

LEARN HOW IN 20 HOURS OR LESS

# ACHIEVE

COLLEGE SUCCESS

Brief Fifth Edition



RAYMOND GERSON



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BRIEF FIFTH EDITION

RAYMOND GERSON



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This book can be used by educators to teach a half-semester college readiness/success course.

Instructor materials are available for educators who adopt and use the book to teach students.

For information about the instructor materials you can email Raymond Gerson at [raymondgerson@gmail.com](mailto:raymondgerson@gmail.com).

All Open Educational Resource books (OERs) by Raymond Gerson are available at his website: <https://www.upbeatpress.com>. These OERs are only available in digital (PDF) formats. If educators prefer to make printed copies for their students, that is permissible if the students do not have to pay for the books.

# Dedication

*To all my students, from whom I have learned so much.*



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## Meet the Author

During junior high and my first two years of high school, I was such a poor student that a counselor told my parents I was not capable of getting a college education. My parents waited until I earned my master's degree in psychology before telling me that a school counselor had said I wasn't college material. Today, I teach students how to succeed in college.

As a teenager, I felt lost, had no goals, did not believe in myself, and was in danger of dropping out of school. An illness in my senior year gave me a wake-up call, and I started getting more serious about my education. I really needed a book like this, but none was available. I wrote this book for you—to give you the gift I needed when I was in school. It is a blueprint for your success.

Helping you to overcome your obstacles, to believe in yourself, and to learn the skills necessary to succeed in college is my passion, because of what I had to overcome.

Eventually, I found out that I had my own special abilities, just as you do. This is my sixth book, and I have had a wonderful career that would not have been possible without a college education. I've been a career counselor, vocational rehabilitation counselor, owner of a job placement business, and training specialist. I came out of retirement to be an adjunct professor of career and college success courses.

Fifty years of "real world" experience teaching success strategies, several years of classroom experience, and a passion for motivating and inspiring students all came together for me to write *Achieve College Success: Learn How in 20 Hours or Less*. I wrote this book to help you gain the knowledge and skills you will need to become successful in college, in your career, and in your life.

RAYMOND GERSON



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# Foreword

I met Raymond Gerson almost twenty years ago when he began teaching as an adjunct professor in the Human Development Department at Austin Community College. I remember being impressed even then by his enthusiasm for teaching and learning and his ability to inspire his students to levels of achievement beyond their expectations. At ACC, he teaches extended orientation courses for entering “at risk” students, learning strategies courses for college-level students, and career exploration and planning courses for students in academic transfer and workforce programs. In all of these courses, Raymond has connected with students in a personable, responsive way that generates very positive feedback, and some remarkable stories of transformative change in students’ lives.

This book captures Raymond’s energy, insights, and experience from a lifetime of guiding people to success in school, career, and life and makes them available to students in high schools and colleges everywhere. It is particularly powerful in its focus on the attitudes as well as the actions that can transform a student’s performance to a new level of effectiveness.

Unfortunately, all too many students in high schools and colleges are never explicitly taught the essential knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors that lead to success in learning. As educators we teach topics and courses in specific departments and disciplines, but not often enough that most important of lessons—how to learn. That is the intent of this book.

*Achieve College Success: Learn How in 20 Hours or Less* can help students clarify what is important to them and what they hope to accomplish in school and in life; give them some insight into their unique learning preferences and patterns and how they can make the most of them; introduce them to the most effective strategies for learning and performing on key educational tasks; and provide students guidance in how to take control of their time and attention so that the effort they put forth brings them the success they seek. The chapter on preparing for career success and making a positive difference connects students to the world beyond college and to the goal of all successful learning—the creation of a successful life.

Raymond’s book is a fine contribution to that worthy goal and one that will bring benefits to students and teachers alike. Make the most of it!

—Tobin Quereau  
*Professor, Human Development and  
Assistant Department Chair for Behavioral Sciences  
Austin Community College*



# Preface

## For the Student

*Achieve College Success... Learn How in 20 Hours or Less* is intended to help you become an excellent student and to prepare you to succeed in college.

Earl Nightingale, a leader in the field of Personal Development, once said that “Success is the progressive realization of a worthy goal or ideal.” In other words, success happens when you are making progress toward worthwhile goals. By this definition, success for you, as a student, is to begin making progress in improving your learning and grades, and finding that reaching your academic goals is becoming much more likely.

I have seen first hand, in my courses, that when a student studies, understands, and applies the strategies in this book, grades on tests and papers quickly improve. The student also reports that grades start improving in other courses. Quick improvement does not mean a student gets something for nothing or that motivation and the will to study are not required to succeed in college. The ability to read well and taking the time to study are a must for college success. When you combine willingness to work and learning how to study, you will find success quickly comes your way. As you start getting better and better grades, you will find it fun and will look forward to working harder and smarter.

## Write for Success

Self-reflection leads to self-knowledge. Self-knowledge results in better choices and actions, which leads to success. This is why self-knowledge is power.

One of the best ways to self-reflect is to keep and use a journal. Please purchase at least a spiral notebook, or better yet, a hardbound journal to use as you read this book. Keep a record of your thoughts, feelings, dreams, and goals. At the end of each chapter, there will also be a written assignment for your journal and several questions to answer. Writing out your thoughts will help you to know yourself better and be clear about what is important for you. It will provide you with many benefits.

## Features of the Book

- 1 **Pre-Course and Post-Course Assessment:** In the beginning (after this Preface) and end of this book, there is a questionnaire for you to find out how much you know about the topics in this book. You will learn about your strengths and weaknesses as a student. It will allow you to measure your progress when you take it again at the end of this book.



② Each chapter contains:

- An introduction of the topic and the benefits you will gain from learning it
- Activities that you can do individually or with others to strengthen the lessons
- A journal assignment
- Student comments about the benefits of using the strategies in this book
- Author's note: this is a personal note from me about each chapter topic
- An inspiring article or paper written by one of my former students
- Goal for the week: this is a small goal you want to accomplish
- A summary of main points
- Questions to answer in your journal and/or to discuss with others

- ③ **Supplementary website:** I have a website with a free ebook with ideas for career success. The website address is <https://www.raymondgerson.com>. My other website is <https://www.upbeatpress.com>.

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## For the Instructor

### COLLEGE SUCCESS STRATEGY COURSES MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE FOR STUDENTS

In the fall of 2006, I came out of retirement to begin teaching three part-time courses for the Austin Community College (ACC) in Austin, Texas. One course covers career exploration and planning. The other two courses—a twenty-hour, eight-week class and a forty-hour full semester class—teach students study skills and success strategies to help them succeed in college. Both “at-risk” and regular students take these courses.

Assessment studies by ACC for the two study skill courses indicated positive outcomes for students who successfully complete the courses when compared to similar students who have not taken these courses. Positive outcomes are indicated by fewer course withdrawals and greater retention the following semester. There was a slight improvement in grades in their other courses for the eight-week students and significant improvement for the full semester students when they successfully completed these courses. Students re-enrolled in subsequent semesters at much higher rates as well. The results seem to support the observations of mine and student anecdotes that report that improvement begins in less than eight weeks. Students continue improving when they find more time to learn and use these new skills. I chose the subtitle, *Learn How in 20 Hours or Less*, because students who use these success strategies begin showing progress in the eight-week, twenty-hour course.

When students begin learning more easily and their grades start improving, they experience a growing sense of accomplishment. They begin to build a “success mind-set” and “can-do” attitude, which increases their self-esteem and motivation. I’m often amazed at how quickly students improve when the ideas and strategies contained in this book are learned and applied.

Several professors, including myself, have used this book to teach courses to ninth grade students.

## How is This Book Different

Twelve Reasons that *Achieve College Success* is unique and useful for everyone:

- ① Professor Gerson uses many inspirational stories from his own life to motivate students and reinforce the lessons.
- ② Professor Gerson’s conversational style makes students feel he is talking directly to them.
- ③ All the ideas and strategies in the book have been successfully class-tested with the author’s students and with other teaching and counseling professionals.
- ④ Based on student and professional feedback, *Achieve College Success*, is updated frequently to ensure the text works well for students, instructors, and counselors, alike.
- ⑤ Practical and user-friendly language is used throughout the book to make reading easier for regular college, “at risk”, and high school students who want to succeed in high school and college. However, there may be a couple of activities where students may need to use a dictionary.
- ⑥ Contains strong career development and exploration components.
- ⑦ Offers “writing good papers” tips.
- ⑧ Includes psychological and motivational tips on building a healthy, successful self-image, and character.
- ⑨ Each chapter features actual former student success stories designed to engage and inspire new students.
- ⑩ Professor Gerson pulls from his vast experience to offer easy-to-use techniques that motivate and inspire students to succeed.
- ⑪ Many of the general life success principles presented throughout the book are distilled from some of the best self-help books ever written.
- ⑫ Professor Gerson has written original articles in the book with a two-fold purpose: 1) as cooperative learning activities to teach students specific skills and, 2) to motivate and inspire students to develop a “success” mind-set from the first page to the end.

## Ways for Instructors and Counselors to Use this Book

This book can be used to teach either an eight-week, twenty-hour or a full semester course. In an eight-week course, the pace will be fast and you will cover one chapter a week. In a full semester course, you will have more time for class discussions and exercises, and will cover a chapter every two weeks. The chapters and the topics within each chapter can stand alone. They can also be used for short workshops. Counselors can use the book, or parts of it, to work individually with students or with small groups.

I designed the assessments and activities so that it would be possible for students who are not in school to do them individually. However, most students who use this book will be in school. All of the activities and assessments are intended to be used by instructors as cooperative learning activities for students in a class room setting.

## CHANGES TO THIS EDITION

- **A new cover and page layout design have been added to the fifth edition.**
- **The interior page layout has been visually streamlined to speed learning the key concepts.**

Each chapter now has visual learning markers and icons for student learners to try out and use:

**Chapter Mind Map** – Most chapters have a “visual map” outlining the key concepts to keep in the reader’s mind and use.



**Student Activity Icon** – Student activities give students opportunities to try out the concepts presented.



**QA Icon** – Questionnaires, self-assessments, and weekly student goal assignments give students opportunities to reflect, identify and personalize the best strategies to use.



**Light Bulb Icon** – Study/Reading strategies give students tools to try out as they study, read and learn.



**Student Comment Box** – Students share their success using the tools described by the author.



**QR Bar Codes** – Students can access online more information about key topics by using a QR Scanner app from Google Play (Android) or from iTunes store (i Phone).



**Poems Icon** – Created by the author, to enhance recall and understanding of key concepts.



**RA Icon** – An article on how to use “Retrieval Learning” has been added to Chapter 4 after Activity 4.6.



# Acknowledgments

I want to thank Mary Cervantez for helping me type part of the first draft. I would also like to thank Laura Tabor-Huerta for helping me with several of the graphs and charts. Thanks also to my friend Deb McCarthy for her constructive feedback.

My gratitude to Tobin Quereau who hired me to teach college success strategy courses at Austin Community College. Without the opportunity to teach these courses, this book could not have been written.

I owe special thanks to Lynn Skaggs, PhD, college professor of psychology, for making many helpful suggestions to improve the text.

Thank you to my lovely wife, Bonnie, for her support and understanding, while I spent endless hours at the computer writing this book.

Thanks to my former students who gave me permission to use their stories and comments throughout the book.

I deeply appreciate Lorna Adams, President, Upbeat Press, for publishing this book and for all of her assistance.

A big thank you to Vera Steves - for the wonderful work she did on the manuscript.

Thanks to Cheryl Spector, Director of First Year Experience, California State University, Northridge, for her suggestions which improved my annotation example and convinced me to add some longer student comments throughout the book.

I would like to thank Ross Oliver for helping me improve “How to Choose a College Major” and for the list of campus resources.

My appreciation to Christie Carr for creating and contributing information about online education. Her article, “Distance Learning/Distance Education” is a welcome addition to the Appendix of this book. Thank you to Melinda Townsel for her feedback on my information about using college libraries.

Thanks to Carlos E. Nunez for the excellent cover design and page layout and design for the fifth edition.

# Student Testimonials

## Comments from former students who have benefited from strategies in [Achieve College Success: Learn How in 20 Hours or Less](#).

"The most valuable part of this course was that it made me a better reader by giving me tips on how to understand a story. It also made me a better test taker and increased my self-esteem and positive thinking."

— JOSH SMITH

"This class helped me in three ways: how to take good notes and write well, setting goals that I achieved, and learning how to improve my memory and test-taking strategies."

— ROSEMARY MARIN

"I had not been to college for several years and was out of the loop. I decided to give this course a try. I have been able to successfully apply these ideas to my other courses. It gave me confidence. I would encourage anyone who is starting college for the first time or in a long time to learn these ideas and strategies."

— JAMES SANDERS

"This course improved my grades because I now look at test questions differently. I also know the best learning skills that fit me."

— JOSE ONTIVEROS

"I learned how to turn my dreams into goals and better time management. I learned that doing activities first because I like them isn't good for me unless the activities are important priorities."

— LYJAE JOHNS

"This course helped me to get a better understanding of my career and my life. I learned more about myself in this course than in any other course I have taken. This course has reassured me that I have a bright future."

— JOSEPH GONZALES

"The most valuable part of this class for me was getting the blueprint for a successful college experience. I wish I could have taken this class when I was younger, but I can honestly say that because of this class I am a better student, mother, wife, and friend."

— BETTY VILLAREAL

"I learned how to manage my time, my writing skills improved, and my study habits are so much better. This course has been an inspiration to me."

— DEVON KERR

# Comments by Educators

"This book captures Raymond's energy, insights and experience from a lifetime of guiding people to success in school, careers and life and makes them available to students in high schools and colleges everywhere."

—**TOBIN QUEREAU**, Professor of Human Development and Assistant Department Chair for Behavioral Sciences, *Austin Community College*

"This is an excellent book that will prepare students for the transition from high school to college. Raymond's book will be the key to success for all students planning any type of post-secondary education. Therefore, I would like to see the book in the hands of every student before they graduate from high school because the book shows you how to achieve success in college, in your chosen career and in life. It is one book that students should keep and refer to throughout their lives."

—**THOMAS S EVERS DYK**, VAC Coordinator/Special Services, *Oak Ridge High School and College Park High School, Conroe ISD*

"This is the third book I have used in my Transition to College Success courses. The book is a definite upgrade based on student performance and evaluations. It is a complete package for teaching students how to achieve student success."

—**ROSS OLIVER**, Professor of Human Development, *Austin Community College*

"I really like the book. It is well written, very approachable and packed with great ideas for student development."

—**LYNN SKAGGS**, PhD, Professor of Psychology, *Central Texas College*

"I loved the Power Points because they lessened my handouts and were easy to follow. Most of my students came to Austin Community College from high school special education classes this semester. They were concerned at first about whether the book and course would be too difficult. They were happy to discover that it was clear, they could do it, and they were successful. My students liked the book's personal style and were encouraged by Raymond Gerson's stories about overcoming his own obstacles."

—**GLORIA "GLO" FOLEY**, PhD, Counselor and Professor of Human Development, *Austin Community College*

"I have pilot tested and plan to adopt Professor Gerson's book for my "Transition to College Success" course because of its simplicity and readability. It helps students stay focused on reading which is a major event and most important for college achievement. Many of my students are not proficient readers. This book helps to open their minds."

—**BILL YOUNG**, PhD, Professor of Human Development, *Austin Community College*



## Pre-course Assessment

This questionnaire is not a test. It is an opportunity for you to find out what you know and don't know about the topics in this book. It will help you to see your strengths as a student and the areas in which you need improvement. At the end of the book, you will have an opportunity to repeat this questionnaire so you can measure your progress. Please be honest where you see yourself now.

Read the statements below and give yourself points for each one. Use the point system below, and then add up your total points for each of the eight topics. Then, add up all of your points for an overall total score.

- 5 Points      The statement is mostly or always true
- 4 points      The statement is often or frequently true
- 3 points      The statement is sometimes true
- 2 points      The statement is rarely true
- 1 point        The statement is never or almost never true

### PRE-ASSESSMENT

#### ① Goals

- A. \_\_\_ I have clear goals for what I want to accomplish in life.
- B. \_\_\_ My goals are written down.
- C. \_\_\_ My goals have deadlines or dates for completion.
- D. \_\_\_ I have short, medium, and long-range goals.
- E. \_\_\_ I have goals for all major areas of my life: education/career, physical, mental, spiritual, financial, social, and family.
- F. \_\_\_ I practice visualizing my goals as if I have already achieved them.

Total \_\_\_\_\_

#### ② Learning Styles and Types of Intelligence

- A. \_\_\_ I am familiar with different learning styles.
- B. \_\_\_ I know which is my preferred and best learning style.
- C. \_\_\_ I am familiar with theories of different types of intelligence.

- D.  I know my strongest types of intelligence and how to use them.
- E.  I know how to use my preferred learning style and types of intelligence to overcome my weaknesses.
- F.  I take good care of my body and my brain.

Total \_\_\_\_\_

### 3 Time Management

- A.  I have a clear picture of how I spend my time.
- B.  I know several time management strategies and use them regularly.
- C.  I know how to prioritize, I make a daily list of my priorities, and do them most of the time.
- D.  I am able to get my class assignments done on time.
- E.  I use time management tools such as planners and calendars.
- F.  I know how to balance my activities so there is enough time for work, fun, school, and family.

Total \_\_\_\_\_

### 4 Reading and Studying

- A.  I know and use reading and study systems.
- B.  I know how to create and use study aids.
- C.  I break my study periods into small chunks.
- D.  I know and use annotation while reading.
- E.  I am skilled in the art of using questions to be engaged with what I am reading.
- F.  I know and use strategies before, during, and after reading my textbooks.

Total \_\_\_\_\_

### 5 Note-Taking and Writing

- A.  I use a note-taking system.
- B.  I regularly take notes in my classes and when I read textbooks. I review and study my notes shortly after taking them and before tests.
- C.  I use a writing system, and I know how to write good papers.
- D.  I know the Cornell Note System and how to use it.
- E.  I know what a thesis statement is and how to use it.
- F.  I ask and use journalistic questions before I write my essays.

Total \_\_\_\_\_

**6 Memory Strategies and Test-Taking**

- A.  I know and use several techniques for improving my memory.
- B.  I create memory aids to prepare for tests.
- C.  I know how to use my preferred learning style to aid my memory.
- D.  I know and use several strategies to reduce test anxiety.
- E.  I know several strategies for taking objective and essay tests.
- F.  I predict questions that may be on the tests and create practice quizzes to take before the actual exam.

Total \_\_\_\_\_

**7 Career Development**

- A.  I have identified and know my strongest values, skills, and interests.
- B.  I know my strongest personal traits.
- C.  I know how to research occupations.
- D.  I am familiar with Holland's six personality types and work environments.
- E.  I have identified needs and problems in the world, which I would like to help with or solve.
- F.  I know how to pick majors in college or jobs that would be a good match for me.

Total \_\_\_\_\_

**8 Create the Life You Want**

- A.  I know my purpose and mission in life.
- B.  I know and use many success principles and strategies.
- C.  I am improving myself and my character on a regular basis.
- D.  I understand why my thoughts are powerful and how to use positive self-talk.
- E.  I know ways to create the life I want and how to make a positive difference.
- F.  I understand the importance of my self-image and how to improve it.

Total \_\_\_\_\_

Overall Total Score \_\_\_\_\_





# Campus Resources

Use your campus resources, which are usually free and can help you to have a successful college experience. Counselors can also help you to identify appropriate campus resources to meet your needs. (**Instructors—Please go over these and any additional appropriate resources for your campus.**)

Here are a few campus resources:

- **Academic advisors.** They are usually found in counseling offices and centers. Advisors can help you in choosing courses for your major. They help you to meet degree requirements and can provide information about which courses will transfer to other colleges and universities.
- **Admissions.** This is where you can go to add or drop a course or get a copy of your transcript.
- **Career counseling.** Your campus will probably have either a career center or counseling offices where you can go for career guidance. They can help you to: assess your skills and interests, take career tests, find matching careers, and provide assistance in determining your major.
- **Computer center or lab.** The campus computer center provides you with computer access. Staff are usually available to help you with computer-related questions or problems. You can use computers to complete: class assignments, email, print documents, access the Internet, and other uses.
- **Counseling.** Counselors can provide you with short-term personal counseling and guidance. They can also refer you to appropriate agencies if you or your family members need crisis management.
- **Disability services.** You can get accommodations if you need help with learning disabilities or other mental and physical barriers.
- **Employment services.** Some colleges offer job placement assistance and help find work on campus.
- **Financial aid office.** You can get information about financial aid and scholarships.
- **Health center.** You can get services for health problems, medication, and shots. Health centers are usually not available on community college campuses.
- **Housing.** On-campus housing is provided for residential colleges. Residential housing is not provided at most community colleges.

- **Library.** Your campus library has databases you can trust for writing your research papers. Often the reference librarian can guide you to the many library resources you may need.
- **Policy and procedure manual.** Most colleges have these available for free. This helps you to become familiar with campus policies and grading procedures.
- **Security.** You can go to campus police if you see a suspicious person on campus, have an on-campus car accident, or lock your keys in your car.
- **Student center.** Provides information about clubs and organizations where you can meet other students who have similar interests.
- **Testing center.** You can take make-up tests here. Students who are referred by the Office for Students with Disabilities and need extra time on tests can take their tests in the testing center.
- **Tutoring services and learning labs.** Tutors can help you with courses in which you face. Tutors are often found in learning centers and computer labs.

# Introduction

- 1 Why are you going to school?
- 2 What do you want to get from your education?
- 3 What dreams do you have that a good education can help you achieve?

Only you can answer these questions. By answering these questions, you will discover a purpose and goal to give you direction in your life. When you find a clear and strong purpose, you will have the motivation and determination to work hard to achieve your goals.

The purpose of a good education is to bring out your best self so you can use your full ability. A good education will give you the knowledge and skills to open doors to a better career so you can make more money. For example, data collected by the U.S. Department of Commerce

Median annual income of persons with income 25 years old and over, by gender and highest level of education, 2009

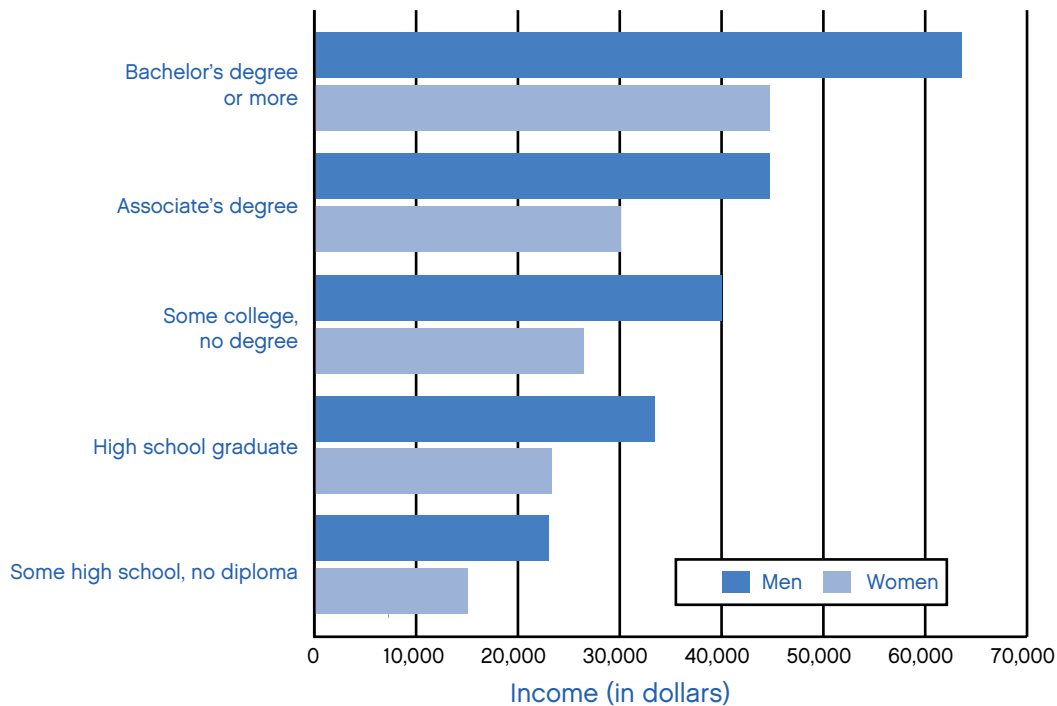
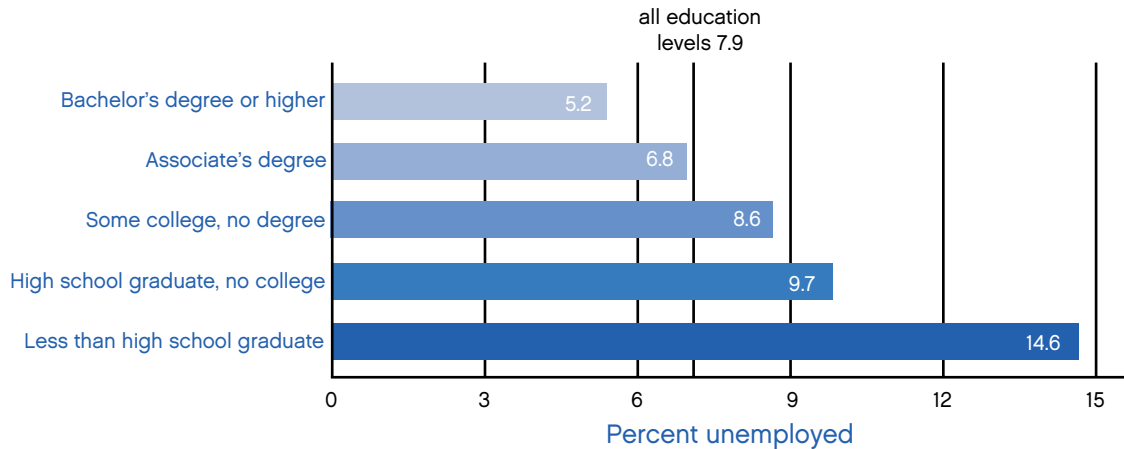


FIGURE 1A MORE EDUCATION IS LIKELY TO RESULT IN MORE INCOME

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, from "Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States, 2009," *Current Population Reports, Series pp 60-238*, 9/2010.

Unemployment rates of persons 25 years old and over, by highest level of education, 2009



**FIGURE 1B MORE EDUCATION IS LIKELY TO MEAN MORE CONSISTENT EMPLOYMENT**

*Source:* From U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statics, Office of Employment and Unemployment Statistics, “Current Population Survey,” 5/2010.

and the U.S. Department of Labor indicates that more education is likely to result in higher income and less unemployment. If you are a high school graduate, you will most likely earn more than a high school dropout. If you are a college graduate, you will likely make more money than a high school graduate. See Figures 1A and 1B.

### Blueprint for Success

[Achieve College Success: Learn How in 20 Hours or Less](#) will help you get more from your education because it gives you a blueprint for success. You will learn better ways to learn and study, how to manage your time better, how to discover a great career, how to achieve your goals, ways to take great notes, how to make better grades on tests, how to memorize, and other tools for success. Not only will you learn how to succeed in school, but you will learn new attitudes, work habits, ideas, and strategies for succeeding in your career and life.

Your success in school, career, and life depends less on you having a high IQ and more on you developing good study habits and the will to succeed. The actions you take today will determine your future. Your habits and actions will determine what kind of student and person you become and what your life will be like in the years ahead. No matter what your past experience in school has been, you can start succeeding now! Look at your education as a great opportunity to learn and grow. Few people in the world get the opportunity for a good education. You can make it an exciting journey to the life you want.

Before your life is over, make sure to sing your special song (use your special talents and abilities) and make your mark. Your education can be a path to becoming your best self, to a rewarding career and life, and to making a positive difference in the world.

Now let’s get started making the most of your education so you can begin traveling the road to your dreams.





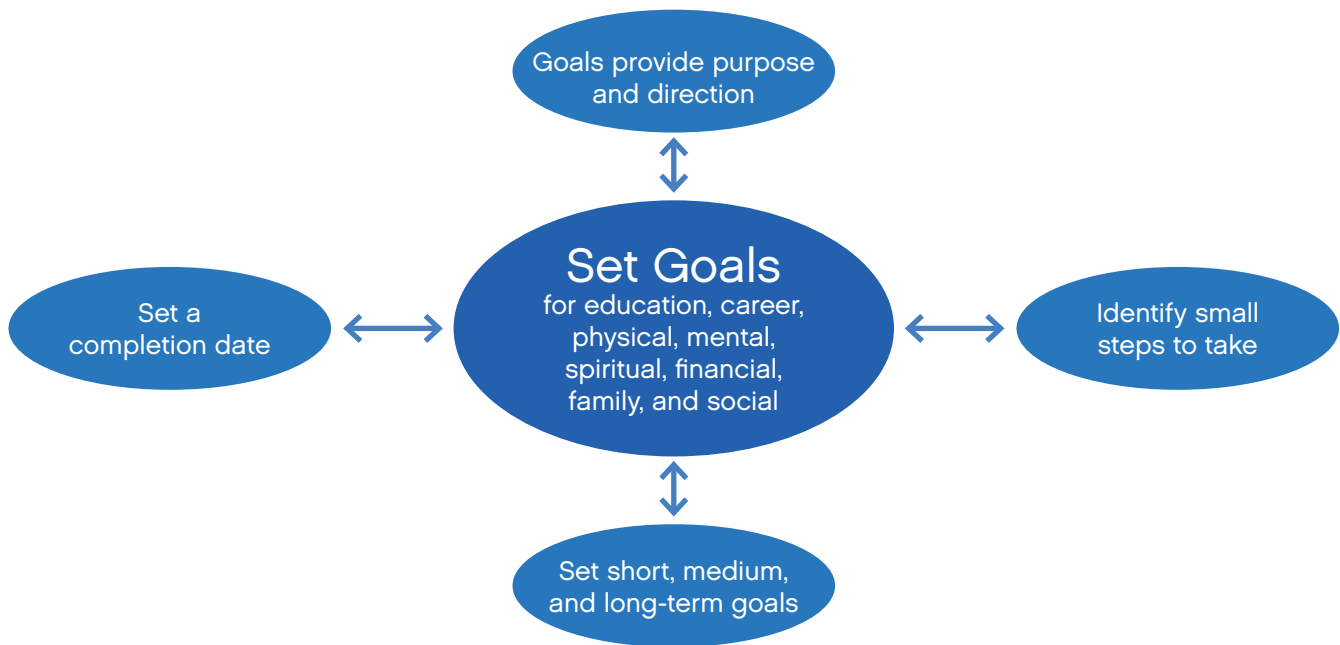
## How to Turn Your Dreams into Goals and Achieve Success

**W**hy is this book starting with a discussion about goals? Because when you have goals and see the relationship between them and your education, you will be motivated to do well in school. A good education will also help you to accomplish many of your goals. Without goals, it will be difficult to see how your education can be applied to your life. Having goals will help you to understand the value of a good education.

### Turning Dreams into Goals Can Make Your Dreams Come True

- What are your dreams?
- Do you have dreams for your life?
- Do you want a college education?
- Do you want a great marriage someday?
- Would you like a new home of your own?
- Do you desire to have a successful and fulfilling life?

Great accomplishments begin with a dream or vision. “Nothing happens but first a dream,” said Carl Sandburg. You will experience success when you turn your dreams into measur-



“Good thoughts are no better than good dreams, unless they be executed.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

able goals and back your desire for these goals with the right actions. Henry David Thoreau spoke of this type of success when he said, “If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.”

Keep moving toward your life dreams and they will happen unexpectedly during the most ordinary times. For example, you may be washing your clothes when a phone call comes to offer you a great job that you interviewed for a couple of weeks ago. You might be watching TV when a letter is delivered, letting you know that your magazine article has been accepted for publication only. You have already put in the hard work, but the results often come when you least expect them or in ways you did not think would happen.

## Answer These Questions to Get What You Want

① Ask yourself: “What do I really want?”

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② Then ask yourself: “Do my actions and habits support my goals and values?”

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To help you answer the questions above, let’s look at the following example: Let’s say you want to become an excellent student.

Do you study enough to support the goal of becoming an excellent student?

One of my students was watching TV forty hours a week, but only studying two to three hours a week. She said her main goal was to do well in college, but her school work was not getting done, so she dropped out. Her actions did not support her desire to succeed in college.

**What can you do when you see that your habits are not supporting your goals?** You can keep changing your actions until they start getting you what you want, or at least until they are moving you in the right direction. My student, who was watching forty hours of TV a week, could have made a different choice, if she realized what she was doing would not take her where she wanted to go. She could have studied more and watched less TV. It is good for you to have dreams, but they must be turned into goals that are backed up by your actions.

**Goals are what you aim to reach or achieve.** Having an end date in mind provides you with an added reason to make them more than just dreams.

Later in this chapter, we will work on goal setting—how to set and accomplish your goals. It is okay to change your goals. When you achieve them, you can set new ones. Goals give direction and purpose to your life.

**JOE'S GOALS**  
Free goal-tracking tool



joesgoals.com

## Benefits of Goal Setting

- Gives you a sense of direction and purpose
- Helps you stay motivated
- Provides a way for you to measure your progress
- Builds your self-confidence and sense of self-worth
- Increases self-responsibility
- Helps you determine actions needed to support your goals
- Provides you with a sense of accomplishment
- Makes your priorities clear
- Provides you with a roadmap for good planning
- Guides your decision-making
- Increases your ability to get the life you want

## Set Goals for Great Accomplishments

You can set short-term goals for one year or less, intermediate or mid-range goals from over one year up to five years, and long-term goals for over five years. For example, if you are a senior in high school, a short-term educational goal could be to graduate in one year. A short-term goal could also be to make an A on your next test. You might even have a goal to graduate from college in four years with a bachelor's degree, which would be an intermediate goal. A goal to receive your master's degree in six or seven years would be an example of a long-term goal.

**Form a habit of breaking all of your goals into small steps or small short-term goals.** For example, let's say you need to complete a particular course to reach your goal of graduating from high school or college. You can break this down by having a goal to earn a specific grade on each of the tests and papers that are required in this particular course.

Big goals and tasks may seem scary, but almost anything can be achieved in small steps.

The Japanese word *kaizen* means small steps for continued improvement. Any large goal or project can be broken into small steps, which can lead you to achieving the goal. Slow and steady often wins the race.



According to Robert Mauer, author of *One Small Step Can Change Your Life*, taking small steps helps you to bypass fears that often arise when you are facing big changes. A huge task does not seem too big when you break it down into small steps. Fear and anxiety limit your ability to think clearly and to be creative. When you take small steps to your large goals, you remain relaxed, confident, and think more clearly.

Here is an example from my life of how small steps often lead to big gains. I started weight lifting when I was eighteen years old. In the beginning, I weighed 120 pounds and could only bench press 75 pounds. Two of my weights were a quarter of a pound each. I would tell myself every couple of weeks that I should be able to add these small weights totaling just a half a pound to the barbell. I continued adding them to the barbell a half pound at a time. In a few years, I was able to bench press 300 pounds at a body weight of 145 pounds. This is an example of using small steps, like a ladder, to accomplish a big goal. I kept increasing the weight by a small amount and, in a few years, was lifting 225 pounds more than when I began weight lifting. It is amazing what can be accomplished with little steps. This approach can be used to achieve any type of goal you wish to pursue.

You can decide what you want in life, whether it is a great relationship, education, career, or any other goal. Begin taking small steps toward your goal until you achieve it!

“When I arrived on campus I was lost and afraid of the challenge. I was losing integrity, courage, dependability and self-awareness. This course and book were like a hand being stretched out for me to reach and to guide me. Now I will always keep improving and building the blocks to accomplish my goals.”

—Ruben Rodriguez

## Building a Successful and Fulfilling Life

There are eight major categories or parts of life in which you should consider setting goals so that your life will be balanced, successful, and rewarding. These categories are: education, career, financial, family, social, physical, mental, and spiritual. If you do not relate to the word “spiritual,” you can think of personal development goals to strengthen your character, ethics, and virtues.

### 1 EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Your educational goals can be varied. For example, you might be setting a short-term goal like getting a paper in on time or making a minimum of a “B” in a course. An intermediate goal might be to get an associates degree in two years. Whereas, earning a master’s degree in six years would be a long-term goal.

#### ACTIVITY 1.1

Brainstorm several possibilities (write them down as fast as they come into your mind) and then write three education goals below that you would like to accomplish.

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
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 \_\_\_\_\_



B. \_\_\_\_\_

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C. \_\_\_\_\_

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## 2 CAREER GOALS

Your career goals include any goals that prepare you for your professional career. If you are in school now, look at it as your most important job. The education you are getting now is your path to your “dream job.”

The average person will spend over eighty thousand hours of his or her life working. Most people spend more time working each day than they do sleeping, socializing, or doing anything else. A big chunk of your life will be spent working. It is important to enjoy the work you do because how you feel about your career will affect every other part of your life. For example, if you are stressed and unhappy at work, it can hurt your physical and mental health, relationships, and overall quality of life. If you enjoy your career, it can have a positive influence on all of the other areas of your life.

Examples of career goals you might consider, while you are in school, could be courses you want to complete, volunteer or internship opportunities, skills you wish to acquire, your college major and specific careers of interest, extra-curricular activities, and leadership development opportunities. These are just a few examples to consider, but you will want to decide on your own goals.

After you begin your professional career, you can continue to set goals for getting additional skills, for promotions, and for other desired career achievements. A good education can open the doors of opportunity into a career you love and do well. Now you will brainstorm about your career goals.

### ACTIVITY 1.2

Brainstorm several possibilities and then write three career goals below that you would like to accomplish.



A. \_\_\_\_\_

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B. \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_  
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### 3 FINANCIAL GOALS

How much money will you need to be happy? This is worth thinking about now because earnings can vary a lot from one career to another. Some people need more money to be happy and others need less.

Certainly you want enough money to meet your needs so that you are not under financial stress. Financial problems can have a negative influence on other areas of life such as your health, relationships, career satisfaction, and quality of life.

Set short-range (1 year or less), mid-range (1-5 years), and long-range (over 5 years) financial goals. For example, you can set a short-term goal to save 10% of your income from each paycheck. Then, you can set a longer-range goal to buy a house or earn a certain amount of income two years after you graduate from college.

Even if you have very little money now, you can start creating good habits such as saving a little money and avoiding credit card debt. These habits will help you build a mind-set for being in control of your finances instead of money controlling you.

#### ACTIVITY 1.3

Brainstorm several possibilities and then write three financial goals below that you would like to accomplish.

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
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B. \_\_\_\_\_  
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C. \_\_\_\_\_  
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### 4 FAMILY GOALS

For most people, family relationships are important. There are usually only a few people in anyone's life that will be there when the chips are down. If you maintain good relationships with your family members, they will often be some of your best friends for life. Therefore, it is worth investing some time and energy to keep good family relationships.

You can set goals for the type of relationships you want to build and keep with your family and then schedule the time to do it. One of my busiest students set a goal to spend a half day

helping her mom do some shopping for clothes to prepare for her mother and father’s wedding anniversary. She said she and her mom had a special time together and will have many great memories.

You do not know how long your loved ones will be on this earth, so now is the time to love and appreciate the important people in your life.

ACTIVITY 1.4

Brainstorm several possibilities and then write three family goals below that you would like to accomplish.



A. \_\_\_\_\_  
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B. \_\_\_\_\_  
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C. \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

“I learned that taking small steps to my goals can have a big impact on my life.”

