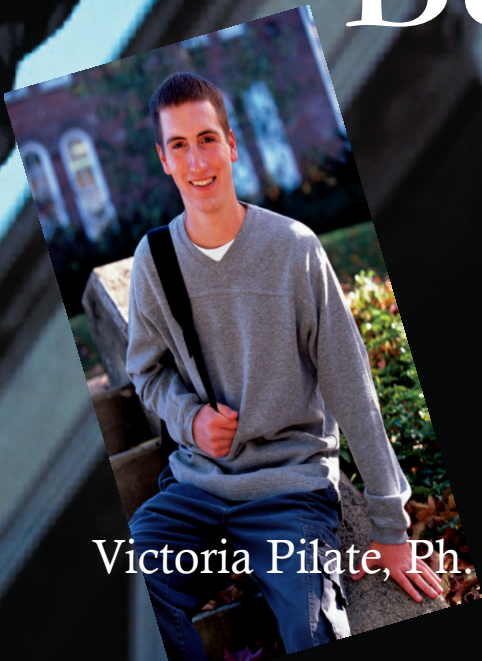


Tips on
Surviving and
Excelling in
College

Go
Boldly



Victoria Pilate, Ph. D.



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and
Excelling in
College



Victoria Pilate, Ph.D.

author of *Dorm Rooms to Boardrooms*

DRAFT MANUSCRIPT

Go Boldly
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*Ha in vita ut in lusu
alae pessima jactura
arte correigenda est.*

As in life so in a game of hazard,
skill will make something of the
worst throws.

from Moonfleet by J. Meade Faulkner

Dear Troy University student,

Congratulations on your admission and attendance to Troy University. In conjunction with the Troy University Division of Student Services, I am pleased to present you with this sneak preview of my upcoming book, Go Boldly. The book is a guide for new college students in making a successful transition into collegiate life.

I am anxious to hear feedback from you about the ideas in this handout. Your input will be used for the final edition of the book. Please review the enclosed passages from the book. Do you have ideas of topics you'd recommend be covered? What are your concerns about being successful in college? Please let me hear from you.

You can contact me at vpilate@victoriapilate.com. You can also submit ideas anonymously to my website, www.victoriapilate.com. My website also has tips on scholarships, internships, and career advice. You're welcome to visit the website for this free information.

You have my sincere best wishes for happiness and success during your college years.

With best regards,

Victoria Pilate

Chapter 1

HEAD CHECK

This topic may seem like a strange starting point for a student success book. In actuality, doing a head check is the first place to start in any venture. If your heart and determination are not in a goal, you'll struggle to cross the finish line. You'll also likely fail.

In doing your head check, check how you feel about yourself. Self-esteem is an excellent starting point for understanding why some people succeed and others fail. Research supports the belief that there is a direct link between self-esteem and goal attainment.

In biography after biography of successful people, you'll notice a common thread. It's that successful people feel good about themselves, and their actions reflect their positive feelings about themselves. Even in defeat, successful people don't lose their feelings of self-esteem.

If you could actually listen to the thoughts of successful people, you might hear them say to themselves I don't like this about me, I want to change that about me but overall their thoughts are acceptance of themselves and their good and bad qualities. They feel good about themselves and their positive and negative qualities. They don't think "I don't like me."

"Having pride in yourself is what protects you so that even when other people disapprove of who you are or what you look like or the job you do, you hold on to who you are and what you believe in. And you hold on tight. Having self esteem means that you're not going to give you something that's important to you.... Just because you think someone will like you better for having changed."

George Foreman

If you take a close comparison of people with low and high self-esteem, you'll notice some differences very quickly. People with high self-esteem bounce back from setbacks, often very easily. Those with high self-esteem don't internalize problems or defeats; rather, they turn them into tools for learning and development.

The opposite is true for those with low self-esteem. People with low self esteem tend to be emotionally fragile. Conflicts and setbacks can be their unraveling, both in terms of their mental health and in the momentum of their lives. They often let setbacks become

detours away from achievement. In effect, their feelings of low self-esteem cause them to condition themselves for failure; they begin to expect failure as a destination rather than consider it an unfortunate, temporary condition.

“I learned a long time ago as a coach that you can expect great things from people who feel good about themselves. They can push themselves. They can set long term goals. They have dreams that everyone expects to be fulfilled. People with high self-esteem are risk takers, but more important, they are achievers.”

Rick Pitino

Why Low Self-Esteem

Students have low self-esteem for a variety of reasons. Some are carrying around the negative voices from their childhoods. These voices cripple their ability to perform and even to enjoy life.

In undergrad, I came across two people who, in retrospect, I came to understand had low self-esteem or, at least, self-esteem issues. For Madelyn, she had been raised by her grandparents. Her mother had had her out of wedlock while the mother was a college student. Her mother had gone on to graduate and have a career but Madelyn was raised by her grandparents from infancy to high school. In talking with Madelyn, it became clear she had a first-class chip on her shoulders. When talking about her father and her early years, a hint of resentment was clear. I tried to be understanding that her upbringing may have been painful and it influenced her behavior. Although I considered her a friend, she would periodically make verbal jabs at me and others. I usually would ignore the comments but did confront her sometimes about them.

