Looking Toward the Future

Learning Objectives

Read to answer these key questions:

- What is my life stage?
- How does positive thinking affect my future success?
- What are some beliefs of successful people?
- What are some secrets to achieving happiness?
Psychologists have identified life stages that we all go through. Knowing about life stages can help you to understand where you are now and where you might be in the future. Positive thinking is also a powerful tool for achieving life goals. Learn to use your attitudes and beliefs to enhance your future success. Many of you have happiness as one of your lifetime goals. This chapter ends with some useful ideas about how to achieve happiness in your life.

**Life Stages**

A number of researchers believe that adults progress through a series of orderly and predictable stages in which success or failure at each stage has an influence on later stages. Understanding these stages can help you to understand where you are now and where you are headed in the future. Life stage theorists include Erik Erikson and Daniel Levinson. Gail Sheehy, author of *Passages* and *New Passages*, is a journalist who has summarized and popularized current research on life stages. As you read through these theories, think about how they apply to you at the present and in your future life.

**Erik Erikson**

Erik Erikson proposes that human beings progress through eight stages of psychosocial development in a fixed order. These stages are turning points, or crises, and the outcome of each turning point will determine future personality development. Each crisis has two possible outcomes: one is negative and the other positive. For example, the first turning point happens during the first year of life. He titles this stage trust vs. mistrust. If the infant’s parents and caregivers provide consistent, caring, and adequate treatment, the infant learns to trust the world as a safe place. If the infant is abused or not cared for adequately, he or she will learn that the world is an unsafe place. The sense of trust or mistrust is carried with the individual throughout life. Erickson identifies seven stages, which range from birth to age 65 and beyond.

1. **Basic trust vs. mistrust (age 0–1).** Based on the parents’ care, the infant learns to trust others and feel comfortable in the world or learns to distrust a world that is perceived to be unsafe.

2. **Autonomy vs. shame and doubt (age 1–3).** Between the ages of one and three, children learn to feel competent by feeding themselves, learning to use the toilet, and playing alone. If they do not accomplish these tasks successfully, children learn to doubt their own abilities.

3. **Initiative vs. guilt (age 3–5).** During this stage, children learn to plan their own activities within the parents’ guidelines. If the children do not learn these tasks, they develop guilt over their misbehavior.

4. **Industry vs. inferiority (age 5–11).** In this stage children learn to meet the demands of parents, teachers, and peers. They learn to clean their rooms, do their homework, and ride a bike, for example. If they accomplish these tasks successfully, they learn that their effort (industry) leads to success. If they do not learn these tasks, Erikson believes that they develop a lifelong feeling of inferiority.

5. **Identity vs. role confusion (age 11–18).** During this stage, the child develops his or her identity. It is also during this stage that the child starts to prepare for work by gaining insights into personality, interests, and values as well as learning about the world of work. If these tasks are not successfully accomplished, the result is confusion over his or her role in life.
6. **Intimacy vs. isolation (age 18–40).** This is an adult stage of development in which relationships are formed with a partner. The task is to develop loving and committed relationships with others that partially replace the bonds with parents. If this task is not completed, the adult remains isolated from others and has difficulty establishing meaningful relationships. He or she is less capable of full emotional development.

7. **Generativity vs. stagnation (age 40–65).** During this adult stage, the person contributes to future generations through raising children, helping others, developing products, or coming up with creative new ideas. At this time, the person continues to grow and produce, but puts unfulfilled dreams aside and finds meaning in work and family. If this task is not accomplished, growth is stopped and the person becomes stagnant and self-centered.

8. **Integrity vs. despair (age 65-plus).** At this stage, people reap the benefits of all that they have done during their lives and accept the fact that life is temporary. If this task is not accomplished, the individual is in despair and struggles to find meaning in life.

**Daniel Levinson**

The research and writing by Daniel Levinson has been very useful in understanding adult development and career development. Levinson proposes four stages in adult development:

1. Pre-adulthood
2. Early adulthood (age 17–45)
3. Middle adulthood (age 40–60)
4. Late adulthood (age 60–65)

Each of these stages of adulthood alternates between stable and transitional periods. Stable periods last six to seven years, during which people pursue their goals and create a desired structure in their lives. Transitional periods last four to five years, during which people question and reappraise the structure and consider making changes. These transitional periods provide the opportunity for growth and reflection.

These stable and transitional periods are related to age. Levinson’s research showed that people do vary a little on the onset or termination of each stage, but generally by not more than two years. He also believes that people go through these stages in a fixed sequence during which certain developmental tasks present themselves in a fixed order. How a person deals with these developmental tasks has a big impact on later life. Transitional and stable periods, including developmental tasks, are summarized below. As you read each description, think about your life stage and where you may be headed in the future.

- **Age 17–22 Transitional Period.** The task here is to move from adolescence to young adulthood and to separate from parents.
- **Age 22–28 Stable Period.** This is a period of settling down and creating life structure, while still keeping the options open to explore jobs and relationships.
- **Age 28–33 Transitional Period.** During this period, adults reappraise their current life structure. There is the feeling that if a change is to be made, it must be made before it is too late.
- **Age 33–40 Stable Period.** During this time, adults build clear work, family, and leisure roles. The need to attain one’s dream is powerful and intense. Levinson says that this stage ends with BOOP (Becoming One’s Own Person). Women often have the challenge of balancing work and family roles at this time.
• **Age 40–45 Transitional Period.** This is a time of turmoil. Up to 80 percent of men and 85 percent of women experience a moderate to severe crisis at this time. At this point there is an awareness of human mortality and the feeling that half of life is now over. There is often a generational shift at this point; adults may have teenage children, and their parents are getting old or have passed away. At this point adults assess their progress toward accomplishing their dream. If the dream has not been accomplished, there is a sense of failure. If the dream has been accomplished, the person considers whether it was worth the effort and wonders, “Is this all there is?” Women are often juggling three roles: career, marriage, and motherhood. Only 4 percent of women manage to have it all: marriage, motherhood, and a full-time career. Efforts to combine these roles often do not provide the satisfaction that women expect.

• **Age 45–50 Stable Period.** During this period, adults work on stable life structures for the middle years. They often have more autonomy and flexibility in choosing roles.

• **Age 50–55 Transitional Period.** Adults continue to work on questions raised during the midlife crisis.

• **Age 55–60 Stable Period.** Adults work on stable life structures.

• **Age 60–65 Transitional Period.** Adults deal with retirement transitions.

**Gail Sheehy**

Journalist Gail Sheehy, author of *New Passages*, notes that because of increasing life spans, earlier theories of life stages need to be updated. Previous theories of life development covered a life span to age 65. Sheehy notes that women today who reach 50 (without developing cancer or heart disease) can expect to live to be 92 years old. Men who are healthy and live to age 65 can expect to live until the age of 81. She quotes the president of a nursing home: “Twenty years ago I’d see 40-year-olds bringing in their 60-year-old parents. Now I’m seeing 72-year-olds bringing in their 90-year-old parents.”