—Dustin Hall

**5 SOCIAL GOALS**

You can set goals for the types of social relationships that you want to have. Social goals include friends, recreation, and fun. All of us need time to recharge our batteries and have fun with others. Good friendships are important and can add quality to your life.

Set goals for the type of social relationships you want to build and schedule the time to do it in your calendar.

Research studies have shown that social relationships are important for physical and mental health. The reverse is also true.

People who are isolated, cut off, and without friends, usually have more major illnesses and die earlier than people with strong personal relationships.

ACTIVITY 1.5

Brainstorm several possibilities and then write three social goals below that you would like to accomplish.



A. \_\_\_\_\_  
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B. \_\_\_\_\_

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C. \_\_\_\_\_

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## 6 PHYSICAL GOALS

You need your physical body to function efficiently in this world. It is worth taking care of because it is the only body you will have in this life.

Once a student of mine told me that she did not take time to exercise or to eat well. She said, since she has only one body, which is temporary, her approach to life was “Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow you may die.” She thought that taking care of her body was a waste of time. I asked her, “If you knew that you had to keep your car running for life because it could not be replaced, wouldn’t you take excellent care of it?” She replied, “Yes, that makes sense.” I said, “You only have this one body for the rest of your life, so doesn’t it make sense to take good care of it?” She said, “Yes” and began taking better care of herself.

Our habits tend to go on autopilot and follow us for life. They are easier to change when you are young, than in later years. Bad habits can be replaced with good ones. Your day-to-day habits have a growing effect over time. Positive habits bring positive results and negative habits bring negative results.

Small positive habits done on a regular basis can pay off big over enough time. For example, walking a mile a day might seem like a small habit, but in one year you will have walked 365 miles; in ten years, you will have walked 3,650 miles. Imagine the benefits to your heart and lungs after ten years of walking just one mile a day! On the other hand, let’s say you drink one can of soda a day. This gives you about ten teaspoons of sugar a day. What effect will this have on your weight and long-term health compared to a healthy habit like walking?

Your habits may seem small, but they can have big effects. Habits can follow you through life and are usually difficult to break. Doesn’t it make sense to replace your negative habits with positive habits? You can use small positive habits to maintain excellent health, achieve your dreams, and live a fulfilling life.

You can set short- and long-range physical goals. For example, let’s say you want to lose thirty pounds. That’s a big goal that will usually take some time. However, you can set short-term goals along the way. For example, you decide to lose an average of two pounds a week. This small, short-range goal supports your big (long-term) goal of losing thirty pounds. Other physical long-term goals can involve exercise or changes you want to make to your diet.

You could set a short-term goal to run, swim, or walk a certain number of miles each week. There are many goals that can be set to have the body and energy that you want.

“I gained knowledge about my goals and all of the different types of goals. At first I thought the goal thing was a little weird and especially all the different sections of goals. I got used to it and how it works. So now I have a goal in each little section and I have a deadline for both my short and long-term goals.”

— Robert Robinson

ACTIVITY 1.6

Brainstorm several possibilities and then write three physical goals below that you would like to accomplish.



A. \_\_\_\_\_  
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B. \_\_\_\_\_  
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C. \_\_\_\_\_  
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“This chapter on goals made me realize to not give up. Just keep moving forward.”  
 — Alexandra Martinez

**7 MENTAL GOALS**

Each of us has a mind, and you can keep it sharp by using it effectively. Your mental development goals can include improving your mental performance, deciding what you would like to learn, gaining greater psychological or mental health, and more self-control. For example, you might set goals to increase your vocabulary and sharpen your mind by playing crossword puzzles, or increase your power of concentration by using mental exercises.

Many athletes practice visualization exercises to prepare for athletic events. A golfer may picture putting the ball in the hole or a diver might visualize making a perfect dive over and over.

Many years ago Dr. Maxwell Maltz, author of a groundbreaking book called, *Psychocybernetics*, discovered that an imagined experience can greatly improve one’s performance. In one study, three groups of people with a basketball shot free throws to determine their baseline scores. One group just practiced shooting free throws, another group pictured themselves shooting free throws, and the third group did nothing. Once again, the three groups shot free throws. The group that did nothing did not improve. The group that shot free throws improved by 24%; the group that practiced visualization improved by 23%. Those who practiced in their minds did about as well as those who actually practiced with the basketball. Today, many athletes use mental imagery to improve their performance in sports. You can also use mental imagery to improve your performance in school and to help you accomplish other goals.

Another way to improve your mental development is to increase your self-awareness and self-knowledge. One way to do this is to keep a journal. Observe your emotional reactions, thoughts, and feelings throughout the day. Jot down your observations in your journal before you go to sleep at night, then review over time. This practice will increase both your awareness of yourself and others and keep your mind sharp.

KEEP A JOURNAL

wikihow.com/keep-a-journal



**ACTIVITY 1.7**

Brainstorm several possibilities and then write three mental development goals below you would like to accomplish.

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
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B. \_\_\_\_\_  
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C. \_\_\_\_\_  
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**8 SPIRITUAL GOALS**

People will choose different paths for their spiritual growth or for developing their character and virtues, but the result should be more peace of mind and inner strength. Spiritual or character development will help you to maintain your mental balance when you face difficulties, obstacles, and even tragedies.

According to a national study of 112,232 college students by Higher Education Research Institute at U.C.L.A., four out of five first-year students are interested in spirituality. Many students said that they were on a spiritual quest. Goals can be set for doing any spiritual or character-building practice that works for you.

Most of us have heard of people who seem to have everything the world has to offer and yet, they are depressed, suicidal, drug addicts, or alcoholics. They may be famous, physically attractive, wealthy, and super successful, but still they feel empty inside and unhappy. The missing part of them seems to be an inner quality, which can provide a sense of meaning and purpose.

Examples of spiritual or character traits (inner qualities) could be peace of mind, patience, compassion, integrity, more love for others, etc.

● ● ●

“I can’t believe I have accomplished so much in this short period of time. I laughed when I was told to take this class and thought it would teach me nothing. I became more intelligent about myself and now I know how to make my goals come true.”

—Sujin Lee

**ACTIVITY 1.8**

Brainstorm several possibilities and then write three spiritual or personal development goals that you would like to accomplish.

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
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B. \_\_\_\_\_  
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C. \_\_\_\_\_  
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All eight major categories that were discussed affect each other. Sometimes one or more of these seven goal areas takes priority and requires extra time and attention. This is natural. However, if you totally ignore any of these major parts of your life, you will probably feel that something is missing or that your life is out of balance. If you need to focus more on a given area of your life at certain times, it is still wise to give some attention to all eight areas.

**GOAL SETTING**  
 Tips and articles



success77.com

**Additional Tips for Setting Goals**

To accomplish anything important, you will need to know where you are going. A person without goals is like a ship without a destination. The ship may never leave the harbor and if it does, there is no telling where it will end up. Do you want to leave the outcome of your life to chance? If not, it is important to steer the course of your life’s direction by setting clearly-defined goals. For a successful program, your goals need to be specific, time-controlled (start and end dates), your own (not goals someone else wants for you), and written down. Writing down your goals helps you to make them clear in your mind; it helps you feel committed to achieving them. Your goals need to be in harmony with your values and with each other. It is also important to consider the following questions:

- Can I work on these goals on a daily basis?
- Are my goals morally sound?
- What obstacles must I overcome?
- What solutions and plan of action will I use?
- What knowledge and skills will be needed?
- Are my goals big enough to create a sense of challenge? (It is helpful to set big goals, if they are realistic).
- What benefits will I gain by reaching my goals?
- Did I include some goals which will help others?
- Can I commit myself to start and complete this project?
- Are my goals believable and achievable?

**Identify One Goal for Each of the Eight Categories To Start Working on Now**

The purpose of the brainstorming and goal setting exercise was to help you come up with several goals, and to begin thinking about what you want. After going over your list of goals, you may find that some are unrealistic or unimportant to you. You may wish to add goals, redo



others, and make some of them more specific. You are now ready to set one goal and a plan of action in each category so that you can begin working on them now.

For now, please concentrate on writing down just one goal (short-term, intermediate, or long-term) under each of the following eight categories. These may be chosen from the goals you brainstormed, but they do not have to be. Later, you can continue to add and revise goals. Think of your goal setting program as a work in progress.

By setting goals for the following areas, you will be improving yourself as a person and your life will take on a sense of purpose.

## MY GOALS

- |  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. <b>Education:</b><br>Plan of action:              | Date of completion: |
| 2. <b>Career:</b><br>Plan of action:                 | Date of completion: |
| 3. <b>Financial:</b><br>Plan of action:              | Date of completion: |
| 4. <b>Family:</b><br>Plan of action:                 | Date of completion: |
| 5. <b>Social:</b><br>Plan of action:                 | Date of completion: |
| 6. <b>Physical:</b><br>Plan of action:               | Date of completion: |
| 7. <b>Mental:</b><br>Plan of action:                 | Date of completion: |
| 8. <b>Spiritual or character:</b><br>Plan of action: | Date of completion: |

You should have at least one goal in each category. Remember the question, “Do my actions support my goals?” Now you will have a way of answering this question and staying on track. Break your goals down into small steps and keep marching forward until you accomplish them.

## Managing Your Money for Success

How well do you manage your money? This will be one of the keys to your success in the future. It will be difficult to feel successful if you are in debt.

The way to successfully manage your money and save is by keeping your expenses less than your income. In other words, don’t live beyond your means. You can keep track of your income and expenses by using a monthly budget. A budget is simply an itemized estimate of your monthly income and expenses.

“This class benefited me in learning and applying study skills. It also made me look at my goals and my life.”

—Lynn Carpenter

**FRUGAL LIVING**  
Budget calculator

frugalliving.about.com/library/Budget\_Calculator/budgetcalculator.html



**Here Are a Few Tips:**

- Spend less than you earn
- Do not carry a credit card balance (pay it off each month)
- Pay yourself first. Set aside and save at least 10% of your income
- Focus on your most important budget items first
- Look at your spending patterns. What would you change?

**FINANCIAL BUDGET ACTIVITY**

Fill in the monthly budget work sheet, then brainstorm ways you can earn more and/or spend less so that you will be able to save a minimum of 10% of your income.

MONTHLY BUDGET WORKSHEET			
Monthly Income	Amount Earned	Monthly Expenses	Amount Spent
Your paycheck	\$	Rent or house note	\$
Bonuses or tips	\$	Food	\$
Student loans	\$	Tuition	\$
Grants	\$	Books	\$
Scholarships	\$	School supplies	\$
Money from family	\$	Transportation	\$
Other	\$	Utilities	\$
—	—	Personal needs	\$
—	—	Credit card payments	\$
—	—	Insurance	\$
—	—	Health care	\$
—	—	Entertainment	\$
—	—	Other expenses	\$
<b>Total \$</b>	—	<b>Total \$</b>	—

AMOUNT SAVED FOR THE MONTH: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT**

Identify a short-term goal that you can accomplish in one week or less. This can be a complete goal in itself or it can be a step toward a long-term goal. An example of a short-term goal in the career/education category could be to make a specific grade (which you determine) on an upcoming test or, if procrastination is a problem, to turn in a paper on time.

You can also set a short-term goal, which is part of a larger goal. For example, let's say you want to lose thirty-six pounds in twelve months which is a big goal. You would need to lose an average of three pounds a month to achieve your goal. You might set a short-term goal to lose one pound a week.

After you set your short-term goal, identify the obstacles to overcome and the specific steps you will take to accomplish the goal.

At the end of the week, write at least one page in your journal explaining what your goal was, whether you achieved it, the obstacles you overcame, the steps or plan of action you used, and what you learned from this activity that can be applied to school and your life.

## QUESTIONS TO ANSWER IN YOUR JOURNAL AND DISCUSS WITH OTHERS



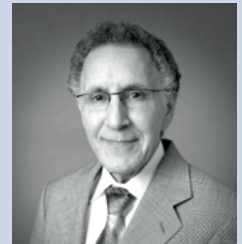
- What is the value of turning my dreams into goals?
- Which of the eight major categories of goals needs more of my attention right now and why?
- What is an example of one tiny step that I can take in the direction of my most important goal?
- What are three examples of goals that I have already achieved in my life and what did I learn from these accomplishments?

### AUTHOR'S NOTE

One of the main reasons that I was not a good student in junior high and my early high school years was that I had no goals. Without goals I did not understand the reason I needed a good education and I lacked motivation. As I began setting goals, I started realizing how education could help me to get what I wanted. My schoolwork took on a new meaning and purpose.

Most students become discouraged at some time or another. There is an article in this chapter I wrote to give hope to students who are discouraged now or who may be in future. It was also written to inspire all students, whether they are discouraged or full of hope.

RAYMOND GERSON



### STUDENT SUCCESS STORY

*The following paper was written by James Sanders, a former student of mine. As a young man, he had goals and a vision of the life he wanted to create for himself. He lost sight of his goals, got in with the wrong crowd, and lost his way. After much suffering, James refocused, created new goals, and returned to college. Here is his inspiring story.*

#### To the Brink and Back

By James Sanders

After graduation from high school, I lost control of myself, forgot what was important, and gave up on my personal goals. I was the kid who thought he knew it all and had all the time in the world to find or complete what was missing somewhere along the way.

During my last year of high school, I got in with several different crowds, but regretfully, I followed the kids who were doing nothing with their lives and I went right into the party scene.

I had been a leader who others respected and followed. It's hard to remember why I chose to follow the party crowd, but I suppose I was on a journey of rebellion. I became party central myself and my accomplishments were few and far between. Living a life of drugs and late nights turned into years and I got swallowed up by darkness.

Exhausted from what seemed to be years of hell, I knew it was time to make a change. It would not be easy because I had no job, no place to live, lost my right to drive, had no money, and had lost touch with my family members.

I decided to set small goals and use what was in front of me. I needed a job and took one tending bar so I could earn some cash fast. My survival depended on it. I supplied free drink tickets to my party friends in exchange for places to stay at night.

This allowed me to save money quickly, which was part of my plan. I was taking one small step at a time and in a few months I had saved enough to get my own place.

Still faced with the party crowd and scene, I decided to get an apartment close to restaurants within walking distance. This would get me away from the night clubs. I took a job as a bar tender in an upscale restaurant. My coworkers started having a positive affect on me because they were not only working, but they were going to college and trying to make something of themselves.

Money was tight, so I got a sober roommate, who was in college, to cut expenses and he was a positive influence. I then cut ties with some of the losers and bad influences. As painful as it was to watch those I loved stay chained to drugs and alcohol, I could not have felt better about looking out for myself.

In the years that followed, I reconnected with my brother, mom, and dad for the first time since high school. I also returned to college and felt really good about myself. I am grateful for the skills and lessons. I learned so much about people, saw the difference between good and evil, and gained self-respect. Today, I feel self-worth, see life through multiple perspectives, and above all else, have a clear path to a great future.

## Hope for Discouraged Students

Are you a discouraged student?

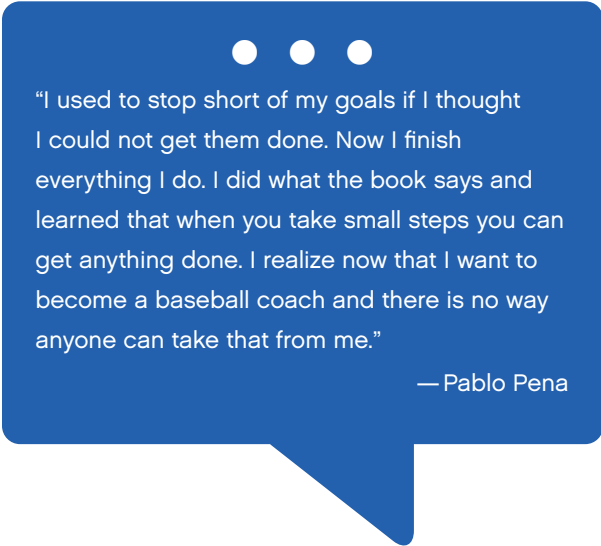
Do you think that teachers or other students see you as dumb and a failure? What others say or think about you is not as important as how you feel about yourself. Don't let others define or label you. Find your own limits and discover from experience what you are capable of accomplishing. Discover your own abilities.

There are many different types of intelligence. Everyone has their own special talents and types of intelligence. For example, some have a gift for music, teaching, counseling, writing, sports, comedy, etc. These require different types of intelligence. Also, your intelligence is not fixed at birth. You can continue to increase your intelligence throughout your life in spite of obstacles.

Read the biographies of great men and women and you will see that many of them were once labeled by others as unintelligent or mediocre. Winston Churchill failed the sixth grade and his teachers thought he was not smart. Helen Keller was born deaf and blind. She was unable to speak until she was taught to do so by Anne Sullivan. Most people had no faith in her ability to accomplish anything of importance. As an adult, Helen Keller gave inspirational talks to audiences all over the world. It is not the hand that we are dealt that determines whether we win the game, but it is how we play the game that counts. Helen Keller was born with a difficult hand but came out a winner. Some people are born with a good hand and lose the game by wasting

their lives.

There are many other examples of intelligent people who were considered unintelligent by others. When Albert Einstein and Thomas Edison were in elementary school, their parents were told their children were not smart. Abraham Lincoln was demoted from being an officer in the military to the rank of private because he was considered incompetent. Even though



"I used to stop short of my goals if I thought I could not get them done. Now I finish everything I do. I did what the book says and learned that when you take small steps you can get anything done. I realize now that I want to become a baseball coach and there is no way anyone can take that from me."

— Pablo Pena

some people considered Churchill, Keller, Einstein, Edison, and Lincoln to be unintelligent, they proved to be intelligent and made important contributions to others.

It is difficult to predict what others will accomplish in their lives. Who can predict what you are capable of achieving, if you work hard in school and are determined to succeed? Success in school depends more on skill and will than a high IQ. Good study skills, combined with the motivation to succeed, can take you a long way in school and life. Will or motivation must come from within you. Study skills can be developed. Study skill courses are usually offered at high schools, early college programs, community colleges, and universities. Many of these courses contain success strategies, which can be used to achieve your goals not only in school, but in your life. I could have used these types of success courses when I was in school to build my self-confidence and learn how to study.

In middle school and during my early years of high school, I experienced self-doubts, insecurity, and a lack of self-confidence. Like you, I also felt discouraged. When I compared myself to others, they seemed smarter, more popular, and superior in many ways. I had no goals and I did not understand how my classes were relevant to my life and future. Needless to say, my grades were poor to average. IQ tests indicated that I was of average intelligence and this is how I perceived myself.

My parents were concerned about my poor performance in school and they spoke to a high school counselor about me. He told them not to encourage me to go to college. He said that I was not capable of succeeding in college and that I would probably perform at a below average level at anything I did throughout my life. Fortunately, my parents did not tell me this story at that time, which I probably would have used as an excuse to quit school. I did not find out what this counselor said about me until I graduated from college with a master's degree and an A average.

I thought about quitting school many times when I was a teenager. And, I am so thankful that I continued my education in spite of obstacles and periods of discouragement.

Over time and through my life experiences, I discovered that I had talents, and I began to develop my strengths. I discovered that I was capable of making a positive contribution to others through inspirational writing, public speaking, coaching, counseling, and teaching. I love my work. It gives me much joy and a deep sense of purpose.

Do not give up on yourself. You were born for a purpose. Search within yourself. Discover your own special abilities and how you want to use them to make a positive difference.

## CHAPTER 1 MAIN POINTS

- Goals are dreams with a plan and an end date.
- Goals provide a direction for your life, self-motivation, and purpose.
- Set short-term and long-term goals in eight major categories: education, career, financial, family, social, physical, mental, and spiritual.
- Break goals into small steps.

For examples of a student Pre-Course Assessment and Goal paper see Appendix A, page 140.



I have written poems for most chapters to reinforce lessons in those chapters. Research on how the brain learns indicates that rhyme and poetry often enhance recall and understanding.

### How Many Dreams?

A poem by Raymond Gerson  
(can be sung to Blowin' in the Wind by Bob Dylan)

How many dreams can I turn into goals,  
To make my dreams come true?  
And how many plans will need to be made,  
To keep my goals in view?  
And how many steps will I need to take,  
To make my life like new?

The answer my friend, is found deep within,  
The answer is found deep within.

How many times will I set measurable goals,  
To make my wishes be real?  
And how many deadlines am I willing to set,  
To pursue my goals with zeal?  
And how specific am I willing to get,  
To achieve a big deal?

The answer my friend, is found deep within,  
The answer is found deep within.

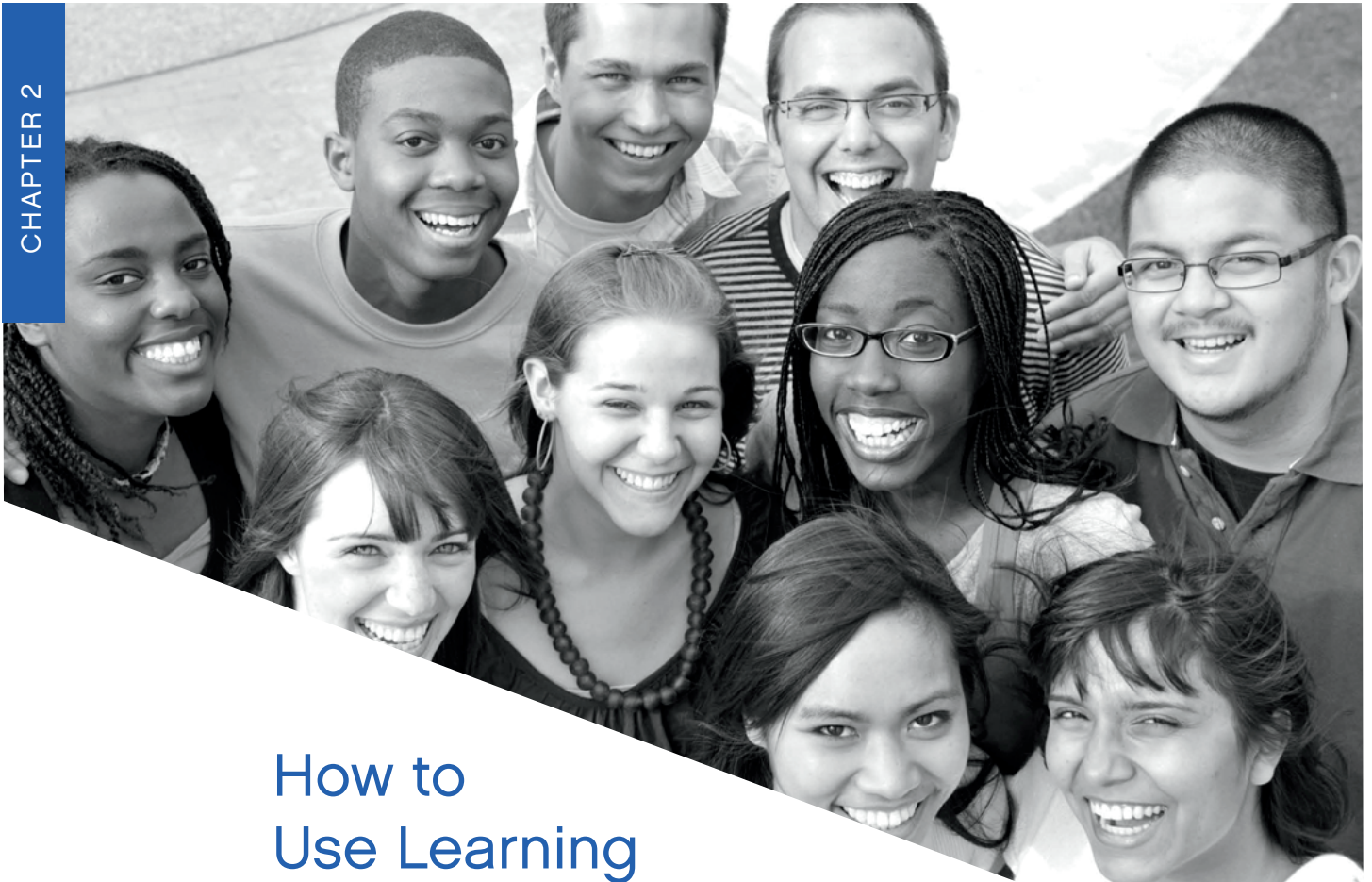
How many years am I willing to fight,  
To create the life that I need?  
And how many wishes in my heart will I want,  
Before I'm willing to proceed?  
And how long am I willing to go,  
Before I finally succeed?

The answer my friend, is found deep within,  
The answer is found deep within.

In the next chapter, you will be learning about your favorite styles of learning and in what ways you are already smart. By knowing and using your strongest learning styles and types of intelligence, you can become successful. You will also learn a few ways to take excellent care of your body and mind to stay healthy and function at your best.







## How to Use Learning Styles and Types of Intelligences to Perform at Your Best

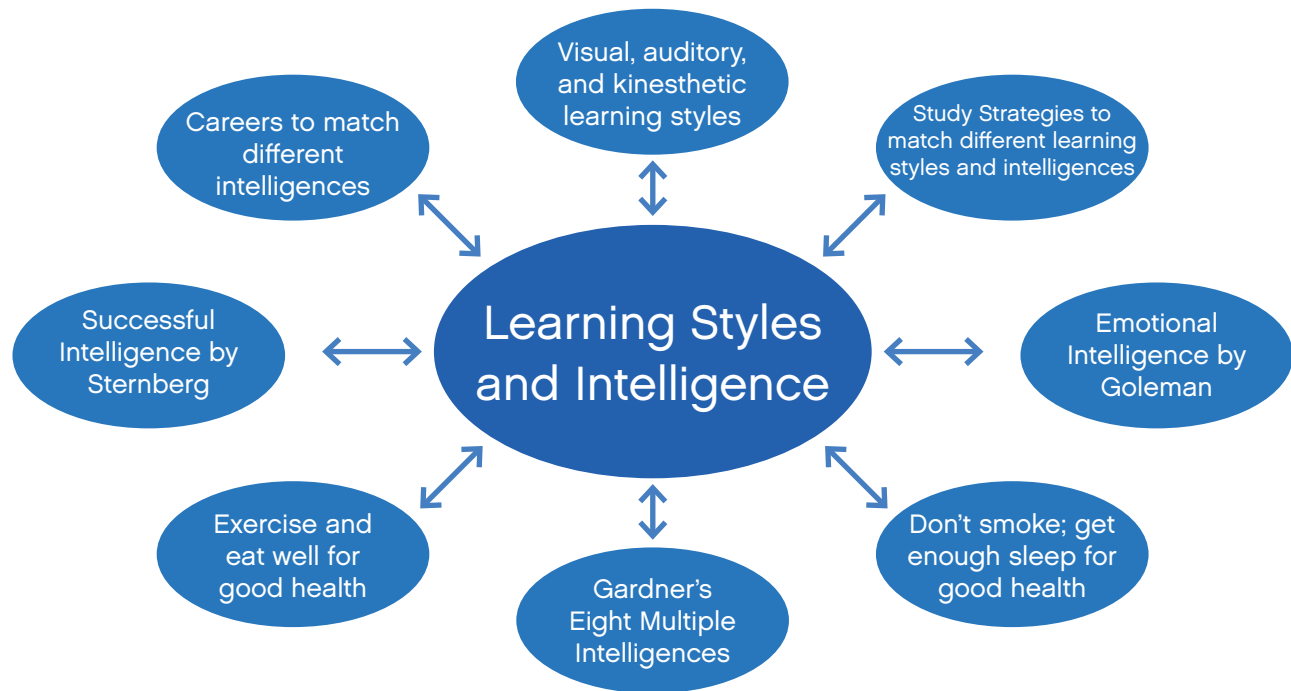
There is great news regarding learning styles and intelligence. People have different styles of learning, which influences how they learn best. When you identify and understand your preferred learning style(s), you will learn more easily. You will be able to use your favorite learning style to make up for the ones which are not as natural. You will also be able to use your less preferred learning styles when needed. This knowledge will help you, even when one of your instructors teaches in a style that is different from the one you prefer to use.

Not only are there different learning styles, but there are also different types of intelligence. People are smart in different ways. Everyone is not the same. This chapter will help you to identify and more easily use your best types of intelligence. As you will learn in this chapter, an IQ test is not the only measure of intelligence, but instead, it indicates two particular types of intelligence, mathematical and linguistic.

Your intelligences are not fixed at birth. You can actually increase your intelligence throughout your life.

When you become aware of your preferred learning style or styles and your strongest types of intelligence, your self-confidence will grow, and school will become easier and more enjoyable. Now let's take a look at some additional benefits you will gain from this knowledge.





“Having intelligence is not as important as knowing when to use it, just as having a hoe is not as important as knowing when to plant.” — Chinese Proverb

## Benefits of Knowing and Using Your Preferred Learning Style and Types of Intelligences

- Allows you to be your best and most natural self
- Increases your ability to learn
- Increases your self-confidence
- Shows you how to overcome your weaknesses
- Makes learning easier and more enjoyable
- Helps you to not only succeed in school, but also in your career and life
- Gives you an edge over your competition
- Helps you to learn more easily from instructors who use teaching styles that are different from your preferred learning styles
- Improves your self-image

## ACTIVITY 2.1

Now you will have an opportunity to take an assessment to determine your preferred learning style or styles.

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_



## LEARNING STYLE QUESTIONNAIRE

Circle either A, B, or C for each of the 15 statements according to your top choice or preference.

**1 I learn best when I:**

- A. Picture the lesson in my mind.
- B. Listen to the lecture.
- C. Go on a class field trip.

**2 I enjoy it most when I:**

- A. Use charts, maps, and pictures to help me remember a lesson.
- B. Receive a verbal explanation.
- C. Move around the room while learning.

**3 It helps me when an instructor:**

- A. Shows me a DVD or PowerPoint presentation.
- B. Explains and discusses the lesson.
- C. Gives a hands-on demonstration.

**4 I remember best by:**

- A. Reading instructions.
- B. Hearing and discussing instructions.
- C. Trying out and practicing the instructions.

**5 I am best at:**

- A. Turning words into pictures.
- B. Turning pictures into words.
- C. Role-playing with words and ideas.

**6 I am best at:**

- A. Putting puzzles together.
- B. Explaining my ideas.
- C. Working with my hands to make and fix things.

**7 I learn best when I:**

- A. Write things down so I can see it.
- B. Teach a lesson to others.
- C. Am in a lab where I can learn hands-on.

**8 When I take a test:**

- A. I can see answers from the textbook in my mind.
- B. I hear answers in my mind.
- C. It helps to trace answers with my finger.

- 9 I would rather learn a lesson by:
- A. Reading the book.
  - B. Listening to the book on tape.
  - C. Participating in a skit.
- 10 I like teaching others by:
- A. Showing them pictures and then explaining the information.
  - B. Explaining and discussing the information.
  - C. Acting out the ideas.
- 11 I learn to spell best by:
- A. Seeing the words over and over in my mind.
  - B. Saying the words over and over in my mind.
  - C. Tracing the words with my fingers and saying the words while moving around.
- 12 I like to:
- A. See the teacher's facial expressions while hearing a lecture.
  - B. Hear stories and examples while learning.
  - C. Fidget while hearing a lecture.
- 13 When a friend gives me directions, I prefer to:
- A. Receive them by e-mail with a map.
  - B. Hear an explanation of the directions over the phone.
  - C. Be taken there and shown the way by my friend ahead of time.
- 14 I prefer a teacher who uses:
- A. Slides.
  - B. Discussions.
  - C. Demonstrations.
- 15 You purchased a new computer and before setting it up, you prefer to:
- A. Look at the pictures in the manual.
  - B. Get verbal instructions from a friend who has the same computer.
  - C. Try to put it together first on your own.

---

*Source:* Questions developed by Raymond Gerson based on many theories of sensory learning styles.

**Scoring:** Add up your choices for each letter and write your totals on the lines below:

Total A's circled \_\_\_\_\_ Visual

Total B's circled \_\_\_\_\_ Auditory

Total C's circled \_\_\_\_\_ Kinesthetic

## Determining Your Primary Learning Preference

Determine the differences between your highest and other two scores. If the difference is three points or more, your highest score represents your primary or main learning preference. If the differences are two points or less, you probably have more than one dominant learning preference. Some people do not strongly favor one over the others and use two or even all three learning models equally well.

No questionnaire is totally reliable in determining your preferred learning style. If you think this assessment was inaccurate, then use your best judgment to decide which is your preferred dominant learning style—after you read an explanation of three learning models in the next section.

“This chapter taught me how to improve my study and learning skills. It also taught me how to help others figure out how they prefer to learn and how to use this knowledge.”

— JESSICA LOZANO

## Sensory Learning Styles

Learning styles are preferred ways of learning. They are how you prefer to take in and process information.

There are many different learning styles. In this section, we will be looking at three learning styles which rely on different senses.

The three primary sensory learning models are: **visual** (eyes or seeing), **auditory** (ears or hearing), and **kinesthetic** (hands or touch). Some schools of thought identify four sensory learning styles by dividing the visual learning style into two segments: a preference for pictures and a preference for seeing and writing words.

**Visual learners prefer and learn best by seeing.** They learn best by turning words into pictures and by seeing visual presentations. Visual learners prefer slides, videos, DVDs, movies, charts, maps, graphs, diagrams, and lots of handouts.

**Auditory learners prefer and learn through listening.** They learn best through class discussions, lectures, teaching others, books on tapes or CDs, and from reading lessons from the book out loud.

**Kinesthetic learners prefer and learn best by hands-on opportunities and demonstrations.** For example, a chart or diagram of how to fix something may not make sense or appeal to kinesthetic learners until they first try fixing it with their hands. It is difficult for kinesthetic learners to sit still and listen to lectures because they like to move around.

## All Three Learning Styles Are Important

Even though most people prefer one learning style over the others, it is of great value to be able to use all three when needed. You can also use your strongest learning style to excel and make up for your less developed styles.

Try to find ways to use your preferred style as much as possible. While reading a textbook, if you are a visual learner, you can draw pictures to give meaning to the words. If you're an auditory learner, you can read out loud and discuss the lessons with others. If you're a kinesthetic learner, you can read while moving about or create a skit and act it out to make the lesson come alive and be understood.

The following section will provide you with additional information about the three sensory styles of learning.



## Tips to Effectively Use Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic Learning Styles

### 1. VISUAL

- Use images: photos, colors, maps, charts, and graphs
- Use DVDs, radios, and films
- Create mind or idea maps (these will be explained in Chapter 4) and time-line charts as study aids
- Highlight, circle, and underline the text and your notes
- Read the text before lectures
- Create your own symbols and drawings to illustrate key points
- Create study cards to learn terms and definitions
- Ask your instructors to use more visuals
- Color code to organize notes

### 2. AUDITORY

- Read the text out loud
- Tape lectures and listen to audios
- Participate in study groups to reinforce lessons
- Sit where you can easily hear the lecture
- Avoid studying with disturbing noises in background
- Talk problems through
- Teach yourself lessons in your own words out loud
- Use jingles and rhymes to memorize information

### 3. KINESTHETIC

- Read the text and your notes while walking around the room
- Trace words with your index finger or with a 3 by 5 card while reading
- Study for short periods followed by brief exercise breaks
- Take courses which have labs and field trips
- Study with others
- Get your hands on what you are learning
- Participate in role playing exercises
- Use study cards while moving around
- Use a computer to rewrite your notes
- Read and highlight to create movement and hands-on activity

## DISCOVER YOUR STRONGEST TYPES OF INTELLIGENCES

Our schools value IQ tests, which measure linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence. Students who are gifted with numerical and reasoning ability and who are good with words and language usually do well in school because much of the learning requires these skills.

“The main benefit of this chapter for me was understanding that even though you may struggle in classes it doesn't mean you are ‘dumb.’ Learning other methods of intelligence and learning styles can make anybody a genius.”

— DUSTIN HALL

“So why are multiple intelligences important?”

Multiple Intelligences are eight different ways to demonstrate intellectual ability. The theory of Multiple Intelligences was presented by Howard Gardner in his book, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*.

Dr. Gardner believes that it is important for schools and teachers to recognize and teach in a way that will benefit you by presenting lessons in a variety of ways, if you are gifted with other forms of intelligence.

A student who might be considered to be an underachiever can shine when teachers use a variety of teaching methods such as music, games, role plays, self-reflection exercises, and creative cooperative group activities. For example, a student might have the potential to become an excellent musician,

artist, carpenter, or business owner.

So, it is valuable for you to develop and use many of the eight types of intelligences, but you will usually be strongest in one to three of them.

Here are Dr. Gardner's eight Multiple Intelligences with brief descriptions of each:

Verbal	Ability to use written and spoken language to express oneself and communicate well. Excellent with words.
Logical-Mathematical	Ability to detect patterns and think logically. Problem solving and reasoning ability in math and science. Excellent with numbers.
Visual-Spatial	Ability to create images and understand spatial relationships. This is not limited to visual sight, but is seen within the mind's eye. Excellent with pictures, graphs, and charts.
Bodily-Kinesthetic	Ability to use the body with skill. Ability to use one's mind to control bodily movements such as with athletes and dancers. Excellent control of one's body.
Interpersonal	Ability to understand other's feelings and intentions. Ability to relate well to others. Often referred to as “people skills.” Excellent with people.
Intrapersonal	Ability to be self-aware and to understand one's own feelings, thoughts, goals, and actions. Excellent self-knowledge.
Musical	Ability to understand and create musical sounds and recognize musical patterns. Excellent with music, sound, and rhythm.
Naturalistic	Attraction to and understanding of nature and the environment. Attuned to and excellent understanding of nature.

## ACTIVITY 2.2

Now is your turn to determine your multiple intelligences.

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

**MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES QUESTIONNAIRE**

Rate yourself on the following questionnaire. Check the statements that you strongly agree with. Remember that no questionnaire is totally accurate. You can also get a feel for which Multiple Intelligences are your strongest by reviewing the descriptions and doing some self-reflection.

**1 VERBAL-LINGUISTIC**

- When I share a story from my life, it flows with ease.
- I love to read.
- I enjoy writing.
- It is easy for me to remember poems and quotations.
- I can easily persuade others or sell them something.
- I remember a lot of what I read or hear.
- I express myself well.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total

**2 LOGICAL-MATHEMATICAL**

- Adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing are easy for me.
- I can add up numbers fast without using a calculator.
- Puzzles are fun and easy for me.
- I am good at problem solving and enjoy math and science.
- It is easy for me to remember telephone numbers.
- I like to investigate things to understand how they work.
- I prefer making decisions based on logic instead of feelings.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total

**3 BODILY-KINESTHETIC**

- Dancing comes easy, and I am good at it.
- I am good at sports.
- I am well coordinated.
- It is difficult for me to sit still in class, and I fidget a lot.
- I learn best by doing instead of by watching or hearing.
- When I study, I like to get up often and move around.
- Scary rides at a carnival and dare devil challenges appeal to me.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total

**4 VISUAL-SPATIAL**

- I easily understand maps, charts, graphs, and pictures.
- If I go somewhere once, I can always find my way back.
- I can easily picture images in my mind.
- I like drawing and doodling.
- I prefer a map instead of written directions.
- I easily turn words into pictures.
- When I explain something to someone, I like to draw them a picture.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total



**5 INTERPERSONAL**

- I am very social and relate easily to people.
- I am sensitive to how and what people are feeling.
- I like to share and teach others something I just learned.
- People feel comfortable telling me their personal troubles.
- I can easily make people feel comfortable and at ease.
- I really like helping others.
- I like listening to other people tell their life story.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total

**6 INTRAPERSONAL**

- I need time alone to self-reflect.
- I am in touch with my feelings.
- I like keeping a journal or diary of my thoughts and feelings.
- Spending time alone recharges and energizes me.
- I have goals and know what I want.
- I am a deep thinker and think often about what is important to me.
- Self-improvement is very important to me.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total

**6 MUSICAL**

- I learned to play a musical instrument without difficulty.
- I like to sing and often have a song in my mind.
- Music is a very important part of my life.
- I have excellent rhythm.
- If I hear a song once, I remember much of it.
- I like to study with music in the background.
- I listen to a lot of music each week.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total

**7 NATURALISTIC**

- The environment is very important to me.
- I love being outdoors and in nature.
- I have special feelings for plants and animals.
- I like being outside as much as possible.
- I can recognize different types of plants and trees.
- I believe strongly in recycling.
- Environmental pollution and issues concern me, and I take an interest in them.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total

---

*Source:* Developed by Raymond Gerson. Based on Howard Gardner's *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York. Harper Collins, 1993.



