



“The secret of getting ahead is getting started.” - Mark Twain

HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL COLLEGE GRADUATE?

Hone these Four Life Traits



There are considerations as you commence a career or a new job – where to live, what to do? What you want in a career and your core skills are also a factor. Not knowing your place in the world and what lies ahead on the road to your future can be very stressful.

While life experience will offer you the greatest lessons, let’s review four life traits that will make your path a less tangled one.

Self-Awareness

Your personal brand is not what you think about yourself; it is how others perceive you. Self-awareness offers the capacity for introspection and a sense of your impact on others and the world via your words, thoughts and beliefs. Developing self-awareness with the goal of positively and productively impacting the people and situations in your world is the first step in creating a successful life. You cannot always control a situation in the workplace or home, yet you alone have control over your reaction.

As you review your impact, look at yourself objectively and be open to feedback. Take a few personality tests. Taking time for self-reflection and self-improvement will enhance your relationships, personally and professionally.

Humility

Arrogance and narcissism are unattractive. We are not all-knowing nor correct in our assumptions and decisions. Humility is one of the most attractive personality traits, exhibiting your inner strength and personal confidence.

Humble people use good judgment but are not judgmental. In lieu of creating silos, an “us” versus “them” mindset, humility creates a culture of trust where people are open to feedback, frank discussions and problem solving. As you recognize the talents and contributions of others and showing appreciation, humility adds to the culture of respect.

Positivity

“Change the way you look at things and the things you look at change.” – Wayne Dyer

A change in perspective changes everything! Positive thinking improves relationships, health, skills and performance. In a typical workday, both negative and positive situations will occur. Why focus on the negative? When we take time to think about what went right during the day, we reduce our stress and boost our mood.

Your attitude sets the tone for the day. Approach life with optimism, creativity and energy. Our mindset influences who we become and as you practice a positive mindset, it becomes a habit. This will serve to increase your self-esteem, performance and posture!

Autumn marks 20 years (40 consecutive semesters!) of teaching as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Rhode Island and four years at Salve Regina University. Teaching is a privilege. One of the highlights is when former students return to the classroom as a guest lecturer. The advice they share is invaluable; offering perspective on culture, communication, commitment and relationships.

This past May, our son, Samuel, graduated from Swarthmore College. As he researched different companies he might want to work for, one draw was the culture.

Culture is crucial, encompassing the core values of the employees and influencing the way they interact with each other, vendors and colleagues. There are many attributes that define a strong culture inclusive of the cumulative traits of the people who work for the company.

While graduation from college is a milestone, this alone will not make you successful. It is what you do with your degree, the knowledge garnered and the opportunities that you seek that will create a path for you. You are your choices.

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Leadership

As a leader, your goal is to pull people towards you versus push yourself on people. You can influence colleagues, clients, vendors no matter what your position is in a company. Just because you are “the boss” does not make you a leader. Leadership skills include “listening to hear” versus “listening to speak,” collaboration, trust, communication skills and resilience.

Hone your strategic thinking skills with a focus on the big picture. Strategic thinking is not only for senior executives, it is a critical skill. Read industry publications and blogs. Follow thought leaders on social media, blogs and podcasts.

Attend industry events, conferences and webinars. Meet as many people as you can in your organization and learn from them. Understand the role you play in the company and be sure to contribute everyday – first and foremost - by bringing an engaged and focused YOU to work!

Live a life of KAIZEN, constant improvement. Hone your skills and become a better version of yourself every day. In the words of Cesar Chavez, “*True wealth is not measured in money or status or power. It is measured in the legacy we leave behind for those we love and those we inspire.*” In the end – you work for you! You are YOUR company! The world is your oyster! Carpe Diem!

Gail Lowney Alofsin is a keynote speaker, author, adjunct professor and business executive. Her book, *Your Someday is NOW – What are you Waiting For*, focuses on becoming your best you. A lifelong student and humanitarian, Gail believes that we all have the capability to be a leader in our own lives, influencing the lives of others for positive peak performance and success. She can be reached at 401-640-4418 and gail@gailspeaks.com. Follow her on twitter: [@gailalofsin](https://twitter.com/gailalofsin) and visit her website: gailspeaks.com.