.

I realized, though, that if I wanted the good, the bad and the ugly, I should seek out the opinion of a student not being paid to give a tour. For example, the official tours I have taken have often shown me the best possible living situations on campus: the few spacious dorm rooms with a view. But, in

talking to other students at one school, I learned that there are many less desirable living situations—especially for freshmen. So, I recommend that you also take an unofficial tour.

### Find out about food and fun

I made sure that I didn't leave campus without sampling the cafeteria's menu! My parents and I had lunch in one of the cafeterias on campus to find out what types of meals are prepared and, most importantly, what they taste like!

I also spent time exploring the school's town or city. My parents and I spent the afternoon checking out restaurants, stores, things to do, as well as resources and opportunities. I asked students about hot spots and what they enjoyed doing.

### A make-or-break decision

Fortunately for my dad, he found his way from the airport to campus and, after a few lonely days, experienced four great years! However, the college search process has changed a lot since he was a student.

As competition to get into college has dramatically increased, students are applying to more schools. Campus visits have the potential to make or break a decision. Take advantage of your opportunities to visit so you can make the best decision. Hey, if nothing else, you may get a mini-vacation or at least a day off from school.



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[bit.ly/RdyIIT](http://bit.ly/RdyIIT)



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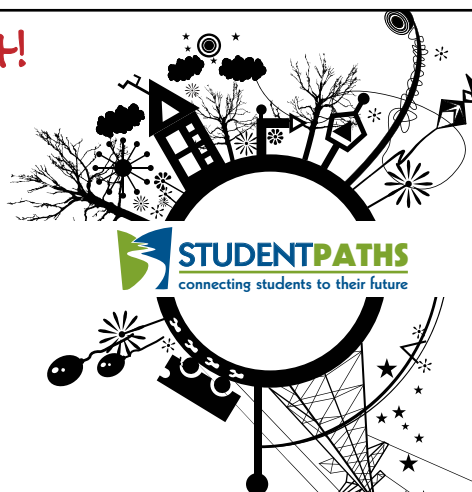


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A two-for-one offer! If you are a twin, consider this deal from Lake Erie College in Painesville, Ohio: Both twins enrolled full-time can attend for the price of one.	Always wanted to wield a blowtorch? District, national and international scholarships are offered for students enrolled in a welding-related educational or training program.	If you're a young woman heading to the University of North Carolina at Greensboro – and don't mind a few restrictions – this might be for you.	Know a burgundy from cabernet? If you have an interest in wine (the study and science of it, that is!) or want to learn grape growing, this scholarship might prove fruitful.	Forty-five high school sophomores and juniors go to Washington, D.C., for a week of activities that encourage them to become active and knowledgeable U.S. citizens.
A full-tuition scholarship awarded 50/50	Varies with scholarship, but several are worth at least \$2,500 annually.	Varies	Varies	Participants compete for \$30,000 in college scholarships.
Twins attending Lake Erie College	Students pursuing a welding-related educational or training program. You must also be a high school graduate or possess a GED equivalent.	Females attending the University of North Carolina at Greensboro with financial need; must be single, live on-campus and not have a car or other scholarships.	Students pursuing a degree in enology, viticulture, or in a curriculum emphasizing a science basic to the wine and grape industry, college junior status, minimum GPA of 3.0	High school sophomores and juniors with a GPA of 3.0 or higher.
Check with Lake Erie College	March 1	March 1	March 1	Last year's deadline was February 1
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# The power of words

— by Flora Richards-Gustafson

“ ‘Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.’ Whoever wrote this either had the best self-esteem in the world or was completely void of any human emotion because he got it SO wrong.” This is how Sam started out his private, online journal entry one day after school. His peers gave him a hard time because he stood up for a classmate others were picking on again.

“I don’t know why they have to be so mean all the time, and call Jerry names like ‘fag’ or ‘homo,’ and tell him everyone hates him. ... They even text him these things, and I can tell it made him feel bad. When I stand up for him, they say, ‘Are you in love with a homo?’ I barely know the guy, but I don’t want our school to be in the news because it got so bad that Jerry shoots himself or something.