The good news is that we will all be living longer and healthier lives in the years to come. In terms of life stages, Sheehy states that “the territory of the mid-fourties, fifties and sixties and beyond is changing so fundamentally it now opens up whole new passages and stages of life.” She asks us to “stop and recalculate. Imagine the day you turn 45 as the infancy of another life . . . a second adulthood in middle life.” She divides adult life stages into the stages:

- Provisional adulthood (18–30)
- First adulthood (30–45)
- Second adulthood (45–85)

**Provisional Adulthood and the Try-Out 20s (age 18–30)**

This stage is traditionally characterized by two opposing goals: (1) a desire for exploration and (2) a desire for stability. Historically, this was a time to finish one’s education and move away from the parents’ home to start a career and family. Young people are now living at home longer, and the period of adolescence has been extended. The author notes that of unmarried American men between 25 and 34, more than one third are still living at home. She describes a dramatic shift that occurs around the age of 30. “Before the shift men and women feel unable to make clear choices or cope with life’s vicissitudes without expecting some help from parents. After the shift they feel confident enough in their own values to make their own choices and competent enough in life skills to set a course.”
Some challenges for the Try-Out 20s include coping with a rapidly changing world:

- Views on marriage are changing. Young women have seen their mothers struggling to balance career, marriage, and children. Many young people are delaying marriage into the 20s or 30s or are deciding not to get married at all.
- Sheehy notes that in previous generations the enemies were external: wars, communism, and the nuclear bomb. Today for many young people, the enemies are internal: drugs, guns, and violence.
- The world has become more unpredictable and violent. Many teenagers do not feel safe in their schools or communities.
- There is a growing gap between the rich and poor.
- There is increased competition for jobs.
- Young people have to reassess their morals, as they become full of fear and anxiety about sex outside of marriage.
- Many worry that they are being educated for jobs that no longer exist.

Some positives include the following:

- This group is becoming more educated: by age 20 to 24, 58 percent of women and 53 percent of men have some college education or have graduated from college.
- Because of increased education, this group will be better able to adapt to change and to do freelance or free-agent work.
- This generation is becoming more ethnically diverse and is more receptive to multiculturalism.
- They will participate in great advances in technology and biotechnology.
- This group will use the Internet to conduct business in a more efficient way than ever before.
- Since young people are waiting longer to marry, they may have fewer divorces.\(^{11}\)

**First Adulthood: The Turbulent 30s and the Flourishing 40s**

Thirty-year-olds step into first adulthood with questions about who they are and what life is all about. They pay the rent or mortgage, make the car payment, and take care of the children. Maybe they used to say that someone over 30 could not be trusted. Now they are 30 themselves and become conscious that they are getting older. At age 35, they take inventory and ask, "Is half of my life over? Is this what it is all about?" These questions are the beginning of a midlife crisis. Since people are living longer, half of their life is not over at age 35. The midlife crisis used to happen around age 38 to 43. Gail Sheehy suggests that the midlife crisis is now often delayed until the mid-40s.

A **midlife crisis** is a major transition in life in which we question what we did during the first half of our life. The central issue in midlife is dealing with growing older and our own mortality. During this time, adults make major changes in their lives. They may start a new hobby, change careers, go back to school, start a new business, get a divorce, or buy a new sports car. During this transition adults often go through what Gail Sheehy calls middlescence, which she defines as adolescence the second time around. She gives this example:

"'At forty-eight I lost 40 pounds, looked younger than I did at 40 and took up a long-repressed passion—music,' says a typical homemaker. Jeannie enrolled in music school to study electric bass and drums. She now plays in a garage rock band with 18-year-old boys. She already has planned her antidote to 'hardening of the attitudes.' After 65 she plans to launch a heavy metal band called Guns and Geezers."\(^{12}\)
While the midlife crisis can be dangerous, it can have some positive outcomes. Adults look at their lives and make changes that lead to continued growth and enjoyment of life. The midlife crisis is a gateway to a new beginning or second adulthood. Half of life is not over; half of life lies ahead, and adults can take advantage of their experiences in the first half of life to find exciting new opportunities in the second half.

**Second Adulthood: The Ages of Mastery and Integrity**

The second adulthood begins with the resolution of the midlife crisis at around age 45 and goes to age 85 or longer. We expect that people will be living into their 80s and 90s and leading healthy and productive lives. Sheehy divides the second adulthood into two stages: the Age of Mastery (45–65) and the Age of Integrity (65–85 or beyond).\(^{13}\)

The Age of Mastery (45–65) marks the apex of life, in which people have a stable psychological sense of mastery. People face the second half of life with 50 years of experience in living. Sheehy states that “45 represents the old age of youth, while 50 initiates the youth of Second Adulthood.” She compares life to watching a play:

> “It’s as though when we are young, we have seen only the first act of the play. By our forties we have reached the climactic second-act curtain. Only as we approach fifty does the shape and meaning of the whole play become clear.”\(^{14}\)

People in their 50s are more serene about their mortality. At age 35, our mortality becomes a realization and at age 40, it becomes a terrifying idea. We try to turn back the clock. At age 50, we are better able to accept the aging process. We have had experience with life and have successfully dealt with many challenges. At this age, many may even feel physically fit and devote time to exercise and better health. The question is, “How long do I want to live and how can I invest my time in my mental and physical health?”

Successful aging does not happen automatically. To age successfully, people need to look at their priorities and determine what is most important in life. Successful aging means taking an active part in life rather than being sedentary and inactive. The central question of this age is a search for the meaning of life. People find meaning by searching for their passion. They need to find what they really enjoy and do it.

Many Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1965) are now approaching this age. Sheehy notes that one-third of all women in the United States today have passed their 50th birthdays. At this age, women are independent, enjoy learning new skills, start new careers, and begin new adventures. They enjoy greater well-being than at any other time in life. Sheehy found that education is a key factor to well-being and happiness at this age. Of the women she surveyed, those who measured near the top on the scale of well-being had completed college or earned a graduate degree.\(^{15}\) She also reports that women who are age 50 say that this age feels like “an optimistic, can-do stage of life.”\(^{16}\)

Men face more difficult times in their 50s. Men frequently base their identity on their careers, and many men in their 50s are unemployed or underemployed or hate their jobs. They are often the victims of an economy that is downsizing.\(^{17}\) Sheehy believes that men
at this age need to move from competing in the workplace to connecting with people who are important to them. Men may try to connect with children and family, but the children may have already left home. She also notes that men from age 45 to 64 who live with their wives live 10 years longer than their unmarried counterparts. One of the male participants in Sheehy’s surveys states that he had to come to realize that “a lot of good friendships is better than a lot of money.”