At one job, my office nemesis, LizBeth, would take verbal potshots at me quite often to my face and to my office friends. It would range from a giggle about what I was wearing to a negative comment about an idea I had raised in a meeting. In dealing with LizBeth, at first I couldn't figure out the source of all her negativity. Then, during a business trip, LizBeth, another coworker and I were eating dinner together. LizBeth started talking about her father and quoting something he used to say to her and her siblings. Suffice to say, her dad apparently wasn't the kindest person. Her constant

criticism was just what she had learned at home and she never shed that conditioned behavior to ridicule someone else.

After that, her periodic critical volleys took on a different meaning. Her goal, no doubt, was to make me feel inferior or angry. Instead, I felt sorry for her.

Wear a Helmet

In graduate school, a fellow classmate made a clever analogy. He said, “We wear seatbelts to protect ourselves from injury when we drive; football players wear gear to protect themselves from injury when they play; we wear heavy coats to protect ourselves from the cold; but we can’t wear a helmet to protect ourselves from negative words of other people.” That is so very true. Negative words – abusive, combative, pessimistic, or condescending—have an influence on how we value ourselves.

These negative influences stay with us for years. Often, eroding over and over again our self esteem and ability to live life to the fullest. A rare few can use these negative influences to propel themselves to achieve higher levels. For the majority of us, the toxic words and attitudes of others stay with us and are corrosive to our lives.

The most damaging of these are from those closest to us. A study found that the cutting put-downs exchanged in childhood between battling siblings linger. The words and the hurt of those words stay with us through adulthood and cause the sibling relationship to be less than what it could be.

The strongest defense is self-defensive which nearly all of us are not taught. I admire Al-Anon members; these are the family members of alcoholics. Al-Anon teaches them how to deal with the behavior of alcoholics but also to deal with their own feelings about the alcoholism. They develop a mental toughness and an emotional self-defense that isn’t taught in school

Reinforce the Positive

Motivation experts tell you to concentrate on the positive before moving on to deal with the negative. Think about and put down on paper all of your accomplishments. As a freshman in college, it may not seem like you have any accomplishments but you do. You managed to graduate from high school and score high enough on standardized test scores to make it to the great halls of higher learning. If you’re sitting in your college dorm reading this, then it also means you didn’t turn chicken and run back home after being

dropped off at college. If you've ever had to juggle school and a part-time job, that's another significant accomplishment that many can't handle.

Giving your life the once over helps to build your confidence in your abilities. If you made it this far, you can endure. You do have what it takes to survive in college.

"I don't know much about anger. I'm not too acquainted with it.... You live and you die. The other things you make happen with hope."

Baseball legend Buck O'Neil

Congratulate Yourself

Praise falls seldom from our lips. If you could balance the positive words we say against the negative words we say. The scale would fall far to the right to negative words. The reasons can be innocuous in that we think others already know the positive points, but we think it's our job to point out the shortcomings (often to help improve something). Yes, it's important to give constructive criticism but praise for the sake of praise is also needed.

Periodically, congratulate yourself on an accomplishment. Some people use tangible gifts to themselves to celebrate large and small victories. It can be as simple as a treat of an ice cream cone or as large as a piece of jewelry. As a student, try the intangible rewards first. Someone I knew in undergrad would congratulate himself on tasks verbally. We were making a cake together and he said to me, "I did an excellent job on scraping the bowl. Don't you think so?" I laughed to myself about it, but that's the kind of feedback to oneself that helps build confidence and self-esteem. And yes, he did do an excellent job of scraping the bowl.

Not hearing praise or congratulations can be as damaging to the human spirit as hearing nothing but criticism. Country music legend, Patsy Cline, had just released her first album and one single hit the Top 10 quickly. As a result of this success, she was invited to be the Grand Marshall at her hometown's Fourth of July parade. The crowd along the street waved and clapped for other cars as they passed but when Cline's car passed, they suddenly went quiet and stopped waving. Cline ignored them and continued smiling and waving. But I think you can imagine how she felt inside.

When I published my first two books, I gave copies to immediate family and friends. I consider my second book, Dorm

Rooms to Boardrooms, to be a major life's accomplishment. In fact, at the time, I said to myself about the book that it was the "greatest triumph of my life to date." In giving the book to a group of family members, I had gift-wrapped the book and then handed out copies. I was expecting some surprise and, frankly, words of congratulations. Instead, there was a brief silence, then one person made a few comments about the content as he thumbed through it then the topic of conversation changed. One person in the group didn't unwrap the book for almost two months, and I doubt if she's read it to this day. That hurt.

"What it taught me is that the competition can be more connected, better looking, younger, stronger, whatever—if you bring persistence and tenacity into battle, you can win.

