

Create Your Success

1

Learning

OBJECTIVES

Read to answer these key questions:

- What are the steps in choosing a major and planning a career?
- How does education affect my future earnings?
- How can I motivate myself to be successful?
- How can I increase my positive thinking about the future?
- How can I take control of my life and create the future I want?
- How do beliefs affect my future success?
- What are some secrets to happiness?
- What does happiness mean to me?



Most students go to college to find happiness, fulfillment, and a satisfying career. The first step is choosing a major and finding the career that matches your personal strengths, interests, and values. One of the keys to success is the belief that you can create your success and then take the steps to make it happen. In this chapter you will explore motivational techniques for increasing your success and some tools for creating the future you want. Finally, you will give some thought to what happiness means to you.

Choosing Your Major and Finding Your Ideal Career

Choosing your major is one of the most important decisions you will make in college, because it will have a big impact on your future career. It is difficult to motivate yourself and put in the work necessary to be successful if you do not have a clear picture of your future career. How do people choose a major and then find their ideal career? This course will help you to become aware of the steps needed to think critically about yourself and the world of work to make a good career decision. Here are the steps in choosing your major and finding that ideal career:

- **Realize that you can create your own future.** Chapter 1 provides some tools for creating your future, including motivation, thinking positively, understanding locus of control, optimism, belief in yourself, visualizing your success, and thinking about what it really means to be happy in your life.
- **Assess your personality type.** The Do What You Are personality assessment in Chapter 2 will help you to identify your personal strengths and matching careers. It will also give you some information about what is required for career satisfaction.
- **Explore your vocational interests and values.** The Interest Profiler integrated into Chapter 3 will help you to explore your vocational interests. Exercises within this chapter will help clarify your values, or what is most important in your life. Making a career decision based on your personal values will enable you to find work that you find important.

- **Discover your multiple intelligences.** In Chapter 4, you will learn more about your skills by using the MI Advantage to explore your multiple intelligences and matching careers. The theory of multiple intelligences describes the many ways that people are intelligent and how they can use these skills in the workplace.
- **Learn about the job market.** Learn about career trends and opportunities in Chapter 5 and how you can match your personal strengths to the job market.
- **Gain job skills while in college.** Chapter 6 begins with some ways to increase your prospects of finding meaningful employment after college by using career services, volunteering, doing internships, and working part time.
- **Use updated job search strategies.** Chapter 6 continues with some ideas for using new media, which has provided many opportunities for marketing your personal brand and using online tools to locate your ideal job.

Journal Entry

Write a paragraph about deciding on your ideal major and career. Use any of these questions to guide your thinking: If you have chosen a major, why is it the best major for you? Does this major help you to live your preferred lifestyle? If you have not chosen a major, what are some steps in choosing the right major and career? What qualities would you look for in an ideal career? What is your preferred lifestyle?

1



“The purpose of our lives is to give birth to the best which is within us.”