## Name your three strongest intelligences in order of preference below.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Using your multiple intelligence results, you can identify your best study strategies.

## Study Strategies for Each Type of Intelligence



- 1 Linguistic**
  - Read the textbook and write down main points in your own words.
  - Teach what you are learning to others.
  - Rewrite class notes.
  
- 2 Logical-Mathematical**
  - Create an outline of the text and organize information into a logical sequence.
  - Create practice quizzes with problems that may be on the test and solve them.
  - View and treat class projects like a scientific experiment.
  
- 3 Visual-Spatial**
  - Create graphs, charts, and pictures.
  - Create pictures to show relationships between concepts and ideas.
  - Review your class notes and draw pictures to remember the words and ideas.
  
- 4 Bodily-Kinesthetic**
  - Pace and move around when you read.
  - Turn a lesson into a skit.
  - Take short exercise breaks when studying.
  
- 5 Interpersonal**
  - Study with and listen to others.
  - Teach the lessons to others.
  - Write papers that contain stories about people.
  
- 6 Intrapersonal**
  - Keep a journal reflecting your thoughts.
  - Make some time to study alone.
  - Set many small goals for what you want to achieve in your classes.

- 7 Musical
  - Memorize by putting words to jingles and music.
  - Play soft music in the background while you study.
  - Listen to pleasant music to relax before going to take exams.
  
- 8 Naturalistic
  - Study outside when possible.
  - When studying inside, surround yourself with pictures of nature or with natural plants.
  - Take breaks from studying and walk around outside.

## Some Career Examples that Match Types of Intelligence

Linguistic	Teachers, writers, and lawyers.
Logical-Mathematical	Scientists, engineers, and computer programmers.
Visual-Spatial	Artists, architects, and inventors.
Bodily-Kinesthetic	Dancers, athletes, and firefighters.
Interpersonal	Counselors, salespersons, and nurses.
Intrapersonal	Writers, psychologists, and inventors.
Musical	Singers, composers, and musicians.
Naturalistic	Environmental scientists, gardeners, and geologists.

## “Successful Intelligence” to Achieve Your Goals

Robert Sternberg, a psychologist and professor at Yale University uses the term, “Successful Intelligence” to identify the type of intelligence needed to accomplish goals. In his book, *Successful Intelligence: How Practical and Creative Intelligence Determine Success in Life*, Sternberg explains the three parts of successful intelligence. It consists of the following three abilities:

- 1 **Analytical thinking** is needed to analyze and evaluate information. It plays a big role in school success.
- 2 **Creative thinking** has to do with the ability to come up with new ideas or different ways to solve problems.
- 3 **Practical thinking** involves putting the first two into action. It helps you to get from where you are to where you want to go.

Let’s say you are trying to decide if a part-time job would be right for you.

Begin by brainstorming and determine several job possibilities that you would enjoy and do well. This process uses your creative thinking skills.

Then, use your analytical thinking ability to evaluate and weigh job options to decide which one is your best choice.

Finally, when you take action by contacting employers and scheduling job interviews, you are using your practical thinking process to get the job you want.

Sternberg was an underachiever in school and did poorly on standardized tests until a fourth grade teacher recognized his ability and potential. He began to believe in himself

“Now when I study I know and use the learning style that works best for me.”

— MONICA ACOSTA

and became a successful leader in the field of psychology. His work provides further evidence that IQ and standardized tests measure analytical and recall ability, but this ability alone does not necessarily result in success in a career or in relationships.

I have a friend who did not do well in college and dropped out after his first year. He had learning disabilities and ADHD, but only discovered this years later. Unfortunately, he did not get the right type of support because his learning disabilities were not identified at the time. However, he had strong creative and practical intelligence, and today he makes over one million dollars a year with his own Internet business.

Remember to use all three: analytical, creative, and practical thinking, which makes up Successful Intelligence, and this will help you to achieve success in school, career, and life.

“When you know what kind of learner you are it helps you to pinpoint exactly how to learn in better ways. After taking the self-evaluations I found out that my learning type was kinesthetic. This means I learn more from hands-on activities than I do from listening to a lecture. The stuff I learned from taking this course will help me make better decisions, know myself better, use better learning strategies, and much more.”  
 — KATE ELLIS

**ACTIVITY 2.3** Use your creative thinking to brainstorm five ways (below) that you can use to be more successful in school:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



Analyze the five ways you listed and decide on the best choice for you. Use your practical thinking to take action and use the method you selected to improve a grade on an upcoming test.

**Emotional Intelligence Can Increase Your Success**

Daniel Goleman wrote a groundbreaking book called, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. Goleman discussed a form of intelligence in the book which he referred to as Emotional Intelligence (EI). EI is the ability to know, use, and manage your emotions.

A person with high Emotional Intelligence tends to be more successful in life than someone with low emotional intelligence, even if his or her IQ score is average. There have been people with high IQ scores who did not do well in their careers because of low EI.

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 INTELLIGENCES  
 For more information



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## Daniel Goleman's Five Components or Parts of EI

- ① **Self-awareness** – Ability to understand your emotions and their effect on others. It also includes your ability to identify and monitor your emotions.
- ② **Self-regulation** – Ability to control your impulse to act before thinking.
- ③ **Motivation** – Ability to pursue your goals and work for reasons that go beyond external rewards such as money and recognition.
- ④ **Empathy** – Ability to put yourself in another person's shoes and to understand what they are feeling.
- ⑤ **Social skills** – Ability for you to relate well to others and manage relationships effectively.

*Source:* Goleman, Daniel. *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. Bantam, 1997, p. 43–44.

Emotional Intelligence is especially important in today's workforce because of the need for teamwork among different types of people. Many projects are done in teams today, and it is important for you to be able to work well with many different types of people. EI is also very important for you if you want to become a manager or leader.

The good news about EI is that you can develop and increase it. By using many of the strategies in this book, you will automatically increase your Emotional Intelligence. You can purposely develop your self-awareness, ability to manage yourself, awareness of others, and your ability to relate to others.

### JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT

Think about your educational journey up to this time in your life. Recall a time in elementary, middle school, high school, or college in which you used one of the types of intelligence discussed in this chapter. Perhaps you surprised yourself or others by using an ability that you didn't know you had and it resulted in an achievement.

Write at least one page in your journal explaining what type of intelligence you used, how it made you feel, and what was the outcome or achievement.



### QUESTIONS TO ANSWER IN YOUR JOURNAL AND DISCUSS WITH OTHERS

- What is my preferred learning style and strongest type(s) of intelligence(s)?
- What are the three ways I plan to use my type(s) of intelligence(s) to succeed in college?
- What were my thoughts and feelings when I learned that there were different types of learners and intelligences?
- What are a couple of careers worth exploring and researching that might allow me to use my strongest types of intelligences?

**AUTHOR'S NOTE**

Many students do poorly in school or drop out, even though they are capable of succeeding. A student might think he is “dumb” or “a slow learner” when he is actually smart in his own way. Unfortunately, in some cases, neither the student nor teacher has recognized the student’s ability and how to use it in school. I have seen many students begin to excel in school when they discovered their preferred learning styles and strongest types of intelligence. I know you can do the same.

When I first heard about Dr. Gardner’s theory of Multiple Intelligences in the early 1980s, a light went on in my mind. I realized that this knowledge of Multiple Intelligences and how to use them was missing when I was in school, and that it would help many students just like you.

RAYMOND GERSON

**Student Success Story**

*In the following story, a student talks about how “dumb” he felt for years before finding out about his strongest forms of intelligence. He expresses his anger because no one taught him about multiple intelligences and learning styles until college, and his gratitude at finally getting this knowledge.*

**Smart After All**

By Rodney Richardson

For many years, I struggled in school and felt stupid. I compared myself to everyone else and they seemed to be smarter than me. I saw myself as a slow learner.

I was always restless in school, got bored easily, and it was hard for me to sit still and pay attention. My role was to be the class clown and make people laugh, which made me popular with the other students, but often in trouble with my teachers. I love talking with people and having fun.

I was diagnosed with ADHD a few years ago, which I guess explains why paying attention to the teachers was so hard for me. Accidentally, I discovered that I learn more when I read a book and dance around the room at the same time. I love music and play the guitar. I’m also a good dancer. So, when I would put on music and read while dancing around, it would help me remember more. Also, if I put anything to a jingle or rap it helps me to learn it better.

I didn’t know anything in middle school or high school about learning styles and multiple intelligences. When I took this course, I learned about these things. Now it makes sense why I learned better while dancing around the room. I see now that I have my own kind of intelligence and I am good at a lot of things. I have a gift for music, dancing, and relating to people. I am a kinesthetic learner which explains why I get restless when the teacher only gives lectures. Now I know that I learn best hands-on, during field trips, labs, performing skits, and things like that.

All those years of comparing my weaknesses to other people’s strengths was really dumb. I feel kind of angry that nobody taught me these things in school until now. Many kids drop out thinking they aren’t smart when they can do a lot of things well.

This information about learning styles and types of intelligence hit me like a bolt of lightning. Now I get how I am smart and somebody worthwhile. Even though I could have really used this information earlier in my life, I’m grateful to have it now. It’s already helping me to do better in my other classes.

Many teachers probably never expected me to go anywhere in life. I plan to prove them wrong. I now expect to be successful in college and to do something great with my life.

## ACTIVITY 2.4

## Goal for the week:



In Chapter 1, you set a small goal for the week. In Chapters 2–8, you will have an opportunity to continue this process. Setting and achieving at least one small goal each week will increase your number of successes and build your self-confidence. Make the goal specific and measurable.

An example follows:

**I will achieve the following goal:** Make a ninety or above on my math test this Friday.

**Three steps I will take to achieve my goal:**

- ① Study my class notes and math chapters for three hours this week.
- ② Get one hour of tutoring in math.
- ③ Create and take a practice math quiz before the actual test.

Now you try it.

**I will achieve the following goal this week:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Three steps to achieve my goal:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

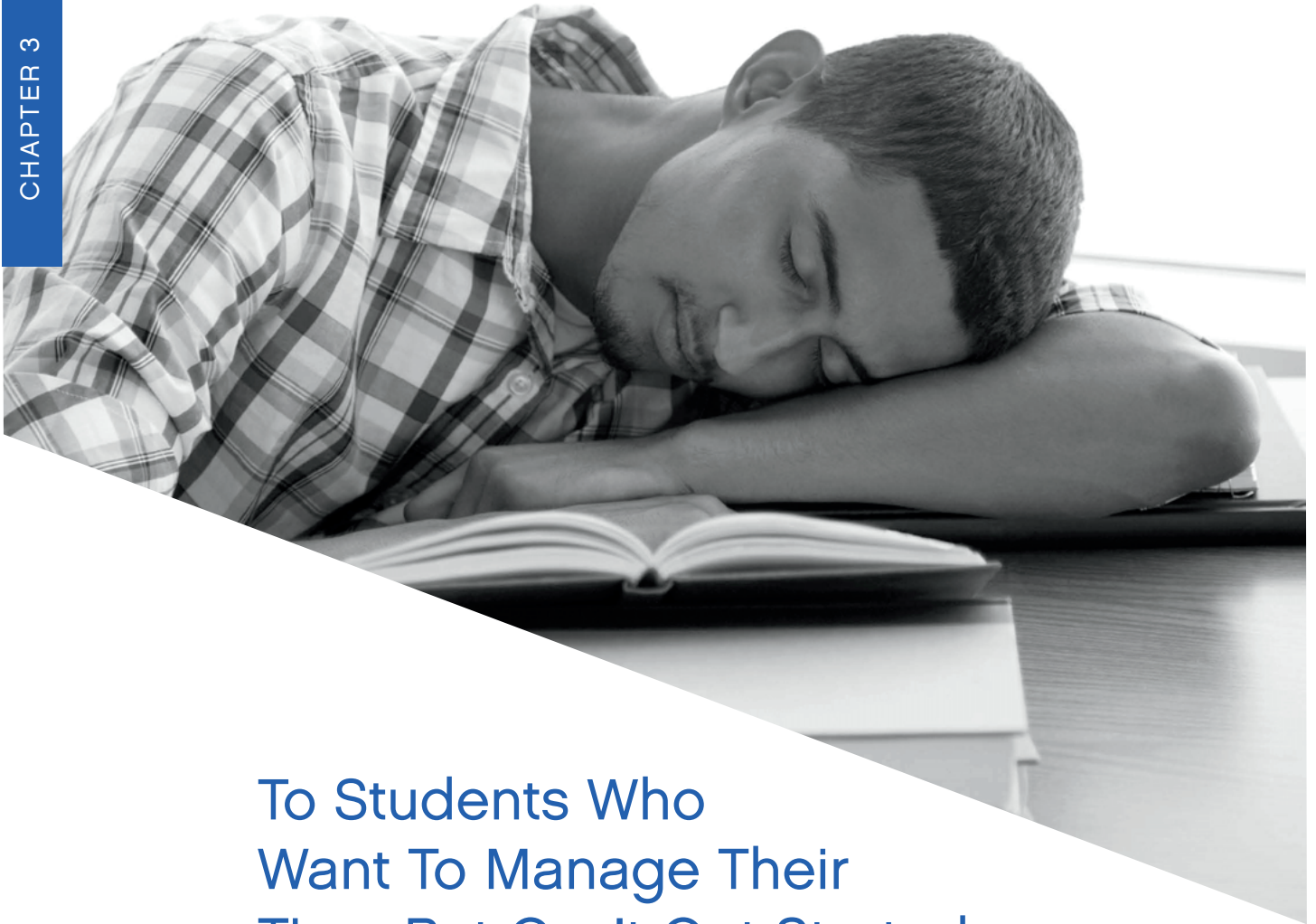
## CHAPTER 2 MAIN POINTS

- There are many different learning styles and types of intelligence.
- You can increase your success in school by knowing and using your unique abilities.
- Your intelligence is not fixed at birth, and you can increase it throughout your life.
- Your IQ score only measures a couple of types of intelligence. A student with an average IQ score can excel in school, career, and life by using her preferred styles of learning and best types of intelligences.

In Chapter 3, you will be learning time management skills and strategies. These skills will help you to make the best use of your time and will provide you with another major key to the success you want.







## To Students Who Want To Manage Their Time But Can't Get Started

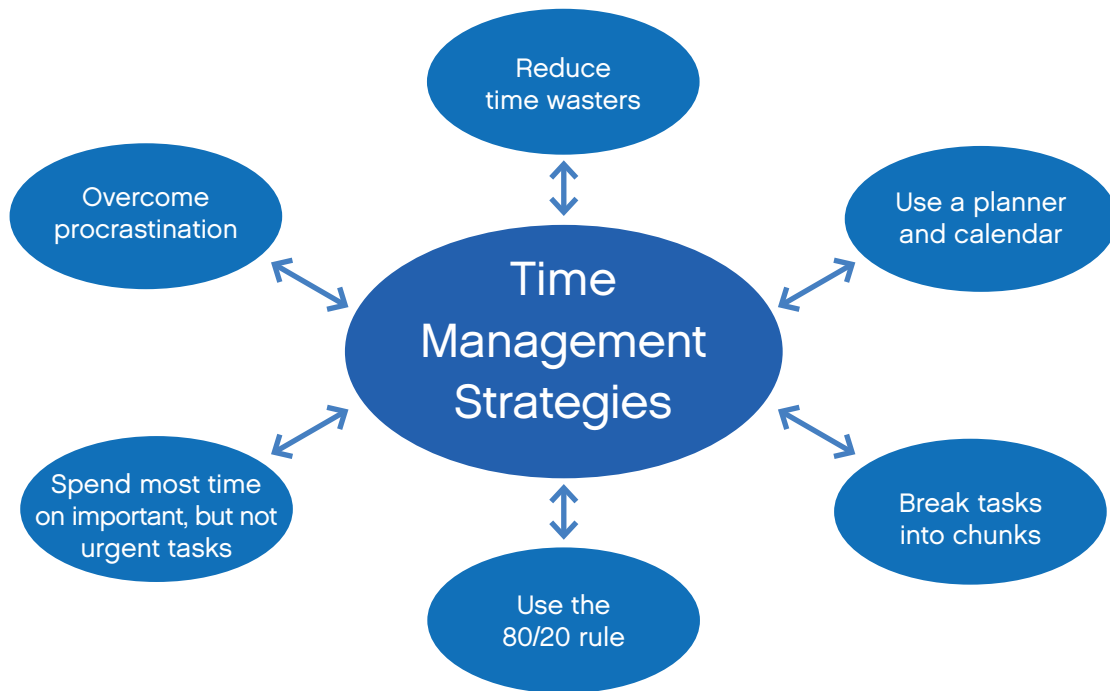
**T**ime is your most valuable resource. You cannot replace it, and it passes very quickly. Time is life, because as it passes so does your life. Managing your time well is managing your life well.

You can take time from activities of lower importance and priority and spend more time on your highest priorities. Time management begins with thinking about what is really important to you. **What do you really want?** Once you know your priorities, you can decide whether your actions support them. If your actions are not taking you where you want to go, just keep changing what you are doing until you are back on track.

1. Ask yourself, "What is the best use of my time right now?"
2. What are you willing to cut out or reduce so that you have time to do what you believe is most important?

Don't sacrifice your most important priorities for things which are of less importance.





“Time is at once the most valuable and the most perishable of all possessions.”

—John Randolph of Roanoke

## 80/20 Rule

The 80/20 Rule says that 80% of your unfocused effort is usually responsible for only 20% of your results. The remaining 80% of your results are achieved with only 20% of your effort. By applying time management strategies, you will be able to direct more energy into 20% of the activities which bring you the greatest results. Good time management will help you do what is important with focused attention.

## Benefits of Effective Time Management Strategies

- Reduces your time wasters
- Helps you overcome procrastination
- Better planning for what you want to accomplish
- Keeps you on track to your goals
- Helps you accomplish your highest priorities
- You get more done with less effort
- You gain extra time for fun and recreation
- Supports your most important values
- Reduces your stress
- Helps you to live the life you really want

## Do You Make These Common Time Management Mistakes?

Rate Yourself

4                      3                      2                      1  
Very much like me    Somewhat like me    Not much like me    Not at all like me

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not plan my actions and study time, but instead go by moods.

\_\_\_\_\_ My study environment is usually messy and disorganized.

\_\_\_\_\_ I often study and do school work when I am sleepy, not alert, and not at my best.

\_\_\_\_\_ I let too many distractions and temptations come between me and what is really important for me to be doing.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have low energy because of a lack of exercise and poor diet.

\_\_\_\_\_ I study for long periods of time without taking breaks.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have too much to do, and I don't cut out time wasters.

\_\_\_\_\_ I usually do not set deadlines for my school work and other priorities that need to get done on time.

\_\_\_\_\_ I spend too much time on low priorities.

\_\_\_\_\_ I usually do what I like first even if these activities are not that important.

\_\_\_\_\_ I don't make good use of small pockets of time throughout the day.

\_\_\_\_\_ I spend too much time trying to understand difficult material instead of seeking help.

\_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL

---

*Score Results:* The higher your score, the more you need to reduce your time management wasters.

## Tips For Managing Your Time

- **Plan of action.** It would be a mistake for you to only do your school work when you feel like it, instead of planning and scheduling the time. It could cause you to fail, especially in college, because there is so much homework and reading to do.
- **Studying when you're not at your best.** It is important for you to get enough sleep so that your mind is alert, and you can concentrate on your studies. Lack of sleep will reduce your ability to remember what you study. Know when you are at your best. Are you a morning or evening person? Schedule your most difficult classes and school work when you will have the most energy and feel your best.
- **Allowing for many distractions.** It is difficult to focus on school work if your cell phone is ringing, you are receiving text messages, the TV is playing, and friends are dropping by unannounced. Remove these distractions so you can focus your attention on studying. Tell friends and family “no” when they want to socialize during your study time. Make plans to play at a better time.
- **Disorganized study environment.** Create a study environment that helps you concentrate and do your important work. Have the necessary supplies (pens, pencils, highlighters, notebooks, etc.) so you don't have to get up and down to get them. Make enough space so you can spread out and work.
- **Poor diet and lack of exercise.** You need energy and good health to do your school work well. Take short exercise breaks between study periods. Eat healthy snacks instead of junk and fast foods.
- **Studying too long without breaks.** If you study for thirty to forty-five minutes, take a short break. You will understand and remember more of what you read. Break your studying into small steps, so you can stay focused.
- **Too much to do.** There are times when you may have too much to do. See what you can reduce or cut out so, you have time for your top priorities. Balance is also important. There is a time for study and a time for play. You will benefit from both.
- **Not setting deadlines.** You can set many small goals with deadlines for completion. If, for example, you have a paper due in two weeks, set a deadline to begin and complete your paper.
- **Spending too much time on low priorities.** Decide what your most important tasks are. Spend more time, energy, effort, and attention on your top priorities and less on activities which don't support your goals.
- **Doing activities you like first.** This is fine, if these are your important priorities. Don't do an activity first just because it is pleasant. Do your important activities first, even if they are difficult and unpleasant for you.
- **Failing to use small pockets of time wisely.** You can study between classes or write part of a paper while sitting in a doctor's office. While waiting in line at a store, you can review flash cards. Use these small pockets of time wisely. They will add up to big results.

“When I arrived on campus I was lost and afraid of the challenge. I was losing integrity, courage, dependability and self-awareness. This course and book were like a hand being stretched out for me to reach and to guide me. Now I will always keep improving and building the blocks to accomplish my goals.”

—Ruben Rodriguez

“I learned to use my time wisely and now use calendars and planners every day.”

—Valeria Rangel

➤ **Not seeking help.** Beating your head against a concrete wall is not productive. Reading something over and over without understanding it can use up valuable time while accomplishing nothing. Seek out assistance when you need it. Use your school’s resources, counselors, tutors, etc. Planning ahead is one of the most important time management strategies you can do. There is a saying, “If you are failing to plan, you are planning to fail.” What follows is a brief self-assessment for you to see how well you are planning.

## Planning Self-Assessment

Circle the number for each statement that best describes you.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
I plan ahead and block out study time.	1	2	3	4
I use a daily planner and/or I will need to study each week.	1	2	3	4
I enter my academic and social plans on my planner and calendar.	1	2	3	4
I allow for the unexpected, so I can be flexible and adapt	1	2	3	4
I accomplish most of my plans.	1	2	3	
I plan well.	1	2	3	4
I meet assignment deadlines by planning ahead.	1	2	3	4
I estimate how many hours I will need to study each week.	1	2	3	4
I start work early on long-term projects.	1	2	3	4
I set short-term goals with deadlines.	1	2	3	4

For items you answered with a number 1 or 2, consider trying new habits to improve in these areas.

## Time Management Tips for Making the Best Use of Your Time

➤ **Use a planner and calendar.** Use an electronic or paper planner and calendar for your daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly goals. Write down your important plans including school assignments, work, personal development, and social activities.

- **Identify your common time wasters.** Being aware of your time wasters is your first step toward making positive changes. Begin substituting your more important activities and tasks for your time wasters by writing them down in your planner.
- **Prioritize.** List five of the most important things you need to get done each day. Arrange the list of activities in order of priority from number one through five. Focus only on your number one item until it's done. Then go to your number two item and on down the list. Make your to-do lists in the evening for the following day.
- **Delegate.** You may have some household chores or responsibilities that can be delegated or given to someone else in the household once in a while. For example, you may need to study for a test and you might be able to pay a younger brother or sister to do a few of your chores for you. You might be able to trade chores which you can do at a better time.
- **Set time limits and deadlines.** Know how much time you have available to complete assignments. This will allow you to start early, prepare for the unexpected, and to complete your assignments on time.
- **Let others know your needs and your schedule of important activities.** Your friends and family need to be aware of your needs, and you should respect and be aware of their needs. There are times for you to say "No, I can't go play at this or that time because I have to study. Let's set a date for another time."
- **Schedule your work for the right or best time.** Plan to do your important and difficult tasks when you are at your best and you have enough time to focus on them.
- **Review your class notes and readings before class and often.** This saves you last minute cramming for tests and reduces stress. You will retain more and be better prepared for your classes. Study daily and keep up with assignments because this will keep you relaxed and productive.
- **Get a good night's sleep and take naps, if helpful.** Most students between fifteen and twenty-two years of age need eight to ten hours of sleep to feel at their best. Sleep deprivation negatively affects your memory and concentration. Studying without focus wastes your valuable time.
- **Set small goals and break your large tasks into small chunks.** This keeps you from feeling overwhelmed. It is easier to start and complete small projects, which helps build your self-confidence and create a "success" mind-set. Study in small segments with short breaks in between.
- **Work on your important, but unpleasant activities a little each day until completed.**
- **Include rewards for yourself when you accomplish your tasks and goals.** Build in consequences or a negative effect when you do not follow through, such as not giving yourself the reward. Examples of rewards are you go to the movies, out for pizza with a friend, etc. Find ways to motivate yourself by using rewards when you get the job done, and use a take away when you fail to come through.
- **Exercise and eat well for maximum energy.** You need good health and energy to work hard and to concentrate.
- **Concentrate on one thing at a time.** This will be more effective for you than multi-tasking when you need to really concentrate. When you are able to focus on the assignment at hand, it will save you time, and this is a key to success.

"I learned how to manage my time wisely so I can work to the best of my ability to be more productive and successful."

—Stephano Alvarez

"The assessment we did in class showed me how little I knew about succeeding in college. The result was like a punch in the face. I learned so much and improved in many areas like my study skills, time management and goal setting."

—Aaron Kwok

- **Use resources and seek assistance.** Use your school tutors, counselors, library, and any other help you need.
- **Be present and enjoy the moment.** Instead of regretting your past and worrying about your future, focus on what you are doing now. Do small things with care and attention because this will give you the best results. This is how you can best use and benefit from your time.

### Time Management Strategy to Accomplish Your Priorities

In his book, *First Things First*, Steven Covey presents a time management strategy which uses the following four quadrants or squares.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Quadrant 1	Quadrant 2
Not Important	Quadrant 3	Quadrant 4

In the **first quadrant**, you list activities that you feel are both important and urgent. These take top priority. In the second quadrant you list activities and things that need doing which you consider to be important, but you don't have to complete them right away. These activities take second priority. The third quadrant contains activities and tasks which are not important to you, but others are trying to make you think they are urgent. Quadrant 4 consists of activities that are not important or urgent for you right now and there is no need to do them.

If something is both important and urgent to you, it needs to be taken care of first. For example, you may have to take someone to the hospital. However, these demands in quadrant 1 are stressful and are not where you want to spend unnecessary time and effort.

- **Quadrant 2 is the best place to focus your attention and effort because it will prevent many things from becoming urgent** and ending up in quadrant 1. If you start early on these important tasks, then you will complete most of your assignments on time without creating urgency. Quadrant 2 is the most productive and best place to spend your time.
- **Quadrant 3** activities are not important to you, but others try to make you think they must be done now. For example, a friend wants you to return his phone call immediately about something that can wait a couple of days.
- **Quadrant 4** consists of activities that you usually consider a waste of time such as sitting and doing nothing. You want to cut out or at least reduce time wasters. However, there may be times where a few minutes of doing nothing is actually useful. For example, you may feel burned out and need some down time to just zone out and relax.

In the exercise that follows, decide which of the four quadrants you would list each of the activities.

### The Four Quadrant Exercise

Assign each activity below to one of the four quadrants, either quadrant 1, 2, 3, or 4. Your answers should show the number of the quadrant you would use for each of the seven activities below.

- A. \_\_\_ A paper is due in your English class tomorrow and you haven't started working on it.
- B. \_\_\_ A paper is due in your History class next week and you have half of it done.

- C. \_\_\_ Your best friend left a message to call back right away about a movie he wants to see with you in a few days.
- D. \_\_\_ You have a Psychology test in a week and you are prepared, but you want to review your notes before the test.
- E. \_\_\_ Your friends want you to attend a meeting tomorrow which they say is urgent, but it has nothing to do with your interests and goals.
- F. \_\_\_ You feel like watching several hours of television today even though you have a test tomorrow.
- G. \_\_\_ Your favorite charity called and asked you to give them some money.

Keep in mind that the more you say no to Quadrant 3 and 4 activities, the more time you can spend on your top priorities listed in Quadrants 1 and 2.

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*Source:* Questions developed by Raymond Gerson. Based on Covey, Stephen, Roger Merrill, and Rebecca Merrill. *First Things First*. Free Press., 1996, p. 37.

## Do You Procrastinate for These Reasons?

Procrastination is when you put off doing something that you need to do. Procrastination can keep you from getting what you want in life. Procrastination is how things that need to be done pile up until you feel stressed.

### SOME OF THE COMMON REASONS THAT PEOPLE PROCRASTINATE

- **Going by moods.** If you are not careful, you might avoid important but unpleasant tasks because you do not feel like doing them.
- **Fear of failure.** If you avoid doing the task and fail, you can say, “I failed because I didn’t try,” not because you could not accomplish it.
- **Fear of success.** It is important for you to feel worthy of success or you might avoid it. If you fear the demands, expectations, and criticism that might come from being successful, you might hold back from big accomplishments.
- **Poor decision-making skills.** If you cannot make a decision, you will not do what you need to get done. First, you must decide; then act.
- **Poor organizational skills.** If you have difficulty putting things in the right order and organizing, you may hesitate to begin the task.
- **Perfectionism.** If you feel the need to be perfect or to do something perfectly, you may hold back because anything less might seem like failure.
- **Not planning ahead.** You cannot do everything at the spur of the moment. You will only accomplish some important things well, if you plan ahead.
- **Being unsure of the next step.** If you don’t know where to start or what to do first, then it is likely that you will not begin.

### WAYS TO OVERCOME PROCRASTINATION AND ENJOY THE SUCCESS YOU WANT

- **Know when you are procrastinating.** Be aware of when you are putting off important activities and honestly admit it to yourself.
- **Procrastinate on low priorities instead of high priorities.** Use the habit of procrastination to put off your time wasters.
- **Set up rewards for not procrastinating important tasks.** Deprive yourself of rewards if you put off doing what needs to be done.



- **Estimate the monetary cost.** For example, figure out what a semester of your classes will cost you. Now figure how much each class will cost. If you are putting off going to a class, now you will be able to figure out how much money missing class will cost.
- **Set small goals and take little steps.** We discussed this as a time management strategy, and it can help you to avoid procrastination.
- **Tackle the most important task first.** This time management strategy can also help you to overcome procrastination. Do your unpleasant but important activities first and play later.
- **Do it now.** Clement Stone, a successful entrepreneur, used to repeat “do it now” over and over for motivation to do the task right now. You might try this approach.
- **Ask for help.** Do not try to do everything by yourself. Use resources and seek assistance from others when you need it.
- **Do not expect perfection.** Realize and accept that you are human. Even though you want to do well, don’t think you must do things perfectly. The road to success is often paved with failures along the way.
- **Set deadlines.** Let’s say you have a paper due for a class in two weeks. This is the final deadline, but you can also set some of your own deadlines. For example, set a deadline

to write a page a day. Set a deadline to have a rough draft completed three days before the final paper is due. You can also set a deadline to complete your paper one day before the final due date.

- **Use time management tools previously mentioned.** You can use time management tools such as calendars and planners to overcome procrastination.
- **Prioritize.** This is another important time management strategy we discussed earlier that also helps to overcome procrastination. Make a daily to-do list the night before. Arrange your list in order of importance. Totally focus on your #1 item until it is done; then go to #2 and continue in this manner.
- **Use positive self-talk.** Explain to your mind the benefits of doing the task now. Reframe or change how you see your unpleasant tasks by recognizing they have value.
- **Try to make the tasks fun.** See if you can be creative and make the task or assignment into a game.

“The one big thing that helped me out was the time management section. It helped out because I got to see where I was spending most of my free time which was mostly in video games and sleeping. So because of that I cut down my gaming time for more school work time. I think that I’m getting better at getting my school work down. Now I do school work first and after that I get into my gaming.”

—Robert Robinson

**Remind yourself that you can accomplish great things in small steps.** A brick layer starts working on a house by putting one brick in place. The job to be done might seem huge and overwhelming to the brick layer, but brick by brick he gets it done. Thousands of bricks end up in place, but the brick layer accomplished it one brick at a time. In the same way, you can break things into small manageable chunks and go step-by-step to successfully complete your tasks. As Doc Childre and Howard Martin put it, “You’re writing the story of your life one moment at a time.”



## ACTIVITY 3.1

**Where does your time go?** Guess how much time you spend each week in the activities listed below in the left column.

Keep track of how you are actually spending your time for one week and record your results on the **Time Log Sheet** (which follows on the next couple of pages). At the end of a week, you will be able to fill in the right side below; then compare your guessed and actual times. Now, fill in your estimated time in the left column (which is a guess as to how much time you are spending in each category per week). It should add up to 168 hours, which is a full week.

“I thought this class was going to be a waste of time. Instead I learned how to study, take notes, manage my time, and writing skills.”

—Melinda Medina

## Assess Your Time Exercise

### Estimated Time

Time in class \_\_\_\_\_

Time at work \_\_\_\_\_

Study time \_\_\_\_\_

Grooming \_\_\_\_\_

Commuting \_\_\_\_\_

Sleeping \_\_\_\_\_

Cooking/eating \_\_\_\_\_

Time with family \_\_\_\_\_

Time with friends \_\_\_\_\_

Shopping \_\_\_\_\_

Exercise \_\_\_\_\_

TV \_\_\_\_\_

Computer fun \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Total hours per week: 168

### Actual Time

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

ACTUAL TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

## Time Log Sheet

Use the **Time Log Sheet** below to track your activities for seven days. Then, go back to the **Assess Your Time Exercise** and fill out the actual time in the right column and total the hours.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6–7 a.m.							
7–8							
8–9							
9–10							
10–11							
11–12							
12–1 p.m.							
1–2							
2–3							
3–4							
4–5							
5–6							
6–7							
7–8							
8–9							
9–10							
10–11							
11–12							
12–1 a.m.							
1–2							
2–3							
3–4							
4–5							
5–6							

**JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT**

Compare your estimated and actual times once they are recorded in the **Assess Your Time Exercise**. Write at least one page in your journal about what you guessed correctly, where you were incorrect, and any surprises. Write about areas that need more of your time, less of your time, and time wasters you want to eliminate. Also, address the extent to which your actual time spent supports your goals and values. Conclude by discussing changes, you will make to more effectively use your time.

**QUESTIONS TO ANSWER IN YOUR JOURNAL AND DISCUSS WITH OTHERS**

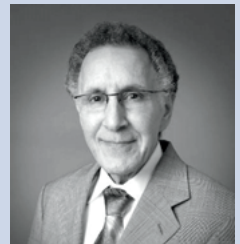
- What are five of my biggest time wasters? How can I reduce or get rid of them?
- What is my most common time management mistake? How can I correct it?
- Why do I procrastinate? Name three ways that you can overcome procrastination.
- What are my three top priorities to get done tomorrow? Name three small steps that you can take for accomplishing each of these priorities.
- What benefits have I received from exercise in the past?
- What is one new activity I am willing to do to improve my physical health and energy level?
- What is one new activity I am willing to do to improve my mental health?
- What am I willing to do to main my good health as long as possible?

**AUTHOR'S NOTE**

Many of my students become angry and upset after doing the time assessment activity because they learn how they are actually spending their time. Some have been shocked at the differences between categories of their estimated and actual time. The shocks come when they realize that their time spent did not support their goals and priorities. For example, I mentioned that one of my students discovered that she watches forty hours of TV a week and studies two to three hours a week. This came as a rude awakening and shock to her, even though she decided not to change these habits.

I explain to my students that their disappointment, anger, and shock can serve as a motivator for positive change. The first step is for a student to be willing to see reality, instead of remaining blind to what is really happening. Secondly, once a student sees how he or she is actually using valuable time, it is possible to make changes. I encourage you to spend your time (life) in a way that takes you to your goals.

RAYMOND GERSON



## SUCCESS STORY PAPER

*The following paper was written by a student of mine who is a single mother of three children. She works full time and began college later in life. Needless to say, she has a lot on her plate. Finding enough time for her many priorities is a challenge.*

### Time Monitor Paper

By Lynn Carpenter

The time monitor paper is difficult for me to write. The reason is I do not have enough spare time to even think about where my time goes. I was actually exhausted when looking at this assignment because it made me realize how much I do on a day-to-day basis.

During this assignment I realized that there are definitely areas that can be improved. The way I spend my time at home is one of the things that can be adjusted. For instance, I could use the small amount of time that I watch TV and use it for more quality time with my kids and doing homework. Instead of waiting until the last minute to do my assignments I could get it done before it is actually due. I spend a lot of time working and going to school which affects my kids and managing my time better would give me more time with them.

During the week I spend an average of 75 hours on school and working, 56 hours sleeping, and 11 hours driving which adds up to 142 out of a 168 hour week. This leaves 26 hours a week for my kids and any time I might actually have for myself which is not much.

At this point in my life I realize that I am stretched about as far as one person should be, but in the long run this sacrifice will pay off. It will pay off because I am bettering myself working toward a goal that will improve my life and the lives of my children. The education that I am receiving will help me to put my kids through college and create better opportunities for me later.

I do plan on changing a few things like the time in front of the TV and focus more on the most important things in my life.

## ACTIVITY 3.2

### Goal for the week:

#### Three steps to achieve my goal:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



## WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOUR BODY, TOO

Your physical and mental health are connected and affect your ability to succeed in college, career, relationships, and other areas your of life.

Without good health, it will be difficult to make your dreams come true. Vitality and energy are byproducts of good health and are needed to succeed in college, your career, maintain excellent relationships, and accomplish many other goals.

You probably know, from your own experience, that your physical and mental health affect each other. When you are physically ill, your mind is less clear, and it's easy for you to feel down. When you're depressed, you have less energy. You will need to keep your brain healthy to think clearly, to focus your attention, and to retain and recall information. Let's look at some of the benefits of good health.

## Benefits of Good Health

- Increases your odds living a longer life
- You will have more energy
- Positively influences your mental health
- Increases your sense of well-being
- Improves your self-esteem
- Improves your overall quality of life
- Gives you more energy and stamina to pursue your goals

## Tips for Maintaining Excellent Health

Genetics play a role in your health and longevity, but lifestyle plays an even bigger role in affecting your overall state of health.

There are no guarantees, but here are some ideas for increasing your odds of having a long and healthy life. These tips will benefit both your brain and your body.

### 1. DRINK PLENTY OF WATER

Much of your body and brain are made up of water. You need water to stay hydrated, to flush out toxins, to get nutrients from food, and for your brain to work well. Drinking plenty of water also keeps your skin from becoming dry and prematurely wrinkled from dehydration.

How much water do you need a day? Rule of thumb is to drink one half your weight in ounces each day. For example, if you weighed 130 pounds, you would need 65 ounces or about two quarts of water a day. If you do strenuous exercise or work, you will need even more water.