More than any other trait, persistence can overcome."

Political strategist James Carville on his first victory in
Esquire magazine, November 2000

New Social Structure

I think the transition to college for traditional students can be difficult because of the new peer structure. In high school, there were cliques and circles of friends with which you grew up or developed over four years of high school. You may have been a "star" in the peer structure of your high school. Now in college, it's a different story and new competition. In my freshman year, we had an orientation session in the School of Business and Industry from upperclassmen business majors. One of the students gave himself as an illustration. When he arrived his freshman year, he'd introduce himself as "I'm Carlos Mendoza. I was the valedictorian of my high school." His expectation of a response of "Wow!" didn't happen. Instead, other students would say, "Yeah, so was I!"

The good news is the new social structure at college isn't painful. It's a new competitive structure but it's fun. And it's a chance for you to grow and develop with others. Two friends from undergrad were in Navy ROTC; one friend, Pablo, said of the other, Elias, that before they became friends they would jockey against each other for the top slots in just about anything from foot race to test scores. Pablo said they finally decided they had to become friends or else they'd kill themselves trying to compete against each other.

Chapter 3

NUTS AND BOLTS

In all my years of education from public schools through my undergraduate studies and graduate study for my master's and doctorate degrees, I cannot honestly say that I ever had a teacher talk about how to study. We may have been given pointers about what to look at to prepare for an exam but I don't think the science of learning ever was discussed. Fortunately, despite not having a grasp of the art of learning, I survived.

Regrettably, students do fail. They fail assignment or courses and sometimes they wash out altogether. The reason often isn't ability. People think differently and they learn differently. You may need to adjust your learning methods to be successful in some courses or in your studies altogether.

I am the master of my fate. I am the captain of my soul.
W.C. Henley

Study Skills

Research has found that studying in long uninterrupted blocks is more effective than studying in short bursts of time. However, short burst of time can augment those long study sessions. Treat study and learning as a continuous process. Look over notes at end of day even if you'll study a few days hence. It helps to refresh the day's lecture and also with retention.

Your body posture is important for learning. I hesitate to say never, but never study lying down. Although you should be in a comfortable, relaxed position to study, lying down is too relaxed and too conducive for falling asleep. The consistent advice of cognitive scientist is to be seated comfortably, preferably at a desk. Give yourself periodic breaks to stand and stretch; this also is associated with better learning. I admire multitasking people who can read while they exercise on a stationary bike or treadmill. It's never worked for me.

Distractions should be at a minimum. Libraries are preferable to the distractions of dorm rooms. I find empty classes rooms too barren for study; I need the background buzz of libraries and the

availability of learning tools (computers, periodicals, books) to study. Periodically when working at home, I will use a foot roller to massage my feet while reading or writing.

Higher levels of alertness lead to better learning. I'm a morning person so I am at my best and do my best work in the mornings. If you're an afternoon person, e.g., at your best alertness in the afternoon. Try to study in the afternoon and not at night. No amount of caffeine at the end of the day can replace the alertness and retention that comes with studying while you're fresh.

Research has shown that moderate exercise before study helps with concentration; in fact, having a daily exercise regimen helps with concentration. I keep a hand-held weights near my desk to pump periodically during the work day. It helps to get my daily quota of exercise and also helps me focus.

Memory and Recall

Some people learn better when music is played. Before you turn on your hard rock radio station; know that this research is usually based on instrumental classical music. And not all classical music is associated with better learning. Not long ago, research suggested that environmental sounds like ocean waves or the call of whales would help with learning and relaxation.

Tutoring

Tutoring is a good idea to augment the learning process of classes. It should not be a substitute for attending classes or interacting with professors. Though rare, some students use tutoring as a substitute for dealing directly with professors.

The success of a tutoring session depends largely on you. Just as you would prepare for a class or an exam, you should prepare for a tutoring session. Read the material first. In undergrad, a friend asked me for tutoring on economics, about five minutes into the session I had to ask her if she had read the chapter. She hadn't. Her expectation, apparently, was for me to explain the material from beginning to end. It doesn't work that way.

Tutoring is not osmosis. You're not going to learn just by talking with a tutor. Go into the tutoring session prepared with questions on problem areas. If it's a session on a mathematics problem, try the problems yourself before going in. The tutor needs to know where things aren't clicking for you. (S)he can't figure that out readily without something to go on.

Focus. Focus. Focus.

Successful people have the distinctive ability to focus. At the commencement ceremony for my doctorate, the faculty and staff present surprised the University P resident, Freeman Hrabrowski, III, with serenading him with a poem then ending it with his apparently famed phrase “Focus. Focus. Focus.” Dr. Hrabrowski has had quite a life, graduating from high school at 15 then graduating from undergraduate studies at 19. I’m jealous to tell you he received his doctorate at age 23. All these accomplishments at an early age required a great deal of intellectual ability but also the ability to focus.