MARIANNE WILLIAMSON

Using Motivation to Increase Your Success

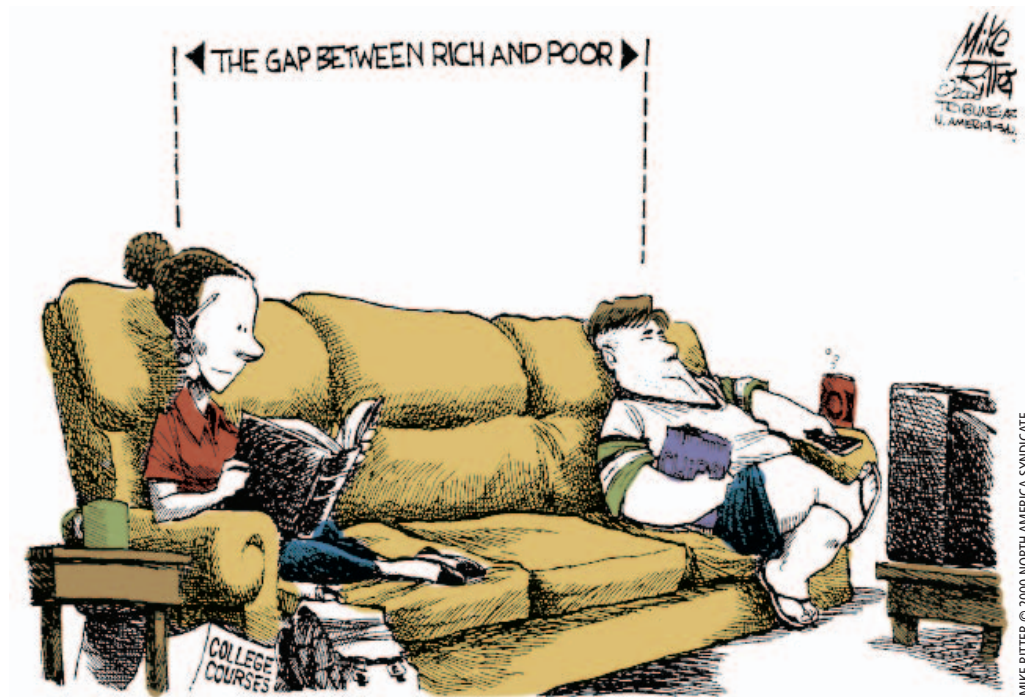
Education and Lifetime Earning

Many college students say that getting a satisfying job that pays well and achieving financial security are important reasons for attending college. By going to college you can get a job that pays more per hour. You can work fewer hours to earn a living and have more time for leisure activities. You can spend your time at work doing something that you like to do. A report issued by the Census Bureau in 2012 listed the following education and income statistics for all races and both genders throughout the United States.¹ Lifetime income assumes that a person works 30 years before retirement.

Average Earnings Based on Education Level

Education	Yearly Income	Lifetime Income
High School Graduate	\$33,904	\$1,017,120
Some College, No Degree	\$37,804	\$1,134,120
Associate Degree	\$40,820	\$1,224,600
Bachelor's Degree	\$55,432	\$1,662,960
Master's Degree	\$67,600	\$2,028,000
Professional Degree	\$90,220	\$2,706,600

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Notice that income rises with educational level. Over a lifetime, a person with a bachelor's degree earns 66 percent more than a high school graduate. Of course these are average figures across the nation and some individuals earn higher or lower salaries. People fantasize about winning the lottery. The reality is that the probability of winning the lottery is very low. In the long run, you have a better chance of improving your financial status by going to college.

Let's do some further comparisons. A high school graduate earns an average of **\$1,017,120** over a lifetime. A college graduate with a bachelor's degree earns **\$1,662,960** over a lifetime. A college graduate earns **\$645,840** more than a high school graduate does over a lifetime. So how much is a college degree worth? It is worth **\$645,840** over a lifetime. Would you go to college if someone offered to pay you **\$645,840**? Here are some more interesting figures we can derive from the table on page 4:

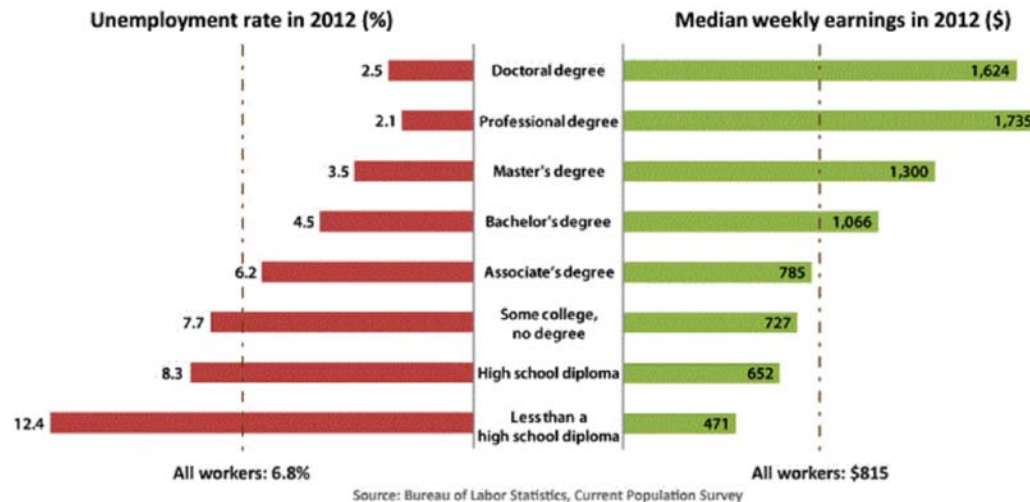
Completing one college course is worth **\$16,146**.
 (\$645,840 divided by 40 courses in a bachelor's degree)