“I tried telling teachers and the school counselors. They seem to care, but nothing’s different. ... I know I could take it, but I don’t know about him....”

Words and teasing have more of an impact than you may think. It is common to hear about the impact words have on high school students today, as some have led to suicide or other acts of violence. However, there are things you can do to help.

### Don't Be That Person

Though articles always offer advice to those who have had unwelcome comments said to them at school, they rarely address those making the comments.

If you are not sure if you are that person, consider the following: Do you make comments about people, even if you are not trying to be mean, to make others laugh or for the attention? Do you feel pressure from your friends to have a big mouth? If you answered “yes” or “maybe” to any of these, you might be that person.

When a peer feels bad because of things people are saying to them at school, they may feel unsafe or scared, and miss school or get bad grades as a result.

Steve Wessler, who formed the Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence, stated, “Students have the right to their own beliefs ... and they have a right to express those beliefs. But students do not have the right to use degrading words to harass and frighten.”

Think hard before you speak: What you say carries power to harm or to do good. Do you really want to be a person whose speech causes negative consequences in another?

Degrading comments cut deeply, but so can a bystander’s silence. If you want to help, speak up against teasing and bullying.



### Remember the Golden Rule

If you’ve ever logged into your social networking account to find someone posted an unflattering message to or about you, think about how you felt. Kind of irritated, right?

The good news is that you have the power to not make others feel this way.

A high school student in High Point, North Carolina (name withheld for confidentiality), said, “Treat people the way you would like to be treated. I’m not saying to change who you are, but just think about what you say. [Those teased] are people just like you and I.”

### Speak Up

Wessler said that most students who use harmful language do not really think about what they are saying or have a deep-seated bias toward particular groups. “Often, they’re just picking up on the messages they hear repeated again and again,” he said.

When your peers are teasing others, speak up. Wessler said the problem of insensitive and hurtful language would be reduced greatly if brave young people stood up more often for what they know is right. When they don’t, he said, “[Verbal abusers] think everybody thinks their prejudices are OK, because everybody remains silent.”

## Choosing Your Path

# A blueprint for technology — by Dennis Owen Frohlich

Ever considered a job in construction? Many tech-savvy young people want nothing to do with the backbreaking labor normally associated with construction. It might be surprising to learn, then, that today’s construction jobs utilize the latest technology.

Over the last decade, demand for high-tech jobs within the construction industry has increased every year. The residential and commercial buildings built today are far more sophisticated than outside appearances might indicate.

Contractors are putting more and more technology between the walls. From advanced theater systems in homes to complex security systems in malls to high-speed wireless systems in hospitals, buildings are doing more today than ever before.

And as the nation moves toward a greener economy, demand is increasing for cleaner and more efficient heating, venting, cooling, and water systems.

Hundreds of technical schools and colleges across the country specialize in preparing students for this high-tech construction industry.

### Programs combine classroom and hands-on instruction

Most schools, such as the Pittsburgh Technical Institute (PTI) in Pennsylvania and the Texas State Technical Colleges in Waco, Marshall, and Harlingen, Texas, offer programs lasting one to two years in several different specializations, such as Home Technology Integration and HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning) Technology.

Programs are a mix of classroom and hands-on technical courses in a variety of areas, such as electronics, wiring, architecture technology, customer relations, and computers and information technology.

Lee Smith is one of many currently working in the HVAC industry. Smith works for Estes Heating and Air Conditioning, Inc., in Atlanta, Ga., as a service technician. Service technicians make calls to residential and commercial buildings, running diagnostic tests, making repairs, and performing general maintenance on HVAC systems.

“My father did this type of work so I followed in his footsteps. I had

some experience working with him but I still went to tech school to get a better background,” Smith says.

Technicians do not simply replace broken parts and make mechanical repairs to systems. A thorough knowledge of electronics is needed to finish the job.

### Energy, environmental controls are big

Joel Heller, a service manager with Estes, says, “We’re seeing a lot more electrical components in our systems today. Efficiency and environmental controls are a big part of our business.”