The Age of Integrity (65–85 and beyond) is a new life stage resulting from the extended average life span. In the “serene 60s,” only 10 percent of Americans 65 and older have a chronic health problem that restricts them from carrying on a major activity. Those who do have chronic health problems are often suffering as a result of neglecting their health at earlier ages. In the sixties, most people are healthy and looking forward to using their experience with life to make contributions to their families and communities. People who have lived to the Age of Integrity have learned to deal with life. They have passed through many stages and dealt with many crises. They have learned how to put life into perspective. It takes about 65 years for human beings to finally figure it all out and to be happy with their lives!

An example of a woman in the “serene 60s” is Deborah Szekely, a pioneer in creating fitness spas. She says that life can be divided into three parts:

“The first third of life is devoted to being a child, learning in school and at home. The next third is spent working as hard as you’re able and being rewarded for it. The final third is perhaps the most important: taking a role in making the world better for the next generation.”

Retirement is one of the most difficult transitions in the Age of Integrity. It used to be that people worked for about 30 years and then retired. However, if a person retires at age 65, there are still 20 to 30 years of life to live. A new idea is serial retirement. A person retires from one career and enters a new career and retires again. This happens because of the need to stay active and involved as well as the need to extend financial resources over a longer life span. It is difficult to predict how much money will be needed to retire 20 or 30 years into the future. To successfully move through the retirement transition, people need to continue to grow and learn how to play after a life of work.

Gail Sheehy summarizes some of the research on factors contributing to health and well-being in the 60s and beyond.

• Having mature love (a wife, husband, partner) is more important than money or power.
• Continued growth experiences and feeling an excitement about life help people to feel happy.
• It is important to find your passion and pursue it.
• Exercise is the most important factor in retarding the aging process. It was found that men and women who walk a half-hour a day cut their mortality rates in half.

Many people are living to the age of 90 to 100. Gail Sheehy describes the characteristics of successful centenarians:

“Characteristics of healthy centenarians, garnered from a number of studies, are these: most have high native intelligence, a keen interest in current events, a good memory, and few illnesses. They tend to be early risers, sleeping on average between six and seven hours. Most drink coffee, follow no special diets, but generally prefer diets high in protein, low in fat. There is no uniformity in their drinking habits, but they use less medication in their lifetimes than many old people use in a week. They prefer living in the present, with changes, and are usually religious in the broad sense. All have a degree of optimism and a marked sense of humor. Life seems to have been a great adventure.”

Writer F. Scott Fitzgerald said that we need to learn “to accept life not as a series of random events but as path of awakening.” We learn and grow and develop over a
lifetime. Knowing about the stages of our lives helps us to realize that as long as we continue to grow and develop, we can awaken to each new day with the prospect of continued satisfaction and enjoyment of life.

**Journal Entry #1**

Consider the life stage theories of Erik Erikson, Daniel Levinson, and Gail Sheehy, and then write a paragraph about your current life stage and whether you agree or disagree with their theories. Here is an easy outline:

According to Erik Erikson, my life stage is . . .
According to Daniel Levinson, my life stage is . . .
According to Gail Sheehy, my life stage is . . .
I agree with or I disagree with . . . . . .

**QUIZ**

**Understanding Life Stages**

Test what you have learned by selecting the correct answers to the following questions.

1. Erik Erikson believes that all human beings pass through eight stages of development
   a. that last 10 years for each stage.
   b. in a random pattern.
   c. in a fixed order.

2. According to Erikson, the main task of the identity vs. role confusion stage (age 11–18) is
   a. learning to follow the rules of society.
   b. discovering personality and interests in preparation for work.
   c. forming intimate relationships.

3. Daniel Levinson says that stages of adult development alternate between
   a. stable and transitional periods.
   b. calm and stressful periods.
   c. integrity and despair.

4. The midlife crisis is defined as
   a. a brief period of insanity.
   b. a major transition in which we question what we did in the first half of life.
   c. the realization that half of life is over.

5. Factors contributing to successful aging include
   a. increasing time for relaxation.
   b. continuing exercise throughout life.
   c. reflecting on past accomplishments.

How did you do on the quiz? Check your answers: 1. c, 2. b, 3. a, 4. b, 5. b
Thinking Positively about Your Life

Thinking positively about yourself and your life is one of the most important skills you can learn for your future success. Following are some ways to practice positive thinking.

Optimism, Hope, and Future-Mindedness

You can increase your chances of success by using three powerful tools: optimism, hope, and future-mindedness. These character traits lead to achievement in athletics, academics, careers, and even politics. They also have positive mental and physical effects. They reduce anxiety and depression as well as contributing to physical well-being. In addition, they aid in problem solving and searching out resources to solve problems. A simple definition of optimism is expecting good events to happen in the future and working to make them happen. Optimism leads to continued efforts to accomplish goals, whereas pessimism leads to giving up on accomplishing goals. A person who sets no goals for the future cannot be optimistic or hopeful. Here are some ideas about optimism from Optimist International.

Promise yourself:

- To talk health, happiness, and prosperity to every person you meet.
- To make all your friends feel that there is something important in them.
- To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.
- To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.
- To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.
- To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.
- To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.

Being hopeful is another way of thinking positively about the future. One research study showed for entering college freshmen, level of hope was a better predictor of college grades than standardized tests or high school grade point average. Students who have a high level of hope set higher goals and work to attain these goals. If they are not successful, they change goals and move in a new direction with a renewed sense of hope for a positive future.

Future-mindedness is thinking about the future, expecting that desired events and outcomes will occur, and then acting in a way that makes the positive outcomes come true. It involves setting goals for the future and taking action to accomplish these goals as well as being confident in accomplishing these goals. Individuals with future-mindedness are conscientious and hardworking and can delay gratification. They make to-do lists and use schedules and day planners. Individuals who are future-minded would agree with these statements:

- Despite challenges, I always remain hopeful about the future.
- I always look on the bright side.
- I believe that good will always triumph over evil.
- I expect the best.
- I have a clear picture in mind about what I want to happen in the future.
- I have a plan for what I want to be doing five years from now.
- If I get a bad grade or evaluation, I focus on the next opportunity and plan to do better.
Believe in Yourself

Anthony Robbins defines belief as “any guiding principle, dictum, faith, or passion that can provide meaning and direction in life . . . Beliefs are the compass and maps that guide us toward our goals and give us the surety to know we’ll get there.” The beliefs that we have about ourselves determine how much of our potential we will use and how successful we will be in the future. If we have positive beliefs about ourselves, we will feel confident and accomplish our goals in life. Negative beliefs get in the way of our success. Robbins reminds us that we can change our beliefs and choose new ones if necessary.