Going to class for one hour is worth **\$336**.
 (\$16,146 divided by 48 hours in a semester class)

Would you take a college class if someone offered to pay you **\$16,146**? Would you go to class today for one hour if someone offered to pay you **\$336**? Of course, if this sounds too good to be true, remember that you will receive these “payments” over a working lifetime of 30 years.

While college graduation does not guarantee employment, it increases your chances of finding a job. In 2012 high school graduates had an unemployment rate of 12.4 percent as compared to college graduates who had an unemployment rate of 4.5 percent.² Increase your chances of employment by continuing your education.

Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment



FROM [HTTP://WWW.BLS.GOV/EMP/EP_CHART_001.HTM](http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm)

Employment and earning are only some of the values of going to college. Can you think of other reasons to attend college? Here are some less tangible reasons.

- College helps you to develop your potential.
- College opens the door to many satisfying careers.
- College prepares you to be an informed citizen and fully participate in the democratic process.
- College increases your understanding and widens your view of the world.
- College allows you to participate in a conversation with the great minds of all times and places. For example, reading the work of Plato is like having a conversation with that famous philosopher. You can continue great conversations with your faculty and fellow students.
- College helps to increase your confidence, self-esteem, and self-respect.

Journal Entry

What are your dreams for the future? Write a paragraph about what you hope to accomplish by going to college.



Intrinsic or Extrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation comes from within. It means that you do an activity because you enjoy it or find personal meaning in it. With intrinsic motivation, the nature of the activity itself or the consequences of the activity motivate you. For example, let's say that I am interested in learning to play the piano. I am motivated to practice playing the piano, because I like the sound of the piano and feel very satisfied when I can play music that I enjoy. I practice because I like to practice, not because I have to practice. When I get tired or frustrated, I work through it or put it aside and come back to it, because I want to learn to play the piano well.

You can be intrinsically motivated to continue in college and achieve your career goals, because you enjoy learning and find the college experience satisfying. Look for ways to enjoy college and to find some personal satisfaction in it. If you enjoy college, it becomes easier to do the work required to be successful. Think about what you say to yourself about college. If you are saying negative things such as, "I don't want to be here," it will be difficult to continue.

Extrinsic motivation comes as a result of an external reward from someone else. Examples of extrinsic rewards are certificates, bonuses, money, praise, and recognition. Taking the piano example again, let's say that I want my child to play the piano. The child does not know if he or she would like to play the piano. I give the child a reward for practicing the piano. I could pay the child for practicing or give praise for doing a good job. There are two possible outcomes of the extrinsic reward. After a while, the child may gain skills and confidence and come to enjoy playing the piano. The extrinsic reward is no longer necessary, because the child is now intrinsically motivated. Or the child may decide that he or she does not like to play the piano. The extrinsic reward is no longer effective in motivating the child to play the piano.

You can use extrinsic rewards to motivate yourself to be successful in college. Remind yourself of the payoff for getting a college degree: earning more money, having a satisfying career, being able to purchase a car and a house. Extrinsic rewards can be a first step in motivating yourself to attend college. With experience and achievement, you may come to like going to college and may become intrinsically motivated to continue your college education.

If you use intrinsic motivation to achieve your goal, you will be happier and more successful. If you do something like playing the piano because you enjoy it, you are more likely to spend the time necessary to practice to achieve your goal. If you view college as something that you enjoy and is valuable to you, it is easier to spend the time to do the required studying. When you get tired or frustrated, tell yourself that you are doing a good job (praise yourself) and think of the positive reasons that you want to get a college education.

"Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it."

RAYMOND CHANDLER

Thinking Positively about the Future

You can motivate yourself to complete your education by thinking positively about the future. If you believe that your chances of graduating from college are good, you can be motivated to take the steps necessary to achieve your goals. Conversely, if you think that your chances of graduating are poor, it is difficult to motivate yourself to continue. The degree of optimism that you possess is greatly influenced by past experiences. For example, if you were a good student in the past, you are likely to be optimistic about the future. If you struggled with your education, you may have some negative experiences that you will need to overcome. Negative thoughts can often become a self-fulfilling prophecy; what we think becomes true.

college freshmen, the level of hope was a better predictor of college grades than standardized tests or high school grade point average.⁴ Students with a high level of hope set higher goals and worked to attain those goals. Hopeful people think positively and believe that the future will be good. They change goals and plans when necessary. People who are not hopeful about the future are less likely to be successful. Be optimistic about graduating from college, find the resources necessary to accomplish your goal and start taking the steps to create your success.

Activity

Are you generally an optimist or pessimist about the future? Read the following items and rate your level of agreement or disagreement.

Rate the following items using this scale:

- 5 I definitely agree
- 4 I agree
- 3 I neither agree or disagree (neutral)
- 2 I disagree
- 1 I strongly disagree

- _____ My chances of graduating from college are good.
- _____ I am confident that I can overcome any obstacles to my success.
- _____ Things generally turn out well for me.
- _____ I believe that positive results will eventually come from most problem situations.
- _____ If I work hard enough, I will eventually achieve my goals.
- _____ Although I have faced some problems in the past, the future will be better.
- _____ I expect that most things will go as planned.
- _____ Good things will happen to me in the future.
- _____ I am generally persistent in reaching my goals.
- _____ I am good at finding solutions to the problems I face in life.

Add up your total points and multiply by two. My total points (X2) are _____.

- 90–100 You are an excellent positive thinker.
- 80–89 You are a good positive thinker.
- 70–79 Sometimes you think positively and sometimes not. Can you re-evaluate your thinking?
- 60 and below Work on positive thinking.

Journal Entry

Write five positive statements about your college education and your future.

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Quiz

Motivation

1. Over a lifetime a college graduate earns about ____ more than a high school graduate.
 - a. \$250,000
 - b. \$650,000
 - c. \$1,000,000
2. As compared to high school graduates, college graduates are
 - a. more likely to be unemployed.
 - b. less likely to be unemployed.
 - c. guaranteed employment.
3. To be successful in college, it is best to use
 - a. an external locus of control.
 - b. extrinsic motivation.
 - c. intrinsic motivation.
4. Intrinsic motivation
 - a. comes from within.
 - b. is the result of an external reward.
 - c. involves higher pay or recognition for a job well done.
5. To increase your chance of accomplishing your goals,
 - a. think positively and work step by step to achieve your goals.
 - b. use wishful thinking.
 - c. set high goals that may not be possible to achieve.

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

Taking Control of Your Life

Locus of Control

Being aware of the concept of locus of control can help you take control of your life. The word **locus** means place. Locus of control is where you place the responsibility for control over your life. In other words, who is in charge? If you place the responsibility on yourself and believe that you have control over your life, you have internal locus of control. If you place the responsibility on others and think that luck or fate determines your future, you have external locus of control. Some people use internal or external locus of control in combination or favor one type in certain situations. If you favor an internal locus of control, you believe that to a great extent your actions determine your future. Studies have shown that students who use an internal locus of control are likely to have higher achievement in college.⁵ The characteristics of students with internal and external locus of control are listed below.

Students with an internal locus of control:

- Believe that they are in control of their lives.
- Understand that grades are directly related to the amount of study invested.
- Are self-motivated.
- Learn from their mistakes by figuring out what went wrong and how to fix the problem.
- Think positively and try to make the best of each situation.
- Rely on themselves to find something interesting in the class and learn the material.