Tennis great Bjorn Borg won Wimbledon more times than another other man in history. In addition to a mean backhand, when he practiced, he practiced more than tennis. Borg would spend hours on concentrating. And that’s much of what it takes to succeed; one analyst noted about Biogen CEO Jim Mullen that he had the “relentless ability to focus.”

The trouble with focusing on a goal is that you can become vulnerable to single-mindedness. Success in business (and life) requires flexibility. Try to find a measured balance.

“We all have dreams. But in order to make these dreams into reality it takes an awful lot of determination, self-discipline, and effort. Sports teaches those things and others – respect of other people, and how to live with your fellow man.”

Jesse Owens

Time Management

In his 2001 book, Richard J. Light, Ph.D., a professor of Harvard Graduate School of Education said on the difference between good students and struggling students that time was the key. Light told a *Newsweek* interviewer, “Students really have to keep an eye on how they spend their time.” Light said for starters students should make a “thorough evaluation of their schedule.” Students would keep track of how they spend time on a daily basis.

“You have to be a risk-taker. You must be willing to take chances, to put yourself on the line, to throw yourself into the middle of activity. Even at the cost of people questioning you and doubting you.”

Rick Pitino

Reaching Higher Ground

In my last year of undergrad and right after graduation, I tutored elementary and middle school children. Watching children learn is interesting but what I found more interesting is how they respond to stimulus. One middle school boy, Tyrone, showed me his science project report; he did so only because he was required by the program to have their science projects reviewed.

In reading over what he had written, I thought his was one of the better ones from the students in the program but it still needed work. After I had read it, I gave it back to him and pointed out a few things that needed changing. From the way he presented it to me it seemed like he took some pride in what he had done. That small spark was all I needed.

When he gave it to me again, I read over it then said, “I see you changed x and y. This over here looks good and it’s an improvement.” Then I looked him squarely in the face and said, “It does look better but I must ask you: is this the best that you could do?”

The look on his face was priceless. A child that had never been pushed to achieve beyond mediocre was now being pushed and he was willing to be pushed. I think we all have that spark and desire to be pushed. Unfortunately, sometimes we have to do the pushing ourselves.

“You can learn a lot more about yourself when you’re on the canvas than when you’re under the klieg lights. And it’s not like you have a choice. No matter who you are, at some point, you’re going to be on the canvas.”

James Carville

The Five Percent Rule

In a work training session for “emotional intelligence,” participants were given the task of thinking about a series of tasks and then told to describe what would happen if they gave an extra five percent to that task.

Success Mantras

In a work newsletter, a long-time employee was getting ready to retire. She had started out of high school as a file clerk and had risen in 30 years to the upper levels of the professional ranks. Her key to

success was try and ask. Try for any promotion even if it's a long shot and ask herself over and over again, what she could do to improve her life.

In my most unhappy moments in life, I trained myself to ask each morning, "What can I do today to improve my life?" and then at the end of the day I force myself to think "What have I done today to improve my life?" A clever friend from undergrad pointed out very succinctly that only two people will worry about your success – you and your mother. Only you can change your life.

Life is Not a Vacuum

One of my regrets about both my undergraduate studies and my graduate studies is that I didn't get to know my classmates and professors better. I feel this acutely about my peers and teachers in graduate school. Most of us in grad school were part-time students and school was a relatively smaller part of our lives with work being the focus. As a result, we didn't participate in many campus activities. The long term result of existing in such a vacuum has become very apparent after the fact. Opportunity after opportunity for networking and brainstorming was missed.

In undergrad, I went to school with some of the top talent in the country. (That is no overstatement; during that time period Florida A&M University led the nation in recruitment of National Merit Scholars.) Regrettably, I and my classmates didn't talk openly about our goals and aspirations. In Rich Brandon and Marty Seldman's book Survival of the Savvy, the authors noted that idea people risk being underestimated and have insufficient networks. Force yourself to attend and participate in group activities. In the work that I do now, I force myself to attend receptions (which I hate) because it's a means to an end.

Brandon and Seldman's book also pointed out an interesting contrast. They suggested that a people person is vulnerable to power trips and cronyism. It's almost as if one is caught in a Catch-22 situation. Here again, balance is the key.

Relationships with professors aid in your learning process but also relationships with professors offer mentoring opportunities. Throughout undergrad and grad school, I had an advisor, at least on paper but that role was largely unfilled. A mentor is great for helping to understand the processes that go on in academics; these are the thing that exist but are not always spoken. They can also help with major life situations or decisions like changing majors or

deciding on career paths. Often times, help is freely given by faculty and staff, but you have to ask for it first.

Live in Reality

Very quickly, I have become deeply concerned about facebook and similar online personals. On the outside, they seem fairly innocuous ways of meeting people and after all we as humans are social creatures. What I think people fail to understand is that these online mediums do not offer real meaningful relationships. Moreover, they seem to enable people to indulge in fantasies. Instead of going through the give and take and joys and pains of real relationships with people face to face, facebook offer an escape from that kind of hard work. Life is work.

