

Learn to "School" Your Toughest Opponent

Achieve Straight A's In
The School of Life

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Introduction

Achieving Straight A's in the School of Life is written so you will have a list of values and principles that can be used to guide your life.

The term Straight A's is equated with the word success. While the definition of success varies with everyone, I define success as improving my life by helping those around me to achieve their goals. If you remain true to the Straight A's, they will lead you to success, peace, and happiness. That is my purpose in writing this book.

From birth until death we are automatically enrolled in the school of "life." We have no choice about entering, but we do choose how we handle it. I have gained some valuable insight while working with the youth and the elderly simultaneously. My attempt in this book is to give some guidance on your own journey.

In the game of basketball you will face many challenging opponents. None will be as "tough" as facing life itself.

**"The School of Life is entered by all,
and everyone must live it.
Those who realize their full potential
Achieve Straight A's while in it!"**

1st Appreciate

Gratitude

The wisdom of years has great value. One of the greatest lessons I have learned from working with the elderly is that they have learned a deeper meaning of appreciation. I believe that the younger we grasp this trait in life then the more successful we will be.

As I was growing up my parents taught me many important principles. In fact, they are still teaching me, and I will remember their example long after they leave this life. It is interesting that most of what I learned during childhood, I did not fully understand until later in my life. Now that I am older, I am able to more rapidly learn from my experiences.

Three important principles my mother and father taught me during my childhood were simple but they left an indelible impression upon my character.

Always be Honest
Always say "Thank you"
Always be On Time

The innocent words of "thank you" that I whispered as a young child, for the smallest of favors, have helped me develop a deep appreciation for everything that I have. Gratitude is one of the greatest attributes that we can develop. Without it, one can become self-absorbed, always desiring to receive rather than to give. I am truly grateful for this important principle that my parents taught me.

Robert W. Woodruff, a prominent business leader of a former time, toured the United States giving a lecture which he entitled "A Capsule Course in Human Relations." In his message, he said that the two most important words in the English language are these: "Thank you."

Frequently expressed, the words "thank you" will cheer your spirit, broaden your friendships, brighten the world around you, and lift your life to a higher pathway. When you take the time to thank

people for the things they do for you, they will often have a desire to repeat the kind word or deed. This helps to build synergy that grows with great power.

Appreciation is a foundation for all remaining principles in the book. I have placed it as the first “A” in Achieving Straight A’s in the School of Life. Be grateful for each day, and enjoy life to the fullest. If you do nothing else but learn to be thankful for life itself, then you have succeeded.

Our family has learned to enjoy life to its fullest through appreciation of what is happening right now and learning from the experience. Once while spending the day at a major theme park we hurried from one thrilling ride to another. We were immersed in the excitement of each ride while at the same time anticipating the excitement of the next. During this time, we lost track of our two-year old daughter, Kayla. After a short period of time we found her sitting in a planter full of beautiful flowers. She was carefully smelling the flowers and drinking in the fragrance of each one. She had literally “stopped to smell the roses.” Watching her enjoyment, as she smelled the flowers, reminded me of an important principle: Don’t be so caught up in rushing from the past to the future that you forget today. Allow yourself the time to appreciate what is happening right now and learn from the experience.

Appreciation can have a big impact on your life. When you take the time to thank people for things they do for you, they will often have a desire to repeat the kind word or deed. If you continue to recognize people for the good deeds they do, they will grow and benefit from your appreciation. When this synergy of recognition starts to develop, everyone grows and gains from the cycle of giving that is developed.

I love each one of my children, and I learn from them continually. My daughter, Linnie, is quick to give me a sincere “thank you” whenever I take her somewhere or do something for her. Does my respect for her grow? You bet! When I know she sincerely appreciates the things I do for her, it makes me want to do more. Our relationship continues to blossom from her use of those two kind words-“thank you.”

This great principle of gratitude will extend into every facet

of your life as you seek opportunities to show appreciation. If you thank a business associate for a small, kind act, what would be their reaction? Furthermore, if you take the time to write a note of thanks to a school teacher, you develop a greater appreciation and a deeper understanding for all the teacher does. This act of kindness may instill in the teacher an even greater desire to teach.

Can you see what happens? Can you understand that power of the principle of appreciation? Appreciation causes negativism to disappear. What great things we could accomplish in this world if everyone would show appreciation to others! Even if others reject your thoughtfulness, you will still prosper and grow. Over time, those who reject your thoughtfulness may begin to soften. The positive energy flow then becomes enormous.

I have found that the more I appreciate life, the more I enjoy it. The more I enjoy life, the more I gain from it. The more I gain from life, the more I can give back to it. Thus, the cycle feeds itself.

As we live our lives, we must remember the words of an anonymous author: "Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift. That's why it's called the present." A great religious leader, Thomas S. Monson, emphasized the importance of living life to the fullest when he said, "The past is behind-learn from it; the future is ahead-prepare for it; the present is here-live in it."

It is my wish that you will take more time to live in the present and to appreciate the million-and-one things that are a part of the here and now. We need to thank those who bag our groceries or load our car, appreciate the beauty of the setting sun, tell our families we are grateful for their help, and so on. Good luck in achieving an "A" grade in Appreciate.

(At the end of each chapter I will give you a homework assignment. It is simply a means for you to apply the principle you have learned in each chapter to your daily life. If you continue to do your homework, it will pay great dividends and benefits throughout your life. Doing this homework is like practicing to make free throws. The more you do it, the better you become!)

Appreciate

- ## Notes and Progress Record

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