“The birth of excellence begins with our awareness that our beliefs are a choice. We usually do not think of it that way, but belief can be a conscious choice. You can choose beliefs that limit you, or you can choose beliefs that support you. The trick is to choose the beliefs that are conducive to success and the results you want and to discard the ones that hold you back.”

The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

The first step in thinking positively is to examine your beliefs about yourself, your life, and the world around you. Personal beliefs are influenced by our environment, significant events that have happened in life, what we have learned in the past, and our picture of the future. Beliefs cause us to have certain expectations about the world and ourselves. These expectations are such a powerful influence on behavior that psychologists use the term “self-fulfilling prophecy” to describe what happens when our expectations come true.

For example, if I believe that I am not good in math (my expectation), I may not try to do the assignment or may avoid taking a math class (my behavior). As a result, I am not good in math. My expectations have been fulfilled. Expectations can also have a positive effect. If I believe that I am a good student, I will take steps to enroll in college and complete my assignments. I will then become a good student. The prophecy will again come true.

Psychologist Robert Rosenthal has done some interesting research on the self-fulfilling prophecy. He describes the following experiment:

“Twelve experimenters were each given five rats that were taught to run a maze with the aid of visual cues. Six of the experimenters were told that their rats had been specially bred for maze-brightness; the other six were told that their rats had been bred for maze-dullness. Actually, there was no difference between the rats. At the end of the experiment, researchers with ‘maze-bright’ rats found superior learning in their rats compared to the researchers with ‘maze-dull’ rats.”

Rosenthal also did experiments with human subjects. Students in an elementary school were given an IQ test. Researchers told the teachers that this was a test that would determine “intellectual blooming.” An experimental group of these students was chosen at random and teachers were told to expect remarkable gains in intellectual achievement in these children during the next eight months. At the end of this time, researchers gave the IQ test again. Students in the experimental group in which the teachers expected “intellectual blooming” actually gained higher IQ points than the control group. In addition, teachers described these students as more “interesting, curious, and happy” than the control group. The teachers’ expectations resulted in a self-fulfilling prophecy.

To think positively, it is necessary to recognize your negative beliefs and turn them into positive beliefs. Some negative beliefs commonly heard from college students include the following:

I don’t have the money for college.
English was never my best subject.
I was never any good at math.
When you hear yourself saying these negative thoughts, remember that these thoughts can become self-fulfilling prophecies. First of all, notice the thought. Then see if you can change the statement into a positive statement such as:

I can find the money for college.
English has been a challenge for me in the past, but I will do better this time.
I can learn to be good at math.

If you believe that you can find money for college, you can go to the financial aid office and the scholarship office to begin your search for money to attend school. You can look for a better job or improve your money management. If you believe that you will do better in English, you will keep up with your assignments and go to the tutoring center or ask the professor for help. If you believe that you can learn to be good at math, you will attend every math class and seek tutoring when you do not understand. Your positive thoughts will help you to be successful.

**Positive Self-Talk and Affirmations**

Self-talk refers to the silent inner voice in our heads. This voice is often negative, especially when we are frustrated or trying to learn something new. Have you ever had thoughts about yourself that are similar to these:

How could you be so stupid!
That was dumb!
You idiot!

**ACTIVITY**

What do you say to yourself when you are angry or frustrated? Write several examples of your negative self-talk.
Negative thoughts can actually be toxic to your body. They can cause biochemical changes that can lead to depression and negatively affect the immune system. Negative self-talk causes anxiety and poor performance and is damaging to self-esteem. It can also lead to a negative self-fulfilling prophecy. Positive thoughts can help us build self-esteem, become confident in our abilities, and achieve our goals. These positive thoughts are called affirmations.

If we make the world with our thoughts, it is important to become aware of the thoughts about ourselves that are continuously running through our heads. Are your thoughts positive or negative? Negative thoughts lead to failure. What we hear over and over again shapes our beliefs. If you say over and over to yourself such things as, “I am stupid,” “I am ugly,” or “I am fat,” you will start to believe these things and act in a way that supports your beliefs. Positive thoughts help to build success. If you say to yourself, “I’m a good person,” “I’m doing my best,” or “I’m doing fine,” you will begin to believe these things about yourself and act in a way that supports these beliefs. Here are some guidelines for increasing your positive self-talk and making affirmations:

1. Monitor your thoughts about yourself and become aware of them. Are they positive or negative?

2. When you notice a negative thought about yourself, imagine rewinding a tape and recording a new positive message.

3. Start the positive message with “I” and use the present tense. Using an “I” statement shows you are in charge. Using the present tense shows you are ready for action now.

4. Focus on the positive. Think about what you want to achieve and what you can do rather than what you do not want to do. For example, instead of saying, “I will not eat junk food,” say, “I will eat a healthy diet.”

5. Make your affirmation stronger by adding an emotion to it.

6. Form a mental picture of what it is that you want to achieve. See yourself doing it successfully.

7. You may need to say the positive thoughts over and over again until you believe them and they become a habit. You can also write them down and put them in a place where you will see them often.

Here are some examples of negative self-talk and contrasting positive affirmations:

**Negative:** I’m always broke.

**Affirmation:** I feel really good when I manage my finances. See yourself taking steps to manage finances. For example, a budget or savings plan.

**Negative:** I’m too fat. It just runs in the family.

**Affirmation:** I feel good about myself when I exercise and eat a healthy diet. See yourself exercising and eating a healthy diet.

**Negative:** I can’t do this. I must be stupid.

**Affirmation:** I can do this. I am capable. I feel a sense of accomplishment when I accomplish something challenging. See yourself making your best attempt and taking the first step to accomplish the project.
Visualization is a powerful tool for using your brain to improve memory, deal with stress, and think positively. Coaches and athletes study sports psychology to learn how to use visualization along with physical practice to improve athletic performance. College students can use the same techniques to enhance college success.

If you are familiar with sports or are an athlete, you can probably think of times when your coach asked you to use visualization to improve your performance. In baseball, the coach reminds players to keep their eye on the ball and visualize hitting it. In swimming, the coach asks swimmers to visualize reaching their arms out to touch the edge of the pool at the end of the race. Pole-vaulters visualize clearing the pole and sometimes even go through the motions before making the jump. Using imagery lets you practice for future events and pre-experience achieving your goals. Athletes imagine winning the race or completing the perfect jump in figure skating. In this way they prepare mentally and physically and develop confidence in their abilities. It still takes practice to excel.

Just as the athlete visualizes and then performs, the college student can do the same. It is said that we create all things twice. First we make a mental picture, and then we create the physical reality by taking action. For example, if we are building a house, first we get the idea; then we begin to design the house we want. We start with a blueprint and then build the house. The blueprint determines what kind of house we construct. The same thing happens in any project we undertake. First we have a mental picture, and then we complete the project. Visualize what you would like to accomplish in your life as if you were creating a blueprint. Then take the steps to accomplish what you want.