Talk to Me

Communication skills have become so important that it is integrated into most academic programs, formally or informally. For example for engineering students, the Center for Engineering Leadership at the University of Utah has made communication skills a required course at every level to develop student's writing, speaking, and team skills. There, a team of humanities grad students help students; they also help faculty to better integrate communication skills into the engineering curriculum.

To survive in the world, communication skills are a must. From presentation techniques and team dynamics, every successful person needs strong interpersonal skills. For those who aspire to higher levels of management, the bar is raised even higher.

One of the top reasons people are forced out of jobs or are kicked out of the limelight at work is lack of ability to deal with others. According to organizational psychologists 80 percent of organizational problems are communications. A 2002 University of Pennsylvania study found that the number one reason for senior managers to be fired was communications. In particular, respondents said the inability to develop and sustain interpersonal relations with key people was the reason the managers were shown the door. That was second only to poor financial performance.

For new hires, the need for interpersonal skills is as important. One of the weeding questions of employment interviews is on having interpersonal skills and providing customer service. As the author of a *Workforce* article put it, "new employees with great qualifications often fade so quickly is because no one has shared

with them how to play the game, how to communicate within the given culture.”

“Courage is what it takes to stand up and listen. Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.”

Winston Churchill

Nonverbal Communications

Nonverbal communications can be as important to overall communication as what is actually said. When dealing with others or trying to understand the essence of an exchange, consider the full sum of the communications. There are unexpected ways in which nonverbal communications can be misinterpreted or misunderstood.

Silence

Silence is probably one of the most misinterpreted nonverbal communications. To many, silence suggests disinterest. However, silence like other nonverbal communication means different things to different people. Some differences are cultural and others are more basic, often as basic as one’s personality.

There are many different communication styles; for each silence means something different. Silence to an internal information processor just means the person is thinking. Silence to an external information processor (one who thinks out loud) is the lack of an opinion. Don’t be quick to judge silence as having a deeper meaning.

Eye Contact

Eye contact like silence often is misinterpreted. Here again, some of the misunderstandings are cultural based and other misunderstandings come from differences in personality including how people process information. Culturally, direct eye contact is discouraged among many Asian cultures, particularly the Chinese. Similarly, direct eye contact is also discouraged across age groups (e.g., young people are discouraged from looking at elders directly in the eye) among many Latino cultures.

With differing personality types, indirect or infrequent eye contact is another human behavior which can be misinterpreted. For example, with an internal information processor, as they think they tend to look up and away. With external information

processors, they tend to continue to look directly at others as they think, often talking through their thought process.

Likewise, people with passive personalities or introverted personalities, direct eye contact can be interpreted as bullying or aggressive behavior. Those with aggressive personalities, direct eye contact is natural and expected behavior.

Sarcasm

Witty sarcasm only works on TV; many people are actually offended by sarcasm of any nature. No one likes to be the brunt of a joke. I'm amazed at the numbers of people who try to repeat behaviors or one-liners from TV in real life.

Insults

Research in 2004 found that humans derive pleasure from insults. The part of the brain associated with pleasure is stimulated when people give insults. That's a primal instinct to overcome quickly. The small amount of pleasure you gain from an insult is almost incalculable to the sum of the damage done by it. People rarely forget insults quickly and rarely fully forgive them.

Turning Up the Volume

If you're prone to shouting when under stress or in a conflict, you're setting yourself up for bigger problems. Shouting matches may occur on TV and end quickly. In reality, that is unacceptable behavior and has lasting negative impacts. Your reputation will be damaged quickly and lastingly if you shout or use profane language. More often than not, competence and ability cannot repair that kind of damage to your credibility.

Rigid Thinking or Lack of Flexibility

When asked about success, among the top traits named by professionals is flexibility. It's a good trait for office politics, communications as well as career planning. The ability to focus on a goal is necessary and essential but it goes hand in hand with the ability to adapt and be flexible for the given set of resources.

Hard work never hurt anyone. Throughout this book, I've been trying to drive home the point of focus and dedication and, essentially, hard work. Now, I'm about to tell something that may seem like a contradiction. A disproportionate amount of hard work without a balance of downtime can hurt. For students, the applications of a work-rest balance are far reaching from the juggling act that some students must perform to handle work, classes, and a social life to how to study effectively. Let's look at these separately.

Balance in Study

For study sessions, the best delivery method is a long, uninterrupted session with rest periods. A growing body of research finds that even a 15- or 20-minute break enhances the ability to learn. In fact, researchers urge a combination of read, rest, and review for effective learning.

I've been amazed at some of the stories I've been reading about engineering schools. Long hours for any major are not unusual, but I'm been dismayed at some stories. Hard work is necessary for any success. But success also has other components than technical skill or proficiency.

The effects of an imbalance of work and rest are far reaching. The health effects range from acne through biological dysfunctions. It's not a badge of courage to be all work and no play.