If you are dehydrated, you probably have lost your thirst signals, which let you know when you need water. Once you start drinking enough water, your thirst signals will return. Then you can get enough water by drinking it when you feel thirsty.

Coffee, tea, and soda are not substitutes for water. Actually, they are dehydrating. If you drink them, you will need more water. Even fruit juice is not a substitute for water because it comes from a food source, and it's not a real solvent. A true solvent is something that dissolves and cleans poisons out of your body.

Drinking tap water is better than not getting enough water, but it is best to drink water which has been purified naturally or through reverse osmosis or distillation. Only some of the bottled water meets these conditions.

### 2. YOU NEED A LITTLE SUNSHINE

It is true that you can get too much sun, but you need some sunshine. Ten to twenty minutes of daily early morning or late evening sun is good for you.

Sunshine gives you vitamin D which you need so your bones can absorb calcium. Without enough vitamin D, your bones can become brittle and break. It is unnatural to spend all of your time indoors. You need fresh air and a little sunshine to maintain excellent health.

### 3. EXERCISE IS IMPORTANT

Your body needs movement and physical activity. Proper exercise can slow down your physical deterioration. Your brain needs oxygen and exercise will provide more of it for your brain

“The main benefit I got was to use my time wisely, separate the important from the unimportant, and calculate use of my time.”

—Bianca Hernandez

and other vital organs. Your brain requires about 25% of the total oxygen that you need. You need three types of exercise: flexibility, aerobic, and strength training.

“I liked the stories about real people. The course was amazing and worthwhile for my future. I can use these strategies for better health, concentration, school success, and whatever else I want to apply them to.”

—John Saucedo

#### **A. Flexibility exercise.**

Your body will become stiffer as you age. Yoga, swimming, tai chi, or just doing stretching can help you to maintain flexibility.

#### **B. Aerobic or cardiovascular exercise.**

Walking, biking, jogging, dancing, and sports which help you to stay in your working heart rate for twenty to thirty minutes are good for your heart. Charts are available to determine the working heart rate for your age bracket.

#### **C. Strength training exercise.**

This type of exercise keeps your muscles firm and strong. When combined with proper nutrition, it also keeps your bones strong. This exercise includes: weight lifting (it can be light weights), calisthenics, and machines, which provide resistance. Unless you are an athlete or compete in sports you don't need to spend a large amount of time exercising. Like anything else, you can overdo exercise and then you will receive less benefit from it. It is better for you to exercise in moderation.

### **4. DON'T SMOKE**

If you are serious about maintaining excellent health, it is important to stop smoking or to never start. It is damaging to your health.

### **5. EAT WELL**

Fresh fruits and vegetables are among the most important foods you can eat. A variety of colors in fruits and vegetables are better for you because they contain different types of antioxidants. Antioxidants strengthen your immune system and slow the aging process. Fresh produce is best, frozen is second best, and the least nutritious are canned fruits and vegetables. It is good to eat some raw foods such as vegetables, fruits, nuts, and seeds. They contain enzymes which are frequently destroyed when the food is cooked. Enzymes help with your digestion and increase your energy. If you eat a salad with one or two meals a day, you will be creating a great and healthy habit. When you eat raw food, know your sources to avoid bacteria contamination. Whole grains, beans, seeds, and nuts are good for you. Raw nuts, seeds, fruits, and vegetables give you energy and contain vitamins and minerals. Your brain also requires nutrients to function well. For example, your brain uses glucose which you can get from fruit and whole grains.

It's best for your health for you to avoid or reduce fast foods, foods high in salt, saturated fat, and sugar. Following these simple and common sense health tips can increase your chances of living a healthy and enjoyable life.

### **6. GOOD DENTAL HYGIENE**

Many dentists say that brushing and flossing your teeth at least once a day may add a few years to your life. Many forms of bacteria, which cause illness, start in your mouth. Good dental hygiene reduces the amount of harmful bacteria in your mouth and prevents it from entering other

organs in your body. The loss of teeth is often due more to gum disease than problems with the teeth themselves. Taking a few minutes a day to brush and floss your teeth is a healthy habit that will keep you smiling.

## 7. GET ENOUGH SLEEP

Getting enough sleep is important for staying healthy. If you are not getting enough sleep at night, try a power nap during the day. Lack of sleep over time can damage your health. It also can reduce your ability to concentrate, impair your memory, and lower your energy, which you need to succeed. Use good time management principles discussed earlier so you can find enough time to get the sleep you need. Sleep benefits both your brain, body, and soul

“I became motivated to improve my health habits. Thank you for the inspiration.”

—Luz Sanchez

## 8. ALCOHOL AND DRUGS CAN DAMAGE YOUR HEALTH

Alcohol is a depressant and destroys brain cells. It impairs your physical and mental functioning. Alcohol also contributes to many accidental deaths, illnesses, and unsafe sex and violence. If you drink alcohol, then drink in moderation. Avoid binge drinking. If you think you have a serious drinking problem, then seek help.

Drugs are as damaging as alcohol and some do greater harm. If you are arrested you can go to prison, damage your reputation, have problems finding a good job, lose valuable relationships, and destroy your peace of mind. If you have a problem with drug use or addiction, seek counseling and help from detoxification centers or support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA).

### ACTIVITY 3.3

Rate your health habits. Check those that are true.

- I avoid unhealthy foods containing lots of salt, fat, and sugar most of the time.
- I eat several servings of fruit and vegetables every day.
- I drink plenty of water each day.
- I brush and floss my teeth daily.
- I very seldom eat fast foods.
- I have a regular exercise program.
- I do some aerobic, flexibility, and strength training exercise each week.
- I get enough sleep almost every night.
- I avoid situations that put me at risk of injury or harm.
- I don't abuse alcohol or use illegal drugs.
- Total score for health habits.



TIME  
MANAGEMENT  
TIPS



timemanagement.com

ACTIVITY 3.4

Rate your mental health. Check all that are true.



- I feel happy and grateful most of the time.
- I am rarely depressed.
- I manage stress well most of the time.
- I do not expect perfection from myself.
- I have wonderful relationships where I both give and receive love.
- I can and do express my feelings often.
- My sense of self-worth and self-esteem are good.
- I am able to forgive myself and others for past mistakes.
- I don't abuse drugs and alcohol.
- I bounce back from tragedies and life's difficulties.
- Total score for mental health.

Make an investment today in your physical and mental health to increase your energy, ability to concentrate, and your feeling of well-being. Your state of health will affect your ability to learn, succeed, and make your dreams come true

**CHAPTER 3 MAIN POINTS**

- Time is your most precious resource because it is irreplaceable, and as it goes by, so does your life.
- Focus more of your time and energy on 20% of the activities that bring you the best results.
- Planning, prioritizing, and using time management tools will help you to manage your time wisely.
- By spending more of your time doing what you think is important, but not urgent, you will reduce stress and accomplish more.
- Your physical and mental health affects each other and every other part of your life.
- Exercise and good nutrition will improve your physical health and increase your energy, which is needed to achieve your dreams and goals.
- Good physical and mental health are attainable for you and will improve your concentration, ability to learn, and your chances for success in college.

MAYO CLINIC  
Stress Assessment



mayoclinic.com/health/stress-assessment/sr00029





## Manage Your Time

By Raymond Gerson

Manage your time,  
to get off of the dime,  
Play your best role,  
and go for your goal.

Take positive action,  
and find satisfaction.  
Plan your day,  
and you'll find your way.

Follow your plan,  
know that you can.  
You can be shrewd,  
don't go by your mood.

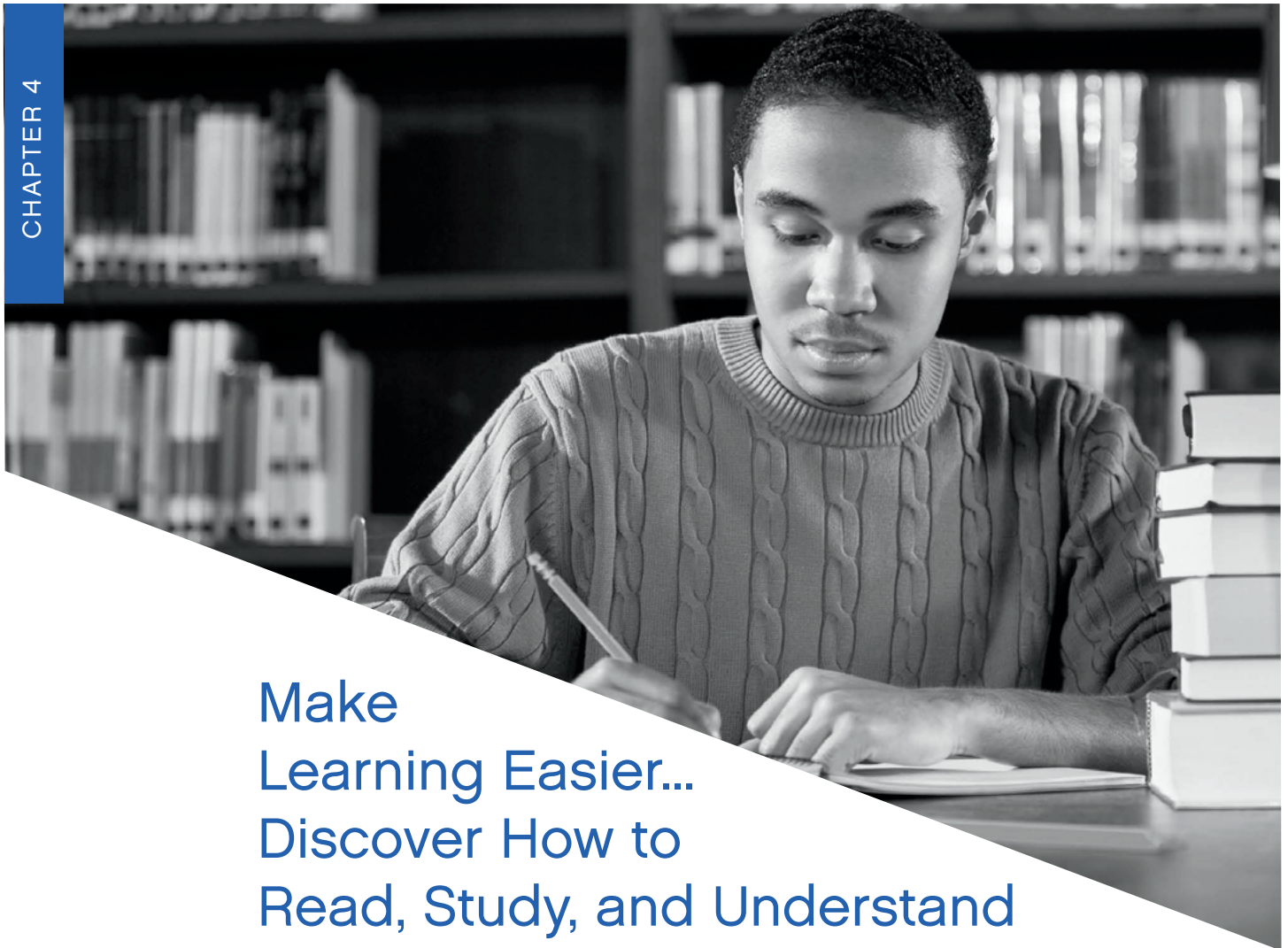
Use pockets of time,  
it will help you to climb,  
the latter of success,  
and not get stressed.

Cut out distraction,  
avoid the inaction.  
Focus your attention,  
Increase your comprehension.

Pursue your destination,  
to overcome procrastination.  
Take steps that are small,  
and you will not stall.

Life goes by fast,  
much time has passed.  
Make the rest worthwhile,  
You can do it with style.

In Chapter 4, you will be learning strategies to use when reading and taking notes so you can get the most from your textbooks and class lectures.



## Make Learning Easier... Discover How to Read, Study, and Understand Textbooks

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Your reading ability and comprehension are strongly related to succeeding in college. You need good study skills for purposeful and worthwhile learning to occur. Effective study skills are centered on your reading and writing ability. If you can't read well, you will not do well in college. Not only will you need to understand words, but you must be able to get the hang of ideas, meaning, theories, and concepts.

The key to your being a good reader is for you to be an active, not a passive, learner. If you are a passive learner, you just read the words in a textbook without focused attention and without thinking about what you're reading. If you are an active learner, you think, question, and take notes when you read. As an active learner, you read important passages from the textbook and write the main points down in your own words. You use study skill strategies as an active learner to make sense out of what you are reading.

In this chapter, you will learn about strategies of active learners and how to understand and remember more of what you read.



“Learning without thought is labor lost.” —Confucius

## Benefits of Excellent Reading Skills

- Increases your retention and comprehension
- Improves your ability to focus
- Improves your self-esteem and self-confidence
- Increases your learning satisfaction
- Stimulates and develops your critical thinking skills
- Improves your self-management skills
- Learning becomes more enjoyable for you
- Attain higher levels of achievement
- Reduces your test anxiety

READING  
STRATEGIES



mindtools.com/dstratg.html

Now let's look at strategies you can use before, during, and after reading.

## Strategies You Can Use Before Reading

- ➊ **Create and use the right study environment.** Choose a location where you can eliminate or reduce distractions, have enough room for your materials, and won't have constant interruptions.
- ➋ **Choose a time when you feel rested and alert.** If you are sleepy, take a short nap before studying. Eat a healthy snack if you need some energy.



- ③ **Ask yourself what you already know about the subject.** Connecting what you're already familiar with to the new material will make learning easier for you.
- ④ **Set goals and know the purpose of your study session.** Ask yourself what is it you are trying to learn. For example, are you preparing for a test or to write a paper? These are different purposes, and you will study for them in different ways.
- ⑤ **Preview the chapter(s).** When you preview chapters before reading them, you will gain a comfort level with the material that you are going to read. You will know what the chapter is about and where you are going. It's like you are looking at a map before you take a trip. When you look over the chapters, form the habit of turning headings and sub-headings into questions. This will help you to focus and to get a better idea of what the author is saying.

When you preview chapters, glance at:

Chapter headings and sub-headings, introductions, questions, pictures, charts, bold or italicized words, and summaries or conclusions.

It will only take you a few minutes to preview a chapter and this provides a good overview. This overview will help you understand and retain more material when you read the chapter.

## READING STRATEGIES



emmanuel.edu/Documents/Academics/ARC/Reading%20Strategies.pdf

## Strategies You Can Use During Reading

- ① **Break up your reading and ask questions.** Read a section of the chapter and then ask yourself questions about what you read. Check your understanding of the material. This process will help keep your attention focused on what you are reading. If your mind wandered while reading, you will know it when you pause to ask questions. If you lost focus, you can go back and reread the section.

*Reading one section at a time will increase your comprehension and retention of the material.* While reading each section, anticipate and guess questions that might be on your next test. Jot down these questions and make them part of a practice quiz that you will take before the actual exam is given.

*Read in chunks followed by taking small breaks.* For example, read for about thirty to forty minutes and then break for a few minutes. You will retain more information this way. Studies have shown that you will remember more at the beginning and ending of a reading session. So you can purposely create many beginnings and endings by breaking up your reading. Many people find that their concentration begins to fade after thirty to forty minutes. Use this knowledge to your advantage.

- ② **Look up words you do not understand.** Keep a dictionary and a thesaurus handy. A good vocabulary will increase your success in school and life. Many high level executives and CEOs have vocabularies second only to college English professors. If you do not understand individual words, it will be difficult to comprehend the meaning of the sentence that contains those words.
- ③ **Write summaries of what you are reading.** You can do this in a separate notebook or in a section of the notebook you use for class notes. Write a brief summary in your own words after reading the chapter - or after reading each major section of the chapter.
- ④ **Create study guides.** Here are examples of study guides to help you study effectively:
  - A. **Create flash or study cards.** Use 3 x 5 cards for learning and memorizing vocabulary words, definitions, and the meaning of scientific and other terms. Write the word or question on one side of the card and the definition or answer on the other side. Study cards are great for helping you memorize information, but you still need to

understand the concepts. One advantage of study cards is that you can take them with you to use when you are waiting at the doctor's office, waiting in line, or when you are in other situations where you have small chunks of time available.

#### EXAMPLE OF A STUDY CARD

- B. Create outlines.** Outlines are a good way to organize your thoughts and the material you are reading. They are especially effective if you like to structure material in a sequence or linear fashion.

What is annotation?

Front

Writing key ideas in the margin of the text in your own words.

Back

#### ACTIVITY 4.1

Outline the main points in the article below.

### Using Dissatisfaction to Find Work That Matters

By Raymond Gerson

One clue for discovering work that matters to you can be found by noticing your own dissatisfaction with problems you see in the world. Are there problems that inspire compassion for others? Do you see problems or needs that make you feel sad or angry? Is there a need that you would like you fulfill if you had the power to make a difference?

Dissatisfaction can be positive if you use your discontentment to make a contribution. How can you use your talents and skills to help fill a need you see in the world? Aristotle put it this way, "Where your talents and the needs of the world meet, there lies your vocation."

Now fill in the numbers and letters below with what you consider to be the main points:

**1. Main point here:**

- a. Supporting point: \_\_\_\_\_  
b. Supporting point: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Main point:**

- a. Supporting point: \_\_\_\_\_  
b. Supporting point: \_\_\_\_\_  
c. Supporting point: \_\_\_\_\_

- C. Create idea maps.** These are especially good for visual learners. An idea or mind map (also referred to as "think link") is a picture of the main lessons that shows how they are connected to each other. Idea maps are diagrams used to represent ideas linked to and arranged around a central idea. Ideas branch out from the central idea, and there is no limit to the number of branches and connections that you can create. See Figure 4.1.



FIGURE 4.1 IDEA MAP

Source: Developed by Raymond Gerson. Based on Tony Buzan. *Use Both Sides of Your Brain: New Mind Mapping Techniques*. Plume, 1991.

ACTIVITY 4.2

Create an idea map for the seven goal categories, but also expand each of them into another branch as in the financial goal example.

- D. **Create timelines.** This study aid involves putting events in chronological order or in a sequence of events, usually in the order they occurred. It is a good study guide for courses like history where you can list historical events in order of occurrence and prominent people who were associated with those events. Table 4.1 is an example of a timeline of major losses in the life of Abraham Lincoln.
- E. **Practice annotating and annolighting.** Annotating consists of writing key ideas in the margins of the textbook in your own words. Annolighting consists of highlighting key words and phrases and annotating these highlights in the margins. In other words, you are explaining the highlighted words and phrases.

Table 4.1 Abraham Lincoln's Major Losses and Failures	
Year	Temporary Defeats
1832	Defeated for state legislature
1833	Failed in business
1835	Sweetheart died
1836	Nervous breakdown
1838	Defeated for speaker
1854	Defeated for U.S. senate
1856	Defeated for V.P. nomination
1858	Defeated for U.S. senate
1860	Success—elected U.S. president

It is best not to highlight on the first reading. Skim a section after you have read it; then, highlight only key words and phrases instead of whole sentences.



When students highlight on the first reading, they tend to highlight too much and this defeats the purpose of highlighting. Highlighting helps to identify main ideas and bypass less important information. This increases comprehension and retention of material. It is best to highlight only 15%–25% of the material.

**Determine your purpose; then highlight.** For example, is your purpose to identify main ideas or were you asked to understand the author's philosophy on a particular subject? Your purpose and goal for the text will determine what is best for you to highlight. You should only highlight words you think are necessary to understand important ideas in a sentence.

“I found this book to be very easy to read and understand. I have learning disabilities and sometimes have difficulty reading and understanding what I read. But this book was an exception to that. It was a great book. Professor Gerson gave good tips. I found it to be encouraging and positive. I would recommend this class to any incoming freshmen.”

—SAM LEEPER

### Example of Annolighting

Note: The *italics* on the right represent written comments in the margins.

#### Work as an Art Form and You as the Artist

By Raymond Gerson

Anyone who responds to an inner calling to fulfill a worthy purpose, envisions their goal, and then brings this vision into reality and form is an artist. In this way your work can be a form of art. Gibran said, “Work is love made visible.” When you love what you do, your work becomes an expression of love. It is natural to desire to express the best of yourself in the world through your vocation. This is how the inner (that which needs to be expressed from within you) becomes the outer visible form of your work.

An architect envisions a building, draws it on paper, and eventually it takes the form of a building. A teacher sees the results he or she wants the students to achieve, conveys this expectation to the students, and inspires them to rise to the level of expectation. Both the architect and the teacher are like artists who paint their masterpiece. Laurence G. Boldt, in his wonderful book, *Zen and the Art of Making a Living* put it this way, “You can experience your everyday life as art by bringing inspiration and absorption, creativity and resourcefulness, play and delight.”

When you are inspired and in the flow, your work becomes a form of art.

*Follow heart,  
see goal, make  
happen and  
you're an artist.*

*Be an artist.  
Picture what  
I want and  
bring into form.  
Be inspired!  
Create.*

## ACTIVITY 4.3

Annolight the following article from Chapter 1.

### Small Habits Can Transform Your Life


By Raymond Gerson

Your day-to-day habits have an increasing effect over time. Positive habits bring positive results and negative habits bring negative consequences.

Small, positive habits done on a regular basis can give you large benefits over enough time. For example, walking a mile a day might seem like a small habit, but in one year you would have walked 365 miles and in ten years you would have walked 3,650 miles. Imagine the benefits to your heart and respiratory system after ten years of walking just one mile a day.

On the other hand, let's say you drink one can of soda a day. This gives you the equivalent of ten teaspoons of sugar a day. What effect will this have on your weight and long-term health compared to a healthy habit like walking?

Your habits may seem small, but they can have big effects. Habits tend to be difficult to break and can easily follow you through life. So doesn't it make sense to replace your negative habits with positive ones and to add new positive habits to your life? You can use small positive habits to maintain excellent health, to achieve your dreams, and to live a fulfilling life.



“What I liked was how many different techniques there are to help me read better.”

— ELIZABETH ELLIS



## Combining Questions and Annotation

You can add questions on one side of your text and annotate on the other side, if your book has enough margin space. If there is not enough space you can use your notebook. People usually think in questions and answers. When you read a section in your book certain implied questions are answered by the author. You can ask questions which were answered by what you read. This practice will engage you with your reading. You will become an active reader, and it will help you to stay focused and to understand what you read. And, it makes reviewing for your test easier.

**Annotation** is even more powerful as a strategy when you combine it with asking questions. When you prepare for your test, you can review your questions on one side and your answers (annotation) in your own words on the other side. You can cover your answers while looking at the questions and use them as a self-test.

Let's look at an example where I used this strategy for an article I wrote about taking small steps to your goals.

### Small Steps to What You Want

#### Questions

What is **kaizen**?

How can I make the journey to my goals manageable?

How can I over-come fear of big goals and remain self-confident?

What is an example of using small steps to reach a big goal?

How can I make my dreams and goals come true?

Lao Tzu said, "A journey of a thousand miles must begin with the first step." The Japanese word **kaizen** means small **steps** for **continued improvement**.

Any large **goal** or project can be broken into **small steps** which leads us to the **achievement** of the **goal**.

According to Robert Maurer, author of **One Small Step Can Change Your Life**, taking **small steps** helps us to **bypass fears** that often arise when we are facing big changes. An overwhelming task does not seem daunting when we break it down into small steps. Fear and anxiety restrict our ability to think clearly and to be creative. When we take **small steps** to large goals we remain relaxed, **confident**, and **think** more **clearly**.

I started weight lifting when I was eighteen years old. I could only bench press **75 pounds**. Two of my **weights** were a **quarter** of a **pound** each. I would often tell myself that I should be able to lift a half pound more weight and I would add these small weights to the barbell. In a few years, I was able to bench press **300 pounds** at a body weight of 145 pounds. This is an example of using small **incremental steps** to **accomplish** a big **goal**. I kept increasing the weight by a small amount, consolidated my gains, and in a few years was lifting **225 pounds more** than when I began weightlifting. It is amazing what can be accomplished with small incremental steps.

You can **decide what** you **want** in life, whether it is a great relationship, career, or any other goal. Then begin taking **small steps** toward your goal until you **achieve it**.

Now you have a combination of two simple, but powerful strategies to increase your understanding and memory of what you read. Try **combining questions** with **annotation** and you will **learn** **faster, easier, and better**.

#### Annotations

Keep stepping up.

Break down large goals into smaller ones.

Take small steps.

Weight lifting. Keep adding small weights to make big gains in strength.

Decide what you want and go one step at a time.

## ACTIVITY 4.4

In the following article, write questions on one side and your annotated comments on the other.



## Questions

## Listen to Your Life and Discover the Work You Were Born to Do

## Annotations

“Is the life I am living, the same as the life that wants to live in me?” These are the words of Parker Palmer from his book, *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*.

Are you living your life based on “oughts” and “shoulds” or on what your life and inner voice are calling you to do? It is easy to fall into the trap of pursuing a career because you or others believe this is what you “ought” to do. And yet, to “follow your bliss” and to discover the work that you were meant to do, you must listen to your heart.

Parker Palmer spent years in vocations, which were not aligned with his true nature and best talents. This resulted in his being depressed for many years of his life. Eventually, he returned to teaching and helping educators. This work was in harmony with the life that wanted to be expressed through him. Greater job satisfaction and the ability to make a positive contribution was the result.

One of my college students was depressed and was self-sabotaging by missing classes and turning his school work in late. For years, he and others believed that he “should” become a nurse. More self-reflection helped him to realize that nursing would not be fulfilling. He had worked in hospitals before and did not enjoy it. Recalling the joy of being an athletic trainer’s assistant while in high school made him realize that he wanted to go in a different direction. For example, he remembered patching up the quarterback who went back into the game and scored the winning touchdown. This experience made him feel joy and a sense of purpose and accomplishment.

My student changed his college major and began pursuing the goal of becoming an athletic trainer. His depression disappeared, papers were turned in on time, and he attended every class. He was inspired, happy, and self-motivated. His grades began to improve, and he seemed like a different person.

This is an example of what can happen when you stop living your life according to “oughts” and begin living the life that wants to live in you. The clues to a career that is right for you are in your life. Let your life speak and then listen to your own inner voice. This is one way to discover the work you were born to do.

The following two articles were blogs that I wrote for one of my websites. They are about a simple reading comprehension strategy that has done wonders for many of my students.

## Reading Comprehension Strategy Makes Student Scream

Why did a student in a college psychology course let out a loud scream of delight, leap out of her chair, run down the aisle, and then give her professor a big hug? Read on for the rest of the story.



A friend of mine is a professor of psychology who is also helping his students to improve their reading comprehension. He gives tough exams, and many of his students fail the tests, unless they understand the concepts and principles.

Last semester, he started advising a few students, who were failing, to read each chapter three times. He advised these students to stop after reading each paragraph and explain it out loud to themselves. Instructions were not to go to the next paragraph until they could explain the meaning of the preceding one. This strategy was being offered to the students to help them become active readers in which they thoroughly engaged with the material for understanding and then through repetition stored the information in their long-term memories.

Several students who used this strategy went from making "Fs" to making "As." One of the students was so excited when she received her grade of "A" that she hollered out loud, bolted from her seat, ran down the aisle toward her professor and then gave him a big hug. Prior to this experience, she was failing all of her college courses in spite of reading the chapters in her textbooks.

Now, my friend has decided to conduct an experiment and do some action research to find out which of three different strategies will improve reading comprehension and test scores the most.

One group of students plans to read the chapters once before the next test, but will also pause after each paragraph and explain it out loud. They are not to go to the next paragraph until they understand the meaning of the preceding paragraph. Group 2 will read the chapters three times, but will not pause and explain the paragraphs. Group 3 will read each chapter three times and will also explain each paragraph three times.

*Which of these three strategies will work best and in what order? Which group will make the highest scores? Which one will prove to be the most effective reading comprehension strategy? Read the following article to find out.*

"I have always had problems with reading comprehension and keeping my attention on what I am reading. After I started using the reading strategies in this chapter my test scores went from Fs to As."

— ADRIANNA VASQUEZ

## Reading Comprehension Strategy Makes Student Scream (Part 2)

I promised to give you the results of my friend's study. Before I share his comments and results, I want to share what has happened with a few of my students.

A couple of my students made failing grades on two of my quizzes. I asked them to prepare for the next exam by reading the chapter once, but to stop after each paragraph and explain it out loud. The latest brain research indicates

that most people can remember 90% of what they teach or explain compared to 10% of what they hear and 20% of what they both hear and see. Both of my students tried this strategy, and they made As on the next quiz. Another student improved from a D average on previous quizzes to a B after using this technique.

*My friend is Lynn Skaggs, PhD and professor of psychology, at Central Texas College. Here are his results in his own words:*

"The results were really good. I had 25 students participate and were pretty evenly distributed among the three groups:

Group 1 – read once, summarizing each paragraph out loud before going to the next paragraph;

Group 2 – read the chapter three times;

Group 3 – do both.

I compared their grade with the average on their previous two tests.

Group 1 – grade increased 23%

Group 2 – grade increased 21%

Group 3 – grade increased 24%

There is really no significant difference in performance among the groups. The increase is the equivalent of a student averaging 75 increasing to a 92.

A confound was that almost all of Group 3 had good grades on their previous two tests, so their ability to improve was very limited. So, I looked at only students who had D or F averages:

Group 1 – increased 28%

Group 2 – increased 28%

This is the equivalent of a student with a 60 average increasing to 77 – from failing to passing.

Group 3 – There was only one student with D or F in this group, but his grade increased 57%!

Since there is really no difference between the study techniques, it probably comes down to a student finally studying, period, and using almost any technique that requires lots of involvement with the text.

The main technique error is in barely studying the text and focusing on notes taken from the text instead. That seems to be a recipe for failure.

**Read the text, read the text, read the text is the recipe for success.** However, the most important ingredient for success is for the student to make the effort to study and stop texting friends!"

---

*Source: Lynn Skaggs, PhD, Central Texas College  
Reprinted with permission.*

## ACTIVITY 4.5

Read the following article **one paragraph at a time**. Explain each paragraph out loud to yourself or to another person.

### Focused Attention Is a Key to Success

One of the secrets of successful people is their ability to focus on the task at hand. Concentrated attention is the key to achievement in sports, school, relationships, and in your career.

Concentrated attention is similar to the power of focusing the rays of the sun through a magnifying glass on to a piece of paper. It burns a hole through the paper because the sun's rays are magnified. Similarly, you can magnify your results with concentrated attention.

Make a list of your priorities for each day. Tackle these tasks, which you identified as important one-by-one. Treat each task that you are doing as the most important activity of the day. This will help you to be totally present in the here and now. Do each activity with enjoyment and enthusiasm, if possible. If you are unable to be enthusiastic, at least do the activity with your attention until you have completed the task or reach an appropriate stopping point. Then, scratch it off of your to-do list (if it is unfinished, add it to tomorrow's list) and approach your next priority in the same way. This may not sound cool in this age of multi-tasking, but it will give you excellent results.

Be like a scientist and try this approach of focusing your attention on one task at a time as an experiment to see if it works for you. I think that you will be pleased with the results.



### Strategies You Can Use after Reading

- 1 **Review the text.** Pay special attention to your highlights and annotations. The more often you review, the more you will remember. Review again as close to the time of the test as possible. If you can review in the morning before you take the test, this will ensure the material will be fresh in your mind.
- 2 **Review your study guides.** If you haven't created any study guides, it is not too late to do so as you read. You can also create study guides after you have completed reading the chapters. Use whichever study guides seem best for the situation. Use the ones that work best for you.
- 3 **Review your notes from the textbook reading and from class lectures.** Note taking will be discussed later in the next chapter.
- 4 **Create a practice test with anticipated questions.** This can be a powerful study method. You can do this alone or - even better - with a couple of your classmates. Each of you can develop questions.  

You can come up with more questions together than by yourself. If you anticipate even half of the questions that will be on the test, it will be a big advantage for you. You will be able to answer those questions quickly and easily; then you can concentrate on the questions that you didn't anticipate. This will reduce your test anxiety and increase your level of self-confidence during the exam.
- 5 **After you have read each chapter in the text, write a final summary.** Distill the material into the main points and ideas.
- 6 **Teach others what you have learned.** The teacher learns as much or more than the student. When you teach the material you learn and retain it better. You strengthen what you already know and gain new perspectives or ways of looking at the material.

“The most valuable part of this book and class for me was the chapter on how to read and study text books. It helped me to study better. For example, I was going to take a reading vocabulary test in another course. My goal was to make a 90, but I exceeded my goal and made a 97. The material in this book was very useful and helpful because it was easy to understand what the author was trying to convey.”

— ELIDA MEDRANO

You can teach lessons to younger brothers or sisters, to friends, or if you have children who are old enough, you can teach them. Getting together with a couple of classmates offers an opportunity for you to teach each other. Each one of you can be responsible to teach different parts of the material to each other.

- 7 **Seek help if anything is not clear.** If you are having difficulty understanding anything from the text or class notes, seek assistance. For example, see if tutoring is available. You can also seek assistance from a classmate or from your instructor.

## ACTIVITY 4.6

Review the main points of what you have read in this chapter. Create a brief practice quiz. Write five multiple choice questions in your notebook with four possible answers for each question. Only one choice will be correct. Here is an example:



The key to effective reading is to be:

- A. An active learner.
- B. A passive learner.
- C. A genius.
- D. A speed reader.

Correct answer is A.

Now you have a variety of reading strategies to use. Be systematic, like a scientist, and experiment with these different strategies to find out what works best for you.



### Retrieval Learning Practice for Student Success

When I was in college I decided to try self-testing to see if it would improve my grades. I created my own practice quizzes and answered the questions before I was tested on the material by my professors. The result was that my retention of material and grades improved. I also forgot less information over a semester compared to how I was doing before.

There are now many research studies which have demonstrated that self-testing is a powerful and effective method of learning. In the book, *Make It Stick: The Secret of Successful Learning*, the authors review numerous research studies that validate the effectiveness of self-testing or “retrieval learning practice” for students. Self-testing can take the form of flash cards, creating practice quizzes or writing summaries of the main ideas.

Self-testing is a retrieval practice for recalling facts and ideas from memory and is a more effective strategy than re-reading according to many studies which are referred to in *Make It Stick*. Retrieving information strengthens memory and interrupts forgetting. It strengthens neural pathways and makes it easier to recall the information in the future. The learning is deeper and more lasting. The other advantage of self-testing is that students can identify what they do not know or have forgotten. It gives students a realistic picture of what they remember and understand about the material so that they can improve.

In addition to encouraging students to do their own self-testing, educators can give practice quizzes and/or frequent short quizzes as part of their grade. One college professor who was mentioned in *Make It Stick* was in the habit of giving students only a mid-term and final exam during the semester. He was dissatisfied with overall student attendance and grades. This professor decided to try a different approach and he replaced the two major exams with



quizzes every week. Student attendance, grades, retention and understanding of material increased significantly.

One study cited in the book was done with an eighth grade science class. One group of students reviewed all of the course material three times during the semester. The second group of students were given low-stakes quizzes with feedback three times during the semester. The first group of students averaged a C- in the course. The group of students who took the low-stakes quizzes averaged an A- in the course.

Whether you are a student, educator or someone interested in improving your capacity to learn, using self-testing as a learning strategy is worth a try. Let me know how it goes.

### JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT

Try out one of the reading strategies discussed in this chapter. Write at least one page in your journal describing your results and what you learned from using the reading strategy.

### QUESTIONS TO ANSWER IN YOUR JOURNAL AND DISCUSS WITH OTHERS

- What are my greatest strengths and weaknesses as a reader?
- Which of the reading and study strategies discussed in this chapter appeal to me the most? How will these strategies benefit me?
- What is one reading strategy that I will use right away and how will I use it?
- What was the most important lesson that I gained from the student success story in this chapter?



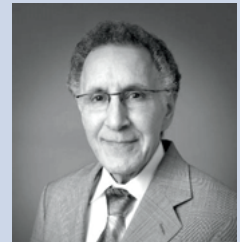
### AUTHOR'S NOTE

I had a student in one of my classes who was reading at seventh grade level according to her score on the Texas Success Initiative. This was the lowest reading level of anyone in my college success course. She failed my first two quizzes with scores of 40 and 50. I asked her to try the strategy of reading a paragraph in the text and then explaining it (teaching it) out loud to herself. I asked her not to go to the next paragraph until she understood the previous one. On the next quiz she made a 100.

On every quiz after that, she continued to make A's. When I asked what she was doing to go from Fs to As, she said that she was following my advice and explaining each paragraph in the book to herself out loud. As a result of practicing this strategy, she was consistently out scoring other students with higher reading scores. She told me that using this one strategy transformed her life, helped her to develop a success mind-set, and gave her the confidence that she can succeed in college.

I suspect that her low reading score on the Texas Success Initiative was at least partially due to a reading attention problem. When she learned a way to focus and keep her attention on what she was reading, better comprehension was the result.

RAYMOND GERSON



## Student Success Story

*In one of my courses, I ask the students to write a paper about their educational journey from elementary, middle school, and high school, which led them to college. The paper usually reflects their learning experiences, obstacles, and what it took to get them to college. In the following story, a former student shares part of her educational journey.*

### My Educational Journey

By Angelica Rubio

As I began my education years ago, I entered with high hopes. My future was bright and I was ready for the adventure. Somewhere along that journey, my promising future tumbled right before my eyes. It didn't happen over night; it was more of a slow deterioration of everything I had dreamed of becoming.

Looking back on those early years, I remember who and what I once wanted to be. I was a typical child who dreamt of being a veterinarian. It seems a little silly to me now, but then I believed it was within my grasp. I had all the potential to become anything I wanted because of all the effort and determination I put forth. It was amazing how learning came so natural to me even at this early age. I was always a straight A student and was very involved in my education.

Then, junior high came along and I was so thrilled. I was ready for the bigger and better challenges that came along with it. Although it was a big transition from elementary I never once allowed it to prevent me from always giving 100%. While there, I explored my learning abilities, which ultimately led to many achievements and awards. So many people around me believed that if I continued on this path, I was sure to succeed in a college career. As my junior high years came to an end, I was ready for the next challenge – high school.

High school, to me, was a whole different ball game. In a way, I guess you could say that I let the glamour of it all get the best of me. There were so many new things to experience, and I took the phrase, “have the time of your life” a little too literal. I used to think these four years were the best times of my life; boy how I was wrong! Somehow my love for school became just one big social occasion for me. My grades quickly dwindled down to ones that I could never have imagined. I took a long, hard drop to the bottom of the pit; it was such a disappointing feeling. Toward the end, I tried to make up for all the time lost, but I was a little too late. So, eventually, I quit and let down all those people who for years believed so strongly in me. Overall, what hurt the most was letting me down. Deep down I still had faith that somewhere, somehow, I would be somebody.

With all said and done, here I am today, a new Angelica who's ready to conclude that journey that I cut short so long ago. It may have taken me a little while, but I see it as better late than never. When I finally decided to start where I left off, I met someone who made me believe again. This woman not knowing anything about me had so much confidence in my ability. Today, I am thankful for her faith. I am at a point in my life where all I want to do is succeed. I am so determined, it has become my passion. My whole educational experience to this point is a lesson learned. I hope to never look back at what I once was or could have been. Like the saying goes, “You live and you learn.” My outlook now is to live and learn another day for my future.



## ACTIVITY 4.7

## Goal for the week:

Three steps I will take to achieve my goal:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



## CHAPTER 4 MAIN POINTS

- Your reading ability and study skills are strongly related to college success. Be an active, not passive learner.
- Use study strategies such as: previewing, breaking up your reading, creating study guides, and annotating to help you to be an effective reader.
- Ask yourself questions as you read and use them for self-testing.
- Explaining each paragraph in your own words and out loud will enhance your reading comprehension.