And that’s what technical colleges are teaching toward. Dave Semich, the Department Chair for the School of Building Technology at PTI, says, “I see the industry moving towards integration. Everything is integrated now. Smartphones and laptop computers control lighting systems, energy systems, and security systems in homes and buildings. Integration is key, and I don’t see that changing.”

Before these systems can be installed, somebody has to design them. Jeff Muha, 19, has one such job as a control contractor.

Muha went to PTI and now works with the Muninn Group, a building automation systems firm in Pittsburgh. The Muninn Group designs energy and environmental control systems for commercial buildings. They do everything from lighting systems to security systems to indoor air control systems.

Muha has already worked on projects in such diverse places as schools and prisons. “The jobs are never the same,” Muha says. “I have to coordinate with different people.”

His job involves electronics, design, and customer relations, so he needs a wide range of skills. “I like this job because three days of the week I’m at the office and two days I’m at the site,” Muha says. “I’m not inside all day like some jobs.”

Whether you like working directly with the installation and maintenance of systems or prefer the designing and consumer relations end, the high-tech construction industry could be for you. The jobs are plentiful and evolving to keep up with the changes in technology.



A Pittsburgh Technical Institute student hones his wiring skills.

**Certification is often required to work in the construction industry. Here is a sampling of those available in the U.S.**

- Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Certifications
- Environmental Protection Agency Certifications (for HVAC)
- Electronic Systems Certifications



Even in a dismal economy, follow your dreams – and perhaps the twain shall meet

**A**s a junior at Rocori High School in Minnesota, John Stielow had his sights set on becoming an algebra teacher. “I’ve always loved to do algebra or even math in general,” he said. “It was one of the only subjects in school that I really liked to do and look forward to almost every day.” Stielow is lucky that his passion aligns well with a career that has remained pretty secure despite the poor economy and dwindling job market. He can find a job that is both enjoyable and promising for him.

Not all high school students can say that. Many are struggling with college and career choices based on competing drives: pleasure and money.

#### Factoring in the economy

This tension is intensified in the throes of a recession when hiring is scarce: Should students follow their dreams even if those dreams don’t pay the bills and make them nearly unemployable? Or should they stick to career paths that offer more job and financial security?

With his goal, Stielow seems to be following both passion and profit. He loves math, and, according to the Occupational Outlook Handbook by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of elementary and middle school teachers is expected to grow by 17 percent through 2020, with secondary school teachers seeing 7 percent growth. Fortunately for Stielow, math and science teachers are expected to be some of the most needed.

Not all sections of the current job market, however, have favorable outlooks. The number of unemployed persons was 12.7 million in June, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, making the average U.S. unemployment rate 8.2 percent. Yet, according to the Spring Job Outlook Survey 2012 by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, hiring will be 10.2 percent greater than it was at the same time last year.

#### Waiting out the recession?

So the job outlook is not hopeless, especially for high school students who have four or five more years (if they are going to college) to wait out the recession. Bob Bardwell, a guidance counselor at Monson High School in Monson, Mass., said the state of the economy today shouldn’t dictate your career plans for the future.

“In four years, things could be very different,” he said.

Bardwell encourages students to not get discouraged if their interests don’t match up with a profitable or secure career. The recession has made the job market more difficult, but the types of jobs available also come simply with a change in society, he said.

“Technology changes it, the economy changes it, and there are jobs that are hot regardless. It’s important to focus on where society is at rather than if there’s jobs or not,” he said.

What are society’s trends now? Technology is booming, creating openings for computer specialists and biotechnology careers in the medical field. The world is also going green, opening up thousands of jobs for engineers and scientists to research and develop environmentally friendly energy. Baby boomers are retiring, leaving openings for young adults.

#### Go for the dream

Of course making a living is necessary, but counselors and students agree that following passions is extremely important. Marcy Morrison, a speaker and the author of “Finding Your Passion: The Easy Guide to Your Dream Career,” has worked with many adolescents in this area and warns, “If our work is not in alignment with our strengths and passions, we can find ourselves in some miserable situations.”

But, she said, “You should always strive to have a good attitude and do your best no matter where you are—you never know where it may lead you.”