The problem is when it becomes excessive and obsessive. Contrary to popular belief, hard work isn't always productive; it can be counterproductive to one's health and even one's cognitive abilities.

Intimate and Sexual Behavior

In college, young adults experience new levels of freedom, including the freedom to choose sexual activity. Researchers are becoming deeply concerned about the level of risk that young adults accept in their intimate behavior. In fact, risk doesn't seem to be the appropriate word, recklessness and irresponsible are better when one looks at the statistics.

In 2005, psychology professor Elizabeth Paul, Ph.D. studied 555 undergraduates. Paul found 78 percent of students had “hooked up” or had casual sex partners. Her research found that an average student had nearly 11 hook-up partners during college. The James Madison University study found that 77 percent of women and 84 percent of men had hooked up or engaged in genital touching, oral sex or sex with a casual partner.

Now consider the data on sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infections. In the U.S., people are stricken with 15.3 million new STD cases annually. Researchers estimate that one in four Americans are infected with the virus that causes genital herpes. By one estimate, 25 percent of sexually active teens have a sexually transmitted disease. Tragically, 13 percent of new cases of HIV infections occurred in young people ages 13 to 24.

Also reflect upon the other results of reckless and irresponsible sexual behavior. Research reported in *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* found that 46 percent of women getting abortions had not used a contraceptive method in the month they conceived. The two major reasons were perceived low risk of pregnancy and concerns about contraception. To prevent a pregnancy, methods of contraception must be used consistently. The research found inconsistent contraception use was the main cause of pregnancy for 49 percent of condom users and 76 percent of oral contraceptive users.

Lastly ponder this data. A baby costs up to \$11,000 for its first year of life. A child born today will cost up to \$240,000 for the basic needs up through age 17, according to a 2004 U.S. Department of Agriculture report. That does not include college cost.

“My college roommate became pregnant. She and her boyfriend had been together sexually, maybe twice, from what I could tell from the number of times he was there at night. That’s all it took. She was going to graduate in two months and had a job waiting for her in Pennsylvania. They didn’t have plans to stay together after graduation. It was just a fling, but it resulted in a baby that had them tied to each other in one way for the rest of their lives.”

Anonymous

Here is a reality check for men. For men who want to dodge paternity claims for a baby. It’s not so easy. A paternity test can be ordered at any time until the child is 18 years old. If paternity is

established, the father is responsible for his share of child support until the child is at least 18 years old. It doesn't matter if the father or mother marries someone else nor if the parent is not working. Child support is still owed; students can owe child support. When child support is not paid, money in bank accounts, tax refunds, or wages can be seized by order of the court. Credit can be damaged as well and professional licenses and driver's licenses can be suspended.

Dealing with Stress

94 percent of students said they felt overwhelmed at some time during the year, according to the American College Health Association. The feelings of being overwhelmed can be associated with depression. In fact, an average of 16 percent of young adults is diagnosed with depression.

Depression is a chemical imbalance in the brain caused by a variety of factors including emotional trauma, an illness or a genetic predisposition. Symptoms of depression range from sleep disorders, lack of interest in hobbies and sex, feelings of helplessness or being overwhelmed, and fatigue. Fortunately, depression, particularly mild cases, responds well to anti-depressant medications on the market. Exercise and therapy are also helpful. The free or low-cost confidential counseling services that most colleges offer can direct you to treatment.

Drinking

I'm surprised by the data on drinking. An estimated 44 percent of college students who drink are considered binge drinkers. (*Psychology Today*, March/April 2005) There have been cases of binge drinking to the point of alcohol poisoning and death.

Even more concerning than the fascination with binge drinking is the behavior and vulnerability that goes with it. In one survey, 74 percent of female college students and graduates said women on spring break trips use drinking as an excuse for public displays of nudity and the like.

That's disturbing but so is the research on the relationship of binge drinking to sexual assaults. A common theme of sexual assaults is vulnerability of the victim. Intoxication makes the victim vulnerable. Intoxication also clouds judgment. Statistics show at least 45 percent of rapists were under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Nationally, three percent of women on college campuses will survive rape each year. Despite the stereotypes, most rapes (75 to 85 percent) are perpetrated by acquaintances.

Fortunately, research shows that few heavy college drinkers remain that way later in life. In March 2001, *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors* reported that fraternity and sorority members who drink heavily while in school don't tend to drink any more than ex-students after graduation.

Other Health Issues

Living in dorms and some of the environmental changes that businesses and colleges have made in response to the rising energy costs (e.g., indoor air is recirculated rather than fresh air being pumped into buildings) make conditions on campus ripe for respiratory infections. These include colds, the flu, strep throat infections and mononucleosis (mono). The very dangerous disease, bacterial meningitis, is spread by close contact including close quarters like dorm rooms.

