

The Road to Failure or Success?

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Man can live about 40 days without food, about 3 days without water, about 8 minutes without air...but only about 1 second without HOPE.

-- Hal Lindsey

THE DARK SIDE of where a person is at any point in time is a function of courage and hope for something better. The failure to be hopeful is deadly. The failure to recognize the effects of stress and the confusion of misdeeds leads to searching for reasons why. Ultimately, the end result for man without hope is depression or worse. Such is human behavior, especially the bewilderment and resentment that leaves a person floundering without roads of escape.

There is a desperate need to believe in the future. Students graduate every year without the slightest chance of locating a credible, financially stable job in the public sector. Yet, they were raised to think that graduating from college meant success. Only later after graduation and thousands of dollars in debt students often realize that many of their non-college friends are financially successful. The mixed message is confusing. They are left wondering about the nonsensical thread of a college education that has woven itself into the very fabric of society.

Some might say the problem exist just with Bob or Shirley. They don't have the right qualities to get a good job. However, it doesn't take much time to digest the genuine misinformation. The fact is this: Just any college will not ensure financial success after graduation. So, to argue that it is the graduate's problem is a cop out that is promoted by those with an invested interest in academia. Students must ask the questions:

1. Why am I here?
2. Why am I spending \$30,000 a year in tuition and related costs?

3. What is the purpose of the academic degree?
4. Where will I find employment?

Finding the right answers to these questions is something that each student must take seriously, and the sooner the better.

I am aware of the fact that many academic exercise physiologists may call me a “screwball,” but let me say that I am finalizing 40 years of college teaching. I have taught in five different academic institutions, probably having taught more than 250 academic courses and 6000 plus students. Finally, I understand what the problem is and I intend to fully explain it wherever and how often I can.

To begin with, I started as a college gymnastics coach. Believe me when I say that gymnasts are trained to know what is necessary to perform specific skills without being hurt. By parallel thinking, I have witnessed first-hand the testimonials of college graduates immersed in the idea that the exercise science degree would ensure their success. The logic of such thinking was wrong decades ago and it is still wrong today. College graduates get hurt every month if not every year after graduation.

Even today after so many years of interacting with college students and academic exercise physiologists from around the country, I am profoundly confused (and even impressed, sadly though) with the failure of the academic community (exercise physiologists in particular) to understand the big-picture. Therefore, I think it is important to argue the case that somebody somewhere within academic must start thinking differently.

After years of not recognizing that there is a problem, I have the mental picture of a great injustice to the students who are interested in the power of exercise to heal and/or promote athletic performance. During the past 15 years, I have found that the greatest problems brothing me and many members of the American Society of Exercise Physiologists (ASEP) are those dealing with disappointment, hurt, depression, and anxiety that results from college graduates not being successful in locating a credible job.

Naturally, as strange as it sounds, aside from the daily disconnect between the dozens of academic degrees (from exercise science to human performance) and the financially stable careers, the faculty of these degree programs have not begun to question their involvement. Every day they continue doing what they have done for decades. It is as if their minds are off somewhere else. They appear not to have the slightest idea of their contribution to the students' failure.

The problem is partly because they believe there isn't anything to be concerned about. Beyond that I can say that they believe what they are doing is right. After all, they are simply doing what they have been doing for decades. They aren't thinking or taking notice of the college graduates who are dissatisfied and hurt by the constant "failed rhetoric" of the faculty. Therefore, it is important for anyone who is interested in the exercise science major to ask the following questions:

1. Do you have a mental picture of what you want to be when you graduate?
2. Do you know where the exercise science major will take you?
3. What are your goals in life, both personally and professionally?
4. Have you taken the time to think about what kind of salary per year you want to earn?
5. What are the advancement opportunities, and is an advanced degree necessary?
6. Do you plan to buy a new car and/or a new home?
7. Are you planning to get married and raise a family?

Not answering these questions before selecting an academic major is part of the ritual of failure. In short, what students think about who they are and what they want to be defines much of what they will become. The failure to think more often than not means failure from the beginning. If a student wants a credible career in healthcare, then, he/she must develop a mental picture of being that person. The art of visualization is tied to the student's thoughts and actions. More often than not, we become the person we visualize.

Why not be the person you want to be? How, by believing in yourself, by visualizing the person you want to be and, yes, by doing your own work for

success? That is your job. Maximize your steps to happiness and success. So, make time for YOU! Be open to new ideas and even rejection to keep moving forwards. Open your eyes and mind to what is around you.

1. Are you projecting failure or success?
2. Do you look the part of a successful person?
3. Are you authentic?
4. Do you put yourself first?
5. Is your health a priority?
6. Is there an issue you care about?
7. Is being recognized as a healthcare professional important to you?
8. Are you willing to take on responsibility?
9. Can you make a decision and act on it?
10. Do you have the desire to do something great?

If you answered “yes” to these questions, then rest assured that you are on the road to success and happiness. Remember, if you believe you can or can't you are right. Believe that you have and will become what you think. It is the power you need to be everything you want to be.