Students with an external locus of control:

- Believe that their lives are largely a result of luck, fate, or chance.
- Think that teachers give grades rather than students earn grades.

"I am a great believer in luck and I find that the harder I work, the more I have of it."

THOMAS JEFFERSON

"Ability is what you're capable of doing.

Motivation determines what you do.

Attitude determines how well you do it."

LOU HOLTZ

- Rely on external motivation from teachers or others.
- Look for someone to blame when they make a mistake.
- Think negatively and believe they are victims of circumstance.
- Rely on the teacher to make the class interesting and to teach the material.



Activity

Internal or External Locus of Control

Decide whether the statement represents an internal or external locus of control and put a checkmark in the appropriate column.

Internal External

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | _____ | 1. Much of what happens to us is due to fate, chance, or luck. |
| _____ | _____ | 2. Grades depend on how much work you put into them. |
| _____ | _____ | 3. If I do badly on the test, it is usually because the teacher is unfair. |
| _____ | _____ | 4. If I do badly on the test, it is because I didn't study or didn't understand the material. |
| _____ | _____ | 5. I often get blamed for things that are not my fault. |
| _____ | _____ | 6. I try to make the best of the situation. |
| _____ | _____ | 7. It is impossible to get a good grade if you have a bad instructor. |
| _____ | _____ | 8. I can be successful through hard work. |
| _____ | _____ | 9. If the teacher is not there telling me what to do, I have a hard time doing my work. |
| _____ | _____ | 10. I can motivate myself to study. |
| _____ | _____ | 11. If the teacher is boring, I probably won't do well in class. |
| _____ | _____ | 12. I can find something interesting about each class. |
| _____ | _____ | 13. When bad things are going to happen, there is not much you can do about it. |
| _____ | _____ | 14. I create my own destiny. |
| _____ | _____ | 15. Teachers should motivate the students to study. |
| _____ | _____ | 16. I have a lot of choice about what happens in my life. |

As you probably noticed, the even-numbered statements represent internal locus of control. The odd-numbered statements represent external locus of control. Remember that students with an internal locus of control have a greater chance of success in college. It is important to see yourself as responsible for your own success and achievement and to believe that with effort you can achieve your goals.

Successful Beliefs

Stephen Covey's book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People*, has been described as one of the most influential books of the 20th century.⁶ In 2004 he released a new book called *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness*.⁷ Your beliefs have a big impact on your success. Use these ideas to take control of your life and improve your chances for 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.
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.”⁸

Successful Beliefs

- Be proactive
- Begin with the end in mind

- Put first things first
- Think win-win
- First seek to understand, then to be understood
- Synergize
- Sharpen the saw
- Find your voice and inspire others to find theirs

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.”⁹ 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.*¹⁰



“If I believe I cannot do something, it makes me incapable of doing it. But when I believe I can, then I acquire the ability to do it, even if I did not have the ability in the beginning.”

MAHATMA GANDHI

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.¹¹ 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 ask the teacher 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.

Visualize Your Success

Visualization is a powerful tool for taking control of your future as well as 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.

“Human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitude of mind.”

WILLIAM JAMES

“The future first exists in imagination, then planning, then reality.”

R.A. WILSON



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Just as the athlete visualizes and then performs, the college student can do the same. It is said 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, we first 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.

“The three grand essentials of happiness are: something to do, someone to love, and something to hope for.”

THOMAS CHALMERS

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.¹² 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.”¹³ 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.

Quiz

Taking Control

1. Increase your chances of success by
 - a. using external locus of control.
 - b. using internal locus of control.
 - c. believing that luck or fate controls your destiny.
2. The following is a statement showing internal locus of control:
 - a. When bad things happen, there is not much you can do about it.
 - b. Much of what happens is due to fate, chance, or luck.
 - c. I can be successful through hard work.
3. Successful beliefs include the following:
 - a. Put first things last.
 - b. Begin with the end in mind.
 - c. Think win-lose.
4. The _____ we have about ourselves determine much of our potential.
 - a. beliefs
 - b. doubts
 - c. criticism
5. 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.