Bardwell’s message to the students he works with has remained the same: Go for the dream. But he adds, “Go for the dream, but keep an eye on the reality of the job market.”

And keeping an eye on reality means that students need to understand that a recession makes the market “incredibly competitive,” Morrison said, so whatever students can do to stand out, the better. This includes completing internships and networking through teachers, coaches, or even professionals your parents might know. Morrison also emphasized the importance of students developing a short-term plan for getting a job that will pay the bills while working toward a long-term goal of a position they are passionate about.

#### Persistence will pay off

Although Stielow is willing to do the work, he echoes many of his peers in that he would like to be paid well for his work. To him, following your passion is doing something that you love and that you are willing to do almost every day. Morrison said people can have the best of both worlds—the dream job and the paycheck—if they have persistence and dedication.

“[They] need to realize that the long-term strategy of following their passions may mean that the money may not come right away, but if they stick with it, it will come,” she said. 🌟



**Jacob Campbell**  
bit.ly/OVOlzc



**Samantha Ickes**  
bit.ly/ON3qNH



*What really is a passion? How do you know what your passions are?*

Brett Farmiloe is a co-founder of “Pursue the Passion,” a Web site that features interviews with professionals who truly have a passion for what they do and what that means in everyday life. Farmiloe told the blog UpMo, “Passion isn’t just something that you ‘love.’... It’s what motivates and moves you to action.”

And pursuing your passion now is even more important than when the economy was booming, he said. He summed up the “formula” for identifying and following your passion: taking ownership over your strengths, weaknesses and interests, and risk plus hard work.

“It’s a matter of identifying where the passion comes from, knowing that passions do change over a lifetime and that you’re not limited to ‘one,’ and balancing your life around that clarity,” Farmiloe said.





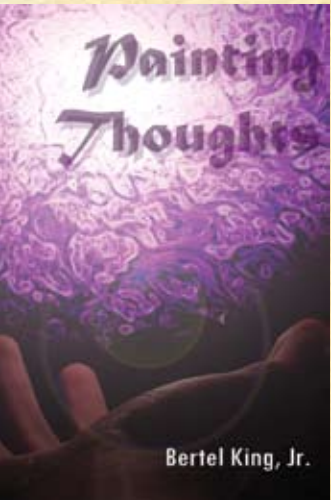
Grasping passion  
requires reach

— by Bertel King

Students do not need to be taught the value of finding a job. College freshmen stress choosing a major, trying to balance what they want to do with what their parents want them to do – with what will make them money. College seniors prowl career fairs looking for the job most likely to offer the most money upon graduation. Interns observe the importance of a steady career path. When it comes time to draft the great to-do list of life, making money is not something most people forget to add.

**Our world is what we make it**  
Far more people need to be reminded, or told for the first time, the importance of following their passion. I know some do not have this luxury. I will not tell anyone to ignore the realities of the world, but the reality is that this world is what we make it. I want to live in a world driven more by passion than profit; if the only things holding me back are inhibitions and fears, I am in the place I need to be to change the world. Or at least my world, or the worlds of the people around me, because that is all this world is, billions of little worlds trying to make sense of the lives they share. I am an independent author. I cannot say I know how to make a living from writing, all I know is that I have been putting stories to paper since I was a child. During my senior year of high school I completed my first full-length manuscript, and I self-published it my senior year of college as an ebook. Whether or not I sell a lot of copies is not the point. Whether or not I ever make a living from it is not the point. What matters is that I do not give up my passion for telling stories due to the pressures of living in a society driven by making profit.

**Fulfillment feels good**  
Creating worlds makes me feel fulfilled, and what is the point of focusing on another career if the result is feeling hollow inside? It feels good to call myself an independent author; what that entails, well, I will figure that out as I go. As a high school student, you might not have any idea how you will get from where you are to where you want to be. I understand; I still do not know how myself.



"Painting Thoughts" is Bertel King, Jr.'s debut novel.

But I have learned that the longer I aim toward something, the sooner it starts to become real. I asked teachers, professors and even past editors at Student Paths for advice on how to become a novelist, but each author's journey is unique, and I will not let uncertainty prevent me from making the journey. Besides, I have a book for sale now, so that makes me a novelist, right?