Recommended Vaccinations for College Students

Tetanus and diphtheria boosters	HPV (for women)
Flu shot	Mumps booster
Meningitis (MCV4) vaccine	Hepatitis B

Source: media interview of Dr. Isadore Rosenfeld

I was shocked to learn that although smoking has declined among the overall U.S. population. Smoking actually has increased in the past decade among young adults between the ages of 18 and 24. By one estimate, 30 percent of college students smoke during their college years.

That's a habit to drop quickly. Fortunately, the body can correct for much of the ill effects of smoking after one quits. However, smoking does have lasting effects.

Chapter 5

THE BIG CHAIR

I've chosen an unusual title for this chapter for a reason. It seems too often, that the emphasis is put on leadership as the be-all-end-all. In fact, in reality, at some time in all likelihood, we all will lead a project but not all of us will be in long-term or permanent leadership positions. There are only so many slots to be the person who sits in the big chair, The Leader. It is equally as important and perhaps more important to be a leader without a position, a good comrade or colleague. From there, true leadership, which is practiced formally or informally, is built.

What characteristic is most important in defining a true leader?

65% integrity/morality	4% political effectiveness
16% intelligence	3% speaking ability
6% diplomatic skill	2% charisma/charm

Source: *American Demographics*, June 2004

Traits of Leaders

There has been considerable scholarship on the science of leadership. Fortunately, history has given us many good examples to study, from our political leaders to our business leaders. Research has found some common traits of those who perform well as leaders.

Leaders Have an Inquiring Mind.

Leaders ask questions and have a genuine interest in learning more. Consistently from across disciplines, leaders ask questions to gain more knowledge and understanding. Their questions are posed in such a way to express interest rather than appear as a cross examination; such inquiring minds draw people together.

“Good leaders are very curious and they spend a lot of time trying to learn things.”

Jeffrey Immelt, CEO General Electric

A sage observer once wrote “Ignorance is no crime; pride in ignorance is.” If you're not interested in what you don't know, you're in trouble.

Leaders Have Mastered the Art of Diplomacy.

Anyone who “cherishes a chance to mock the other team” is unsuitable for leadership as a journalist Hugh O’Neill put it. Within this is the ability to reason w/ others especially others of differing points of view.

“Leaders have to be very self-aware. They have to understand their flaws, their own behavior, and the impact they have on others.”

Terri Kelly CEO W.L. Gore and Associates

Leaders Know and Interact with a Variety of People.

I have read several biographies and listened to or read several interviews of famed leaders from former presidents through religious leaders. One of the most wily politicians and leaders of U.S. politics, Bill Clinton, was asked by a British college student at his London book signing for tips on how to succeed in politics. Clinton told him simply, “get to know a lot of different people.” The student later told a reporter he was underwhelmed by the advice.

Think about it for a moment; leaders must successfully interact and negotiate with individuals and representatives of groups. It’s far easier to negotiate and/or persuade others if you know them and understand their points of view or concerns. People cooperate more readily when they believe that their needs are being considered.

Leaders Use Power Correctly and Efficiently.

Leaders use power for the sake of change not for the sake of power. As Martin Luther King, Jr. observed to civil rights leaders assembled for strategy that it’s okay to want to be a leader and enjoy the spoils of respect but first a leader must “be a servant of the people.” There is a difference between power and authority.

“Leaders also encourage creativity when they take the sting out of failure. In creative groups, failure is regarded as a learning experience, not a pretext for punishment. Creativity inevitably involves taking risks, and in Great Groups, it is understood that the risk taker will sometimes stumble.”

Warren Bennis, Author

Organizing Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration

Leaders Can Move Mountains with Their Words.

There have been few successful or memorable leaders in recent history that couldn't give a good speech. Some of the most memorable leaders are best known for their speeches. The speeches tended to touch the imaginations of their listeners. In fact, the research of Ronald Riggio, Ph.D, professor of leadership and organizational psychology at Claremont McKenna College found that memorable leaders give speeches rich in imagery. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech and speeches by charismatic presidents like Franklin D. Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan, and Abraham Lincoln used twice as many metaphors in inaugural address as uncharismatic presidents.

"If you start yelling and becoming obtrusive and 'bebopping' around you give the impression of insecurity and that becomes infectious."

Clint Eastwood on being a film director

Leaders Touch Hearts (and Egos).

I have a theory on who succeeds in the life. I think there are two kinds of successful people who are actually nearly polar opposites of each other. From all the jobs I had, the leaders on TV, and leaders on campus, two personalities stick out in the respective leaders.

They are either bullies or "snake charmers" as I call them. Bullies get ahead by elbowing their way to the top. They usually don't engage in unethical behavior but they often engage in controlling, manipulative or combative behavior to which others will concede rather than deal with the unpleasantness. Bullies exist in social organizations and workplaces from fraternities to medical offices. Their aggressive behavior may have been tolerated in the past; however, the American society is changing and the tables are turning on bullies.

With snake charmers, it's delightful to be around them. They exhibit high amounts of self-control either in how they present themselves to others or in how they manage themselves in interactions. By virtue of their charismatic personalities, they can bring out the best in others. On one such snake charmer, an observer wrote, "he had the distinctive ability to make each person

feel like the most important person in the world, even if it was for a few seconds.”