As a college student, you might visualize yourself in your graduation robe walking across the stage to receive your diploma. You might visualize yourself in the exam room confidently taking the exam. You might see yourself on the job enjoying your future career. You can make a mental picture of what you would like your life to be and then work toward accomplishing your goal.

**ACTIVITY**

Select one example of negative self-talk that you wrote earlier. Use the examples above to turn your negative message into a positive one and write it here.
Stephen Covey’s book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* has been described as one of the most influential books of the 20th century. In 2004, he released a new book called *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness.* These habits are based on beliefs that lead to success.

1. **Be proactive.** Being proactive means accepting responsibility for your life. Covey uses the word “response-ability” for the ability to choose responses. The quality of your life is based on the decisions and responses that you make. Proactive people make things happen through responsibility and initiative. They do not blame circumstances or conditions for their behavior.

2. **Begin with the end in mind.** Know what is important and what you wish to accomplish in your life. To be able to do this, you will need to know your values and goals in life. You will need a clear vision of what you want your life to be and where you are headed.

3. **Put first things first.** Once you have established your goals and vision for the future, you will need to manage yourself to do what is important first. Set priorities so that you can accomplish the tasks that are important to you.

4. **Think win-win.** In human interactions, seek solutions that benefit everyone. Focus on cooperation rather than competition. If everyone feels good about the decision, there is cooperation and harmony. If one person wins and the other loses, the loser becomes angry and resentful and sabotages the outcome.

5. **First seek to understand, then to be understood.** Too often in our personal communications, we try to talk first and listen later. Often we don’t really listen: we use this time to think of our reply. It is best to listen and understand before speaking. Effective communication is one of the most important skills in life.

6. **Synergize.** A simple definition of synergy is that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. If people can cooperate and have good communication, they can work together as a team to accomplish more than each individual could do separately. Synergy is also part of the creative process.

7. **Sharpen the saw.** Covey shares the story of a man who was trying to cut down a tree with a dull saw. As he struggled to cut the tree, someone suggested that he stop and sharpen the saw. The man said that he did not have time to sharpen the saw, so he continued to struggle. Covey suggests that we need to take time to stop and sharpen the saw. We need to stop working and invest some time in ourselves by staying healthy physically, mentally, spiritually, and socially. We need to take time for self-renewal.

8. **Find your voice, and inspire others to find theirs.** Believe that you can make a positive difference in the world and inspire others to do the same. Covey says that leaders “deal with people in a way that will communicate to them their worth and potential so clearly that they will come to see it in themselves.” Accomplishing this ideal begins with developing one’s own voice or “unique personal significance.”
Positive Thinking

Test what you have learned by selecting the correct answers to the following questions.

1. When teachers were told to expect “intellectual blooming” in their students,
   a. students gained IQ points at the end of the year.
   b. students had the same IQ at the end of the year.
   c. students became frustrated because of high teacher expectations.

2. Positive self-talk results in
   a. lower self-esteem.
   b. overconfidence.
   c. higher self-esteem.

3. The statement “We create all things twice” refers to
   a. doing the task twice to make sure it is done right.
   b. creating and refining.
   c. first making a mental picture and then taking action.

4. A win-win solution means
   a. winning at any cost.
   b. seeking a solution that benefits everyone.
   c. focusing on competition.

5. The statement by Stephen Covey, “Sharpen the saw,” refers to
   a. proper tool maintenance.
   b. studying hard to sharpen thinking skills.
   c. investing time to maintain physical and mental health.

How did you do on the quiz? Check your answers: 1. a, 2. c, 3. c, 4. b, 5. c

Journal Entry #2

Write five intention statements about thinking positively about your life. In thinking about your statements, consider these factors: optimism, hope, future-mindedness, belief in yourself, the self-fulfilling prophecy, positive self-talk, affirmations, visualizing your success, and successful beliefs.

Secrets to Happiness

Many of you probably have happiness on your list of lifetime goals. It sounds easy, right? But what is happiness, anyway?

Psychologist Martin Seligman says that real happiness comes from identifying, cultivating, and using your personal strengths in work, love, play, and parenting. You have identified these strengths by learning about your personality type, learning style, interests, and values.
Seligman contrasts authentic happiness with hedonism. He states that a hedonist “wants as many good moments and as few bad moments as possible in life.” Hedonism is a shortcut to happiness that leaves us feeling empty. For example, we often assume that more material possessions will make us happy. However, the more material possessions we have, the greater the expectations, and we no longer appreciate what we have. “Suppose you could be hooked up to a hypothetical ‘experience machine’ that, for the rest of your life, would stimulate your brain and give you any positive feelings you desire. Most people to whom I offer this imaginary choice refuse the machine. It is not just positive feelings we want, we want to be entitled to our positive feelings. Yet we have invented myriad shortcuts to feeling good: drugs, chocolate, loveless sex, shopping, masturbation, and television are all examples. (I am not, however, suggesting that you should drop these shortcuts altogether.) The belief that we can rely on shortcuts to happiness, joy, rapture, comfort, and ecstasy, rather than be entitled to these feelings by the exercise of personal strengths and virtues, leads to the legions of people who in the middle of great wealth are starving spiritually. Positive emotion alienated from the exercise of character leads to emptiness, to inauthenticity, to depression, and as we age, to the gnawing realization that we are fidgeting until we die.”

Most people assume that happiness is increased by having more money to buy that new car or HDTV. However, a process called hedonistic adaptation occurs that makes this type of happiness short-lived. Once you have purchased the new car or TV, you get used to it quickly. Soon you will start to think about a better car and a bigger TV to continue to feel happy. Seligman provides a formula for happiness:

$$\text{Happiness} = S + C + V$$

In the formula $S$ stands for set range. Psychologists believe that 50 percent of happiness is determined by heredity. In other words, half of your level of happiness is determined by the genes inherited from your ancestors. In good times or bad times, people generally return to their set range of happiness. Six months after receiving a piece of good fortune such as a raise or promotion or winning the lottery, unhappy people are still unhappy. Six months after a tragedy, naturally happy people return to being happy.

The letter $C$ in the equation stands for circumstances such as money, marriage, social life, health, education, climate, race, gender, and religion. These circumstances account for 8 to 15 percent of happiness. Here is what psychologists know about how these circumstances affect happiness:

- Once basic needs are met, greater wealth does not increase happiness.
- Having a good marriage is related to increased happiness.
- Happy people are more social.
- Moderate ill health does not bring unhappiness, but severe illness does.
- Educated people are slightly happier.
- Climate, race, and gender do not affect level of happiness.
- Religious people are somewhat happier than nonreligious people.