**Reach for it**  
Ask yourself: What is it you want to do, and what would it take for you to feel like you have become the person you want to be? A stand-up comedian is not a comedian because he is hired by Comedy Central; he is a comedian because he tells jokes whenever given the chance. All he has to do is reach for the microphone to be a step closer to living his dream. I have said enough into the mic now; I am going to hand it to you. I hope you take it.



A graduate of the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, Bertel King, Jr. hopes to produce another novel this fall. Hometown: Newsoms, Virginia



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Our Real Story writers, who've recently been where you are now, offer advice on how to get the most from the year ahead.

# the Real Story

on life after high school



## Your Mission: Possible — by Jordan Harper

**Ferris State University, Big Rapids, Michigan**  
**Hometown: Niles, Michigan**

Another school year is already starting! Notebooks are being bought, hair is being cut, and outfits are being picked. Nobody is ready to start waking up early again, but everybody must face the facts. High school, the bridge between kid and adult, has started.

High school is a great time to get involved. I'm sure that you've had a lot of people tell you that already, but it's true. There are so many different, interesting things that are out there for you to try.

### Plug in to your community

My high school didn't have a whole lot of options, given that it was so small, but I went out into my community and got involved. I think many people let the excuse of going to a small school keep them from doing much of anything. Well, let me tell you, your community has plenty of opportunities that I'm sure will interest you.

Seek out a local volunteer organization and get involved with a cause you care about. Or talk to someone at a local community college and take dual credit classes and get started on your college degree while still in high school. Maybe even just go to the library and join a reading program. If school sports or band or choir are your thing, go for it. If not, know that the community has a lot to offer too.

### Make a point of finding your mission

My advice to high-schoolers is to find out what your mission is. I'm sure you have had a million people ask you what you want to

do when you grow up, and what you're going to major in. You don't need an answer to those questions. In fact, it's better if you don't have one specific career in mind. Instead, figure out the kind of person you want to be.

Think of what you want to represent when you are 20, 30, 40, and so on. Then work on becoming that person. If your mission, for example, is to be a strong voice against suicide within our generation, then start reading about suicide. Talk to people who have gone through depression. Start figuring out what you can do to help others who are struggling, and talk to professionals in your community who can give you a better idea on how to help.

Then, when it comes time to make major decisions about your own life, they will go in accordance with your mission. Every decision will also reflect the type of person you want to become. So when people ask what you are going to do with your life, you can say "I don't know how I'm going to do it, but I am going to become the best person I can become."

### Be thankful, and don't wish the time away

Finally, just be grateful for where you are at. High school (as much as we don't want to admit it) is a privilege that most of the world does not have in the way we do. You have the opportunity to take advantage of your situation and make an impact on the world. You also have the opportunity to make yourself a better person and make a lot of money because of your hard work.

Don't just wish the day away, and then the week, and then the year, in the hopes that the future will be better and you will be better in the future. You will waste extremely valuable time that you have been afforded now.

Just keep in mind that you are just as capable now to do things as you will be down the road, and circumstances are just as hard. We are not the future of this country. We are this country, and we need to represent it well.

Check these videos out!



Daisy Vazquez  
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[bit.ly/NXXwdn](http://bit.ly/NXXwdn)



Alyssa McComb  
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Jordan Harper  
Michigan  
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It will be over before you know it

Leah Ferguson • Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA  
Hometown: Minneapolis, MN

There is one main thing that I think all high school students should know. (There is more than one thing of course, but I know you are already on information overload so I decided to keep it simple.) I don't just want to tell you to work hard while you are in high school, although that is very important if you want to have success in your life.

No, I think that one of the most important things that most students fail to realize is how fast it will all be over. At the beginning of high school, four years seemed like an eternity to me. The next thing I knew, I was walking across a stage with a diploma in my hand. I think this is important to remember for a couple of reasons.

Sometimes it is a great comfort to know that high school will not last forever. I really enjoyed high school, but there are some parts I am glad I will never have to repeat. If school is really difficult for you, or if you are dealing with a lot of drama, or even if you're just really excited to head off to college, remember that high school won't last forever.