## Active Reader Am I

By Raymond Gerson

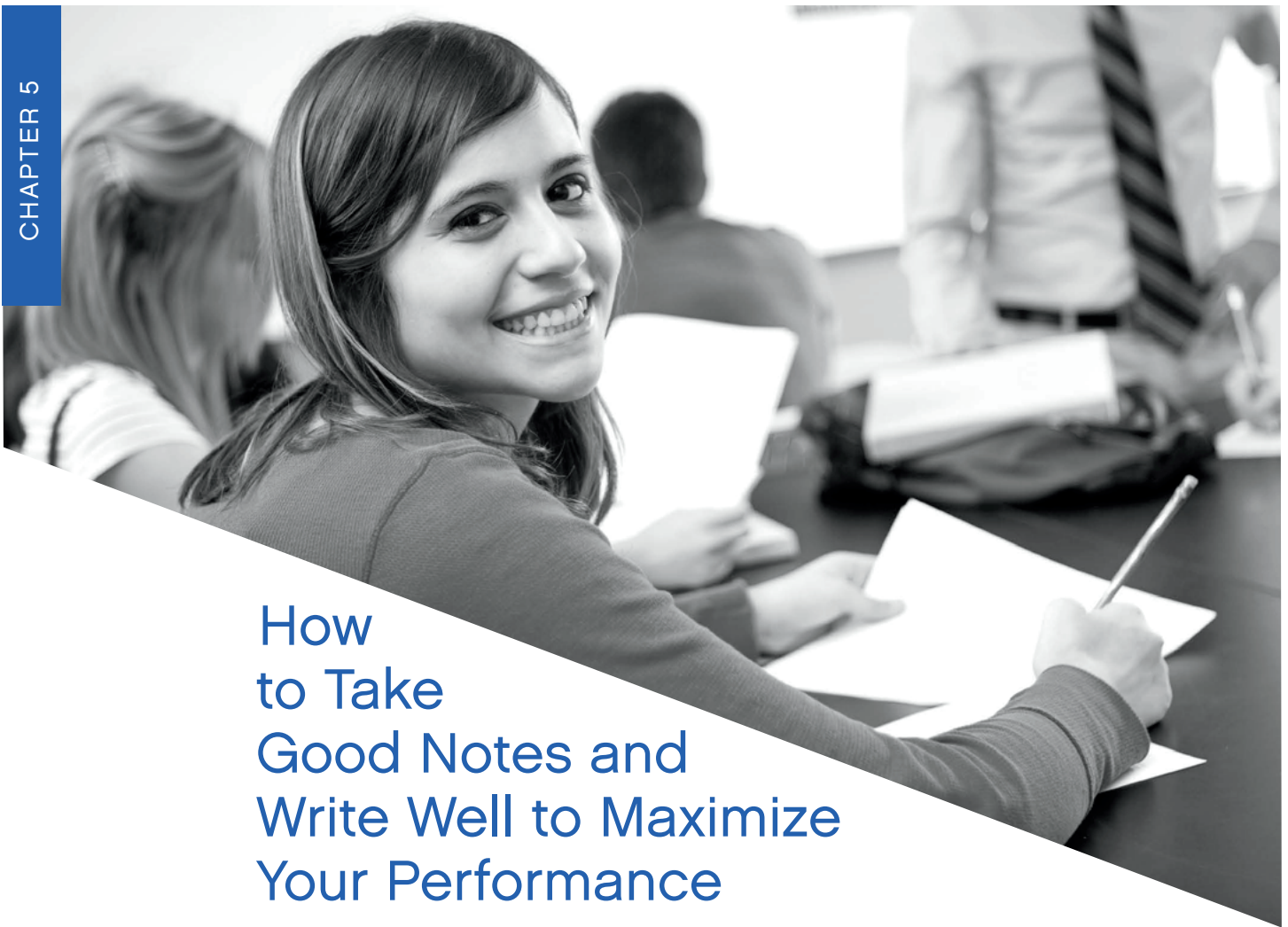
I will focus my attention,  
for better reading comprehension,  
it is my intention,  
to avoid split attention.

I will ask myself questions,  
and teach myself lessons,  
I'm open to suggestions,  
to avoid brain indigestion.

I'll break reading into parts,  
and incorporate the arts,  
it requires our hearts, and leads to more smarts.  
Books are to be read,  
to get knowledge in my head,  
then I'll earn my own bread,  
and be able to get ahead.



In Chapter 5, you will be learning systems for taking notes in class and better writing skills which can improve your grades on objective tests and the quality of your papers.



## How to Take Good Notes and Write Well to Maximize Your Performance

### Note-Taking Skills

#### TAKING GOOD NOTES FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS

The information presented in your classes by teachers and professors usually contains important ideas and material, which will be included on exams. Most instructors include questions on exams that come both from the textbook and the class lectures. Many students do not realize the importance of listening in class with focused attention and taking good notes.

If you are not in class, you cannot listen to the instructor, cannot pick up verbal and nonverbal cues as to what is important, and cannot take notes. So, a major key to your success is attending class.

Note-taking helps you to concentrate on what your teacher or professor is saying. It helps you understand and organize the information in your textbook that is related to the lecture.

It is important for you to take good notes and review them often because you will forget information rapidly after you hear it. The Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve reveals (Table 5.1) how much information you will remember with the passage of time. Hermann Ebbinghaus found that we tend to lose more than half of our memory of newly learned knowledge in

a matter of days and weeks. This tends to happen unless you review the learned material. So, you can see that if you do not attend your classes, listen attentively, take good notes, and review them; you will retain less and less of the material over time.

“I can now express myself well in my notes and through my papers. I realize that I can do anything now if I put my mind to it. My reading has improved.”

— THERESA HERNANDEZ



“True ease in writing comes from art, not chance.” —Alexander Pope

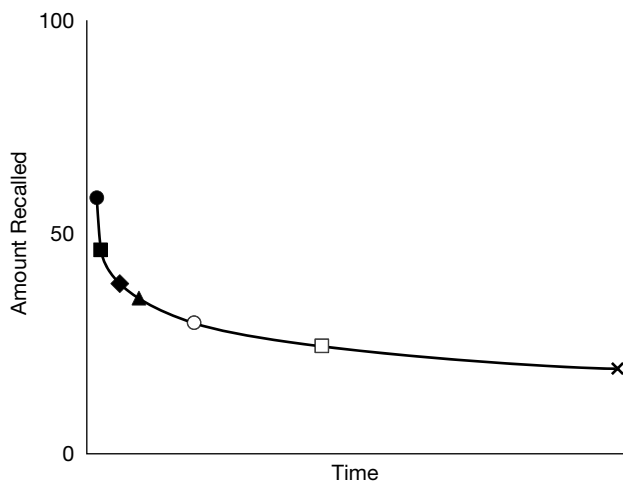


Table 5.1 The Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve	
Time	Amount Recalled
● 20 minutes	58.2%
■ 1 hour	44.2%
◆ 9 hours	35.8%
▲ 1 day	33.7%
○ 2 days	27.8%
□ 6 days	25.4%
× 31 days	21.1%

Source: Hermann Ebbinghaus, *Memory: A Contribution to Experimental Psychology*, (1885). Translated by Henry A. Ruger & Clara E. Bussenius (1913). Originally published in New York by Teachers College, Columbia University.

## Benefits of Effective Note-Taking

- Important information is recorded and available to you for review instead of forgotten
- Helps you to concentrate in class, stay alert, and be an active learner
- Helps you organize information
- Complements and makes information in the textbook easier for you to understand
- Improves your grades on exams and class assignments
- Builds your critical thinking ability
- Builds your listening skills
- Provides you with information to study that may not be in the textbook
- Improves your overall learning

## Active Listening Is Important For Effective Note-Taking

Active listening means that you are engaged with the lecture. You can do this by:

- **Listening with your focused attention.** This means being fully present.
- **Asking questions both silently and out loud.** You can ask questions silently within your own mind and also ask your instructor questions to stay engaged.
- **Watching for verbal and nonverbal cues.** You will find what information is important by listening and watching your instructor's verbal cues and body language.
- **Writing what you are hearing in your own words.** You will understand and remember your own words better than the words of others. Translate your instructor's lectures into your own words so it makes sense to you.
- **Evaluating what you are hearing.** Analyze and evaluate the information presented to separate the important from the unimportant

### ACTIVITY 5.1

Think about the internal and external distractions that interfere with your ability to listen well. List three of these distractions and brainstorm ideas for reducing them.



1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### NOTE-TAKING ASSESSMENT

Decide to what extent each statement applies to you. Circle the rating that fits you best at this time.

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost always
I attend my classes.	1	2	3	4
I pay attention and listen with focused attention.	1	2	3	4
I take notes.	1	2	3	4
I take notes in my own words.	1	2	3	4
I ask questions silently and out loud.	1	2	3	4
I use a specific note-taking system.	1	2	3	4
I review my notes soon after class.	1	2	3	4
I compare my notes to the textbook.	1	2	3	4
I write down main points and use abbreviations.	1	2	3	4
I review my notes often before my test.	1	2	3	4

#### ACTIVITY 5.2

List your three biggest note-taking problems. Brainstorm several possible solutions to each problem.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



## TIPS TO HELP YOU TAKE EFFECTIVE NOTES

1. **Attend your classes.** You cannot take notes if you are not in class. It is also important to be rested and alert when you take notes. Take your textbook, notebook, pens, and other materials that you will need to class so you can take good class notes. It will really help if you read chapters ahead of time before your instructor discusses them in class.
2. **Pay attention to verbal and nonverbal cues.** Your instructor will often give you hints as to what is important.
  - A. **Verbal cues** – The instructor’s voice becomes excited, slows down or speeds up, pauses before and after a comment and she varies pitch, repeats something, says “listen to this” or “an important point is”, or other comments, which indicate that an important idea is being stated.
  - B. **Nonverbal cues** – The instructor’s eyes or face lights up, gestures become animated, he paces back and forth, looks to see if students are taking notes, points to information on the board or to a handout or PowerPoint slide.
3. **Sit close so you can see and hear well.** Obviously, you need to be able to hear the instructor. Sit close enough to watch the instructor’s expressions so you can pick up nonverbal cues.
4. **Write legibly.** You want to write neatly enough so you can read your notes later.
5. **Leave a couple of lines between topics.** This allows you to fill in what you missed after class.
6. **Compare notes with a classmate.** Each of you may have written and missed something different from each other. “Two heads are better than one.”
7. **Do not try to write everything down.** Take down what you feel is important, not too much or too little is a good rule of thumb.
8. **Annotate your notes after class when you have time.** Use the same process of annotating or annolighting your class notes that you learned for textbooks.
9. **Date and number your pages and identify the subject.** This keeps your notes organized, and it will be easy to find the notes from class lectures when you need them.
10. **Review and edit your notes soon after class.** The sooner you review your notes, the easier it will be to fill in missing information. It will be fresh in your mind. Every time you review your notes, you will retain more information.
11. **Read or skim chapters before the instructor discusses them in class.** If you do this, you will be familiar with the material and will be able to take better notes.
12. **Ask questions in class.** You can ask the instructor questions for a better or clearer understanding of the lecture and material. This also allows you to slow the instructor down so you will have more time to capture important points. You can also ask questions silently in your mind, which can help you to stay focused and alert.
13. **Create study guides and anticipated test questions from your notes.** This is something you can do soon after class. You can create study guides, which you learned earlier in this chapter, and make up practice quizzes from your notes.

“I learned how to take better notes and writing skills. I learned valuable skills that I can use in my other courses and in my life.”

—JOSE PALICIOUS

14. **Compare the text to your class notes.** The text and your notes will usually complement each other. Both usually make more sense to you when you compare them.
15. **It is better to write on one side of the paper.** This allows you the opportunity to place your notes side by side for easier reviewing.
16. **Include examples and facts, which illustrate important points.** This allows you to say and understand more of what is in your notes.
17. **Rewrite key ideas in your own words.** Summarize what you think are the most important ideas.
18. **Use abbreviations and symbols.**

For example:

- Write “psy” instead of “psychology”.
- Put a star sign by important points.
- Use symbols like equal (=) instead of writing out the word.
- Shorten words like “continued” and write “cont’d” instead.

These are just a few examples of how you can abbreviate and shorten words to save time when writing notes. You can create and use your own abbreviations, symbols, and shortcuts that work for you as long as you can understand what you have written. This will increase your speed at taking notes.

19. **Review your notes soon after taking them and before exams.** This is as important as reviewing your textbook. It is important to review your notes within a day after taking notes and at the end of the week to help get this information into your long-term memory. Then, review again before your quiz, but first, self-test. Create a practice quiz, give it to yourself, and test your understanding and recall.
20. **Use a note-taking system.** There are several note-taking systems to choose from. For example, you can use an outline method to emphasize major topics. Under the major topics, you can add subtopics and under these, list supporting points, examples, and illustrations.

## Examples of Note-Taking Systems

You can use an idea map, which was discussed earlier, as a note-taking system. This is especially useful, if you are a visual learner.

One of the most popular note-taking systems is the **Cornell Method**. In this system, you divide the page into three sections (See Figure 5.1). The largest section is on your right (usually about six inches wide); you use this space for taking notes during class. You can also use this space while taking notes when you read the text. Use the left section (about two and a half inches wide) after class to write in questions or make statements that are addressed in your notes. Use bottom section (about two inches deep and eight and a half inches wide) for summarizing what you think are the main points.

DARTMOUTH  
ACADEMIC SKILLS  
CENTER  
Note-taking tips



dartmouth.edu/~acskill/success/notes.html

COLLEGE  
WRITING TIPS



collegewritingtips.net



## Cornell System of Note-Taking

Figure 5.1 is an example of the Cornell Method being used to take notes on the subject of How to Write Essay Papers.

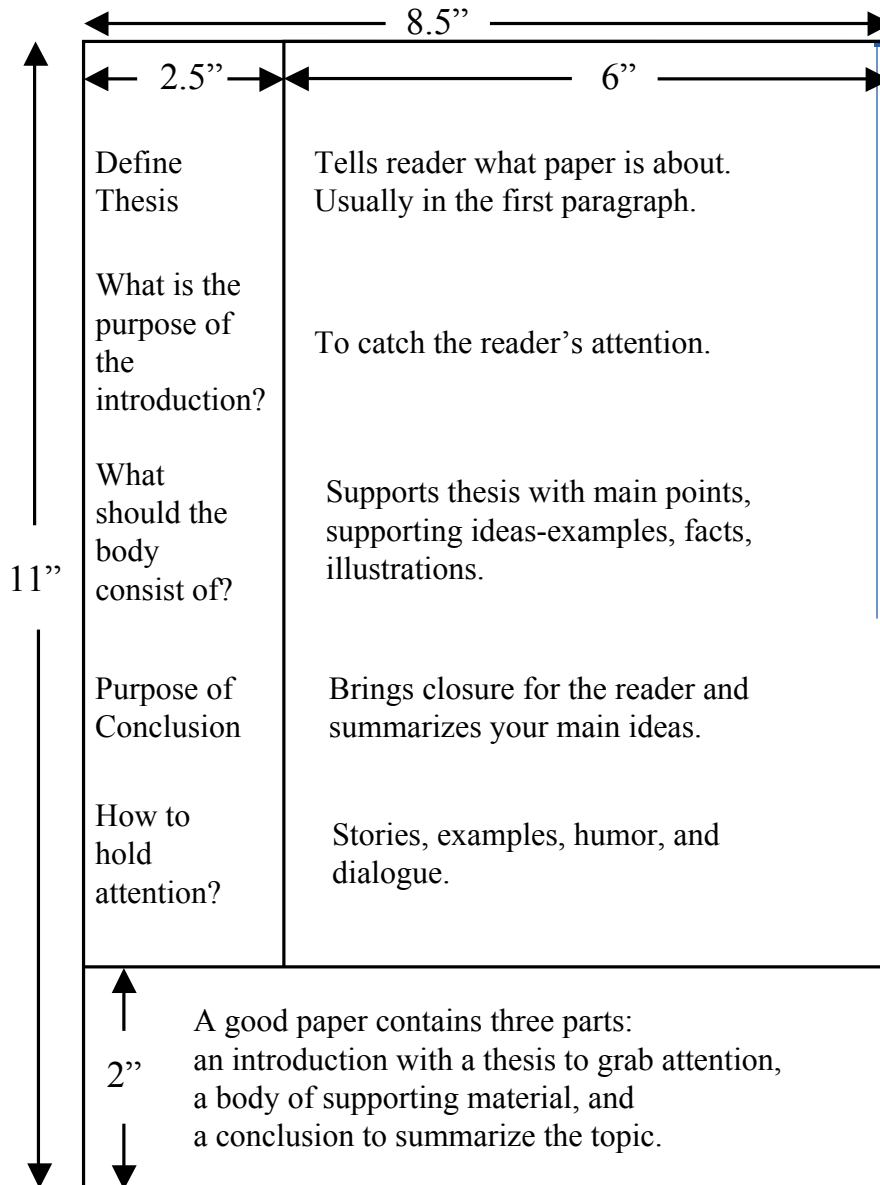


FIGURE 5.1 CORNELL NOTE-TAKING SAMPLE: HOW TO WRITE ESSAY PAPERS

Now you can see the value of note-taking and how taking good notes will contribute to your success in school.



## Outline Method

An outline method of note-taking works well for linear thinkers who like to take notes in an organized and logical sequence. It is similar to using other outline formats that you have probably used before (See Figure 5.2):

- I. **Main idea #1.** Knowing how to plan a research project is the first step.
  1. **Supporting point.** Identify sources and where to look for information.
    - A. Example: World Wide Web or library databases.
    - B. Example: Information that is recent and reliable versus old and unreliable information.
- II. **Main idea #2.** Keyword searching is different from subject searching.
  1. **Supporting point.** Key word searches usually bring up many more documents and irrelevant items than a subject search.
    - A. Example: “Time management” is a keyword phrase that will bring up many documents.
    - B. Example: “Time Management for college students” will bring up less documents, but they will be more relevant.

FIGURE 5.2 OUTLINE SAMPLE: LIBRARY RESEARCH

## Idea Map

You have seen an example of an idea map used for reading comprehension. The principle is the same for taking notes and is especially appealing to visual learners and students who are strong in Visual-Spatial Intelligence. Idea maps are also referred to as mind maps or think links. See Figure 5.3 sample below.

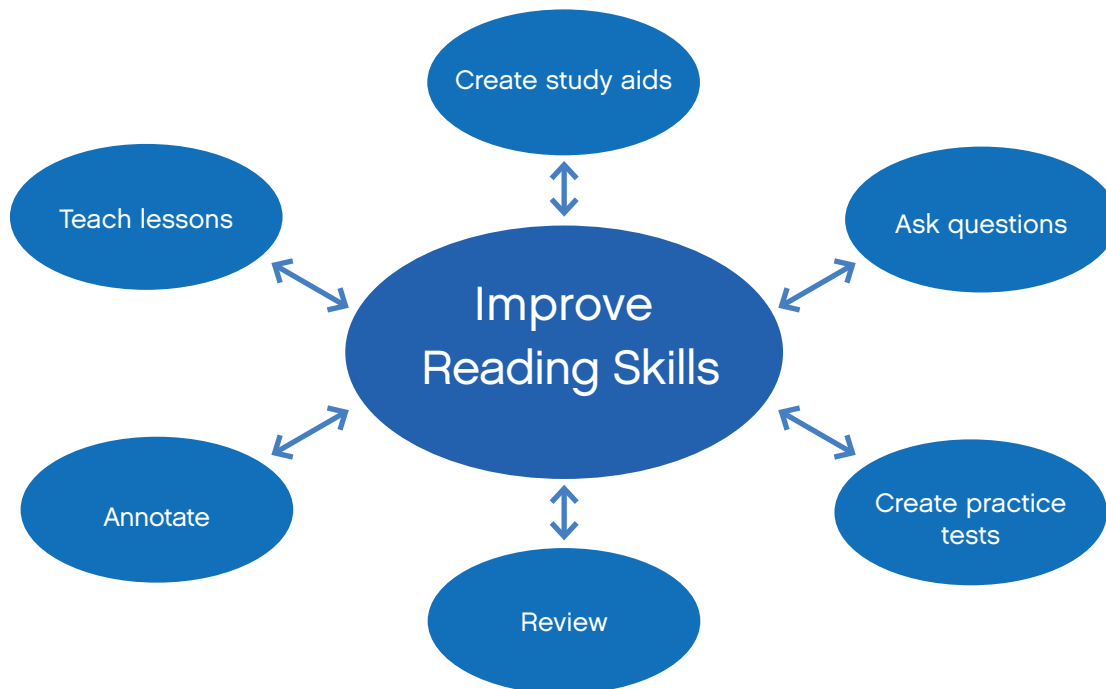


FIGURE 5.3 NOTE-TAKING IDEA MAP SAMPLE: IMPROVE READING SKILLS

## Parallel Note-Taking System

If your instructor provides you with lecture notes before the topic is covered in class, you can use parallel note-taking. This is an excellent system for taking advantage of online notes.

This system works best with a three-ring binder. On one side are your instructor’s lecture notes and on the other side is a blank sheet of paper for your notes. During the lecture, record your notes on the blank paper with the instructor’s lecture notes in front of you. In other words, the instructor’s notes and the paper for your notes will be parallel to each other (See Figure 5.4).

How to Get Your Priorities Accomplished	How to Get Your Priorities Accomplished
<p><b>Instructor’s notes</b></p> <p>Make a list of your priorities for each day. Tackle these tasks which you identified as important one-by-one. Treat each task that you are doing as the most important activity of the day.</p> <p>This will help you to be totally present in the here and now. Do each activity with enjoyment and enthusiasm, if possible. If you are unable to be enthusiastic, at least do the activity with your attention until you have completed the task or reach an appropriate stopping point.</p> <p>Then, scratch it off of your to-do list (if it is unfinished add it to tomorrow’s list) and approach your next priority in the same way. This may not sound cool in this age of multi-tasking, but it will give you excellent results.</p>	<p><b>My notes</b></p> <p>Each day, I list my priorities in order of importance and do them one at a time.</p> <p>Doing them with enthusiasm is best, but at least with attention.</p> <p>Complete the task and scratch off my list.</p>

FIGURE 5.4 PARALLEL NOTES SAMPLE: HOW TO GET YOUR PRIORITIES ACCOMPLISHED

### CONNECT NOTE-TAKING TO YOUR BEST MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

In Chapter 2, you identified your three strongest multiple intelligences. You can use these intelligences for effective note-taking. For example, if you are strong in musical intelligence, go over your notes after class and translate important ideas into a rap, rhyme, or song. If you are strong in logical-mathematical intelligence, use an outline method, put the main ideas into a logical order, and analyze the connection between these ideas.

#### ACTIVITY 5.3

Identify three note-taking strategies that match your top three multiple intelligences. Think about how you can use these intelligences to take better notes.



#### Best Multiple Intelligences

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Best Note-Taking Strategies

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

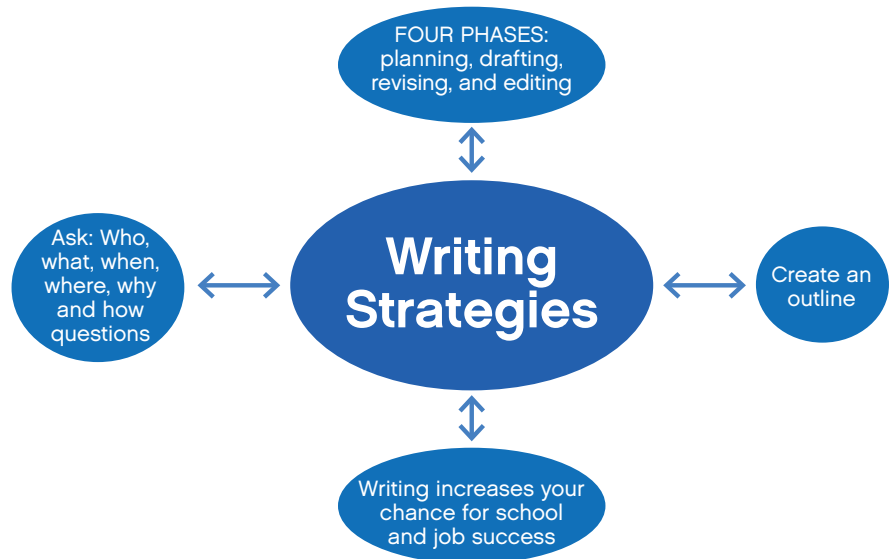
As you practice taking notes and use at least one note-taking system, you will see an improvement in your grades if you edit, study, and review your notes. Using good note-taking skills is one of the keys to college success.

Now you have four different note-taking systems from which to choose. You may prefer to use one system, a variation of a system, or to use different systems when appropriate for the situation.

## Writing Skills

### BENEFITS OF WRITING WELL

- Increases your job opportunities
- Improves your grades and college achievement
- Helps you to do better on essay tests
- Allows you to write articles in your career field
- Communicates your level of professionalism and expertise



### Tips for Writing Good Papers

There are four main phases or stages of writing.

They are: 1) planning 2) drafting 3) revising, and 4) editing. Let's look at the purpose of each stage.

#### STAGE 1: PLANNING

In this phase, you will be deciding on your topic (unless your instructor gives you one). You will be thinking about what you want to say about your topic. Even if your instructor chooses your topic, you will write about it in your own unique style. The planning phases consists of the following steps:

- 1 Choose a topic you are passionate about. If you didn't choose the topic, you should still look for parts of the topic that interest you. Write about what you know.
- 2 **Brainstorm.** Jot down topic ideas as fast as they come into your mind. If the topic was chosen for you, then write down ideas about what you already know and want to say about it in your own way.
- 3 **Determine your audience.** Who are you writing this paper for? Have an audience in mind for whom you will be writing, even if only the instructor will read your paper.
- 4 **Narrow down your topics and ideas.** Identify the topic you will write about. Narrow down the main ideas you want to cover.
- 5 **Write your thesis statement.** Write "The purpose of my paper is" and complete the sentence. What is your paper going to be about?

“Now I am a more responsible student. Writing in English is not one of my strengths, but I completed all written assignments and feel so proud of myself. These ideas taught me how to improve my study habits and this will help me to succeed in college.”

— GABRIELA QUEVEDO

- ⑥ **Ask questions like a journalist.** Who? What? Where? When? Why? How? Answer these questions for yourself.

Below are examples of using journalistic questions to write a paper. I will show you a sample paper at the end of the Writing Tips section.

- A. **Who?** Who has had bad experiences that had a benefit?
- B. **What?** What are examples of these experiences?
- C. **When?** When did these events happen?
- D. **Where?** Where did these events take place?
- E. **Why?** Why were these experiences important?
- F. **How?** How was good found in these bad experiences?

- ⑦ **Create an outline.** Make an outline before writing your paper. Include your introduction and thesis statement, at least three main points for the body of your paper to support your thesis, and your conclusion. Let's look at a sample outline below:

### Sample Outline

Title: The Hidden Benefits in Life's Difficulties

- ① Introduction.
  - A. Napoleon Hill opening quotation.
  - B. Thesis statement– “Every bad experience has a benefit.”
- ② Body.
  - A. Supporting paragraph and idea #1.
    - 1. Overcoming adversity can lead to greatness.
    - 2. Abraham Lincoln example.
  - B. Supporting paragraph and idea #2.
    - 1. Good is often hidden in what seems to be bad.
    - 2. Story of wise persons in India.
  - C. Supporting paragraph and idea #3.
    - 1. There is opportunity in crisis.
    - 2. My personal health crisis story.
- ③ Conclusion and summary.
  - A. Adversity can lead to greatness.
  - B. Benefits are hidden in bad experiences.
  - C. Opportunity can be found in crisis.
  - D. Good is hidden in bad experiences.

## ACTIVITY 5.4

Think of a paper that you will be writing for one of your classes. Write out the thesis statement. Answer the six journalistic questions.

**STAGE 2: DRAFTING**

This is the second phase of writing your paper. The first draft is your first actual writing of your paper. Here are steps for the drafting phase:



- 1 **Freewrite your first draft.** Write with your heart (later you will edit with your mind). Let the ideas flow without criticizing or judging what you are writing. Try to write without lifting your pen from the page or your fingers from the keyboard of your computer. Let it flow.
- 2 **Research.** After freewriting, is a good time to gather facts, stories, and examples to support your thesis and main idea. Some people advise doing research sooner. My personal experience has been that it is better to freewrite first to say what you think and feel, then do research to support your thoughts.
- 3 **Introduction.** Include your thesis statement and attention grabbers in your introduction. Your thesis tells your audience the purpose of your paper. You can grab the reader's attention by using a quotation, a startling statement, a good question, humor, or a human interest story.
- 4 **Body.** Develop each supporting paragraph. Every paragraph in the body of your paper should support your main points. A good rule of thumb is to have at least three points or ideas that support your thesis. Use a separate paragraph for each of these points.
- 5 **Write clear and simple sentences.** Write as if you are having a conversation with one person in your target audience.
- 6 **Stay focused on the main topic.** Move from sentence to sentence and from paragraph to paragraph so it flows and makes sense.
- 7 **Conclusion.** This is where you summarize your main points. You can end with a call to action, a story, or with a great quotation, if any of these are appropriate for your paper and audience.

**STAGE 3: REVISING**

In this third phase, you evaluate your paper to see what you need to improve, reshape, and rewrite. In the drafting phase, you did freewriting from your heart without making any revisions. Now you have the opportunity to fill in details and improve your first draft.

**Ask yourself:**

1. Does your thesis, your thesis sentence, and paper meet your writing purpose?
2. Is it clear and simple to understand?
3. Will it grab the reader's attention?
4. Does the body contain ideas which support your thesis?
5. Does it flow?
6. Do you have a strong conclusion?

Answering these questions will help you to know what needs revising. This is the phase in which you take a look at the overall structure (big picture) of your paper. Then, look at your paragraphs. See if they are organized well, flow easily from one to another, and if they are too short or too long. Rearrange your paragraphs, if necessary, so that they are in a logical sequence. Do the same thing with your sentences. When you finish revising, the content and structure of your paper should be in good shape.

Eliminate words and information that are unnecessary. For example, remove sentences or words that you have repeated unnecessarily. Replace words with different ones that will make your writing clearer, more interesting, and more believable.

## STAGE 4: EDITING

This stage involves correcting grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors. Use a computer to spell-check. Also, manually check for spelling errors that the computer might miss. Check your commas and periods to make sure that they are in the best place. Do you need any exclamation marks, colons, or semicolons? This is the phase to make grammatical improvements and to proof and polish your work.

One approach you can use is to **proofread your paper from back to front**. When you read your sentences from the end of the paper to the beginning, it will help you to focus and catch errors that you would normally miss.

**Read your paper out loud.** If you run out of breath while reading a sentence, it is probably too long and may need to be shortened.

Seek assistance if you need someone with good grammatical skills. Learning labs at colleges usually have assistants who will look over your paper to point out grammatical errors and to make suggestions for improvement.

Wait a while before looking over your paper for the final time. **Proofread your paper one more time**, and complete the final draft of your paper before turning it in to your instructor.

Now let's look at an example of a paper that I wrote from the outline you saw earlier.

“This course and book helped me improve the way I do my school work, listen, write, and take notes. Another thing I felt great about was reading stories not only by Professor Gerson, but also from his previous students who went through difficulties in their lives. I think those stories made me realize that I can accomplish whatever I want, as long as I put my mind to it and don't quit.”

— TANA CABEQUELA

## Sample Paper

### The Hidden Benefits in Life's Difficulties

By Raymond Gerson

“Every adversity, every failure, and every heartache carries with it the seed of an equivalent or greater benefit.” These are the words of Napoleon Hill who spent his life studying successful people and the obstacles they had to overcome. Based on Napoleon Hill's experience interviewing hundreds of successful people, he concluded that every bad experience has a benefit. I believe that you also can find something good and benefit from difficult life experiences.

You can become a greater person by overcoming adversity. Take the example of Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln's sweetheart died, he had a nervous breakdown, was demoted while serving in the military, failed in business, and lost several elections. Many historians agree that he was one of the finest human beings and presidents we have had in the United States. Lincoln's many adversities seemed to only make him stronger and more determined.

Good is often hidden in experiences that seem to be bad. There is a story that illustrates this idea. Long ago in India, there were no matches and people covered their cooking fires with ashes. The ashes kept the fires alive. In a particular village, all of the fires mysteriously went out. The villagers were upset because they had no way to cook. They went to see the wise one of their village and told him about their problem. He replied, “This is something good.” This sounded crazy to the villagers, but the wise one just said, “Wait and see.” A couple of days later a cruel king passed through the country with his army of soldiers. They killed people and destroyed villages. One night when the king came to the vil-

lage with no fires, he thought that no one must live there. So the king ordered his soldiers to go on to the next village. This story illustrates how something good can lie hidden in something that appears to be bad.

The opposite side of crisis is often opportunity. When I was in high school, I became ill because I was not taking good care of myself. I had to be out of school for six weeks. At first, this seemed like a terrible crisis to me. I was so bored that I began to study for the first time in my life. When I returned to school, I had to take many make-up tests, but to my surprise I made As and Bs. Because of this experience, I made the decision to go to college. I am still enjoying a wonderful career because of my decision to attend college. I also realized that my health was important and began taking good care of myself. I am still experiencing the payoff today. What seemed like a crisis at the time turned out to be an opportunity to attend college and become healthy.

In conclusion, there is a benefit and something good in every bad experience. Overcoming adversity can make you great, good is often hidden in bad experiences. There is opportunity in every crisis. Look for the good in your difficulties and you will find it.

“The Hidden Benefits in Life’s Difficulties made me realize that through all my pain I can still come out on top. This book is powerful because it gives you information that benefits not only college success, but your life in general.”

— BETTY HALL

## THINK LIKE AN ARTIST WHEN YOU WRITE

When you have a paper to write, think of yourself as an artist who is going to create a sculpture. The planning phase is similar to an artist coming up with the idea for creating the sculpture. In the drafting phase, you are taking chunks and shaping them into a general outline. The revising phase is where you add details to make your sculpture look better. In the final editing phase, you polish your work, add any finer details, and smooth out any errors. Do your best to turn your writing into a memorable work of art!

### JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT

List the two most important note-taking strategies and two most valuable writing tips that you learned from this chapter. Reflect on and write your ideas for applying these strategies and tips to maximize your performance in school.

## QUESTIONS TO ANSWER IN YOUR JOURNAL AND DISCUSS WITH OTHERS

- What does the Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve reveal to me about the importance of taking notes in class?
- What are my strengths and weaknesses as a note taker? Which note-taking strategies will help me the most—and why?
- How can I best apply the four stages of writing to write better quality papers?
- What three strategies will I use to improve my writing ability? Why do I think they will improve my writing?





RAYMOND GERSON



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

In the early stages of my college success courses, I always notice that several students aren't taking notes. Even when I say, "Be sure and study these ideas (which I name) because there will be questions about them on the test," some students still don't take notes. This never ceases to amaze me. In time, I am able to convince most of these students to take notes in class. It has been my experience that if you don't take notes, you are likely to do poorly in class or dropout.

## Student Success Story

*The following paper was written by Tomas Carrizales-Rodriguez. He got off track, dropped out of high school, and spent some time in trouble with the law. Fortunately, with the right type of support and through his own effort, Tomas turned his life around.*

### From Dropout to Graduate

By Tomas Carrizales-Rodriguez

The biggest accomplishment in my life was finishing high school at the age of 16 and enrolling in Austin Community College. This was important for me because I am the first in my family to attend any type of higher education.

I had trouble in high school because I went to DAEP. This is a school where the bad students go and I was there for a year. I hated it there so I stopped going to school. For the next two years, I was a dropout. I was just doing drugs and not going home. I would get in trouble with the cops and my mom just got tired of it. So she went up to the high school for help and she found Mr. Day, one of the principals. He told my mom to bring me up to the school so he could talk to me.

I had always felt judged by high school principals because no matter whether I was good or not, I was blamed and sent to DAEP. So I didn't want to go back to school or talk to this new principal. Mr. Day said, "I can help you if you let me Tomas." I asked, "How can you help me?" "Well, first you need to get back in school, then I can help you a lot more." I said, "I don't want to go back to DAEP." Mr. Day said, "Well, you have to go for two weeks and you will be out. Then, I can help you get your credits that you need to finish high school and, hopefully, you can go to college."

I think one of the biggest steps I had to take was to quit feeling sorry for myself. I feel I had a pretty tough life. I grew up without a dad and that was tough on me. My family struggled to get by and this fuelled my anger at the world. Once I started to mature, I looked back and thought, "All I am doing is hurting me. If I don't want this to keep repeating, I have to fix it now or I will have no future."

I knew I could not do this all on my own. If I had not had the support of my mom who never gave up on me and the guidance from the Opportunity Center, I'm scared to think where I would be now.

When Mr. Day put me in Atlas, I had no credits and I was about to turn 15 so I was pretty far behind. I met with Mr. Day and the counselors and set up a plan for me to get caught up and graduate early. It was up to me to make it happen. I had to stay focused and attend school everyday. The Opportunity Center was a great place to be. The teachers will help you one-on-one and they don't look down on you if you act up a little bit. They just want to help you. I was getting my credits faster than I thought and they told me that I could graduate early. I needed help

"This book and the stories in it are making me realize that anything is possible if I am just willing to give my all. It is giving me the hope that I always had in me. I just needed to be reminded that it was there."

— ISRAEL VASQUEZ



on my reading and writing so Mrs. Horton helped with that as well as with my college paperwork. She is a huge influence in my life. A lot of people from Del Valle Opportunity Center helped me turn my life around and to become a success.

I learned many lessons from this experience. I know the importance of having faith in myself. You have to believe in yourself first before anyone can help you. Also, no matter how tough your life is, someone else has it just as bad or even worse than you. I learned that it is important to be at school everyday and be on time. This is a habit you will need throughout your entire life. I learned that there are a lot of good people out there who care about students and people no matter how messed up they are. I know to set goals and dream big because if you work hard anything can happen. I feel I picked up good study skills and work habits. I think all these things apply to everyday life. Because school is not just about knowledge, it is also a guide to the rest of your life. When I get a job, I know I need to be there on time and have good attendance. I have to be able to pick up what they are teaching me and I might have to do extra at home so I can get ahead at my job.

I know I still have a lot to learn, but life is one big lesson in failure and success. I am proud that I graduated from High School and am attending ACC. This by far is the biggest success of my life. It has taught me study and note-taking skills or I would not have been able to graduate early because it is not easy to pick up all those credits as quickly as I did. It has taught me to be prepared. It has also taught me to believe in myself. I hope with what I learned in the past, combined with this course, I can achieve my next success and that is graduating from college.

## ACTIVITY 5.5

## Goal for the week:

Three steps I will take to achieve my goal:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



## CHAPTER 5 MAIN POINTS

- Use a note-taking system to capture important points and take better notes to study and review.
- It is important for you to take good notes, review them within twenty-four hours, again in a week and again before the test because otherwise information is quickly forgotten after you hear it for the first time.
- Asking and answering journalistic questions and preparing an outline will help you to write better papers and in less time.
- A good paper will include an introduction and thesis which grabs the reader's attention, a body with strong supporting ideas, and a conclusion, which brings the topic to closure and leaves the reader wanting more.



### On Writing Well By Raymond Gerson

Plan, draft, revise and edit,  
this will help you receive course credit,  
The introduction, body and conclusion,  
will help you avoid confusion.