The letter $V$ in the equation stands for factors under your voluntary control. These factors account for approximately 40 percent of happiness. Factors under voluntary control include positive emotions and optimism about the future. Positive emotions include hope, faith, trust, joy, ecstasy, calm, zest, ebullience, pleasure, flow, satisfaction, contentment, fulfillment, pride, and serenity. Seligman suggests the following ideas to increase your positive emotions:

- Realize that the past does not determine your future. The future is open to new possibilities.
- Be grateful for the good events of the past and place less emphasis on the bad events.
• Build positive emotions through forgiving and forgetting.
• Work on increasing optimism and hope for the future.
• Find out what activities make you happy and engage in them. Spread these activities out over time so that you will not get tired of them.
• Take the time to savor the happy times. Make mental photographs of happy times so that you can think of them later.
• Take time to enjoy the present moment.
• Build more flow into your life. Flow is the state of gratification we feel when totally absorbed in an activity that matches our strengths.

Are you interested in taking steps to increase your happiness? Here are some activities proposed by Sonya Lyubomirsky, a leading researcher on happiness and author of The How of Happiness. Choose the ones that seem like a natural fit for you and vary them so that they do not become routine or boring. After putting in some effort to practice these activities, they can become a habit.

1. **Express gratitude.** Expressing gratitude is a way of thinking positively and appreciating good circumstances rather than focusing on the bad ones. It is about appreciating and thanking the people who have made positive contributions to your life. It is feeling grateful for the good things you have in life. Create a gratitude journal and at the end of each day write down things for which you are grateful or thankful. Regularly tell those around you how grateful you are to have them in your life. You can do this in person, by phone, in a letter, or by email. Being grateful helps us to savor positive life experiences.

2. **Cultivate optimism.** Make a habit of looking at the bright side of life. If you think positively about the future, you are more likely to take the effort to reach your goals in life. Spend some time thinking or writing about your best possible future. Make a mental picture of your future goals as a first step toward achieving them. Thinking positively boosts your mood and promotes high morale. Most importantly, thinking positively can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you see your positive goals as attainable, you are more likely to work toward accomplishing them and invest the energy needed to deal with obstacles and setbacks along the way.

3. **Avoid overthinking and social comparison.** Overthinking is focusing on yourself and your problems endlessly, needlessly, and excessively. Examples of overthinking include “Why am I so unhappy?” “Why is life so unfair?” and “Why did he/she say that?” Overthinking increases sadness, fosters biased thinking, decreases motivation, and makes it difficult to solve problems and take action to make life better.

   Social comparison is a type of overthinking. In our daily lives, we encounter people who are more intelligent, beautiful, richer, healthier, or happier. The media fosters images of people with impossibly perfect lives. Making social comparisons can lead to feelings of inferiority and loss of self-esteem.

   Notice when you are overthinking or making comparisons with others and stop doing it. Use the “Yell, ‘Stop!’” technique to refocus your attention. This technique involves yelling, “Stop!” to yourself or out loud to change your thinking. Another way to stop overthinking is to distract yourself with more positive thoughts or activities. Watch a funny movie, listen to music, or arrange a social activity with a friend. If these activities are not effective, try writing down your worries in a journal. Writing helps to organize thoughts and to make sense of them. Begin to take some small steps to resolve your worries and problems.

4. **Practice acts of kindness.** Doing something kind for others increases your own personal happiness and satisfies your basic need for human connection. Opportunities for helping others surround us each day. How about being courteous on the freeway,

“Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could; some bunglers and absurdities have crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day; you shall begin it serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson
helping a child with homework, or helping your elderly neighbor with yard work? A simple act of kindness makes you feel good and often sets off a chain of events in which the person who receives the kindness does something kind for someone else.

5. **Increase flow activities.** Flow is defined as intense involvement in an activity so that you do not notice the passage of time. Musicians are in the flow when they are totally involved in their music. Athletes are in the flow when they are totally focused on their sport. Writers are in the flow when they are totally absorbed in writing down their ideas. The key to achieving flow is balancing skills and challenges. If your skills are not sufficient for the activity, you will become frustrated. If your skills are greater than what is demanded for the activity, you will become bored. Work often provides an opportunity to experience flow if you are in a situation in which your work activities are matched to your skills and talents.

As our skills increase, it becomes more difficult to maintain flow. We must be continually testing ourselves in ever more challenging activities to maintain flow. You can take some action to increase the flow in your life by learning to fully focus your attention on the activity you are doing. It is important to be open to new and different experiences. To maintain the flow in your life, make a commitment to lifelong learning.

6. **Savor life's joys.** Savoring is the repetitive replaying of the positive experiences in life and is one of the most important ingredients of happiness. Savoring happens in the past, present, and future. Think often about the good things that have happened in the past. Savor the present by relishing the present moment. Savor the future by anticipating and visualizing positive events or outcomes in the future.

There are many ways to savor life’s joys. Replay in your mind happy days or events from the past. Create a photo album of your favorite people, places, and events and look at it often. This prolongs the happiness. Take a few minutes each day to appreciate ordinary activities such as taking a shower or walking to work. Engage the senses to notice your environment. Is it a sunny day? Take some time to look at the sky, the trees, and the plants. Landscape architects incorporate artwork, trees, and flowers along the freeways to help drivers to relax on the road. Notice art and objects of beauty. Be attentive to the present moment and be aware of your surroundings. Picture in your mind positive events you anticipate in the future. All of these activities will increase your “psychological bank account” of happy times and will help deal with times that are not so happy.

7. **Commit to accomplishing your goals.** Working toward a meaningful life goal is one of the most important things that you can do to have a happy life. Goals provide structure and meaning to our lives and improve self-esteem. Working on goals provides something to look forward to in the future.

The types of goals that you pursue have an impact on your happiness. The goals that have the most potential for long-term happiness involve changing your activities rather than changing your circumstances. Examples of goals that change your circumstances are moving to the beach or buying a new stereo. These goals make you happy for a short time. Then you get used to your new circumstances and no longer feel as happy as when you made the initial change. Examples of goals that change your activities are returning to school or taking up a new sport or hobby. These activities allow you to take on new challenges that keep life interesting for a longer period of time. Choose intrinsic goals that help you to develop your competence and autonomy. These goals should match your most important values and interests.

8. **Take care of your body.** Engaging in physical activity provides many opportunities for increasing happiness. Physical activity helps to:
   - Increase longevity and improve the quality of life.
   - Improve sleep and protect the body from disease.
• Keep brains healthy and avoid cognitive impairments.
• Increase self-esteem.
• Increase the opportunity to engage in flow.
• Provide a distraction from worries and overthinking.

**Journal Entry #3**

Psychologists Martin Seligman and Sonya Lyubomirsky write about the secrets to happiness. Write about four of their ideas with which you agree or disagree.

David Myers, a professor of psychology at Hope College in Michigan, is a leading researcher on happiness. He says that 90 percent of us are naturally happy. He adds that if most of us “were characteristically unhappy, the emotional pain would lose its ability to alert us to an unusual and possibly harmful condition.”