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

Journal Entry

What tools can you use to take control of your life and create the future you want? How can you use locus of control, successful beliefs, hope, or visualization to accomplish your goals?

4

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.¹⁴

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, which 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:¹⁵

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

"Success is getting what you want; happiness is wanting what you get."

DALE CARNEGIE

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, 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*.¹⁶ 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 a positive contribution 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 it a habit of looking at the bright side of life. If you think positively about the future, you are more likely to make 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?”, or “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 our basic need for human connection. Opportunities

“Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could; some blunders 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

for helping others surround us each day. How about being courteous on the freeway, 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 plants. Landscape architects incorporate art work, 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 you 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

“Happiness consists more in small conveniences or pleasures that occur every day, than in great pieces of good fortune that happen but seldom.”

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

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.

“An aim in life is the only fortune worth finding.”

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON



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.”¹⁷

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.”¹⁸
3. Learn to think like an optimist. “Pessimists tend to complain; optimists focus on solving their problems.”¹⁹ 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.”²⁰
8. Reduce stress.
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.²¹
11. Keep things in perspective. Will it matter in six months to a year?
12. Laugh more. Laughter produces a relaxation response.

Journal Entry

What does happiness mean to you? Write five intention statements regarding your future happiness.

To me happiness is . . .

I intend to . . .

5



Keys to Success

Learn to Laugh at Life

“Have a laugh at life and look around you for happiness instead of sadness. Laughter has always brought me out of unhappy situations. Even in your darkest moment, you usually can find something to laugh about if you try hard enough.”

RED SKELTON

All of us face challenges in life, but if we can learn the gift of laughter and have a good sense of humor, it is easier to deal with these challenges and create the future we want to have. Laughter has important physical as well as emotional benefits. Laughter relaxes the body, boosts the immune system, and even improves the function of blood vessels and increases blood flow, which can protect the heart. It adds joy and zest to life, reduces anxiety, relieves stress, improves mood, and enhances resilience. Being more relaxed can even help you to shift perspective, solve problems, and be more creative.

Just putting a smile on your face can help. German psychologist Fritz Strack had his subjects watch a cartoon with a pencil in their mouths. Half of his subjects held the pencil between their teeth, which made them laugh. The other half of his subjects held the pencil between their lips, which made them frown. The smiling group thought that the cartoon was funnier. It seems that there is a connection between our physical responses and our internal feelings. The physical act of smiling actually makes you feel happier.²²

If you do not feel happy, smile and pretend to feel happy. Neurophysicist Richard Hamilton says that if you pretend to be happy, you actually feel better, because positive thoughts and behavior impact the biochemistry of the brain. Positive thinking helps the brain produce serotonin, a neurotransmitter linked with feelings of happiness.²³

Humor has several components. Humor involves looking at the incongruities of life and laughing at them. It is looking at adversity and finding the humor in the situation. It is a playful attitude and the ability to make other people smile. Most children are playful, but socialization reduces their playfulness. You can develop your sense of humor by taking yourself less seriously and being grateful for the good things in your life. Learn to laugh at yourself by shar-



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ing your embarrassing moments and laughing at them. Be careful not to use humor that puts down other people or groups. Surround yourself with people who enjoy humor and laughter. Look for the humor in difficult situations. Life is full of irony and absurdity and laughing about it unites people during difficult times. By laughing at the situation, you will be in a better position to deal with it. Keep a positive perspective by focusing on the good things that are happening in your life rather than dwelling on the negatives.

The author, Mark Twain, was a good example of using humor in life. Mark Twain said that he had never worked a day in his life. He said, “What I have done I have done because it has been play. If it had been work, I shouldn’t have done it.” He used humor throughout his life despite facing many adversities. His father died when he was 11 years old and he started work at age 12 as a printer’s apprentice. He was constantly in trouble and spent some time in jail. He served in the Civil War. His wife died at an early age and three out of four of his children died before he did.