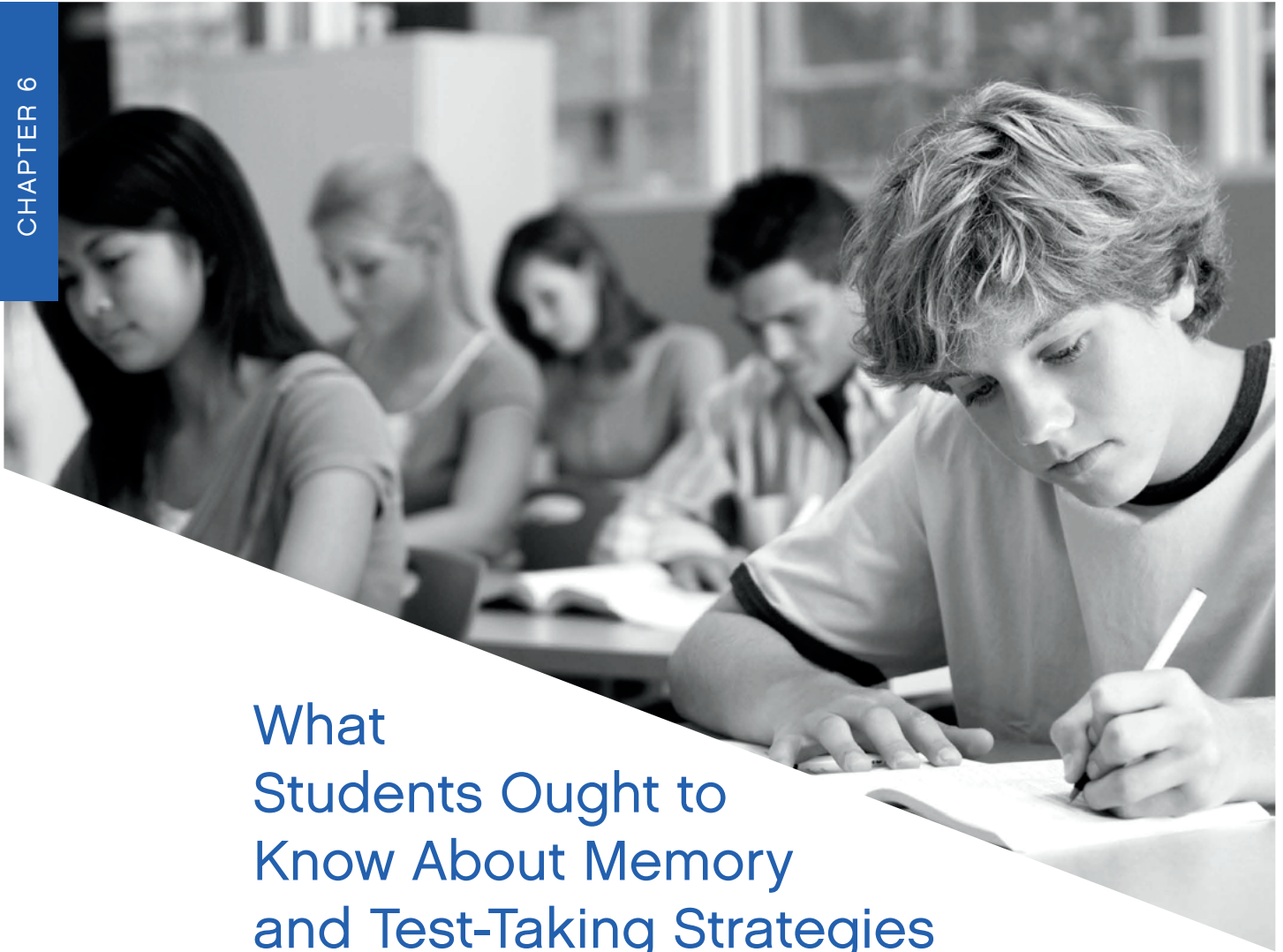
Your thesis tells what its about,  
in the introduction don't leave it out,  
Your conclusion can be a call to action,  
this will increase reader satisfaction.

Like an artist creating a sculpture,  
you can write like you're a sculptor,  
Create, shape, improve and polish,  
and bad writing you'll abolish.

To take notes be in class,  
this will help you more than pass,  
Then use a good note taking system,  
this will show that you have wisdom.

In Chapter 6, you will be learning test-taking and memory strategies, which can boost your grade point average, increase self-confidence, and reduce test anxiety.





## What Students Ought to Know About Memory and Test-Taking Strategies

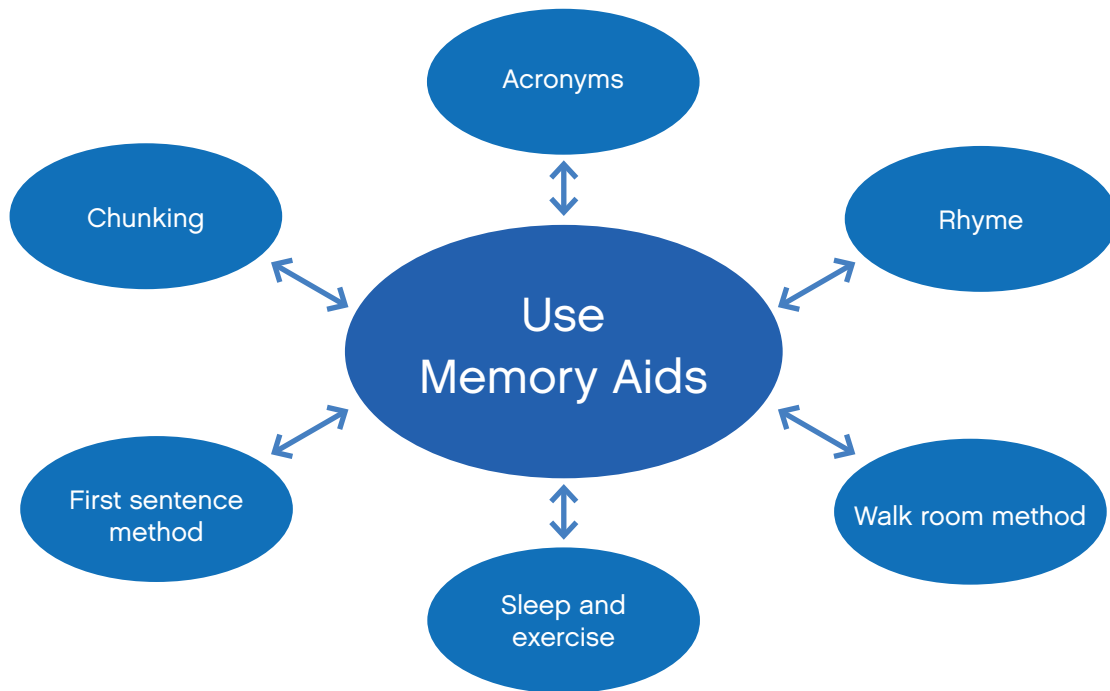
In this chapter, you will learn several memory techniques that you can use to remember more of what you study and learn. Later in the chapter, you will learn many different test-wise strategies that will improve your skills and confidence when preparing for and taking tests. Also, you will learn ways to reduce or eliminate test anxiety. Having a better memory plus effective test preparation and test-taking skills are a powerful combination that will help you achieve success during your college career.

“The strategies for overcoming test-taking anxiety were most helpful for me.”

—GUILLERMO RAZO

### How to Remember More of What You Want to Retain and Recall

A better memory will help you to retain and recall more information from the text and class lectures for your tests and papers. A better memory can help you to achieve greater success in school. Even on exams that have questions, which require an understanding of concepts and principles, you will not do well, if you don't remember information related to those principles. Good recall will make it possible for you to use information in school, your career, and in your life when it's needed.



“An education isn’t how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It’s knowing where to go to find out what you need to know, and it’s knowing how to use the information you get.”

—William Feather

Your short-term memory stores information for a few seconds up to a few minutes. Your long-term memory contains information that requires you to use more effort to retain it and your conscious effort to recall it.

There are a variety of memory aids known as **mnemonics**, which you will be learning in this chapter. **Mnemonics** are memory aids that help you to quickly and easily remember information.

## Benefits of Memory Aids and Having a Good Memory

- You can learn and recall facts, names, and figures more easily
- Your brain functioning improves because you stimulate parts of your brain
- Your test scores will usually improve
- Improves your concentration
- You will be able to recall more information when writing papers
- You will be better at remembering people’s names, which improves relationships

## HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO HAVE A BETTER MEMORY

- **Exercise.** It increases oxygen to your brain.
- **Get enough sleep.** If you are in your teens or early adulthood, you need eight to ten hours of sleep a night. Studying before getting a good night's sleep can help you to remember more information.
- **Keep stress levels low.** High stress will interfere with your concentration.
- **Don't smoke.** Smoking will reduce oxygen to your brain.
- **Drink enough water.** Your brain is made up of a high percentage of water, and you need it to function well.
- **Eat well.** A healthy diet helps your brain to be healthy and function well.

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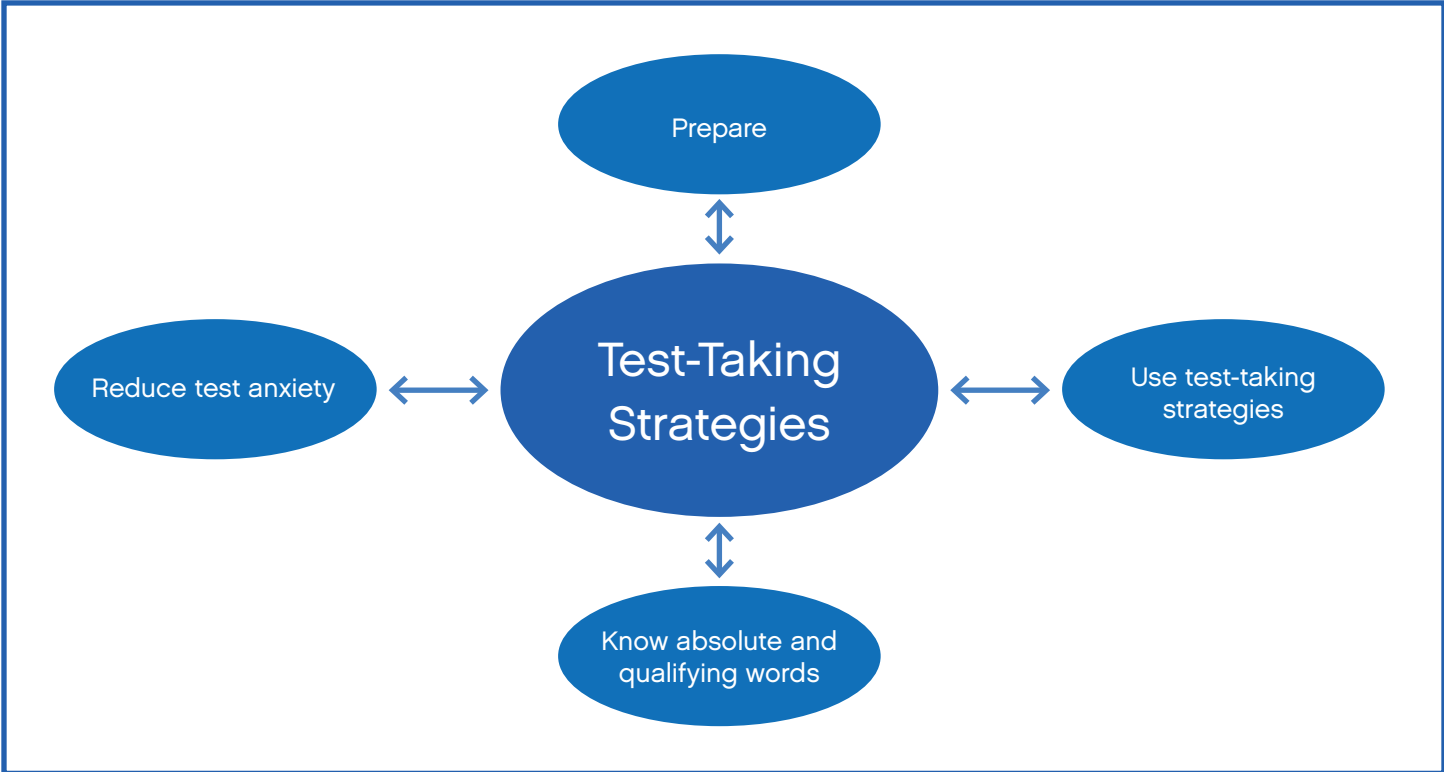
## STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE MEMORY

- 1 Use several of the study strategies you learned earlier. Break up your study periods, review often, organize your materials, and create study aids such as flash cards and idea maps. All of these are memory aids, which will improve your success in school.
- 2 Pay attention. You cannot remember material that you never noticed or learned.
- 3 Create memorable images. Word pictures aid your memory. For example, to remember Pat's name, you can picture her in your mind patting her shoulder. For someone named Mike, you could picture and associate him with a microphone in his hand.
- 4 Use your preferred learning style. If you prefer auditory learning, then tape-record what you want to remember and play it back. If you are a visual learner, use pictures, charts, graphs, idea maps, and things you can see.
- 5 Use as many senses as possible. Learn a poem while seeing the words and any pictures associated with these words. Read the poem out loud so you can hear it, and move around while reading. In this way, you will use several of your five senses at the same time.
- 6 Create interest. You will remember more material if you can make it interesting. Material that bores you is more difficult to remember.
- 7 Associate what you are learning with something humorous. Anything you find to be funny or even ridiculous will be easier for you to recall.
- 8 Associate or relate the new material to something already familiar. A student of mine remembered that he gets vitamin D from the sun by picturing himself walking his dog (D for dog) outside in the sun. He said he will probably never forget which vitamin we get from the sun because of the association he created.
- 9 Rehearse, recite, and overlearn. If you are learning a poem or quotation, recite it over and over. It will go into your long-term memory, and you will eventually be able to repeat the poem without thinking about it.
- 10 Use mnemonic techniques. Examples of these memory aids and shortcuts are listed and explained below:

- A. **Acronyms** – These are initials that create pronounceable words such as NBA for National Basketball Association. Another example is Roy.G.Biv so you can remember the colors of the rainbow.
- B. **Acrostics or first letter strategy** – Take the first letter of each of the items you want to remember and make a word or phrase out of these letters. A popular example is “Please excuse my dear aunt Sally.” This is a mnemonic for “Parenthesis, Exponents, Multiplication, Division, Addition, and Subtraction.” This is the order in which operations in algebraic expressions are to be evaluated.
- C. **Rhyme** – Jingles and rhymes will aid your memory. For example, “In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue” or “30 days hath September, April, June, and November.”
- D. **Chunking** – When you arrange a list such as numbers into smaller units, this becomes a memory aid. For example, 19531825 can be chunked into 1953 and 1825 or 1953\_18\_25.
- E. **Method of loci** – Associate what you want to remember with a familiar route or path. Let’s say you need to remember parts of the body in a particular order such as heart, brain, lungs, and kidneys. Picture a walk through your house and associate parts of the house with each part of the body. For example, when you enter the house you could picture a photo of a loved one in the living room (heart), a picture of Einstein (brain) in the hallway, an exercise machine (lungs) in the master bedroom, and a can of kidney beans (kidneys) in the kitchen. When you see this question on a test, you will easily recall the correct order of these body parts by recalling your walk through your house.

“The memory strategies were another thing in this chapter that really helped me to remember more.”  
—ELIZABETH ELLIS

Keep in mind that just memorizing information by itself will not be enough for success in college. You need to combine memorization with learning and understanding the concepts.



## Test-Taking Skills

Learning a variety of test-taking strategies is an important part of your academic success. You will be taking exams throughout your education. These tests usually account for a high percentage, if not all, of your grade in each course. No matter how much you study, you will not do your best unless you know how to prepare for and take tests.

### Benefits of Test-Taking Skills

- Reduces your test anxiety
- Increases your self-confidence
- Makes good use of your types of intelligence
- Improves your test scores and grades
- Increases your self-confidence for other evaluations and exams that you take later in your career
- Improves your self-esteem
- Gives you more motivation for pursuing your education
- Gives you greater ability to focus on learning due to less anxiety about tests

#### TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES



testtakingtips.com

### General Test Preparation Strategies

Here are some general strategies that will help you: prepare for tests, while you are taking a test, and useful tools after taking a test. I will also cover specific test-taking strategies for the various types of tests that you will be taking. First, here are some tools and strategies you can use to prepare for a test.

#### TEST PREPARATION STRATEGIES

- 1 Find out what kind of test you will be taking. Will you be taking an essay, a multiple-choice test, fill-in-the-blank, or some other type of test? You need to answer this question to prepare properly for your test. Talk with your instructor to find out what will be covered on the test. Learn as much as possible about your upcoming test.
- 2 Set a goal test score you want to achieve. Study with your goal in mind.
- 3 Use the reading and study strategies you previously learned. One way to prepare for the test is by applying the strategies you learned in the last chapter. Create study guides that will help you prepare for your test and which use your preferred learning style.
- 4 Use the memory strategies that you learned earlier in this chapter.
- 5 Apply test anxiety reduction techniques (discussed later in this chapter) to reduce your anxiety before the test. Picture yourself in your mind taking the test and being relaxed and successful.
- 6 Be positive. Use positive self-talk in the days and hours before you take the test.
- 7 Get a good night of sleep.



- 8 **Build up your energy.** Eat something nutritious before the test so that your blood sugar and energy level are in good shape. Remember that your physical condition affects your state of mind and vice versa.
- 9 **Review your notes and highlights as often as possible.** Just before your test, review your notes one last time so the material is fresh in your mind.
- 10 **Develop a practice test.** Anticipate test questions and give yourself the practice quiz. As you learned in the last chapter, it is helpful to study with and teach others.
- 11 **Finish reading assignments a few days before the test date.** This leaves you time to spend reviewing the material that you consider most important.
- 12 **Talk with students who have already taken the course.** You can look at old exams if other students have them. Ask the former students what you can expect and for any advice they can give you for succeeding on the test.
- 13 **Remind yourself of your long-range goals.** Refresh your memory about why you want an education and the importance to you of succeeding in school. Remind yourself of the benefits you will receive. This will keep you motivated to prepare for the test.
- 14 **Arrive a little early to relax and review.**
- 15 **Bring all of your necessary materials to class.** Bring your pens, Scantrons, #2 pencils, and blue books, if required.

#### ACTIVITY 6.1

Take a few minutes to sit quietly by yourself and take some slow, deep breaths. Relax your mind and body. In your mind's eye, see yourself taking the test. In this relaxed state, see yourself taking the test while feeling clear-minded and positive. Picture yourself successfully completing the test with a big smile on your face.

#### SUCCESS STRATEGIES TO USE DURING THE TEST

- 1 **Before you start the test, jot down information on the back of the test that you are concerned you might forget.** Get your instructor's permission to do this.
- 2 **Look the test over to find out what it covers.** For example, let's say you see that the test has thirty multiple-choice questions and two essay questions. You should decide how much time you need to spend on both sets of questions. If you have forty minutes to take the test and need twenty minutes on the essay questions, then you will know that you have twenty minutes to complete the multiple-choice questions. When you look over the test in the beginning, you will also be able to see which questions will be easier for you to answer and which ones will be difficult for you and will require more time.
- 3 **Answer questions that you know and the easier ones first.** This will allow you more time to concentrate on the less familiar and difficult questions.
- 4 **Read the instructions and questions thoroughly.** The questions will often provide you with clues for the correct answer on objective tests and for what your instructor wants you to write about on essay tests.

“I cannot begin to tell you how scared I was of college classes at first because I was afraid of failure. Studying for tests was my weakest spot in school. Every time it was test day I would try to cram as much information as I could before the test. Then when it was time to take it I would always go blank. I am no longer worried about my tests. I have seen improvement in my test-taking ability and test results and now I have a positive mind when tests come along.”

—ASHLEY LEMLEY

- 5 **Answer every question.** If there is “no penalty for guessing,” it’s best for you to answer every question, even if you have to guess.
- 6 **Make sure the test questions and your answers match.** If you are using a Scantron or separate answer sheet, it is very important that you make sure the questions and answers match up.
- 7 **Keep track of time.** You will need to stay aware of how much time you have left during the test. This will allow you to pace yourself, and it increases your chances of completing the test.
- 8 **Use all of the available time.** Go over your test to check for accuracy. Make sure you answered every question and make any changes you think are needed.
- 9 **Ask for clarification.** If you don’t understand a question, ask your instructor to make the question clearer.
- 10 **Be honest.** Do not cheat. Cheating will keep you from learning and can result in your expulsion from school.
- 11 **Reduce anxiety.** If you start feeling nervous and worried, then use the techniques you learned to reduce your test anxiety. Breathe.

### SUCCESS STRATEGIES TO USE AFTER A TEST

“I wish I could have taken this course in middle school so I could have been a better high school student. I learned how to become a successful college student.”

—CARLOS RODRIQUEZ

- 1 **Reward yourself for the preparation and work you did.**
- 2 **Get correct answers from the instructor.** You need to be in class when the instructor gives feedback and correct answers. If the instructor does not go over the test in class, you can ask for a private meeting to find out the correct answers to any questions that you got wrong.
- 3 **Use the test as a learning and feedback tool.** Determine what you did well and what needs improvement. Learn from your mistakes. Analyze your strengths and weaknesses on the test questions and answers.
- 4 **After two or more tests in a course, look for patterns.** Is there a pattern to your mistakes? Do you keep making similar mistakes on every test? You can also look for any patterns in the test questions that the instructor uses. For example, let’s say you noticed on multiple-choice questions that the answer “all of the above” is usually correct and “none of the above” is usually the wrong answer. By being aware of your instructor’s pattern, you can watch for questions which contain these possible answers.
- 5 **Make a plan for the next test.** What changes will you make while preparing for your next test and taking the test itself? You may also have a better idea how to pace yourself so you have extra time to spend on difficult questions and to complete the test.

## SUCCESS STRATEGIES FOR MULTIPLE-CHOICE TESTS

The majority of tests in college will be multiple-choice tests so you want to be especially test-wise when taking them. Multiple-choice tests usually include a phrase, stem, or question followed by three to five possible answers from which you can choose.

Here are some strategies for taking multiple-choice tests:

- ① **Read the directions carefully.** Make sure you know what you are being asked to do on the test.
- ② **Read the entire question or statement to make sure it is asking what you think is being asked.** Be clear in your mind about what you are looking for or supposed to do.
- ③ **Answer easy and familiar questions first.** You can go through the test several times like this.
- ④ **Treat your choices like they are true/false statements.** Ask yourself for each choice, “Is this true or false?”
- ⑤ **Eliminate choices you know are wrong.** Narrowing your choices to two instead of four increases your odds of making a correct choice. You will have a fifty-fifty chance, even if you guessed. Make an educated guess when you are unsure of the answer.
- ⑥ **Answer every question.** If there is no penalty, then do not leave answers blank.
- ⑦ **Look for keywords in the statement or question that provide you with clues to the correct answer.** Choose the answer that is similar or harmonious with the keyword or phrase. See the following example:

**Monica is a visual learner.** She would probably prefer to learn by:

- A. Listening to lectures.
- B. Watching a PowerPoint presentation.
- C. Participating in a field trip.
- D. Playing a book on tape.

What was the keyword in the statement about Monica? The answer is visual. So before looking at the choices you already know the answer will involve the sense of sight. The answer is obviously B.

- ⑧ **Pay attention to negatives or questions which are asking you for an exception.**

Here is an example:

The following is not a soft skill:

- A. Mathematics.
- B. Persistence.
- C. Time management.
- D. Self-discipline.

The negative is the word “not.” So if you were using the true/false approach, you would ask for each possible answer, “Is this a soft skill, true or false?” The correct answer is mathematics. Even if you did not know what a soft skill was, you could see that one answer stood out as different from the others and must be the correct answer. If you had been asked which **are the** soft skills, the correct answer would have been different. Your choice would be b, c, and d.

“The test-taking strategies that I learned in this class will take me through my college education. I immediately implemented them into my classes and it has been a great success. The author’s passion comes through in the book and I like how he injected his own life experiences and wrote about them in this book. This definitely inspires, motivates, and makes you believe in yourself.”

—KIM BROWN

- 9 Make sure your test and answer sheet are lined up. Make sure you do not mark answers that go with different questions.
- 10 Pay attention to “All of the above” and “None of the above” choices. More often than not “All of the above” is the correct answer. More often than not “None of the above” is an incorrect answer. This is not always true, but if you have to guess, the odds will be in your favor if you answer this way.

“The most valuable part of this class for me was getting the blueprint for a successful college experience.”

—BETTY VILLAREAL

- 11 Look for similar answers. Usually one of two similar answers is the correct one. Sometimes both choices are available such as an answer like A and B or A and C. These choices are more often correct than incorrect.
- 12 When there are contradictory answers, one of them is often the correct answer. If you see that two possible answers on your test are saying the opposite of each other, then one of them must be incorrect.
- 13 Look for the best answer, even if two choices could both be correct. Choose the one you think is the best choice.
- 14 Specific answers are more often correct than vague or general answers.
- 15 Words that are repeated often in the test will often be a right choice in one of the questions on your test.
- 16 Choose answers that agree grammatically with the statement or question.
- 17 Choose logical answers over those that do not make common sense to you.
- 18 Pay attention to qualifying and absolute words and statements. Words like frequently, sometimes, and probably are qualifying words. They leave room for an exception or for you to doubt the answer. Words like “always,” “never,” and “all” are absolute words and leave no room for doubt or an exception. For example, “The grass is usually green” uses the qualifying word “usually.” Qualifying words and statements are more often correct answers. If we said, “The grass is always green,” the word “always” is an absolute word. Isn’t the grass sometimes brown? Absolute statements are more often an incorrect answer on multiple-choice tests.
- 19 Determine how much time you can spend on each question. Don’t spend too much time on any given question so that you will have enough time to complete the exam.
- 20 Review the test. Change answers, if you think your first choice was incorrect and you see a better choice.

## ACTIVITY 6.2

Try these two multiple-choice questions. Choose the best answer.

1. **The correct order for previewing a chapter in a textbook is which of the following?**
  - A. Read a section, create an outline, review the chapter, and check for understanding.
  - B. Preview the chapter, read a section, check for understanding, and create an outline.
  - C. Create an outline, read a section, preview a chapter, and check for understanding.
  - D. Check for understanding, read a section, create an outline, and preview the chapter.
2. **Talking out loud as you read is an excellent study strategy and especially appealing for which learning style?**
  - A. Visual.
  - B. Aural or auditory.
  - C. Kinesthetic.
  - D. None of the above.



What was the keyword in question number one that provided you with a clue to the correct answer? The keyword was “Preview.” This keyword gives the answer away because the first step is to preview the chapter.

In question number two, what was the key phrase in the question? If you replied “Talking out loud,” you were correct. Before you looked at the choices available, you should have known that the answer would involve which of the five senses? If you answered “Sense of hearing,” you are correct. The correct answer is B. It’s the only choice which involves hearing.

### STRATEGIES FOR DOING WELL ON ESSAY TESTS

Essays are more subjective than objective tests and offer you the opportunity to express more of your knowledge. Here are some strategies for answering essay questions:

- 1 **Read the entire question and make sure you understand what is being asked.**  
Ask for clarification, if you don’t understand the question.
- 2 **Identify and interpret directive words.** These are action verbs which indicate what you are being asked to do. Here are examples:
  - A. **Analyze** – Break into separate parts and discuss each one.
  - B. **Compare** – Write about how two or more things are alike.
  - C. **Contrast** – Write about how two or more things are different.
  - D. **Critique or evaluate** – What are the positive and negative aspects? What is the value?
  - E. **Describe** – What are the qualities or characteristics?
  - F. **Discuss** – State the pros and cons.
  - G. **Illustrate** – Give examples and supporting explanations.
  - H. **Outline** – Organize into a structure with main ideas and supporting points.
  - I. **Summarize** – Briefly restate the main points.

- ③ **Brainstorm ideas** and jot them down on a scratch pad.
- ④ **Create a brief outline** to organize what you want to cover before you start writing.
- ⑤ **Use the writing principles discussed in the last chapter.** Use a strong thesis statement in the introduction, supporting ideas in the body, and summarize main points in the conclusion.
- ⑥ **Write neatly** so your instructor can read it.
- ⑦ **Make sure most of the information you write comes from the text or your class notes.**
- ⑧ **Reword the question and make it your first sentence in the form of a statement.** For example, let's say you were asked to contrast visual and kinesthetic learning styles. You could begin by saying, "Visual and kinesthetic learning styles are different in the three following ways." Then you would complete the sentence and say how they are different. This would be a good opening sentence.
- ⑨ **Budget your time.** Don't spend too much of your time on one essay question at the cost of your other questions. You will want to write more, if some essay questions are worth more points than other questions.
- ⑩ **Focus on writing one main idea per paragraph.**
- ⑪ **If a question asks you for facts, do not give personal opinions.** You should provide some factual information.
- ⑫ **Review, proofread, and revise your draft.**

“Test-taking has been a big weakness in my life. It is hard for me to remember everything for a test. The test-taking skills really helped me.”

—ELIZABETH ELLIS

### OVERCOMING TEST ANXIETY

One reason that you might not do as well as you are capable is because of test anxiety. **Test anxiety** is a feeling of stress that happens when you are over-worried about your performance on a test. It is possible for you to be so nervous that your mind can go blank during a test or your thinking can become unclear.

The good news is that your test anxiety can be reduced or eliminated. If you have a small amount of anxiety about a test, this is natural and it is usually not a problem. On the other hand, if you have high test anxiety, it can prevent you from having success on tests and in school.

### HERE ARE SOME WAYS FOR YOU TO OVERCOME TEST ANXIETY

- **Prepare well for your test.** Find out what the test will be like from your instructor. Use the reading and study skill strategies you learned in the last chapter. The more prepared and confident you feel before the test, the less anxiety you will experience.
- **Change how you see tests.** You can try to see the test as a learning and feedback tool. Tests provide feedback as to what you are doing well and reveal where you need improvement.
- **Understand the relationship between your body, your thoughts, and your feelings.** Your negative thoughts create tension in your body and unpleasant feelings in your mind. By changing your thoughts, you can change how your body feels and how you feel emotionally.
- **Use positive self-talk.** Tackle your negative thoughts by replacing them with positive ones. When you hear yourself thinking thoughts like, “I might fail” come back with “I can and will succeed.”



- **Put the test in perspective.** It's not life and death for you. It's just a test. Even if you fail a test, it's not the end of the world. You are not a failure as a person because you failed an exam. Refocus and do better next time.
- **Exercise before coming to class to take the test to relieve your tension.** Doing some exercise or listening to relaxing music on the drive to class may relieve your anxiety before taking the test.
- **Recognize that you are not helpless.** You have choices and you can take control over how you feel and think.
- **Arrive to class a little early.** Give yourself a few minutes to relax before the class begins. Rushing to class at the last minute can increase your stress level.
- **Visualize success.** Practice mental imagery like the athletes do before they participate in a real sports event. See yourself in your mind's eye taking the test and being relaxed, cool, and confident.
- **Be present in the moment.** Anxiety comes when you worry about the future or remind yourself of your past failures. One way to be present and to relax is to observe your breathing. When you get anxious, you will naturally start breathing faster and shallower. When you are relaxed, you will naturally start taking slower, deeper breaths.

You can purposely take slow, deep breaths before and even during the test. Observe your breathing and you will automatically be focused on the present. When you change your breathing, your thoughts and feelings will become more positive.

Another relaxation technique is to tense all of your muscles and then let go. You can repeat this several times to lessen tension in your body.

### JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT

Create a multiple-choice test of ten questions which covers the material in this chapter. Test yourself. Write in your journal what you learned from this activity. 1) What were the benefits for you of doing this exercise? 2) How can you create an even better practice test next time? 3) What insights did you gain?

### QUESTIONS TO ANSWER IN YOUR JOURNAL AND DISCUSS WITH OTHERS

- What are three memory strategies that I will use to prepare for my next test? How will I use each of them?
- What is an example of something I once overlearned and still can remember today?
- What are three test-taking strategies that I will use to study for my next test? How will I use them?
- Which anxiety reduction strategy appeals to me the most and how can I use it for best results?



RAYMOND GERSON



### AUTHOR'S NOTE

I had no idea when I was in high school and college that there were so many test-taking strategies. I could have really benefited from this information. I did stumble upon the idea of creating practice tests, and this was a great help to me. It was a wonderful feeling when I was taking a test and over half the questions had been on my practice test. It allowed me to breeze through the familiar questions and then spend time concentrating on questions that I didn't anticipate.

I memorized several poems years ago by reciting them repeatedly and overlearning them. It amazes me that I can still quote these poems word for word automatically without much thought.

I make it a point to learn the names of my students as soon as possible. Using some of the memory strategies which were discussed in this chapter makes it possible for me to know all of my students' names by the second or third class.

The test-taking and memory aids discussed in this chapter have worked for me and my former students. And, I believe they will work for you.

### Student Success Story

*The following student paper is different from the previous ones because it is about the benefits, including test-taking skills, that this student gained from taking my Transition to College Success course. This was an eight-week course, and she learned many of the same college success strategies that are in this book.*

#### Final Thoughts about the Course and Its Benefits

By Rhonda Guidry

At first I thought, "Why is this course so important? Why do I need this class? Well, once this course was explained, I got excited and signed up for it. I thought the course was awesome.

The most valuable part of the course for me was the test-taking strategies and study skills. Taking this class has helped me to study smarter, not harder. It helped me with test success and also with test anxiety. I learned that if I did fail a test, it would not be the end of the world, and I became more relaxed about test-taking. The test-taking and study skills helped me to be better prepared to succeed in my other college courses.

Time management also helped me to manage my time more productively. I am better at using a daily planner and using a semester calendar. Also, I learned how to avoid procrastination and how to balance academic and social demands.

I have learned necessary skills for doing college-level work. This will prepare me for college success. Now, I believe that this class is an excellent way to help new students that are entering college. It helps by teaching active listening, note-taking, and other strategies for success in college. I am better now with taking notes, highlighting, and studying. I learned to highlight a chapter and study it to get ready for class discussions and tests.

I plan on using knowledge of my aural learning style and study skills in all of my future courses. I discovered that talking out loud really helps me to remember the lessons. I also go back over every test and look for any careless errors. All of the many skills I learned in this class will help me with the other college courses I will be taking.



## ACTIVITY 6.3

Goal for the week:

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_



Three steps I will take to achieve my goal:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER 6 MAIN POINTS

- Memory techniques alone are not enough for you to succeed in college. It is also necessary for you to understand concepts and principles.
- Memory strategies and mnemonics can often help information transfer from your short-term into your long-term memory. This is important for college success.
- See and use tests as feedback, which can reduce your test anxiety and improve your test results.
- Knowing and using test-taking strategies will increase your academic success.

### Memory Strategies to Remember

By Raymond Gerson

Memory strategies will help you remember,  
 Memory won't fade like a dying ember,  
 Good sleep and exercise will improve retention,  
 Better recall comes from paying attention.

Acronyms and rhyme will help your recall,  
 Remembering will be easier and not hard at all,  
 When you over learn, rehearse and recite,  
 You will see that your memory's alright.

Retention will improve with stories and visuals,  
 You will receive excellent residuals,  
 Walking the room method will help you learn,  
 and better grades you'll be able to earn.



In Chapter 7, you will be identifying some of your skills, interests, and values which you can use in different careers. You will begin thinking about careers of possible interest to explore for more information.



## Preparing for Career Success . . . Discover Your Skills, Values, and Interests

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**A**t this point in time, you may or may not know the exact career that you want after college graduation. Even if you do know, you might change your mind when you gain more self-knowledge.

Self-knowledge should be the starting point for making career choices. If you don't know who you are, which includes your skills, values, and interests, how can you choose a career that is a good match for you? Self-knowledge is the way you can determine a good match. Many people make the mistake of looking outside of themselves at career choices, before they look within to discover what they are about. In this chapter, you will discover more about yourself so that you can make wise career choices. The answer to what works best is within you, and you will discover the answer by getting to know yourself better. In this chapter, you will learn several memory techniques that you can use to remember more of what you study and learn. Later in the chapter, you will learn many different test-wise strategies that will improve your skills and confidence when preparing for and taking tests. Also, you will learn ways to reduce or eliminate test anxiety. Having a better memory plus effective test preparation and test-taking skills are a powerful combination that will help you achieve success during your college career.



“Your life’s work is the work you were born to do—the most appropriate vehicle through which to express your unique talents and abilities.” —Laurence Boldt

By the end of this chapter, you may not know the exact career you want to go after, but you will have some careers that you want to explore and learn more about. Even beginning to think about career goals will motivate you to do well in school because you will see the relationship between getting a good education and getting the job you want.

When I ask my students, “Why are you going to college and what do you hope to gain from a good education?”, they usually answer, “a good career.” They want a career that pays well, is enjoyable, and one in which they are successful. Most of my students realize that a good education can open doors of opportunity to rewarding careers so that they won’t have to work in low-paying and back-breaking jobs for the rest of their lives.

### A Student Learns the Hard Way

One of my best students told me that he had returned to college after dropping out in his freshman year three years earlier. When he first came to college, his only interest was partying, and he did almost no studying. He said he worked for three years in a physically demanding, low-paying job. One day, he told his boss that he no longer wanted to do this type of work. His boss asked, “What other kind of work can you do with so little education?” My student said these words from his supervisor felt like a knife stabbing him in his heart. He said the words were painful because he knew they were true. He thought, “Yes, what else can I do if I don’t get a better education.” He returned to college as a more mature and serious student because he had learned the value of a good education in the “school of hard knocks.”

## Career Satisfaction Improves Life Satisfaction

Research shows that life satisfaction and happiness increase when you are happy with your job. Your quality of life is affected by what you do for a living. After working for over forty years in career counseling and job placement, I observed that about 75%–80% of employees feel unhappy in their jobs. This is tragic, considering the amount of time we spend working and the influence our careers have on our lives. It does not have to be this way.

You have talents which are waiting to be discovered. It is your responsibility to find your gifts and to use them in your life's work. This is one of the secrets to job fulfillment. You can make a positive difference and contribution by discovering your talents and how to use them to fill a need in the world. Such a career will give you a sense of purpose in life. According to Fred Buechner, your true vocation will be, "The place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." In other words, you will experience joy when you use your talents to fill a need for others that you are passionate about. Ask yourself, "What is my life calling me to do? What is my life asking of me and how can I give it my best?" This chapter will help you begin searching for answers to these questions.

## Benefits of Career Exploration and Planning

- You get to know yourself and what you want in life
- Discover your skills, interests, and values
- Explore career choices that match you
- Teaches you how to do a job search
- Reduces the chance of wasting time in college majors and jobs that are not right for you
- Increases your self-confidence
- Discover a purpose in life that motivates you

## Your Life Provides Clues to Your Natural Gifts

The following section contains some ideas from another book I wrote called, *Create the Life You Want*.

You will discover your special talents by observing:

- Enjoyable activities you do well
- Repeated feedback from others about what you do well
- Behaviors and skills that are so natural that you rarely notice them
- Activities you do where time seems to fly
- People whose work you admire
- Activities that make you come alive

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*Source:* Developed by Raymond Gerson. Based on *Create the Life You Want* by Raymond Gerson. Inspirational Works, 2006.

Richard Bolles wrote a best-selling career book called, *What Color Is Your Parachute?* In his book, Bolles asks his readers to identify their motivated skills. These are skills you are motivated to use and would enjoy using in a job. You can identify your motivated skills and talents by examining your most enjoyable accomplishments.