However, there is another side to the story. While the bad parts of high school will be over in a flash, so will the good. I encourage you to make the most of it while it lasts. You don't want to leave high school with regrets about things you wish you'd gotten involved in.

Some students do not think about life after high school until their junior or senior year, and this can be a big mistake. Too many get to senior year with no clue of what they want to do and end up going to college for the wrong reasons. College is not the best choice for everybody, and it can be a big mistake (and a waste of money) to enter unprepared.

Personally, I decided that going to college was the best decision for my life. Even though going on to college was my intention all throughout high school, I wish I had started much sooner. I wasn't able to enjoy my senior year as much as I would have liked, because I was so busy with my school work, plus filling out applications and visiting campuses.

Even all of you freshmen and sophomores out there should be aware of your options and begin thinking about what you want to do after high school. If you want to go to college, you should start considering what you want in a school so you can narrow your search and not end up doing extra work to apply to too many schools (like I did).

Finally, here is one thing I wish I'd known when I was a junior in high school: There are tons of scholarships that juniors can apply for. I recommend that you sign up an online scholarship search engine and keep your eyes out for scholarships for juniors.

Anyway, I wish you all luck, and I hope you have a great school year!



It's about time

Nicholas Bowens • Florissant Valley Community College,  
Florissant, MO • Hometown: St. Louis, MO

It still seems unreal to me that I am actually out of high school. I definitely wasn't prepared for what I thought would be so simple and easy. I made a lot of costly mistakes early into high school, to the point where I would constantly find myself having to work twice as hard on a daily basis just to catch up.

My biggest problem I first encountered was I took my knowledge for granted. I was smart enough to do all the work I was given, yet I would only do what was required. Anything extra to me was being an overachiever, which wasn't "cool."

A key factor to always remember is time. It is the single most important entity you will ever have throughout your high school life because you can't get it back. Make your life a lot easier by planning your daily course of action out early. Scheduling your week is very helpful; do it and, of course, stick to it! Sometimes we lose track of our goals chasing a dream. Be realistic and allot an ample amount of time for studying, homework, your job if you have one, and some good relaxation.

As you enter this year don't try to rush anything. Find out what all your school has to offer from clubs, extracurricular activities, programs, service projects. I am now a firm believer that if you don't have a lot of leisure time on your hands you will be more successful.

My brain is sort of wired to believe I can just push things off if I have free time. In the end I would frequently forget about whatever the assignment or task was until it was too late. Don't make the same costly mistake; I know it's so hard to get out of that hole.

If you handle your business first, you will find high school and life to be a lot easier. It will take lots of energy and patience, and at times you will feel you never get a break or you never come out on top. But don't let that stop you from putting forth your best effort.

Your biggest asset to help you get through high school are your mentors and role models. Having a positive person in your life can only help. I got so involved with successful adults that it made me known to a lot of people. I even got the opportunity to speak on a panel at Washington University here in St. Louis in front of doctors, attorneys, business owners and many more successful people. Now when I need references I don't worry about having to find one. We are in the networking generation: It's not necessarily what you know, it's who you know. Get out and go join those clubs; you won't regret it.

Before you know it, this year will be over and you are now even closer to joining the work force or expanding your knowledge by getting a post-secondary education. Don't think you have to prove anything this year; you're only unproven if you think you're unproven. Do good at all times, and work hard even if nobody notices. All the good and bad choices you make now will directly affect your future choices.



Ask the Real Story team:

If you could do one thing over again in your high school experience, what would it be?

