

The AC
Phoenix
More Than a Newspaper, A Community Institution

**An Associate Consultant's
Newspaper
Established in 1983**

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Moving On Up

Taking Yourself To The

Next Level

By Dr. Ernie Wade



Dr. Ernie Wade

Dear High School Student,

Many of you are struggling to achieve a higher academic performance. It is not an easy task, but moving to a higher level of performance is possible. A prerequisite for high academic performance is a sincere and strong belief in self. It is important that you believe that you are worthy and have been blessed with a great mind. This belief is the foundation upon which you will build this strong sense of self. As a high school student you don't usually spend a great deal of time on personal growth and development. Personal growth is a process that is related to self-improvement and the acquisition of skills. It is something that should certainly play a larger role in your life. The sooner you begin to look and examination of your feelings, thoughts and ideas about your academic standing and performance. It also entails an academic personal

inventory; a close look at what you have academically, how much you have academically, and what you need to do to make it more attractive to colleges and universities.

When you start this introspection, your journey toward academic change begins. You will find that as you begin the process, it will require personal change, and change starts on the inside. I like to tell students, "academic success is an inside job it starts in of you".

One of the elements of academic failure is never feeling good enough. When you lack confidence in yourself and your abilities, any small failure will set you back and allow you to lapse into inactivity. However, when you attack assignments with confidence in your ability, if failure occurs, you accept it, determine how and why it occurred, take corrective action and move forward.

I have developed a set of principles that will help you in your introspective process. The list could be much longer, but I have narrowed it down to just ten.

1. Your Reason For Being

Why are you here? Start the search to find out who you are and where you are going. Keep a personal growth and development journal. Develop a personal vision for your life in the best way you can imagine. Each day, take a few minutes to write down where you want to go in life. Where would you like to do? Where would you like to live? Get started, and you will find that as time goes by you will become better and more specific as you move

along through your high school career. Make sure your expectations are yours and not those of your family, friends and others.

2. Now Is The Time

You will be faced with multiple tasks in high school and will find the need to perform many tasks concurrently. The need to learn study and time management skills early is critically important. The number of tasks increases as you move forward in high school and increases even more as you move on to college. Often the hardest task is getting started. You must learn to initiate action. Don't sit and dwell on how many, how hard or how long, get started. Don't wait until later, tomorrow or next week, get started. Now is the very best time to get started.

3. You Are Bigger Than Your Fears

You cannot allow your fears to get in the way of your progress. Too often I hear "I'm not good at math or I'm not good at science". This thinking gets in the way of academic excellence. Instead of giving into your fears, fight through them, struggle through them, work through them, cry through

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4. Learn From Your Mistakes

Treat mistakes as preparation for your next move. Do not allow them to lull you into inactivity? Too often we wallow in the fact that something did not go as we had planned, and we spend far too much time examining and reexamining and the examining what we just reexamined. Don't tread water in the misery of your mistake. We all make mistakes. Ask anyone who has achieved any measure of success about their mistakes and they will tell you they have had many. The key is to move beyond them, learn from them and use them as lessons for your next step. Remember, those who make no mistakes, are those who attempt nothing.

5. Position Positive Peers

If you are to be a successful, high achieving high school student, it is absolutely imperative that you surround yourself with people who have similar goals, dreams, and aspirations. We all have friends who have goals that are different from ours. However they should at least have goals and aspirations. Understand that it becomes increasingly more difficult to move to your highest level of achievement in school if your closest friends and associates are students who don't like school. Being a top student can be very difficult and time intensive. The pull between your academic demands and friends who find school boring, uninspiring, and a waste can become overwhelming. It can also be isolating. You must distance yourself from the "I can't, we

can't, I don't want to, why dowe have to crowd". They will drain you and become the source of your demise. Select for yourself a "tuff times team" a group of friends and acquaintances who have achievement goals and aspirations similar to yours, and when you feel alone on that "you think you're better than us because you get really good grades" island, turn to them for support.

6. Keep It Simple

Straighten out the crooked parts of your life. Work to clean up the contradictions. If you want to become a better, higher achieving student but you don't want to spend the time necessary to do so; clean up the contradiction. If you say you want to become an engineer but at the same time say you don't like math; clean up the contradiction.

7. Show Me The Money

Money is not everything, but knowing how to get it, use it, and keep it is important. You should learn how to handle and budget money while in high school but surely before you leave high school and head off to college. Upon arriving at college, you will be bombarded with offers of free credit cards and it is in your best interest to be a able to "just say no". Many college students succumb to the "offers" of free credit cards and end up with tremendous credit card debt. Far too many people only know how to work for money, and not to have money work for them. Learning how to have both people and money working for you is one of the keys to financial success and freedom.

8. Take Care Of You

You must be able to count on your body to support you through stressful times of your high school journey. It is imperative that you eat right, exercise and get the proper amount of sleep. Far too many high school students come to school and try to function without having eaten breakfast or having had sufficient sleep. That's like trying to run a high powered vehicle with too little gas and without proper maintenance. If you take care of your body, your body will take care of you.

9. Let Go Of The Rope

No matter how bad your situation has been. No matter what your academic performance has been, you can start over and improve your academic standing. However, you must start over with a new attitude, an attitude of success. You must start believing in your ability to be successful. No class can be too hard, no teacher too demanding. You must believe you have what it takes, to take what is presented to you. You cannot move to the next level academically carrying last years, last months, last weeks or yesterdays' mistakes. You must move to realize your potential. Potential is that innate ability lying just below the surface of your previous performance. Take steps to realize your potential.

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