I love teaching and counseling others. Some years ago, I began to notice the way I naturally share ideas, information, and inspiration with others. This happens whether I am with a group of people or one-on-one. Without thinking about it, I had been doing this from my childhood, beginning with my younger sister and brothers. Before I began teaching, I noticed that movies or books about great teachers inspired me and had a powerful affect on my emotions. These are examples of how your life can provide clues to the right work or vocation.

Pay attention to yourself. Notice what you naturally do so well that you may have overlooked strong abilities. You may not think of them as skills or talents. Notice what inspires you and makes you feel most alive.

Observe yourself in your daily activities. Recall past behaviors and experiences. (Look at jobs or volunteer work you have done. Decide which you liked and in which you did well.) Consider subjects you are good at in school. What do you do well and what is difficult? Write in your journal to help you get clear about your strengths and weaknesses. Briefly review it each evening before going to sleep. Write down observations about yourself from the day just past. Listen to yourself. Listening carefully to the advice you give others will help you get in touch with your beliefs and what you care deeply about. For example, a friend of mine used to advise me to teach psychology. Eventually, he returned to school and got his PhD in psychology. He has been a college professor of psychology for years and loves it.

“This course helped me to get a better understanding of my career and my life. I learned more about myself in this course than in any other course I have taken. This course has reassured me that I have a bright future.”

— JOSEPH GONZALES

#### ACTIVITY 7.1

Name three things that you naturally do well:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



### Discovering Your Greatest Gifts

Finding your greatest gifts and natural career path will come from answering the question,

- ① Who am I?
- ② Who is the real you?
- ③ What is natural for you to do?
- ④ Are there some things you do so well that you have heard about it many times from others?

If feedback from others is similar and repeated often, it is worth thinking about. Over and over again, I heard from others that I had a gift for inspiring people. It is such a natural part of who I am that I took this gift for granted for many years. Do you have talents you've ignored or overlooked? Ask those who know you well to tell you what they believe are your greatest

strengths and talents. Weigh the feedback against everything else you know about yourself. See if it fits and is supported by your own observations and life experiences.

Activities during which you lose all sense of time can provide important clues to your natural vocational tendencies. You may get so focused on what you are doing that you don't notice time passing. When you're bored, time drags, but time flies when you're doing something you enjoy.

Who do you admire for their work, talents, or accomplishments? Do you know anyone whose job you would love to have? What about their job appeals to you? Each of us has lots of ability and special talents that can be developed. Your talents, combined with a positive regard for yourself and others, can be a powerful way for you to make an important contribution. Using your special gifts to accomplish a worthwhile purpose will improve your life and those lives of others.

You will do well and enjoy your work when it uses your best and favorite skills, matches your top interests, and supports your highest values.

In the following activities, you will be identifying your favorite skills, interests, and values.

### IDENTIFYING YOUR SKILLS

Rank the following skills and talents on a scale of 1 to 10. A 10 represents exceptional skill, a 5 is average, and a 1 is very little or no skill. Determine your top 10 skills.

- |                                 |                                   |                                   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Acting _____                 | 2. Adapting _____                 | 3. Analyzing _____                |
| 4. Appraising _____             | 5. Arranging _____                | 6. Assembling _____               |
| 7. Assessing _____              | 8. Building trust _____           | 9. Calculating _____              |
| 10. Carving _____               | 11. Coaching _____                | 12. Compiling _____               |
| 13. Computing _____             | 14. Constructing _____            | 15. Consulting _____              |
| 16. Counseling _____            | 17. Creating _____                | 18. Dancing _____                 |
| 19. Designing _____             | 20. Developing _____              | 21. Diagnosing _____              |
| 22. Drawing _____               | 23. Editing _____                 | 24. Establishing _____<br>rapport |
| 25. Evaluating _____            | 26. Executing _____               | 27. Growing things _____          |
| 28. Healing _____               | 29. Initiating _____              | 30. Inspiring _____               |
| 31. Interviewing _____          | 32. Inventing _____               | 33. Leading _____                 |
| 34. Managing _____              | 35. Mediating _____               | 36. Music ability _____           |
| 37. Negotiating _____           | 38. Operating _____<br>Machines   | 39. Organizing _____              |
| 40. Painting _____              | 41. Performing _____              | 42. Persuading _____              |
| 43. Physical _____<br>ability   | 44. Planning _____                | 45. Producing _____               |
| 46. Recruiting _____            | 47. Repairing _____               | 48. Researching _____             |
| 49. Resolving _____<br>problems | 50. Sculpting _____               | 51. Selling _____                 |
| 52. Serving _____               | 53. Sewing _____                  | 54. Speaking _____                |
| 55. Strategizing _____          | 56. Supervising _____             | 57. Synthesizing _____            |
| 58. Teaching _____              | 59. Working with _____<br>animals | 60. Writing _____                 |



Now go back over your list and identify your top ten best and favorite skills. List them below:

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____  |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____  |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____  |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____  |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

---

*Source:* Developed by Raymond Gerson. Based on *How to Create the Job You Want* by Raymond Gerson. Enrichment Enterprises, 1996.

There are many ways to get new skills and develop them such as working at a job, going to school, volunteering, and internships. Volunteering is a great way to find out if a particular type of work appeals to you and to develop new or current skills.

### IDENTIFYING YOUR INTERESTS

In this section, you will consider:

- Subjects that interest you and which you know a lot about
- Problems or needs in the world which you feel passionate about

The subjects of interest may have been learned in school, at work, doing volunteer work, from hobbies, or from reading or training you did on your own.

List your top five areas or subjects of interest below:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

### Problems or Needs in the World

Every job tries to solve certain problems or to fill particular needs. For example, a nurse works with illnesses, injuries, and patients who need to get well.

There are millions of problems in the world needing your energy and creativity to solve them. Problems actually create opportunities for solutions, and this often means they create new jobs.

● ● ●

“The most valuable thing that I learned from this book and course is that in life you have to do what you love to be happy. I learned that when you’re good at something you should really look into how you can do that in a career. When you do something you love you are more likely to be successful at it. Even though we might achieve something great without loving what we do, it is also important to be happy in that work.”

— AMANDA FIGUEROA

**What problems do you feel deeply about?** What do you feel passionate about? Which needs would bring you joy if you could fulfill them for others?

There are many different jobs using a variety of skills to solve the same problems. Say you decide to contribute to the need of affordable housing in your community. You could do this as a carpenter, a builder/developer of houses, or a real estate salesperson. All of these jobs can help solve the problem of too little affordable housing.

Perhaps you want to help young people grow up to be healthy and strong adults. You might consider teaching, coaching or counseling, becoming a health care provider, or physical fitness trainer. There are many different jobs, dealing with similar needs, to consider when seeking a match for your skills.

To decide which problems are of greatest interest to you, ask yourself, “What contribution do I want to make? If I were rich and didn’t have to work, what would I do? What type(s) of people in the workplace do I admire? When I solve a problem or fill a need, which ones bring me the greatest joy? If I had two years to live and decided to work, what would I do? How do I want to be remembered?” Answering these questions can put you in touch with your strongest interests.

Let’s look at some examples of problems and needs in the world that can become careers, if you choose to solve them.

## EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE ACTIONS TO FILL NEEDS AND/OR SOLVE PROBLEMS

- Reduce crime
- Increase affordable housing
- Improve technology for persons with disabilities
- Build better teams and relationships
- Improve the economy
- Match people to appropriate jobs
- Design better technology
- Reduce illiteracy
- Provide relief for victims of natural disasters
- Improve quality of products
- Improve physical or mental health of others
- Reduce costs
- Improve efficiency and make things work better
- Provide recreation and entertainment
- Improve the lives of children
- Improve communication
- Develop training and development programs
- Improve education
- Raise funds for worthy projects
- Organize and improve work flow
- Help people to save time
- Improve transportation services



- Identify problems before they happen
- Provide financial planning for others
- Increase sales
- Reduce environmental problems
- Improve services or products

*Source:* Developed by Raymond Gerson. Based on *How to Create the Job You Want* by Raymond Gerson. Enrichment Enterprises, 1996.

If the list above leaves you uninspired, think of other problems that interest you. Below, list at least five needs or actions you think would be challenging and enjoyable to do, whether or not they come from the above list.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Now decide which of your favorite skills and interests are the best match for the actions or needs you think are important. Then, prioritize and arrange these needs in order of importance to you. What are your top three?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Consider preparing for a career that will allow you to fill the need or solve the problem that is most important to you.

### IDENTIFY YOUR VALUES

There is a saying that “a person who stands for nothing will fall for anything.” What is important to you in life? What are your most important values? Upon what values do you stand?

The following exercise will give you a way to examine some values and to consider which of them are most important to you. Feel free to add any to the list that are not included, if they are important to you.

Check each value below that is very important to you. Review the list, and write down your five most important values below the list.

- |                   |                        |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Abundance_____ | 2. Accomplishment_____ | 3. Appreciation_____   |
| 4. Adventure_____ | 5. Affection_____      | 6. Attractiveness_____ |
| 7. Balance_____   | 8. Belonging_____      | 9. Calmness_____       |

“I was able to learn what my skills, values and interests are and what jobs fit me based on them. I now have the tools I need to get my dream job.”  
— DESTIN KOZOJED

- |                      |                         |                              |
|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 10. Capability_____  | 11. Challenge_____      | 12. Compassion_____          |
| 13. Confidence_____  | 14. Contentment_____    | 15. Courage_____             |
| 16. Creativity_____  | 17. Dependability_____  | 18. Determination_____       |
| 19. Discipline_____  | 20. Excellence_____     | 21. Expertise_____           |
| 22. Faith_____       | 23. Fame_____           | 24. Family_____              |
| 25. Fidelity_____    | 26. Financial_____      | 27. Fitness_____             |
|                      | independence            |                              |
| 28. Flexibility_____ | 29. Generosity_____     | 30. Gratitude_____           |
| 31. Happiness_____   | 32. Helping others_____ | 33. Honesty_____             |
| 34. Humility_____    | 35. Inspiration_____    | 36. Integrity_____           |
| 37. Justice_____     | 38. Kindness_____       | 39. Knowledge_____           |
| 40. Leadership_____  | 41. Love_____           | 42. Make a contribution_____ |
| 43. Motivation_____  | 44. Nonviolence_____    | 45. Optimism_____            |
| 46. Persistence_____ | 47. Popularity_____     | 48. Power_____               |
| 49. Punctuality_____ | 50. Recreation_____     | 51. Relationships_____       |
| 52. Respect_____     | 53. Self-control_____   | 54. Skillfulness_____        |
| 55. Solitude_____    | 56. Spirituality_____   | 57. Success_____             |
| 58. Teamwork_____    | 59. Thoughtfulness_____ | 60. Variety_____             |
| 61. Virtue_____      | 62. Wealth_____         | 63. Wisdom_____              |

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ |          |

## IDENTIFY YOUR PERSONAL STRENGTHS OR TRAITS

When you become aware of your strengths, you believe more in yourself. You can then develop and use these strengths in your career and your life.

Review the list of personal traits and positive qualities below. Select and write down the five you think are your greatest strengths and fit you best in the numbered list. If your greatest strengths and needs are not listed, feel free to add them.

- |          |             |               |              |
|----------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| Kind     | Disciplined | Honest        | Self-reliant |
| Friendly | Persistent  | Inspiring     | Neat         |
| Positive | Caring      | Energetic     | Self-aware   |
| Trusting | Gentle      | Helpful       | Humorous     |
| Calm     | Creative    | Charming      | Fair-minded  |
| Stable   | Considerate | Self-directed | Flexible     |

Ambitious	Tactful	Tolerant	Competent
Poised	Reliable	Dependable	Strong-willed
Faithful	Motivated	Unselfish	Compassionate
Overcoming	Cooperative	Dedicated	Open-minded
Courageous	Trustworthy	Consistent	Imaginative
Independent	Sociable	Determined	Efficient
Confident	Talented	Hard working	Cheerful
Thoughtful	Forgiving	Expressive	Enthusiastic
Persuasive	Affectionate	Accepting	Understanding

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

You can also look at these strengths as self-management skills, as they are important to employers who will hire you. These strengths also can be thought of as soft skills, which are different from the hard skills, that are needed to do a particular type of job.

An additional activity you can do is to ask people who know you to make a list of five of your best personal traits.

“Out of every class I have taken this was the most helpful. The class helped me to choose a career path that I am confident in pursuing and the motivation to do so.”  
— PAUL KADERLI

### SKILLS MOST WANTED BY EMPLOYERS

This list was based on a study by Michigan University Placement Services. It was compiled from a survey of five hundred employers in the United States.

1. Ability to get things done
2. Common sense
3. Honesty/integrity
4. Dependability
5. Initiative
6. Good work habits
7. Reliability
8. Interpersonal skills
9. Enthusiasm
10. Good judgment
11. Motivation
12. Decision-making skills
13. Intelligence
14. Adaptability
15. Oral communication
16. Energy
17. Problem-solving ability
18. Good work ethic and habits
19. Mental alertness
20. Emotional control

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Source: Reprinted from Lawrence Boldt, *Zen and the Art of Making a Living* (New York: Penguin Group, 1991), p. 492.

Consider which of the above skills you already have and which ones you need to develop.

## PERSONALITY TYPES AND WORK ENVIRONMENTS

According to John Holland, there are six different personality types, and people usually look for careers and work environments that match their personality.

“I always thought that you don’t necessarily need to work in something you enjoy because life is not perfect and sacrifices may be needed. Reading this chapter helped me see that you can at least try to get an opportunity to do so.” “I also felt inspired by the author sharing stories about struggles he faced in school. Even though he struggled like any other student, he was able to become a college professor and writer. This gives hope to me and to all of us.”

— JESSICA LOZANO

The six personality types are:

- 1 **Realistic (R)** – Practical, love to work outdoors and with their hands, enjoy building things, and using tools. Examples of matching occupations: carpenter, chef, auto mechanic, industrial arts teacher, and pilot.
- 2 **Investigative (I)** – Good at math and science, problem solving, research, and curious about how things work. Examples of matching occupations: biologist, doctor, chemist, and veterinarian.
- 3 **Artistic (A)** – Creative, attracted to the arts such as music, art, dancing, and acting. Enjoy being innovative. Examples of matching occupations: graphic designer, writer, musician, and fashion designer.
- 4 **Social (S)** – Helping others is most important. Attracted to teaching, social work, counseling, and other direct helping relationships. Examples of matching occupations: counselor, teacher, nurse, and dental hygienist.
- 5 **Enterprising (E)** – They like to influence others and are goal and results driven. Good communicators who often are attracted to business and management. Examples of matching occupations: lawyer, business owner, salesperson, and hotel manager.
- 6 **Conventional (C)** – They like things orderly and organized.

Good with details. Enjoy routine and working with data and numbers. Examples of matching occupations: accountant, secretary, banker, and bookkeeper.

In the order of your preference, which of these personality types you think best fit you? Most people feel a match with two to three of them, but they have an order of priority.

My preferences are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

For a more complete and accurate assessment of your Holland Code, (three letters) you can go to <http://www.self-directedsearch.com> to take the online Self-Directed Search Assessment.

Keep in mind that a career decision should be made based on many factors and not just on one or even several tests or assessments.

HOLLAND CODE  
For more information

self-directedsearch.com



## ACTIVITY 7.2

## Careers to explore.

List three occupations that you would like to research, explore, and learn more about.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



## How to Choose A College Major

You are ahead of the game because of the work you have already started doing in this chapter. Once a student identifies careers that are a good match, the next step is to find college majors that are a good fit for those careers.

You have started the career development process by:

- Assessing your interests, skills, and values
- Considering your personality type and appropriate working environments
- Identifying occupations to explore
- Reading about those occupations and requirements in the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*

You can also:

- Consider what were your best and worse subjects in high school
- Consider which parts of any jobs you have done were enjoyable and which parts you disliked
- Take an online career assessment. For example, many colleges offer career assessments such as “Discover.” It allows you to search by occupations to find appropriate college majors.

Here are more tips:

- Talk with a high school guidance counselor, if you are in high school
- See an academic advisor or counselor, if you are in college
- Talk to students in majors that interest you
- Talk to professors who teach in departments of interest
- Interview people who work in careers that interest you for their advice and find out what were their majors
- Do internships, volunteering, and part-time work in career fields of interest to find out if they are for you
- Consider degree requirements for majors that interest you. Are you willing and able to meet these requirements and to go to school that long?
- Consider labor market projections. Will jobs in this field be in-demand in your preferred geographic locations?
- Consider earning potential. Will it be enough to meet your needs and desires?
- Use college catalogs as a resource to find descriptions of majors

THE PRINCETON  
REVIEW



www.princetonreview.com

## OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK HANDBOOK

bls.gov/ooh



- Look at books on how to find a college major
- The *Princeton Review* online can be a resource. Go to: <http://www.princetonreview.com/majors.aspx> to do a college majors search. You will see profiles of over 200 majors.
- Students often change majors as they take courses, do research, learn more about possible occupations, and/or realize that career opportunities will develop regardless of the major/degree that is earned. So don't panic if you decide that your first declared major or career choice is not the one for you.

You can find out more about these careers through written or online research. Both the library and the Internet can provide good sources of information. Your school librarian can help you.

One good source is the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (OOH) which you can find in most libraries or online at [www.bls.gov/ooh](http://www.bls.gov/ooh).

Another great way to learn more about careers that interest you is to talk with people who work in these occupations. This is called “informational interviewing.” Usually people who you already know can refer or introduce you to the people who you want to interview. One of the counselors at your school can help you to think of some questions to ask. You can also find questions by reading more about informational interviewing online. Take advantage of the resources at your high school or college because this can make a difference between success and failure in school. Resources include counselors, tutors, learning labs, librarians and libraries, and more.

## JIBBER/JOBBER

jibberjobber.com



## LINKEDIN

linkedin.com



## ONLINE JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

- Use search engines to include searches for: job banks, job listings, job sites, and job opportunities listed by location and careers.
- Use keywords on your resume to highlight your skills.
- Use social media sites such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and others.

## TWITTER

twitter.com



## TIPS FOR JOB SEEKERS USING SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITES

- LinkedIn - Search the jobs section by keywords and location. Search for employer contacts. Search previous employers and schools and seek recommendations to be included in your profile. Create a profile, include keywords in your resume, connect and network, and use the answer section to ask and answer questions.
- Twitter - Use Twitterchats (live conversations) and learn job search strategies from jobhuntchat, H Chat and Careerchat. Network, find job leads, show your expertise, and follow employers of interest.

## What is Your Life Calling You to Do?

The word “vocation” comes from the Latin word for “voice.” It means a calling that you hear. A calling comes from within you and inspires you to move in a certain direction. Finding the right career is a process of self-discovery. Who are you and what are your natural tendencies? Answering these questions will lead you to the right career.

I believe, based on my over forty years of doing career counseling with hundreds of people, that each of us is born with a purpose. You can say it is a mission, avocation, calling, or whatever name you prefer to call it. Discover and line up with your purpose, and you'll find work that gives meaning to your life. You will experience joy when you find a purpose beyond or greater than yourself. Happiness tends to be unattainable when you live only for yourself. Your ability to make a difference will be obvious when you perform the work you love and do best.

When you give the best of yourself, using your natural ability and holding back nothing, you will get much joy in return for your efforts.

## Express Your Own Unique Song and Music

You have only a little time to use your ability and make your dreams happen. Life passes quickly. Your life will be over before you know it, so time is too valuable to waste. Becoming aware of your limited life span can be a motivator for you to take positive action. Now is the time to go for your dreams. You can't change the past, but you can take action now!

Ask yourself:

- 1 What do I really want out of the rest of my life?
- 2 What are my highest priorities?
- 3 What dreams have I not yet achieved?
- 4 Have I sung my special song and used my best talents?
- 5 What contribution would I like to make?

The answer to these questions is inside you. It is a matter of self-reflection and self-discovery. No one wants to die with their song unsung and with their ability unused. You have your own special talents and the ability to make a difference in the world. Let your life speak to you. Notice what it is that lights you up inside with fire, aliveness, and passion. Look for clues to your life's purpose. You can discover and use your greatest and most natural gifts and talents. You can make a difference!

### JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT

Use the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (OOH) to research the three occupations that you listed as being of interest.

In your journal, write a brief summary of what you learned from the OOH about these careers. Write about what you liked and disliked about these occupations.

“I realized that a career doesn't have to be a high paying one for me to enjoy it. A career that includes your interests can be fun.”

— DUSTIN HALL

## QUESTIONS TO ANSWER IN YOUR JOURNAL AND DISCUSS WITH OTHERS

- What are five enjoyable activities that I do well?
- What strengths and talents do others repeatedly tell me I have?
- How can I use my strengths to overcome my weaknesses?
- Who are three people whose jobs I would like to have and why?





RAYMOND GERSON



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

Earlier, I mentioned that I did poorly in school until my last year of high school, when I started getting more serious about my education. During those years, I had no goals and felt lost. I had no idea what my skills, interests, and values were, what careers I was suited for, and I had no sense of purpose. At this time, school had little meaning because I couldn't connect the value of an education with where I wanted to go in life. It's no wonder I was doing badly in school.

I desperately needed career guidance with someone that could help me discover that I actually had natural gifts and potential. Unfortunately, this type of guidance was not available in my school.

I teach a full semester college course in career exploration and planning. High school students can also take the course as part of the Early College Start Program. The course helps a student to discover skills, values, and interests, determine an appropriate major and career goal, how to research the job market, and how to use job search strategies.

It is my belief that every high school and college should offer a course in career development and planning. A student who learns both study skills and discovers a career direction will gain the motivation and know-how to do well in high school and college.

## Student Success Story

*The following paper was written by a former student of mine who completed my college career course while she was still in high school. Her paper provides an excellent example of how many of the ideas and exercises in this chapter can help a student to discover an appropriate career direction and purpose.*

### Case Study Paper for Career Exploration and Planning Course

By Tracy Rocha

I am a high school senior, and a few weeks ago I had no idea what I wanted to do after graduation. I knew I wanted to go to college, but I wasn't sure what I was going to study. My counselor at school mentioned this career exploration course to me and after taking the course my situation changed from being stuck to just the opposite. Now I have a pretty good idea of what I want to do and this is all because of this class.

This course is one of the few classes that have actually benefited me in realizing what I want to do for the rest of my life. I enrolled into the class with low expectations, but came out of it with a lot of valuable knowledge. This class not only helped me learn how to be a good job-hunter and narrow my career choices to either becoming a medical social worker or a physician's assistant, but it also taught me a lot about myself.

I never would have imagined that the number one rule to be successful in life is to "know thyself." You need to realize what strengths, values, weaknesses, and interests you have and to think of the steps needed to achieve the goals that will help you create a better future. This is what I did throughout this course.

With the help of the professor, the Discover program, and the What Color is Your Parachute book, my accomplishments during this semester have been many. First of all, I took the time to evaluate myself and thought really hard about what I wanted. I learned that my mission in life is "to care for and be of service to others, helping people overcome situations by informing them of unknown possibilities,

and influencing their decisions to live a better life,” and that is exactly what I plan to do. I am going to let my mission guide me from now on, and with the help of God, I believe I will get to where I want to be.

During this course, I also set goals for myself that will hopefully keep me on the right track. I learned that goals have to be realistic and at the same time short-termed enough to stay focused on them. Some steps I have taken toward my career goals are to research my career choices and learn in depth about them. The two careers I mentioned earlier fit me perfectly. Both careers allow me to do what I love, how I want to do it, and where I want to do it. They are both jobs that are in high demand and will let me live my life as I want. I will not be superrich, but I will not have to worry about money. Last but not least, I made a resume, cover letter, and thank you note during this semester which gave me the opportunity to practice for the future and improve my skills.

From when I started this course to where I find myself now, I feel I have come a long way and have made much progress. I'm more confident in where I am headed with my life and have a lot of hope. Even though life is full of surprises that might cause change, I am following my heart in what I want to do and will have no regrets. I know I will feel good about myself and live life with a positive attitude. I will be happier and feel I have lived my mission like God wanted me to do.

My plan after ending this course is to make a final decision about which of the two careers I will pursue. I want to keep striving to accomplish my goals and try my best always. Even if that means sacrificing certain things and learning how to balance my life, this is something I want to get better at. The key for me now is just to take “baby steps” because they are what will lead me to big achievements.

I have big expectations for myself now and to tell you the truth I am not scared of meeting them or other people’s expectations. As I mentioned before, this class has really prepared me for what is ahead of me and I believe I can do what ever I put my mind to. I am willing to step up to the challenge.

I just want to take this time to thank you, Mr. Gerson, for having such a huge impact on me. I appreciate everything. I am inspired to make something out of my life. The things I learned during this class, I will take with me forever.

**DANIEL POROT**  
 Career expert:  
 Information  
 and games for  
 identifying your skills



careergames.com

**DISCOVER ACT  
 CAREER PLANNING**  
 (Check with your  
 school or college to  
 find out if they can  
 give you Discover  
 or another online  
 career assessment.)



act.org/discover

**ACTIVITY 7.3**

**Goal for the week:**

Three steps I will take to achieve my goal:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



**CHAPTER 7 MAIN POINTS**

- Your life provides clues to your natural ability.
- You will do well and enjoy your work when it matches your skills, interests, and values.
- Many different jobs can fill the same need or can solve similar problems.
- Within you is a special song—a form of expression waiting to be discovered and communicated.



### The Voice of My Vocation

By Raymond Gerson

(This poem can be sung to the melody of Seven Spanish Angels)

In my heart there is a treasure,  
it lies deep inside of me,  
It's the answer to my purpose,  
the dream I know can be.

The voice of my vocation,  
is calling out to me,  
I listen and can hear it,  
And it will set me free.

I will find a need and fill it,  
I will use my talents well,  
to make a contribution,  
before the final bell.

When the end is near and I'm looking back,  
there won't be regret,  
because I've lived a life of purpose,  
there'll be no need to fret.

In the world there are problems,  
that call out to me,  
one that needs my talents,  
with solutions I can see.

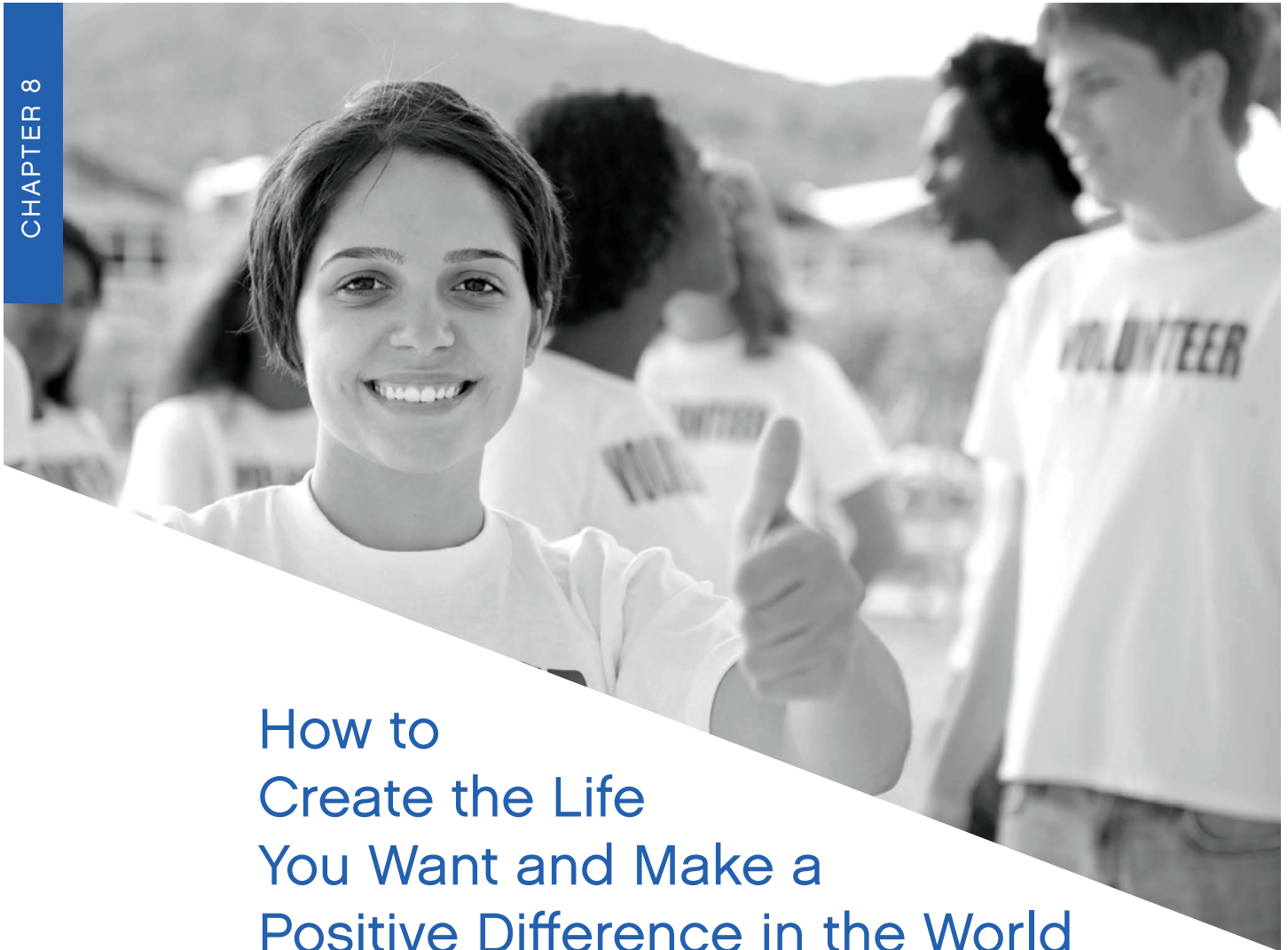
I want to leave my footprint,  
in the sands of time,  
I want to share my treasure,  
and live a life sublime.

I will find a need and fill it,  
I will use my talents well,  
to make a contribution,  
before the final bell.

When the end is near and I'm looking back,  
there won't be regret,  
because I've lived a life of purpose,  
there'll be no need to fret.

You have learned many ideas and skills so far, which will improve your academic performance, if you apply them. In the final chapter, you will be learning how to create the life you want so that you can make your dreams come true and make a positive difference for others.



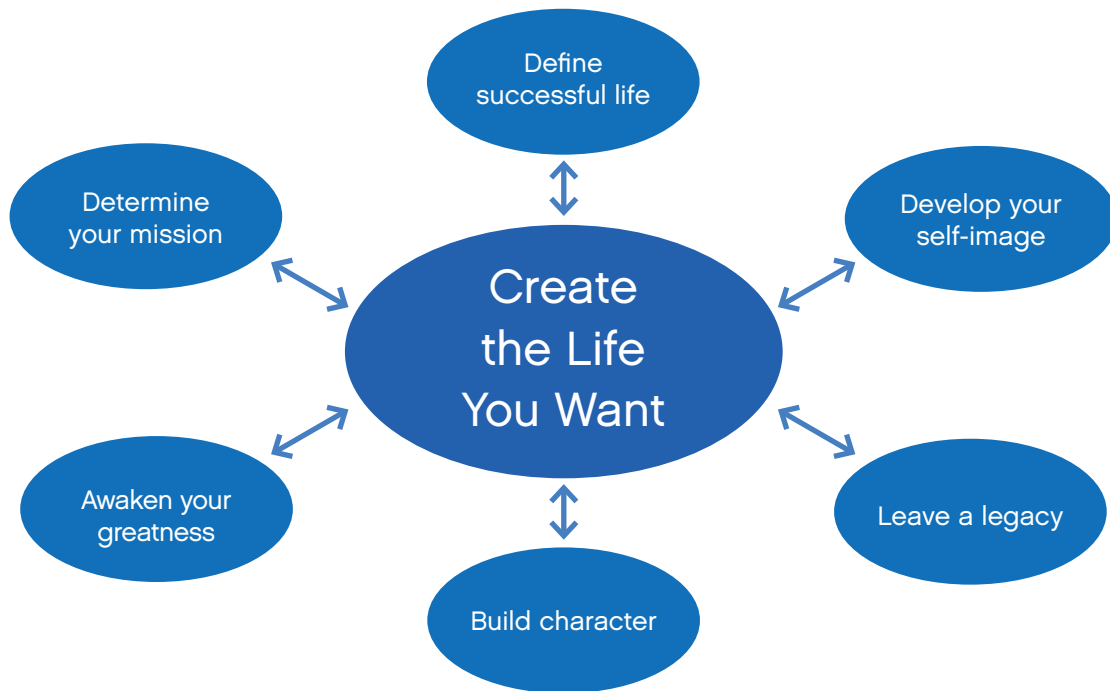


## How to Create the Life You Want and Make a Positive Difference in the World

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**Y**ou began this book by thinking about your life dreams and turning them into goals with deadlines. Your goals provide a vision of where you want to go in life. Deciding what you want is the first step to creating the life you want. The second step is to manifest your vision – to make it happen.

An architect envisions a house in his or her mind, draws it on paper, and then it is built. This is how thoughts become things. You start with a thought, desire, vision, and goal, and they become a physical reality. In the same way, you can create the life you want by turning your dreams into physical reality. Not only is it possible to make many of your dreams come true, but you can help others to fulfill their needs and dreams. You can create the life you want and make a positive difference in the lives of others.



“To the extent that your work takes into account the needs of the world, it will be meaningful; to the extent that through it you express your unique talents, it will be joyful.” —Laurence Boldt

## Benefits of Creating What You Desire and Making a Contribution to Others

- Your life becomes more fulfilling and enjoyable
- Your self-worth and self-esteem increase
- You grow as a person
- Your self-confidence increases
- It is good for your physical and mental health
- You get a sense of well-being and purpose
- You know yours is a life well lived
- You get the joy that comes from making a difference

## What is a Successful Life?

I wrote this book to help you succeed in college. It can also help you to do well in your courses and to prepare for college success even if you are still in high school. This book's secondary purpose is to help you succeed in your career and life.

In addition to the specific success strategies for college success, here are some general success principles to help you achieve more in your college, career, and life.

Success means different things to different people. For example, a person may need to make a lot of money to feel successful. Another person may feel successful helping others and making much less money.

In the beginning of this book, I defined success as “Making progress toward your goals.” Your goals will be different from many others because each person decides what goals are important for him or her to achieve. It will be difficult, if not impossible for you to feel successful, if you are not moving in the direction of your goals. Success will often come when you least expect it in the most ordinary moments. Keep making the effort and continue moving forward and results will happen. You might ask, “What if I feel like I am in a fog and can't see where I want to go?” Just start moving in the general direction you want to travel and try to see the next step in the fog. With each step you take you will see and decide on the next step. In this way, you keep moving forward one step at a time.

## General Life Success Principles

- 1 **Know yourself.** Be aware of your strengths and weaknesses. Build and use your strengths to excel, overcome weaknesses, and to improve.
- 2 **Know the outcome you want.** Set goals and have a definite purpose. Visualize your desired outcome.
- 3 **Ability to focus.** One key to success is your ability to concentrate on the task at hand. You will achieve greatness from doing small things with care and attention. Be in the present moment, focus, and do whatever you are doing as well as possible.
- 4 **Self-discipline.** Manage yourself and your time to get the best out of yourself.
- 5 **Self-motivation.** Focus on your goals to maintain motivation. Visualize your success.
- 6 **Go the extra mile.** Be willing to do more than is expected or being asked of you. Take action and provide more value than you are getting paid to do. Employers will want to hire and keep you, if you are willing to go the extra mile.
- 7 **Persistence.** This is your ability to hang in there even, when the going gets tough. Persistence is your ability to persevere and not give up easily. You also need to know when to change course.
- 8 **Complete tasks and avoid procrastination.** Do what you need to do now and follow through on tasks until completion.
- 9 **Willing to risk failure.** This is your ability to take reasonable chances and to learn from your mistakes. This takes courage and a belief in yourself.
- 10 **Ability to delay gratification.** Your going to college is an example of delayed gratification. You are sacrificing some pleasure now for future benefits.

“I like this book because it's a starting point for my success. It is sort of like a manual on how to be great. You may fail, but it tells you how to get back up and succeed.”

—MATHEW CASTILLO



- 11 **Communicating and relating well with others.** Many employers will want to hire you if you can work well with others. Your ability to listen and to understand how others are feeling are important communication skills.
- 12 **Enjoy helping others.** Success often doesn't happen, at least not for long, if a person is selfish and only cares about their progress. If you are willing to help others, you will probably become a successful leader.
- 13 **Master mind alliance.** This is where you get with others and help each other reach your goals and their goals.

## ACTIVITY 8.1

What will it take for you to feel successful? Write your definition of success in the space below.

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## Building a Strong Foundation for Your Inner Growth

Your inner growth will determine the person you become and are becoming. Your inner development is even more important than just getting material things. The good news is that when you become a better and better person, you will also usually do better in your relationships, career, and finances. Your inner growth can bring you the happiness that you might miss out on, if you focus only on going after material things. You will enjoy the material things more if you are happy with yourself.

Steven Covey, in his book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, discovered something interesting when he read success literature written during the last two hundred years. The success literature of the last fifty years was about the importance of personality and skill development. The literature of over fifty years ago by writers such as Emerson and Thoreau and others was more about character and inner development. What happens if you do not build a strong inner foundation? You have probably seen stories on the news about politicians, ministers, athletes, and others with great talents and communication skills that ended up in disgrace and/or in prison. What was missing? *The foundation was missing*. Character, which has to do with inner qualities, is the foundation upon which your skills, talents, and strategies must be built. Without good character, you will not be able to handle the temptations and obstacles that come your way and this can hurt you and others. Without strong character, you would likely misuse your talents. If a house has a weak foundation, it can easily fall down. If a person has weak character, he or she can easily fall also. So, it is important to keep improving yourself and becoming a better and better person.

“It was good for me to discover how everyone defines success in their own way.”

—AMANDA FIGUEROA

Here is a partial list of character traits to develop:

- **Honesty and Integrity.** Honesty builds your self-respect and the respect you get from others. It takes time for you to earn trust and you can lose it overnight, if you are not careful. Integrity includes honesty and includes your values and principles.
- **Forgiveness.** You can find the courage to forgive yourself and others. This will bring you peace of mind.
- **Responsibility.** This means you respond to the situation before you that needs to be done.
- **Courage.** You will need courage to do what you feel is right and to go ahead in spite of your obstacles. Courage does not always mean you have no fear, but it also means you go ahead and do the right thing, even if you are afraid.
- **Compassion.** You can feel for others who are suffering and take action to help them.
- **Humility.** You can be humble and self-confident at the same time. To be humble means you are not full of yourself and your own self-importance. A humble person does not think he is better than others.
- **Love.** When love is awakened in you, other good qualities such as joy, inner peace, and courage, develop automatically. Love helps you to see that we are all interconnected and worthwhile.

ACTIVITY 8.2

List three more character traits below that you want to develop further.



1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

“I am grateful for this knowledge. I have been given the blueprint to succeed in college.”

—ANGEL DIAZ

A person may be brilliant, highly educated, personable, and have awesome talents, but without good character, he will not have true success. Strong character traits are the foundation upon which you and others can build a successful and fulfilling life.

Your choices and actions reveal your character and who you are as a person. When you piece your small habits together, it shapes who you become. By changing your thoughts, you can change and improve your habits or actions, which are creating the person you are becoming.

## The Power of Self-Image and Your Success

Maxwell Maltz's book, *Psycho-Cybernetics*, which was mentioned earlier, contained major breakthrough information at the time it was published about self-image.