Just as you have made a decision to get a college degree, make a decision to be happy. Make a decision to be happy by altering your internal outlook and choosing to change your behavior. Here are some suggestions for consciously choosing happiness.
1. Find small things that make you happy and sprinkle your life with them. A glorious sunset, a pat on the back, a well-manicured yard, an unexpected gift, a round of tennis, a favorite sandwich, a fishing line cast on a quiet lake, the wagging tail of the family dog, or your child finally taking some responsibility—these are things that will help to create a continual climate of happiness.

2. Smile and stand up straight. Michael Mercer and Maryann Troiani, authors of *Spontaneous Optimism: Proven Strategies for Health, Prosperity and Happiness*, say that “unhappy people tend to slouch, happy people don’t. . . . Happy people even take bigger steps when they walk.”

3. Learn to think like an optimist. “Pessimists tend to complain; optimists focus on solving their problems.” Never use the word “try”; this word is for pessimists. Assume you will succeed.

4. Replace negative thoughts with positive ones.

5. Fill your life with things you like to do.

6. Get enough rest. If you do not get enough sleep, you will feel tired and gloomy. Sleep deprivation can lead to depression.

7. Learn from your elders. Psychologist Daniel Mroczek says that “people in their sixties and seventies who are in good health are among the happiest people in our society. . . . They may be better able to regulate their emotions, they’ve developed perspective, they don’t get so worried about little things, and they’ve often achieved their goals and aren’t trying to prove themselves.”


9. Take charge of your time by doing first things first.

10. Close relationships are important. Myers and Mroczek report higher levels of happiness among married men and women.

11. Keep things in perspective. Will it matter in six months to a year?


**Journal Entry # 4**

Write five intention statements about increasing your future happiness. I intend to . . .
“Whether you think you can, or think you can’t . . . you’re right.” Henry Ford

Sometimes students enter college with the fear of failure. This belief leads to anxiety and behavior that leads to failure. If you have doubts about your ability to succeed in college, you might not go to class or attempt the challenging work required in college. It is difficult to make the effort if you cannot see positive results ahead. Unfortunately, failure in college can lead to a loss of confidence and lack of success in other areas of life as well.

Henry Ford said, “What we believe is true, comes true. What we believe is possible, becomes possible.” If you believe that you will succeed, you will be more likely to take actions that lead to your success. Once you have experienced some small part of success, you will have confidence in your abilities and will continue on the road to success. Success leads to more success. It becomes a habit. You will be motivated to make the effort necessary to accomplish your goals. You might even become excited and energized along the way. You will use your gifts and talents to reach your potential and achieve happiness. It all begins with the thoughts you choose.

“Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habits. Watch your habits; they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.”

—Frank Outlaw

To help you choose positive beliefs, picture in your mind how you want your life to be. Imagine it is here now. See all the details and experience the feelings associated with this picture. Pretend it is true until you believe it. Then take action to make your dreams come true.

**Journal Entry #5**

Henry Ford said, “Whether you think you can, or think you can’t . . .you’re right.” Based on this quote, how can your thoughts help you to be successful in college and in your career?
Success over the Internet

Visit the College Success Website at http://www.collegesuccess1.com/

The College Success Website is continually updated with new topics and links to the material presented in this chapter. Topics include:

- Adult development
- Happiness
- Self-improvement
- Self-esteem
- Sports psychology
- How to be successful

Contact your instructor if you have any problems in accessing the College Success Website.

Notes

5. Levinson and Levinson, Seasons of a Woman’s Life, 372.
7. Ibid., 7.
8. Ibid., 6.
9. Ibid., 49.
10. Ibid., 52.
11. Ibid., 43–53.
12. Ibid., 140.
13. Ibid., 145.
14. Ibid., 150.
15. Ibid., 189.
16. Ibid., 191.
17. Ibid., 264.
18. Ibid., 335.
19. Ibid., 277.
20. Ibid., 351.
21. Ibid., 395.
22. Ibid., 384.
23. Ibid., 426.
24. Ibid., 427.
28. Peterson and Seligman, Character Strengths and Virtues, 570. Goleman, “Hope Emerges a Key to Success in Life.”
30. Ibid., 54-55.
35. Ibid.
37. Ibid., 6.
38. Ibid., 8.
39. Ibid., 45.
42. Boal, “Happy Daze.”
43. Quoted in Smith, “Nineteen Habits of Happy Women.”
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
Measure Your Success

Name ____________________________ Date _______________

Now that you have finished the text, complete the following assessment to measure your improvement. Compare your results to the assessment taken at the beginning of class.

Read the following statements and rate how true they are for you at the present time.

5  Definitely true
4  Mostly true
3  Somewhat true
2  Seldom true
1  Never true

_____ I am motivated to be successful in college.
_____ I know the value of a college education.
_____ I know how to establish successful patterns of behavior.
_____ I can concentrate on an important task until it is completed.
_____ I am attending college to accomplish my own personal goals.
_____ I believe to a great extent that my actions determine my future.
_____ I am persistent in achieving my goals.

_____ Total points for Motivation

_____ I can describe my personality type.
_____ I can list careers that match my personality type.
_____ I can describe my personal strengths and talents based on my personality type.
_____ I understand how my personality type affects how I manage my time and money.
_____ I know what college majors are most in demand.
_____ I am confident that I have chosen the best major for myself.
_____ Courses related to my major are interesting and exciting to me.

_____ Total points for Personality and Major

_____ I can describe my learning style.
_____ I can list study techniques that match my learning style.
_____ I understand how my personality affects my learning style.
_____ I understand the connection between learning and teaching style.
_____ I understand the concept of multiple intelligences.
_____ I can list my multiple intelligences.
_____ I create my own success.

_____ Total points for Learning Style and Intelligence
I can describe my vocational interests.
I can list careers that match my vocational interests.
I can list my top five values.
I generally consider my most important values when making decisions.
My actions are generally guided by my personal values.
My personal values motivate me to be successful.
I can balance work, study, and leisure activities.

**Total points for Interests and Values**

I understand how current employment trends will affect my future.
I know what work skills will be most important for the 21st century.
I have an educational plan that matches my academic and career goals.
I know the steps in making a good career decision.
I have a good resume.
I know how to interview for a job.
I know how to choose a satisfying career.

**Total points for Career and Education**

I have a list or mental picture of my lifetime goals.
I know what I would like to accomplish in the next four years.
I spend my time on activities that help me accomplish my lifetime goals.
I effectively use priorities in managing my time.
I can balance study, work, and recreation time.
I generally avoid procrastination on important tasks.
I am good at managing my money.