*"I would work at my full potential."*

Jelani Hayes • University of Pennsylvania  
Hometown: Moreno Valley, CA



*I would have gotten involved in a few extracurriculars I wanted to try and never did, or gotten involved in others that I started and tried too late.*

Sydney Nolan • Macalester College, St. Paul, MN  
Hometown: Plymouth, MN



*Walking through the doors freshman year not having a single clue where I was going because I knew I had four exhilarating years ahead of me to learn all that I wanted.*

Jordan Sweigart • Assumption College, Worcester, MA, studying abroad at the University of Oxford, Oxford, England • Hometown: Reading, PA



*"I would learn to enjoy being an adolescent because having a fun time with friends is more memorable than studying for tests and quizzes."*

Anjelica Enaje, • CUNY Hunter College, New York.  
Hometown: Ramapo, New York



*I would use the school resources for students more wisely.*

Natalia Naranjo  
University of Texas at Austin: Austin, TX  
Hometown: Missouri City, Texas



*I would spend just a little more time focusing on myself and my own needs instead of being distracted by so many others.*

Claire Gillespie • College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia • Hometown: Johnsburg, IL



# Give your attitude a positive charge

— by Andrea Nies

While being optimistic isn't always easy, adopting a positive attitude can unleash a 'spiral of success.'

It may seem like being happy is always just around the corner. It's easy to think about things you'd like to change or have more of. Focusing instead on the positive aspects of life and celebrating your successes is a healthier alternative. Recognizing that life naturally has ups and downs and being willing to push through hard times will make all the difference.

Here's the good news: Simply having a positive attitude can help you feel good and achieve more.

You've heard the popular saying: Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you deal with it. This has proven true for many very successful people. Here's a lesson from people who have faced roadblocks and have not given up.

## They tried, and tried, and tried again

J. K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter books, was one step from being homeless and was jobless before she followed her dream of becoming a writer. The manuscript of the first Harry Potter novel was rejected by 12 publishers. Persistence paid off, though, and her books are now popular around the world.

Basketball great Michael Jordan didn't make his school's varsity team as a sophomore in North Carolina. He practiced morning and night year-round to develop his skills, and is now generally considered the most successful basketball player of all time.

It is easy to wish we could have done or do more, but it's important to realize that perception is personal. You get to choose what is good enough.

"When we also choose to see things that are positive and not just negative we get a much more comprehensive picture of what is actually realistic," states Shona Vas, director of the Cognitive-Behavior Therapy Program at the University of Chicago.

## A shot of positivity

If you are having a down day and need to inject some positivity, take Vas' advice and choose one of these activities:



1. Write down the things that are going well in your life. In a recent study, a group of adults wrote down three things that had gone well each day and why, for a week. Participants reported happier feelings for six months afterwards!

2. Determine five of your top strengths. Challenge yourself to use one of these each day for a week. A similar study by Marting Seligma, Ph.D., tracked people who did this, and volunteers also reported increased happiness for six months' time.

It is possible to be more optimistic. Research suggests that even pretending you are happier can make you feel better.

## Start the spiral of success

If you do not feel very optimistic, think about how things could gain momentum and positively affect your next move. For example: You adopt a positive attitude toward studying rather than feeling like it's torture; over time, hard work pays off and leads to success on a test; you receive positive feedback from a teacher or parent, which inspires a desire to work hard again in the future, and so on. Adopting a certain attitude can foster a spiral of success.

Not convinced? Being happy with what you have does not mean ignoring your goals or desires to achieve great things. It simply means focusing on what is good about today. Studies show that optimists (not perfectionists) do better in school, sports and relationships than pessimists do. They also make more money.

Give yourself a break and recognize your achievements. Use your talents and feel good about them. Don't worry too much about small setbacks, and realize that even the most successful people have dealt with hardships in life.



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# The learning world vs. the working world — by Nicole Pajer

Once academic life is done, what will your life look like? Here are six differences you might find after your first week at the office.

## 1 You won't have that feeling of having completed a project and being done at the end of the day.

When you are in school, you have a number of exams, papers, and projects in each class that you have to get done before the semester ends. You basically bounce from one project to another, finishing them, and moving on.

Having a job is different. There, it's pretty rare that you finish your tasks for the day and then go home with that feeling of completion. You will always have a feeling that there is something left to do, and you will always have an ongoing "To Do list" or "wish list" of projects that you want to get to.