What was so significant about this book? Dr. Maltz was a plastic surgeon who improved the physical appearance of thousands of people, especially those with facial deformities. Some of his patients went through positive changes after surgery in how they saw themselves. Others felt no different about themselves; even though photos showed they had major improvements in how they looked following surgery. Why? They still saw themselves the same way because their self-image did not change. For example, some people who felt ugly before surgery still saw themselves as unattractive after major improvements were made to their appearance. Dr. Maltz realized that your self-image or picture of how you see yourself is extremely important.

The bad news is that your self-image defines and limits what you will achieve in life. You cannot outperform what you believe to be true about yourself. Your self-image determines your degree of happiness and fulfillment, success in relationships, and career accomplishments and satisfaction. It also impacts your physical, emotional, and mental health.

The good news is you can change and improve your self-image. Dr. Maltz found that 90% of people could use at least some improvement in their self-image. His book provides practical exercises for improving your self-image and for managing your inner critic or what could be called "the negative voice inside your head." As your self-image improves, so does your self-confidence and self-esteem, which are important for any type of success in life. A strong and healthy picture of yourself can help you to overcome many of your self-imposed limitations and beliefs.

See Figures 8.1 and 8.2.

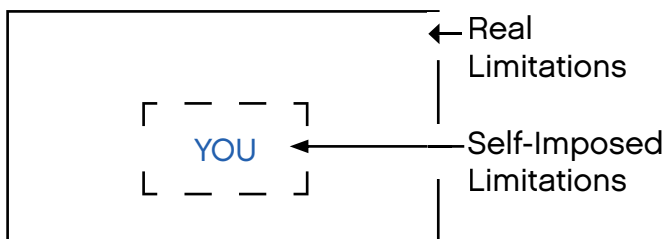


FIGURE 8.1  
LIMITED SELF-IMAGE VS. REAL LIMITATIONS



FIGURE 8.2  
EXPANDED SELF-IMAGE

There is a difference between self-imposed and real limitations.

Some of your limitations are real. For example, you can't lift a house weighing thousands of pounds over your head. In the figure above and to the left, the outer boundaries of the box represent your real limits. The smaller box represents your self-imposed limits.

Self-imposed limitations such as "I will always be a poor student" can be changed and improved. Real limits can't be changed, but you can go beyond the self-imposed limits so they do not hold you back from achieving your dreams. The box to the right obviously represents an expanded self-image and what is possible for you.

## How to Improve Your Self-Image

Your inner critic can be a major obstacle to your achieving a successful and fulfilling life. All of us hear the voice of this critic at times. It takes the form of inner dialog and negative self-talk. This is the voice that says, “I can’t do it” or “I’m not worthy of achieving my dreams.”

“I learned how to improve my self-image and discovered my mission.”

—CLAUDIA GUERRERO

As you strengthen and improve your self-image, you also lessen the power of your inner critic. This will help you to overcome your inner resistance (which is often at a subconscious level) to achieving your dreams. As your self-worth increases, your limiting beliefs will be changed into positive beliefs. When you can start believing in your worthiness and great potential, it will change your life.

Is there something practical that you can do to improve your self-image? Yes! Dr. Maltz suggested that you go into what he called “The theater of your mind” each day and play mental movies. Picture yourself sitting in a theater looking at a large white screen. Then, see yourself on the screen acting and feeling like the person you want to be. For example, you might picture yourself cool and relaxed while taking a test. Also, replay movies of yourself reliving past successes. Your self-image is influenced more by pictures than words.

You will become what you think about most of the time. By reliving your success experiences often, you will reinforce an image of yourself as a successful person. Also, when you play mental movies of yourself acting as the person you want to become, you begin to see yourself in that way. You will behave like the person you believe yourself to be. When you improve your self-image, your life improves from inside out. This is one of the great secrets for you to find happiness and fulfillment.

### ACTIVITY 8.3

Practice going into the theater of your mind that Dr. Maltz talked about.



Sit down and relax. Imagine a big blank movie screen and you are the only one in the theater. Now, for a few minutes, see yourself on the screen being the person you want to be. See yourself calm and confident.

If you are going to a job interview or any situation that causes you anxiety, practice this method. You can practice seeing yourself in the interview doing well. This is one way to improve your self-image. Your self-image is a mental picture of how you see yourself. Keep improving this picture so that it supports your success.

## Your Thoughts and Words are Powerful and Can Make a Difference in Your Life and Others'

How you feel about yourself makes a big difference. *Your thoughts have the power to weaken or strengthen you.* Scientific experiments show that if you think about Mother Teresa or have loving thoughts, it will make you feel more compassionate, and your immune system will get healthier and stronger. This study was done with college students and published in the

*Journal of Advancement in Medicine*. The researchers also discovered that thoughts of Hitler or of hatred weaken the immune system. Negative thoughts and self-talk can make you weaker and less healthy. Your positive self-talk supports and strengthens your self-image. You'll have a much better influence on others, if you develop a healthy self-image.

## THE POWER OF POSITIVE EXPECTATION

Many studies have been done to show that your expectations will influence how things turn out. What you strongly expect will happen often does happen. This is called a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Studies have been done in the schools that show that a teacher's expectations can influence a student's performance. There are examples in which teachers were told that one group of students were the smart ones and another group of students were the dumb ones, when both groups were actually of similar intelligence. The students performed according to the expectations of their teachers. The students, who were considered the smart ones, performed much better than the group who had been labeled unintelligent. The teachers verbally and nonverbally communicated their expectations to the students who then performed according to the teachers' expectations.

In a review of the research on the effects of teachers' expectations on student performance by Kathleen Cotton, she concluded that "the most important finding from this research is that teacher expectations can and do affect a student's achievement levels and attitudes."

You will often rise to the level of the teacher's expectations because it changes your mental picture of yourself and your own expectations. When your self-image supports your success, you will perform in a way that is likely to bring it about.

**How you think and what you choose to think about, shapes your character and influences your self-image.** This is one reason why what you are thinking about and doing (your actions) in the present is so important—you are creating your future now!

"I know now that if you dream big, then you have to reach as far to the stars as you can. I know that it is up to me to make my dreams come true."

—ROSLYNN RICHARDSON

### ACTIVITY 8.4

Identify a time in your life when your expectations (negative or positive) influenced your outcome.

Reflect on this and write your insights and thoughts about it below.

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## The Power to Make a Difference Comes From Within

The kind of person you are and are becoming determines how you see others. How you see yourself and others is influenced by your own inner qualities. Also, how you perceive others will determine what influence you will have on them. Remember the power of expectation. Do you see people as worthwhile human beings with great potential or as con artists who

want to take advantage of you? Your perception determines your influence and is even more powerful than what you say, although what you say will be an expression of who you are.

Mother Teresa saw others through eyes of love; Hitler, through eyes of hatred. Each acted according to his or her perception. One had a positive influence on the lives of many people. The other left a path of destruction, suffering, and death. Mother Teresa's and Hitler's levels of consciousness – their widely different perceptions – led to entirely opposite historical legacies or what they left behind. What do you want your legacy or mark or footprint on the world to be? What is your purpose and mission?

## INNER AND OUTER PURPOSE

In his book, *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*, Eckhart Tolle tells us that human beings have an inner and outer purpose. The inner purpose is to fully awaken and know yourself.

Your outer purpose may be different from others and it can change with time. According to Tolle, you will be most effective when your inner and outer purposes are connected. You will be able to bring more of yourself and who you really are into your work in the world. He says you can bring more of your self and true power to make a difference into your outer purpose by enjoying what you do. If you cannot enjoy your work, he says, at least accept it. In other words, don't fight and resist what is, but go ahead and do the work with care and attention. This doesn't mean that you don't look for new work. According to Tolle, even better than enjoying your work is to add enthusiasm to your enjoyment. This happens when you not only enjoy what you do, but you add a vision or goal to the work you are already enjoying. Your goal, combined with enjoyment of your work, gives you a strong outer purpose.

## DISCOVERING YOUR MISSION AND WORK THAT MATTERS

The world is facing major problems today such as global hunger, poverty, economic problems, global warming and other environmental challenges, health care problems, educational issues, weapons of mass destruction, overflowing prisons, crumbling infrastructures, and the list goes on. You can either feel discouraged by these problems or see them as a map of possibilities for change. As I mentioned earlier, problems call for solutions and crisis is the flip side of opportunity. Many people have discovered work that they feel really matters, and even their personal mission, by deciding to tackle a particular problem. You can do the same.

Edward Everett Hale said, "I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything but I can do something, and I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do." Your life can make a difference for others. You can leave the world a little better because you lived and took positive action.

- ① What is life calling you to do?
- ② Do you have a great idea and vision that can bring out your best?
- ③ Do you have a special gift you want to share with others?

This can be your personal mission. It will be the vehicle by which you express your unique abilities to make a positive difference.



An individual mission is a calling or higher purpose that you feel inspired to fulfill. It includes your goal, vision, and your main purpose. A mission will take you beyond yourself to a greater sense of purpose. When you discover your mission, your life will take on new meaning, and you will automatically feel motivated to fulfill your mission.

A mission may take the form of a career, volunteer work, parenthood, or a hobby. One person’s mission may be to add beauty to the world through art, music, or some other means. It could involve helping young people to get off of drugs, or to help them acquire a quality education.

A mission is any worthwhile purpose for which you feel a deep sense of commitment and connection. It usually involves a cause you feel deeply about and uses talents that bring you joy.

You may not know your mission yet, but it is not too early to begin giving it some thought. It also may change and develop as you get older. Think about how you would like to make a contribution to others. Is there a problem, need, or dream others have that you feel passionate about? A need you would love to fulfill?

Think about your goals and skills you want to use. Think about the types of populations you would most like to help.

Here is an example of a brief mission statement that I wrote. “To teach others to discover their talents, potential, and calling so they can fulfill their dreams and make a positive difference in the world.” Now give it a try in the activity below.

“The most valuable part of this course and book for me was the last chapter on ‘How to Create the Life You Want and Make a Positive Difference in the World.’ This chapter, well, the whole book, in fact, helped me to better myself in many ways. I learned how to be more responsible, how to overcome hard times, and to forgive myself and others for past mistakes. I know one day I will make a difference in someone’s life. This course and book helped me to find out more about myself and to think better about myself. Honestly, I’m a whole new person inside and out.”

—ALEXANDRA MARTINEZ

**ACTIVITY 8.5**

Write a brief mission statement in the space below. Keep in mind that it can change as you become clearer about your personal mission.

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**Where Does Greatness Lie and How Can It Be Awakened?**

What follows is a brief article I wrote and would like to share with you called, “How to Awaken the Greatness within You.”

**How to Awaken the Greatness within You**

By Raymond Gerson

The power to make a positive difference comes primarily from within. It has more to do with who we are than what we say. This is why Mahatma Gandhi said, “My life is my teaching” and “Be the change you want to see in the world.” Our example speaks louder than words, but our words are also a reflection of who we are as a person.



Gandhi is a great example of someone who transformed himself and the lives of many others when he shifted from self-consciousness to other-consciousness. From childhood to early adulthood, Gandhi felt awkward and self-conscious. He was shy and had many fears. Only when he became captivated by a passionate mission — a sense of purpose larger than himself — was he able to go beyond his fears.

Gandhi's compassion for the Indian people and his desire to free India from British rule became a burning desire that changed Gandhi into a man of great courage, love, and inner strength. His life's purpose took him beyond his petty self-concerns and self-imposed limitations. He became a great leader who inspired a nation to fulfill his mission.

Success and happiness that escapes us when we seek them directly will frequently come when our focus is on contributing to others. We need to get out of our own way and allow the power within to be expressed.

Many of you want to make a positive contribution. You want to know that your having lived on this earth made a positive difference in the lives of others. Your positive actions can inspire others to glimpse their own potential and to become what they are capable of becoming. This brings joy, meaning, and fulfillment to your life.

You may be wondering, "Okay, fine, but how am I supposed to find a great purpose that overcomes my fears and self-concerns"? First, take a look at the many problems and needs in the world. Which ones do you feel passionate about? Are there problems in the world that make you angry or sad? What inspires you to act? What impact do you want to have on the world? How could you use your talents to contribute to humanity? Answering questions like these can help you to discover how you want to be of service.

Many psychologists have said that most people use only a small percentage of their brain power and creativity. Enormous resources are within you, but they often remain dormant until you find a purpose that is bigger than yourself. You move then from self-centeredness to focusing on your unique way of helping others. Like Gandhi, you can also rise above your weaknesses and awaken your dormant potential when you decide how you want to be of service. This is the secret for awakening the greatness within you.

## What Will Be Your Destiny and Legacy?

The interesting thing about Gandhi was that he was shy, awkward, and lacking in self-confidence as a young man. Once he became passionate about a mission and focused on helping others, he was transformed. He rose above his petty fears and self-consciousness and discovered a mission which brought out his best.

**One source of happiness is being of service and helping others.** This does not mean you must become a social worker, nurse, or counselor to be of service to others. A business person, architect, auto mechanic, medical lab technician, and people in almost any profession can be of service directly or indirectly.

**When you use your best skills in a profession that you love, you also experience joy.** Your education can be the key that unlocks the door of opportunity leading you to this work and allowing you to fulfill your mission.

CREATE THE JOB  
YOU WANT



successforcollegestudents.com

**JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT**

In your journal, name the three most important ideas you learned from this book and discuss how you will use them to succeed in college.

**QUESTIONS TO ANSWER IN YOUR JOURNAL AND DISCUSS WITH OTHERS**

- Which success principles discussed in this chapter appealed to me the most and how will I use them to succeed?
- What are my three strongest character traits? Which three character traits mentioned in this chapter do I need to work on the most?
- What is one self-imposed limitation that is part of my self-image and how will I overcome it?
- What are three things I would like for people to be able to say about me and my legacy when I am gone?

**AUTHOR'S NOTE**

It is possible to create work or a job for yourself that doesn't exist in the form of an advertised job opening. If you can sell an employer on the value you can bring to the company, it is possible to create a job that doesn't yet exist or where there is no opening available. I have done this in my life and have taught others how to do it.

My free ebook, *Finding the Right Work and Making a Difference* is available at <https://www.upbeatpress.com>. See link to the free ebook download.

So many wonderful events are happening for me late in life. The same can be true for you, and this is why I encourage you to take care of your health. You will fulfill dreams and new ones will replace them. In your 60's and 70's or 80's, you might decide to remarry or retire and travel, write a book, return to work, start a business, do volunteer work, or who knows what. You will need the health and energy to pursue your dreams.

Life goes by quickly. As I was writing the first edition to this book, I received an invitation to attend my 50th high school reunion. It seems like only yesterday that I graduated from high school. The last fifty years went by so fast that it boggles my mind.

Realize how quickly time is passing and how precious it is so you will use it wisely. Ask yourself, "If I was hundred years old and today was my last day on earth, what regrets would I have? What would I like to have accomplished? Who is the person I became?" Then, realize that there is still time to live the life you want to live.

RAYMOND GERSON



## Student Success Story

*The success story by Melinda Medina is a great example of unconditional love and how clues to your mission can come from your life experiences.*

### My Future in the Making

By Melinda Medina

I would have to say caring for my grandmother when she had cancer would be my biggest accomplishment in my life.

It was early November 2002, when my best friend, my other mom, my grandmother was formally diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. I had taken her to several appointments before that and I had no idea what to expect because she just had abdominal pain for the past few months. Once she got a medical specialist who was experienced in that field, it was clear that it was cancer and very serious.

I needed to make a plan for her and the remainder of the time she had left with us. At first, I don't think she had a clue about what she would be going through. As I looked in her eyes while explaining what the doctor had discovered, it was clear to me she was scared. I remember telling her that no matter what happened, I would never leave her side. At that point, I told myself any attention she needed I would give her. I would stay nights and eventually moved in with her. This was to prevent her from going to a nursing home. I had made a promise that I would be there to the end and that was what I intended to do.

I can remember my grandmother asking if there was any way she could beat the cancer and without a doubt, there was no way. However, I would not take away whatever hopes she may have had. I mentioned to her there was a surgery she could have that may help or just give her added time to what the doctor thought she had left. With that said, she underwent a surgery that in reality bought her only a couple of months. After the unhelpful surgery, she also had the option of chemotherapy. Chemo required several hours for more than a couple of days out the week. These appointments, as well as travel time, getting her ready, and taking her to other errands the doctors had her doing would keep me from home for hours or even long days. My personal life had come to an end. I was her personal assistant, driver, chef, and companion.

I decided one day, after commuting twenty-five minutes from my home to hers, that I would move in. I wanted to be at her call whenever she needed me without having to wait. I could see the happiness in her face when she woke up, and I was there at her bedside, or in my twin bed that I had set up right beside her. Everyday that I was with her was special to me. I would take time out after her feedings, medications, etc. to talk, laugh, cry and just about anything to keep her mind off the pain she was going through. When she was up to it some, I would record her on my video camera, just to have memories for myself and my family. I would also comb her hair, give her nice hair hairdos, paint her nails, and just remind her that I had such a beautiful, fun-loving, good-hearted grandmother. I always told her that taking care of her was such a joy, and that I wouldn't trade it for the world.

She once sat up and cried and said how embarrassing and depressing it was that she couldn't take care of herself because the disease made her so weak and she was in lots of pain. She once told me that I would be a great nurse, that I had lots of personality and love for people. I knew that my grandmother had a lot of pride. This was a woman who started to work at the age of nine and, with no education, she was able to raise six kids, buy a home, and retire from a job she had for over fifteen years. She still found time to take care of me since I was born. There was no way I could repay her, so I was against hospice and home health aides. I knew that they would do a good job in helping her and giving my grandmother

what she needed. But I wanted to be the one who helped her in every way possible. So, every day when I fed, bathed, washed her clothes, cleaned her wounds and made sure she was well rested or hydrated, it made a big difference in my life.

There were days that I prayed this wasn't happening. When I came back to the reality, it was clear I had to do the best I could for her during the days we had left. I had never thought what I had done for my grandmother might become a profession and had not thought of becoming a nurse. After my son was born, (he is two years old now), I decided I needed a career and a future for him. I enrolled in college. When they asked me what my major would be, I thought about it awhile. Then, I remembered my grandmother and how much I helped her live her days in complete happiness. I said I would like to become a nurse so I can provide others with my willingness to care for people, my friendliness, and my love for a job that never ends.

I believe that you learn different skills in your life, and it's up to you to use them. I think nursing is my skill and I plan to be the best nurse I can for myself and others.

**ACTIVITY 8.6****Goal for the week:**

Three steps I will take to achieve my goal:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**CHAPTER 8 MAIN POINTS**

- Deciding what you want and making it happen are steps to creating the life you want.
- Character is an important foundation for you to build success upon.
- Visualize what you want, associate positive emotions with your goal, and then let go, and don't worry about how or when it happens.
- Your power to make a difference lies within you. When you find a purpose larger than yourself, you will create a life that is fulfilling and helps others.



## Can We All Come Together?

By Raymond Gerson

Can we all come together,  
And love one another,  
And make this a better world?  
Can we all get along,  
And sing our song,  
And let our love unfurl?

Yes its amazing, so amazing,  
Amazing this gift of life,  
Its amazing, so amazing,  
A world with much less strife.

Can we all be kinder,  
And not a faultfinder,  
And be more humane?  
Can we find inner peace,  
And let hatred cease,  
And reduce the pain?

Yes its amazing, so amazing,  
Amazing this gift of life,  
Its amazing, so amazing,  
A world with much less strife.

Can we become our best,  
And know were blessed,  
And live in gratitude?  
Can we be more caring,  
And much more sharing,  
With a positive attitude?

Yes its amazing, so amazing,  
Amazing this gift of life,  
Its amazing, so amazing,  
A world with much less strife.



# Post-Course Assessment

Now take the Post-Course Assessment below and compare your scores to the Pre-Course Assessment you took before you started Chapter 1.

This questionnaire is not a test, but is an opportunity for you to find out what you know and don't know about the topics in this book. It will help you to see your strengths as a student and in which areas you need improvement. So be honest where you see yourself now.

Read the statements below and give yourself points for each one. Use the point system below and then add up your total points for each of the eight topics. Then, add up all of your points for an overall total score.

- 5 Points      The statement is mostly or always true
- 4 points      The statement is often or frequently true
- 3 points      The statement is sometimes true
- 2 points      The statement is rarely true
- 1 point        The statement is never or almost never true

## POST-ASSESSMENT

### ① Goals

- A.  I have clear goals for what I want to accomplish in life.
- B.  My goals are written down.
- C.  My goals have deadlines or dates for completion.
- D.  I have short, medium, and long-range goals.
- E.  I have goals for all major areas of my life: education/career, physical, mental, spiritual, financial, social, and family.
- F.  I practice visualizing my goals as if I have already achieved them.

Total \_\_\_\_\_

### ② Learning Styles and Types of Intelligence

- A.  I am familiar with different learning styles.
- B.  I know which is my preferred and best learning style.
- C.  I am familiar with theories of different types of intelligence.



- D. \_\_\_ I know my strongest types of intelligence and how to use them.
- E. \_\_\_ I know how to use my preferred learning style and types of intelligence to overcome my weaknesses.
- F. \_\_\_ I take good care of my body and my brain.

Total \_\_\_\_\_

### ③ Time Management

- A. \_\_\_ I have a clear picture of how I spend my time.
- B. \_\_\_ I know several time management strategies and use them regularly.
- C. \_\_\_ I know how to prioritize, I make a daily list of my priorities, and do them most of the time.
- D. \_\_\_ I am able to get my class assignments done on time.
- E. \_\_\_ I use time management tools such as planners and calendars.
- F. \_\_\_ I know how to balance my activities so there is enough time for work, fun, school, and family.

Total \_\_\_\_\_

### ④ Reading and Studying

- A. \_\_\_ I know and use reading and study systems.
- B. \_\_\_ I know how to create and use study aids.
- C. \_\_\_ I break my study periods into small chunks.
- D. \_\_\_ I know and use annotation while reading.
- E. \_\_\_ I am skilled in the art of using questions to be engaged with what I am reading.
- F. \_\_\_ I know and use strategies before, during, and after reading my textbooks.

Total \_\_\_\_\_

### ⑤ Note-Taking and Writing

- A. \_\_\_ I use a note-taking system.
- B. \_\_\_ I regularly take notes in my classes and when I read textbooks. I review and study my notes shortly after taking them and before tests.
- C. \_\_\_ I use a writing system, and I know how to write good papers.
- D. \_\_\_ I know the Cornell Note System and how to use it.
- E. \_\_\_ I know what a thesis statement is and how to use it.
- F. \_\_\_ I ask and use journalistic questions before I write my essays.

Total \_\_\_\_\_

**6** Memory Strategies and Test-Taking

- A.  I know and use several techniques for improving my memory.
- B.  I create memory aids to prepare for tests.
- C.  I know how to use my preferred learning style to aid my memory.
- D.  I know and use several strategies to reduce test anxiety.
- E.  I know several strategies for taking objective and essay tests.
- F.  I predict questions that may be on the tests and create practice quizzes to take before the actual exam.

Total \_\_\_\_\_

**7** Career Development

- A.  I have identified and know my strongest values, skills, and interests.
- B.  I know my strongest personal traits.
- C.  I know how to research occupations.
- D.  I am familiar with Holland's six personality types and work environments.
- E.  I have identified needs and problems in the world, which I would like to help with or solve.
- F.  I know how to pick majors in college or jobs that would be a good match for me.

Total \_\_\_\_\_

**8** Create the Life You Want

- A.  I know my purpose and mission in life.
- B.  I know and use many success principles and strategies.
- C.  I am improving myself and my character on a regular basis.
- D.  I understand why my thoughts are powerful and how to use positive self-talk.
- E.  I know ways to create the life I want and how to make a positive difference.
- F.  I understand the importance of my self-image and how to improve it.

Total \_\_\_\_\_

**Overall Total Score** \_\_\_\_\_

How did your scores compare to the first time you answered these questions? This Post-Course questionnaire gives you one way to measure your progress and to see how much more you know about topics in the book and what it takes for college success.

# Conclusion

You have covered a lot of ground since beginning this book. You have learned much more about yourself. You have learned:

- How to turn your dreams into goals
- How to determine your learning styles and types of intelligence
- Time management and good health strategies
- Reading comprehension techniques
- How to write well and take good notes
- Memory and test-taking strategies
- Career development ideas
- How to create the life you want and make a positive contribution to others

Young people are the future and can create a better world. As a young person who has the opportunity to receive a good education, you are one of the fortunate ones in the world. You can use the knowledge and skills contained in this book to do well in school and succeed. Your education is a powerful means to make a positive difference in the world.

Consider how you can give something back from what you learned. You can teach some of these ideas and strategies to a younger brother or sister, to your friends, or you can become a mentor to younger students. By teaching others, you will learn the lessons better yourself and will help others at the same time.

I would love to hear how this benefited you. You can contact me at [raymond@raymond-gerson.com](mailto:raymond@raymond-gerson.com). I leave you now with my best wishes for a successful and fulfilling education, career, and life.

## Examples of Student Papers

In my eight-week “Transition to College Success” course which is based on *Achieve College Success... Learn How in 20 Hours or Less*, I require several reflection papers. These papers include the following: Pre-Assessment, Goal Setting, Time Management or Time Monitor, and Success Story.

Examples of Student Success Story papers are in Chapters 1 and 8. An example of a student Time Management paper is in Chapter 3.

The Pre-Assessment paper is a reflection by students about what they learned about themselves from taking the Pre-Assessment Questionnaire. The Goal Setting paper is about a one-week goal each student created, steps taken to achieve it, the outcome, and what was learned from it.

Examples of a Pre-Assessment and Goal Setting paper are provided below:

### Pre-Assessment Paper

By Maria Moreno

The pre-assessment questionnaire was an unpleasant wake-up call for me. I was surprised and disappointed to find out how little I knew about what it takes to succeed in college. It showed me that I really do need to learn the topics that will be covered in this course.

I scored low in career development, learning styles and intelligence, reading, studying and note taking, test taking and memory strategies, and creating the life I want. I really don't know much about these subjects. I scored about average in goal setting. I do have goals, but not in all of the categories. I plan to set more goals and to start writing them down. My time management and health and fitness scores were pretty good. I do use a planner and I write down my important things to do. I exercise several times a week and eat pretty good most of the time. I can still improve on these, but I was happy to see I am doing something well.

Even though I felt upset at first with my results, the assessment helped me to see what I need to work on and why I need this course. This is funny because I didn't think I needed a course like this.

I look forward to taking this assessment again at the end of this course and I think there will be big improvements. This motivates me to study and learn these topics because I really want to do well in college.

## Goal Paper

By Sugey Zavala

My short and small goal that I achieved was to at least pass my biology test on Friday. To achieve this goal, for the first time I worked really hard and I did everything I could to pass my test. All of my hard work at the end it paid off because I got an outstanding grade on my biology test.

The steps that I took to achieve my goal were a little difficult because I couldn't do other things that I like to do. One step was staying after school almost every day of the week so I could understand everything clearly. Also in my free time, I would study everything we learned that day in class to make sure I understood it. That week I paid extra attention to the teacher, because I didn't wanted to miss on anything we were learning each day.

While doing these steps to achieve my goal, I had to overcome some obstacles too. One obstacle was not playing my favorite sport, soccer, like always because I stayed after school for about two hours almost every day. Another obstacle was that in my free time I couldn't go out with my mom to the stores because I stayed home studying really hard to achieve my goal.

Finally, it was Friday and I was doing my biology test that I worked so hard to at least pass it. By my surprise the test was very easy, so I was the first one to finish. When everybody was finished, the teacher gave us back our tests already graded and I was very happy because I had gotten my first hundred in biology and I was the only one that got a hundred in my class. At that moment I was so happy because I had not only achieved my goal but I overcame it with the best grade in my class.

From working on this short and small goal I learned that when you work on something really hard, you can achieve or overcome anything you want. In order to achieve my goal I had to overcome some obstacles, but at the end everything was all worth it.

## Distance Learning/Distance Education

### Is online learning right for you?

Online classes, distance learning, and distance education all refer to the same thing, that is, taking a class by signing up for it through a college or university, logging onto a computer, reading materials, accessing and completing activities and papers, participating in discussions, and taking tests. You may never meet your instructor in person, and you may only know your peers in the class by their online presence.

And, while the traditional way of attending class and taking notes, participating in discussions, turning in paper assignments is still an integral part of the higher education system, it is also true that one can complete an education wholly online at some institutions.

Most colleges and universities are now offering online classes in most areas. But is taking an online class right for you? Let's look at an overview of what the requirements of taking an online class might be.

First, online classes require the use of a computer and Internet access. Do you have easy computer access? This could mean having a not-too-old computer at home with Internet access and word processing software (such as MS Word). Or you might have access to a computer through work that you could use when you are off the clock. There are also computers available to you on school campuses during open hours. One benefit of taking an online class is that you can enroll and participate in a time frame that works for you, even if you have to come to campus to use a computer. For example, if you work during the day, and the only time a class is offered on campus is during your work hours, you might be happy (willing) to drive to campus after work and take that same class online, if that means completing the class.

Second, the time required to attend an online class is generally equal to attending a traditional on-campus class. A three-hour class may still require three hours of "in-class" time no matter if online or "face-to-face" learning happens. Also, consider that you will need two hours of homework time for every hour of in-class time, so a three-hour online class may require nine hours of total time per week.

Finally, online classes often have requirements that have you "check in" several times per week (often five different times per week), and not on the same day. Usually, this is broken down between:

- 1 Attendance and participation, and;
- 2 Lecture, discussion on discussion boards, and coursework requirements.

Plan on regular class activity throughout the week, and not just sporadic attention to course requirements every so often.

So, what makes a successful online learner? Here is a brief list of successful online learner qualities:

- Good with time management and can successfully manage assignments and due dates
- Works well alone
- Can read and understand material with little explanation from others
- Has motivation to succeed
- Good written communication skills
- Understand and comfortably use computers and current technology
- Can successfully interact with others online
- Clear understanding that all online instructors are not created equal

How can students prepare themselves for an online course the first time? Many colleges offer a “readiness” assessment to help students determine if this type of course is appropriate for them. Once enrolled, students should stay in contact with the instructor and take particular care not to let things slide until they get too far behind to complete the course.

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BA, English, San Francisco State University

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*Source:* Used with permission from Christie Carr.



## Your College Library: A Great Resource

Typical areas in the library:

- **Circulation desk.** All publications are checked out here. This is usually at the entrance of the library.
- **Reference area.** Encyclopedias, dictionaries, directories, atlases, and almanacs.
- **Book area.** Books and sometimes magazines and periodicals.
- **Audiovisual materials.** Videos, photography, audio recordings, art, and recorded music collections.
- **Computer area.** Terminals linked to Internet and college databases. These databases are reliable and can be trusted when doing research for writing papers.
- **Microfilm areas.** Microfilm materials printed in reduced size and viewed through special machines.

**Where to find help: Your college reference librarians can help you:** (They can assist you in-person, by e-mail, and many college libraries offer live chat.)

- Locate, analyze, and use information in the library.
- Use the library's many databases, which are reliable for your research projects and papers. The Internet contains both accurate and inaccurate information. The library databases contain only accurate and trustworthy information.
- Locate hard to find sources of information.
- Learn how to evaluate resources.
- Improve your research skills. Tutorials and online classes are usually available.
- Choose a research topic.
- Learn how to avoid plagiarism.
- Become familiar with citations and different documentation styles such as MLA, APA, etc.
- Know the difference between primary (original documents) and secondary sources (comments, interpretations, and writings about primary sources).
- Know how to use call numbers.
- Access loan services when what you need is not available. Books, DVDs, or whatever you are looking for may be available from other libraries and resources. Your library can borrow these and make them available to you.

Several of these ideas about the many services offered by college reference librarians came from "Frequently Asked Questions" on Austin Community College Library's website: <http://library.austincc.edu>.

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*Source:* Used with permission from Melinda Townsel, ACC Reference Librarian

# Notes

## PREFACE

1. I first heard Earl Nightingale's definition of success on his CD *The Greatest Secret in the World*. This CD is available through Nightingale-Conant Corporation 1-800-525-9000.

## INTRODUCTION

1. The two charts in the introduction are based on statistics from the U.S. Dept. of Labor and the U.S. Census Bureau. The ideas for the chart images came from: Carter, Carolyn, Joyce Bishop, and Sarah Lyman Kravits. *Keys to Success: Building Analytical, Creative, and Practical Skills*. Pearson Prentice Hall, 2012, 6–7.

## CHAPTER 1

1. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882), U.S. essayist, poet, philosopher. *Nature*, chapter 5 (1836), revised and repr, 1849.

2. Carl Sandburg, “Washington Monument by Night,” stanza 4, *The Complete Poems of Carl Sandburg*, rev. and expanded edition, 282 (1970).

3. Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862), U.S. philosopher, author, naturalist. *Walden* (1954), in *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau*, vol. 2, 356, Houghton Mifflin (1906).

4. Mauer, Robert. *One Small Step Can Change Your Life: The Kaizen Way*. 21. Workman Publishing, 2004.

5. I was first introduced to the idea of the eight different goal categories by Zig Zigler at his Richer Life Course. Zig is the CEO of Zig Zigler Corporation in Dallas, Texas.

6. Maltz, Maxwell. *Psycho-Cybernetics*. Pocket Books, 1969, 32.

7. Astin, A.W., H.S. Astin, J.A. Lindholm, and A.N. Bryant. *The Spiritual Life of College Students: A National Study of College Students Search for Meaning and Purpose*. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute. U.C.L.A., 2005.

## CHAPTER 2

1. Chinese proverb. Quoted in *The Columbia World of Quotations*. 1996. Number 2209.

2. Richard Bandler and John Grinder. *The Structure of Magic. Science and Behavior Books*, 1975. I believe that Bandler and Grinder made the first reference to visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles.

3. Gardner, Howard. *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. Basic Books, 1993. Gardner is the original source of Multiple Intelligences and covers each of seven types of intelligence in chapters 5–10, pages 237–276. He later came up with an eighth type of intelligence, “Naturalistic.”

4. Sternberg, Robert. *Successful Intelligence: How Practical and Creative Intelligence Determine Success in Life*. Plume, 1997, 127–128.
5. Goleman, Daniel. *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. Bantam, 1997, 43–44.

### CHAPTER 3

1. John Randolph of Roanoke-William Cabell Bruce, *John Randolph of Roanoke, 1773–1833*, vol 2, chapter 7, 205 (1992, reprinted 1970.)
2. Joseph M. Juran, pioneer of quality control, first mentioned the 80-20 rule. It is also referred to as the Pareto principle.
3. Covey, Stephen, Roger Merrill, and Rebecca Merrill. *First Things First*. Free Press, 1996, 37.

### CHAPTER 4

1. Confucius, Chinese philosopher (551–479 B.C.), Quoted in *The Columbia World of Quotations*. 1996. Number 13085.
2. Buzan, Tony. *Use Both Sides of Your Brain: New Mind-Mapping Techniques*. Plume, 1991. I believe that Tony Buzan was the originator of “mind maps” which are sometimes referred to as “idea maps” or “think links.”
3. Brown, Peter, Roediger, Henry and McDaniel, Mark. *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning*. Harvard University Press. 2014. The Retrieval Practice Learning article was based on ideas from this book.

### CHAPTER 5

1. Alexander Pope 1688–1744. Bartlett, John. comp. 1919. *Familiar Quotations*, 10th ed.
2. The Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve was the result of Hermann Ebbinghaus’ discoveries made regarding the relationship of learning new material and how much is forgotten over time. Many Web sites contain this information. The original study material appeared in Hermann Ebbinghaus’ book, *Memory: A Contribution to Experimental Psychology*, (1885). Translated by Henry A. Ruger & Clara E. Bus-senius (1913). Originally published in New York by Teachers College, Columbia University. The translation can be accessed online at: [http://psychology.about.com/ai/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=psychology&cdn=education&tm=11&f=00&su=p897.4.336.ip\\_&tt=11&bt=0&bts=1&zu=http%3A//psychclassics.yorku.ca/Ebbinghaus/index.htm](http://psychology.about.com/ai/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=psychology&cdn=education&tm=11&f=00&su=p897.4.336.ip_&tt=11&bt=0&bts=1&zu=http%3A//psychclassics.yorku.ca/Ebbinghaus/index.htm).
3. Pauk, Walter. *How to Study in College*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 7th edition, 2000. Walter Pauk devised the Cornell System in the 1950s and wrote about it in this book.

### CHAPTER 6

1. Attributed to William Feather-August Kerber, *Quotable Quotes on Education*, 17 (1968). Unverified.

### CHAPTER 7

1. Boldt, Laurence G. *How to Find the Work You Love*. Penguin. Arkana, 1996.

2. Bolles, Richard. *What Color Is Your Parachute?* Ten Speed Press, 1970, 2009. Richard Bolles wrote about a process known as “The System for Motivated Abilities” which was devised by Bernard Haldane.

3. Gerson, Raymond. *Create the Life You Want*. Inspirational Works. 2006, 3. The section “Career Satisfaction Improves Life Satisfaction” was adopted from this book.

4. Gerson, Raymond. *How to Create the Job You Want*. Enrichment Enterprises, 1996, 2007, 13, 14, 45–46. I wrote this book in 1996, and it is now available as a free eBook at [www.successforcollegestudents.com](http://www.successforcollegestudents.com).

5. Boldt, Lawrence. *Zen and the Art of Making a Living*. Penguin Group. 1991, 492. “The skills most wanted by employers.” Original source was Michigan University Placement Services.

6. Holland, John. *Making Vocational Choices: A Theory of Careers*. Prentice Hall. 1973, 21–28. John Holland is the originator of the Six Personality Types theory.

## CHAPTER 8

1. Boldt, Laurence. G. *How to Find the Work You Love*. Penguin. Arkana, 1996.

2. Covey, Stephen. *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. Free Press, 1970, p. 18–19.

3. Maltz, Maxwell. *Psycho-Cybernetics*. Pocket Books, 1969, ix.

4. I got the idea for the pictures of the self-images and created a variation from a workbook that came with a CD program I purchased from Nightingale-Conant Corporation in Chicago, Illinois. The program is “The New *Psycho-Cybernetics*” by Dr. Maxwell Maltz and Dan Kennedy. Available at 1-800-525-9000.

5. Rein, Glen, Mike Atkinson, Rollin McCraty. “The Physiological and Psychological Effects of Compassion and Anger.” *Journal of Advancement in Medicine*, 8.2 (1995), 87–105.

6. Cotton, Kathleen. *Expectations and Student Outcomes*. Office of Educational Research and Improvement. U.S. Department of Education. November 1989.

7. Tolle, Eckhart. *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life’s Purpose*. Penguin, 2008, p. 301–302.

8. Edward Everett Hale (1822–1909). *Respectfully Quoted: A Dictionary of Quotations*. 1989.



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12. Maltz, Maxwell. *Psycho-Cybernetics*. Pocket Books, 1969.
13. Maslow, Abraham. *Motivation and Personality*. Harper Collins, 1987.
14. Mauer, Robert. *One Small Step Can Change Your Life: The Kaizen Way*. Workman Publishing, 2004.
15. Rein, Glen, Mike Atkinson, Rollin McCraty. The Physiological and Psychological Effects of Compassion and Anger. *Journal of Advancement in Medicine*, 8.2 (1995), 87–105.
16. Sternberg, Robert. *Successful Intelligence: How Practical and Creative Intelligence Determine Success in Life*. Plume, 1997.
17. Tolle, Eckhart. *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*. Penguin, 2008.



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