

Success and Self-image:

THEME: “One of the greatest weaknesses in most of us is our lack of faith in ourselves. One of our common failings is to depreciate our tremendous worth.” (L. Tom Perry, “Be the Best of Whatever You Are,” in *Speeches of the Year, 1974* [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1975], p. 77).

Things I’d like to change about myself:

Why do I sometimes let others make me feel inferior?

People keep telling me that I am a Child of God—what does that mean?

How can I keep from underrating myself?

Elder Faust says: “Young people too often depend upon someone else’s image rather than _____” (Conference Report, Apr. 1981, p. 8; or *Ensign*, May 1981, p. 9).

According to Elder Marvin J. Ashton, my image of myself is based on two things:

1. _____
2. _____

How would my life be different if I *consciously* chose positive thoughts about myself over a period of time?

Application:

- I can improve my self-image by changing those things about me that *I have the power* to change. I choose to change _____ about myself.
- I will improve myself image by accepting compliments by simply saying “Thank you.” I will not make negative remarks such as, “Oh, this old dress,” or “I can’t sing,” or “My hair really doesn’t look that good.” It is not conceit to accept compliments.
- I will choose positive thoughts instead of negative thoughts by _____

Lessons Learned in the Journey of Life

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From a Church Educational System fireside talk given at Brigham Young University on 7 November 1999.

Some of the happiest people I know have none of the things the world insists are necessary for satisfaction and joy.

Many of you may be at a time in your lives when perhaps you are feeling a little discouraged or alone. Perhaps you feel a little lost, maybe even a little afraid. Everyone has felt this way at one time or another.

More than two millennia ago, Aristotle suggested that everyone who lives has the same basic objective: to be happy (see *Nicomachean Ethics*, book 1, chapters 4, 7). After 80 years of living, I've begun to pick up a few ideas about what it is that makes people happy and successful. I'd like to tell you five things that, if you will take them seriously and apply them to your own life, will bring you happiness, success, fulfillment, and the obtaining of an inheritance in the celestial kingdom.

Have Faith in Heavenly Father

First, have faith in your Heavenly Father. He knows who you are. He listens to you when you pray. He loves you. He is mindful of you. He wants the best for you.

The Savior asked:

“Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows” (**Matt. 10:29-31**).

By the same token, if saving a book from seawater can be worthy of heavenly attention, how much more will your Heavenly Father be aware of your life and your needs?

On one occasion President Thomas S. Monson, now First Counselor in the First Presidency, made this statement to me: “There is a guiding hand above all things. Often when things happen, it's not by accident. One day, when we look back at the seeming coincidences of our lives, we will realize that perhaps they weren't so coincidental after all.”

The Lord knows your trials. He knows your victories. And if you will “trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding [but] in all thy ways acknowledge him, ... he shall direct thy paths” (**Prov. 3:5-6**).

Set Righteous Goals

Second, set righteous goals. Many things will compete for your attention as you pursue your course through life. There will be endless distractions. People and things will call to you, singing the siren songs of wealth, pleasure, and power.

[Jacob] taught his people to:

“...think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you. But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God. And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted” (**Jacob 2:17-19**).

Work to Accomplish Your Goals

Third, once you have established righteous goals, work with all your might to accomplish them. In the words of Elder David O. McKay (1873-1970) when he was in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Let us ... realize that the *privilege to*

work is a gift, that *power* to work is a blessing, that *love* to work is success” (in Conference Report, October 1909, 94; emphasis in original).

Remember the words of President Gordon B. Hinckley: “The major work of the world is not done by geniuses. It is done by ordinary people, with balance in their lives, who have learned to work in an extraordinary manner” (“Our Fading Civility,” Brigham Young University commencement address, 25 April 1996, 15).

Magnify Your Callings

Fourth, magnify your callings and be faithful members of the Church. When we go to church, we surround ourselves with others who share our commitment to obey the commandments and follow the Savior.

Another test of your worth in the kingdom is to ask yourself if you are actively engaged in magnifying your calling in the Church. When you magnify your calling, you don’t merely go through the motions; you challenge yourself to serve in the place you are called with all your heart, might, mind, and strength.

This is a wonderful feeling—to know that the Lord trusts and loves you enough to want to use you in blessing the lives of others. Brothers and sisters, your Heavenly Father wants to use you for the same purpose. As you magnify your callings and go about doing good, I promise you the Lord will shower upon your heads blessings of satisfaction and joy so great that you will not have room enough to receive them.

Enjoy the Journey

Fifth, enjoy the journey. The people of God are a joyful people. We understand there are times for sobriety, reverence, and devotion; we also understand that we possess the joyful principles of eternal life.

So many of us are always waiting to be happy. “If only I could graduate, if only I could afford a car, if only I could get married ...” For too many, happiness is just over the horizon, never reachable. Every time we climb one hill, happiness beckons just beyond the next.

Make up your mind to be happy—even when you don’t have money, even when you don’t have a clear complexion, even when you don’t have the Nobel Prize. Some of the happiest people I know have none of these things the world insists are necessary for satisfaction and joy. Why are they happy? I suppose it is because they don’t listen very well. Or they listen too well—to the things their hearts tell them. They glory in the beauty of the earth. They glory in the rivers and the canyons and the call of the meadowlark. They glory in the love of their families, the stumbling steps of a toddler, the wise and tender smile of the elderly. They glory in honest labor. They glory in the scriptures. They glory in the presence of the Holy Ghost.

Do not procrastinate a minute longer. Every moment is precious. Determine now that you will make of your lives something remarkable!

As I look back on it now, I wonder if those times of trial and loneliness weren’t instrumental in strengthening my character and heightening my desire to succeed. Those times of seeming failure may have been some of the most instrumental of my life, because they prepared me for greater things to come.

Create of your lives something worthy of your divine heritage.

As you pursue righteous desires, the Lord will be with you and will direct your paths. He wants you to be happy and successful. He wants you to come unto Him. May you find peace and joy in your journey throughout life.