As a child, he enjoyed playing pranks on his mother and she responded with a sense of humor. After playing a prank on his mother, she told him that he gave her more trouble than all the other children. He replied, “I suppose you were afraid I wouldn’t live,” and she responded, “No: afraid you would.” When Mark Twain almost drowned in the river, she pulled him out and said, “I guess there wasn’t much danger. People born to be hanged are safe in water.” Mark Twain’s children described him as “a very good man and a very funny one. . . . He does tell perfectly delightful stories.” He started every day by making jokes at the breakfast table and his humor is later reflected in his famous books, including *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer*. He wrote that “humor is a great thing . . . the saving thing after all. The minute it crops up, all our hardnesses yield, all our irritations, and resentments flit away, and a sunny spirit takes their place.”²⁴

The path to achieving your goals is much smoother if you choose to be happy. So relax, smile, and be happy. Then work on making positive changes in your life.

JOURNALS

CREATE YOUR SUCCESS

Go to <http://www.collegesuccess1.com/JournalEntries.htm> for Word files of the Journal Entries.

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:

- Choosing a major
- Motivation
- Education and earnings
- Positive thinking
- Emotional intelligence
- Happiness

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

Notes

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11. Robert Rosenthal, "Self-Fulfilling Prophecy," *Psychology Today*, September 1968.
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14. Ibid., 8.
15. Ibid., 45.
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17. Quoted in Joan Smith, “Nineteen Habits of Happy Women,” *Redbook Magazine*, August 1999, 66.
18. Quoted in Smith, “Nineteen Habits of Happy Women.”
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
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BEGIN WITH SELF-ASSESSMENT

A good way to begin this course is to assess your present skills to determine your strengths and areas that need improvement. Complete the following assessment to get an overview of the topics presented in the textbook and to measure your present skills.



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Measure Your Success

The following statements represent major topics included in the textbook. Read the following statements and rate how true they are for you at the present time. At the end of the course, you will have the opportunity to complete this assessment again to measure your progress.

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

_____ I understand the steps in choosing a major and career.

_____ I understand how education will affect my future earnings.

_____ I know how to use motivation techniques to be successful.

_____ I have control over my life and can create my future.

_____ I usually practice positive thinking.

_____ I have a visual picture of my future success.

_____ I have a clear idea of what happiness means to me.

_____ **Total points for Creating Success**

_____ 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 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 the concept of multiple intelligences.
- _____ I can list my multiple intelligences.
- _____ I can list my personal strengths.
- _____ I can list the careers that match my personal strengths.
- _____ I am aware of my emotional intelligence and use it to create positive relationships.
- _____ I have a list of my short-term and long-term goals.
- _____ I believe that I can create my own future.

_____ **Total points for Multiple Intelligences and Goal Setting**

- _____ I understand how current employment trends will affect my future.
- _____ I know what work skills will be most important for the 21st century.
- _____ I know how to do career research.
- _____ I am aware of the job outlook for careers in which I am interested.
- _____ I have an educational plan that matches my academic and career goals.
- _____ I know the steps in making a good career decision.
- _____ I know how to choose a satisfying career.

_____ **Total points for Career and Education**

- _____ I know how to increase my chances for employment while in college.
- _____ I know how to write a good resume and cover letter.
- _____ I understand personal branding and know how to market myself online.
- _____ I know how to use social media to find a job.
- _____ I am familiar with online tools for job search.
- _____ I know how to interview for a job.
- _____ I know about options for creating my own business.

_____ **Total points for Job Search Strategies**

Total your points

- _____ Creating Success
- _____ Personality and Major
- _____ Interests and Values
- _____ Multiple Intelligences and Goal Setting
- _____ Career and Education
- _____ Job Search Strategies
- _____ **Grand total points**

If you scored

- 190–210 You have excellent skills for creating your future career, but you can always learn something new.
- 168–189 You have good skills for creating your future career, but could improve.
- 126–167 You have average skills for creating your future career, but will increase your skills in this course.
- Below 126 Your score is low right now, but this course will help you to increase the skills for creating your future career.

What are the areas in which you scored the highest?

What areas do you need to improve?

SUCCESS WHEEL

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.