## 3 Jobs usually don't involve tests and exams.

They will, though, test your skills, knowledge, and ability in different ways. Your job ability will be tested through on-the-job crisis management, the way you handle your day-to-day endeavors, your ideas and contributions to your team, professionalism, as well as through projects and presentations. How you handle something that pops up unexpectedly or how you can save the company money and increase profits are just a few of the ways in which your job skills will be put to the test.



## 5 No homework, studying, or writing papers outside of the office.

It is true that some jobs will require overtime and extra hard work. But for the most part, when you put on your coat and leave for the day, you are done until the next morning. You will not have to spend a day at class and then go home and work on a paper or a project, or make yourself study for an exam. A lot of people don't even know what to do with all of their extra time when first transitioning from school to a job.



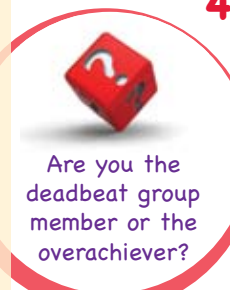
## 2 Working involves a different kind of prioritizing throughout the day.

When you have a job, you can't really sit down and focus all of your effort on one project for the entire day. You will have a phone at your desk that will ring, emails that need to be addressed, meetings that pop up, and a boss who will call you in randomly to give you new projects to work on. Working is all about prioritizing the most important task at the moment and focusing on that, then moving on to the next on the ladder. Sometimes you will have to stop what you are working on and move on to something that takes precedence.



## 4 You may have hated group projects in school, but they will prepare you for your job.

Remember everything that came with the group project? The deadbeat group member, the overachievers, the ones who tried to do all the work, and the ones who didn't do anything? Well, chances are good that when you have a job, you will be working in a team environment and collaborating in some way on a project, task, or presentation. Learning to work with the group members in high school who didn't pull their own weight will help you deal with those employees at your job who might need an extra push to get started.




Are you the deadbeat group member or the overachiever?

## 6 The hours are different.

Most jobs that follow the traditional college track are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in nature, with a scheduled break and time off for lunch. This is very different than a typical college schedule, with classes scattered throughout the day and a schedule like: 8:30 a.m. class, 11 a.m. class, 5:40 p.m. class, and having to study and feverishly work on homework in between throughout the day.





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SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

# HIGH SCHOOL DIARY

**Aubreigh Sabbota**  
Redford Union High School  
Redford, MI



I will consider my senior year a success if I achieve every one of my goals.  
Aubreigh Sabbota

## Hoping for personal and physical growth

I have a long list of hopes and wishes for the year ahead but I will share only a select few. First and foremost, I anticipate reading more books. I plan to read more since I am determined to go to college for English and Communication Arts. Secondly, I hope to grow taller. I am an inch from being 5 feet tall. Thirdly, I hope to befriend more people in my senior year.

Lastly, I have a goal to become less chatty in class, though I will not go into great detail about this.

### New chapter: Reading for pleasure

Never have I read a book for pleasure, with the exception of comic books and magazines. College English courses go further than what is taught all through high school. Sometimes it is necessary to have prior information about a piece of text that is not introduced in high school. This is why I wish for the motivation to choose a few books and read them all the way through.

I am going to read a number of novels, maybe five, per month. In addition, reading is also known to reduce anxiety. Perhaps reducing worry will assist me in growing taller.



## Check out the following videos!

### Growth could be tall order

I have been a small person all of my life. One of my goals for the year ahead is to get at least one inch taller. I have heard that teenagers produce the majority of their growth hormones while sleeping; thus, I am going to attempt to obtain better rest.

While getting taller is something I do not need, it is something I fancy. I am similar to a middle school student in size, but I would like to get past this awkward smallness. All the time, I have people approaching me with remarks about my height. Literally being able to rise above the sarcasm is significant.

### Setting sights on friendships

My third objective is to become a better buddy. In high school, I have not been the most sociable person. I come off rather timid and shy, when in fact I am quite the opposite once one is familiar with me.

I am making it a priority to be a better friend to others, and I may finish school with a good number of friends. I will reach my goal by forming genuine friendships rather than just making acquaintances. I made more than a few friends this summer and will be there for them.

I trust that the year ahead will be the most excellent year of my life. I have high hopes that can be attained. In addition, anyone can go after their dreams!



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