**Total points for Managing Time and Money**

I know memory techniques and can apply them to my college studies.
I can read a college textbook and remember the important points.
I know how to effectively mark a college textbook.
I can quickly survey a college text and select the main ideas.
I generally have good reading comprehension.
I can concentrate on the material I am reading.
I am confident in my ability to read and remember college-level material.

**Total points for Memory and Reading**
__ I know how to listen for the main points in a college lecture.
__ I am familiar with note-taking systems for college lectures.
__ I know how to review my lecture notes.
__ I feel comfortable with writing.
__ I know the steps in writing a college term paper.
__ I know how to prepare a speech.
__ I am comfortable with public speaking.

**Total points for Taking Notes, Writing, and Speaking**

__ I know how to adequately prepare for a test.
__ I can predict the questions that are likely to be on the test.
__ I know how to deal with test anxiety.
__ I am successful on math exams.
__ I know how to make a reasonable guess if I am uncertain about the answer.
__ I am confident of my ability to take objective tests.
__ I can write a good essay answer.

**Total points for Test Taking**

__ I understand how my personality affects my communication style.
__ I know how to be a good listener.
__ I can use some basic techniques for good communication.
__ I can identify some barriers to effective communication.
__ I know how to deal with conflict.
__ I feel confident about making new friends in college and on the job.
__ I am generally a good communicator.

**Total points for Communication and Relationships**

__ I have the skills to analyze data, generate alternatives, and solve problems.
__ I can identify fallacies in reasoning.
__ I can apply the steps of critical thinking to analyze a complex issue.
__ I am willing to consider different points of view.
__ I can use brainstorming to generate a variety of ideas.
__ I am good at visualization and creative imagination.
__ I am generally curious about the world and can spot problems and opportunities.

**Total points for Critical and Creative Thinking**
_____ I understand the basics of good nutrition.
_____ I understand how to maintain my ideal body weight.
_____ I exercise regularly.
_____ I avoid addictions to smoking, alcohol, and drugs.
_____ I protect myself from sexually transmitted diseases.
_____ I generally get enough sleep.
_____ I am good at managing stress.

**Total points for Health**

_____ I understand the concept of diversity and know why it is important.
_____ I understand the basics of communicating with a person from a different culture.
_____ I understand how the global economy will affect my future career.
_____ I understand how the concept of the electronic village will affect my future.
_____ I am familiar with the basic vocabulary of diversity.
_____ I try to avoid stereotypes when dealing with others who are different than me.
_____ I try to understand and appreciate those who are different from me.

**Total points for Diversity**

_____ I understand the theories of life stages.
_____ I can describe my present developmental stage in life.
_____ I have self-confidence.
_____ I use positive self-talk and affirmations.
_____ I have a visual picture of my future success.
_____ I have a clear idea of what happiness means to me.
_____ I usually practice positive thinking.

**Total points for Future**

_____ I am confident of my ability to succeed in college.
_____ I am confident of my ability to succeed in my career.

**Total additional points**
Total your points:

_____ Motivation
_____ Personality and Major
_____ Learning Style and Intelligence
_____ Time and Money
_____ Memory and Reading
_____ Test Taking
_____ Taking Notes, Writing, and Speaking
_____ Interests and Values
_____ Career and Education
_____ Communication and Relationships
_____ Critical and Creative Thinking
_____ Health
_____ Diversity
_____ Future
_____ Additional Points

_____ Grand Total Points

If you scored

450–500 You are very confident of your skills for success in college and your career. Maybe you do not need this class?

400–449 You have good skills for success in college. You can always improve.

350–399 You have average skills for success in college. You will definitely benefit from taking this course.

Below 350 You need some help to survive in college. You are in the right place to begin.

Use these scores to complete the exercise “Chart Your Success” as in Chapter 1. Note that the additional points are not used in the chart.
Use your scores from “Measure Your Success” to complete the following success wheel. Use different colored markers to shade in each section of the wheel.

Compare your results to those on this same assessment in Chapter 1. How much did you improve?
Below are some negative thoughts. Transform each negative statement into a positive statement that could help a student to be successful. You may want to do this exercise as part of a group in your classroom.

**Example:**
Negative thought: I have never been any good in math.
Positive thought: I have had difficulty with math in the past, but I can do better this time.

1. I can’t find a job.

   

2. I can never manage to save any money.

   

3. I hate physical education. Why do I have to take that class anyway?

   

4. I’m not very good at job interviews.

   

5. I’ll never pass that test.

   

6. I’ll never finish my college degree.

   

7. I was never good in school. I just want to play sports.

   

8. I’m not smart enough to do that.

   

9. Some people have all the luck.

   

Name __________________________________________________ Date ________________
Name __________________________________________________ Date _______________

To be successful, you will need a clear mental picture of what success means to you. Take a few minutes to create a mental picture of what success means to you. Include your education, career, family life, lifestyle, finances, and anything else that is important to you. Make your picture as specific and detailed as possible. Write about this picture or draw it in the space below. You may wish to use a mind map, list, outline, or sentences to describe your picture of success.
Think of small things and big things that make you happy. List or draw them in the space below.
Look over the table of contents of this book and think about what you have learned and how you will put it into practice. Write 10 intention statements about how you will use the material you have learned in this class to be successful in the future.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.
Name ______________________________________________ Date _______________

1. What did you think of this course?
   ____ A. This was one of the best courses I ever had.
   ____ B. This course was excellent.
   ____ C. This course was very good.
   ____ D. This course was satisfactory.
   ____ E. This course was not satisfactory.

2. How helpful was this course in choosing a major or career or confirming your choice of a major or career?
   ____ A. Extremely helpful
   ____ B. Very helpful
   ____ C. Helpful
   ____ D. Not helpful
   ____ E. Unknown

3. How helpful was this course in improving your chances for success in college?
   ____ A. Extremely helpful
   ____ B. Very helpful
   ____ C. Helpful
   ____ D. Not helpful
   ____ E. Unknown

4. How helpful was this course in improving your chances for success in your future career?
   ____ A. Extremely helpful
   ____ B. Very helpful
   ____ C. Helpful
   ____ D. Not helpful
   ____ E. Unknown
5. How helpful was this course in building your self-confidence?
   _____ A. Extremely helpful
   _____ B. Very helpful
   _____ C. Helpful
   _____ D. Not helpful
   _____ E. Unknown

6. Please rate the textbook used for this class.
   _____ A. Outstanding
   _____ B. Excellent
   _____ C. Satisfactory
   _____ D. Needs Improvement

7. Please rate the instructor in this class.
   _____ A. Outstanding
   _____ B. Excellent
   _____ C. Satisfactory
   _____ D. Needs Improvement

8. Would you recommend this course to a friend?
   _____ A. Yes
   _____ B. No

9. Do you plan to continue your college studies next semester?
   _____ A. Yes
   _____ B. No

10. Please tell what you liked about this class and how it was useful to you.

11. Do you have any suggestions for improving the class or text?