If snake charmers are angry, they don't show it readily. They never shout; profanity is unheard of. They're fun to be around even when working on or talking about otherwise dull topics. Generally, snake charmers are good listeners, but also talkers who ask well-timed questions.

Leadership Lessons

In public opinions on who we respect, the people consistently ranked at the top as being the most respected in life or in death are the U.S. presidents and peacemakers. Among these two groups are some tremendous lessons in leadership. The presidents and well-known peacemakers like Mother Teresa, the Dalai Lama and Martin Luther King, Jr. have exhibited the traits of great leaders that have been mentioned so far. Let's consider their lives and actions more closely.

Leadership Lessons from the Oval Office

The presidents are among the best examples to highlight leadership issues. The presidents have had varying levels of talents and abilities but the nation (and the world) has looked to the Oval Office for guidance. If you want to learn about leadership, look at the leaders of millions and how they handle problems and crises.

Team Skills

The most successful people in life navigate among differing personalities and disciplines with skill. If you're the team leader, you're also a bit of an acrobat. Your job is to pull people together, juggle differing perspectives and agendas, pull out the talents of team members, balance options and advice, and pull together a product. It sounds easier than it is.

Success Skills for Team Members

Most books on teams emphasize the role of the team leader. In life, you're more likely to be a team member than a team leader. It's important to be successful in either role.

Team work can be frustrating. On reforming the United Nations, Secretary-General Kofi Annan was asked why it was taking so long since it only took God six days to create the Earth. His reply was tongue-in-cheek, “God had the luxury of working alone.”

Leadership Lessons from the Oval Office: Harry S. Truman

- **Know that there are consequences and never lose your humanity.** War is the great ultimate. After war, there are consequences. After World War II, there was peace, but with it was terrible hunger in Europe, particularly in Germany. Many allies were reluctant to help the German survivors after four bloody years of war with 53 million dead including nine million in the Holocaust. Truman knew poverty breeds violence. He took the high ground and promoted the Marshall Plan.
- **Listen to your gut.** Truman ignored the polls and did what he thought was right. In his election bid, he trailed Dewey in all polls even up to that election night. The *Chicago Tribune* famously declared Dewey the winner. Truman kept campaigning right up to election night.
- **Share information.** Unlike FDR, Truman made a point of sharing information with others including his successor. Truman didn't know about the atomic bomb until after FDR's death.
- **Stay grounded and humble.** In his autobiography, Truman candidly said one day while being served breakfast at the White House he realized his every whim was being met readily by a staff of workers. Instead of pumping up his ego, he thought to himself "how did a guy from Missouri end up here?"
- **Take a stand.** When communist North Korea invaded South Korea, people were weary of war. Few allies had the resources to help. Instead of looking the other way, Truman took a stand and did so in an unpopular situation. Likewise, he took a stand with the Soviet Union over Berlin. Instead of turning a blind eye on the wrongdoing of an "ally," Truman chose to intervene. His response was measured but effective. The goal was accomplished without force but with embarrassment. The Berlin airlift saved thousands of lives and prevented a confrontation with Russia. Ultimately, the Soviet Union gave up in embarrassment.

Pulling together multiple people, egos, agendas, perspectives, talents, and needs into a final product tests the mettle of the strongest person. Under the worst situations, teams are ripe for frustration and can easily dissolve into negativity. As Phil Dusenberry put it in a *Fast Company* (September 2005) piece, “Complaining deflates morale, makes you look weak, and creates an environment that breeds negativity like a contagion.”

Recognize People Communicate Differently.

Silence is neither good nor bad if it means people are thinking. If you or others are silent because you’re afraid to speak for fear of ridicule or worse, the team dynamic is all wrong.

Know that People Think Differently.

Allow people time to think ideas over. If you present a new concept, pause and give it time to sink in. See questions as opportunities to advocate position and to clarify ideas. Never take questions as challenges to your idea.

Use Team Etiquette.

Never interrupt people when they are speaking. You can correct errors after they have finished. Consensus work is not survival of the fittest. The loudest voice should never win; for that matter, there’s something very wrong if there are loud voices or shouting matches. If you’re passionate about something, turn down the volume and turn up the persuasion. The most persuasive argument is one which couples reason with fact.

Tips on Brainstorming.

Brainstorming is only as good as the participants’ willingness to contribute. Focus on getting ideas down but not on the quality of ideas. Don’t slow down the process commenting on an idea or asking questions about it. The group will edit the list later and you can ask clarifying questions later.

Tips on Leading Teams

Go easy on talking.

Your initial role in forming a team will be to communicate the goal and your vision on meeting the goal. Vision gives team

members direction and confidence. From there, let the focus be on the ideas of others.

In becoming a leader, practice listening. Actively listen to others; give nonverbal feedback that you're interested and following the other person's point (nods, facial expressions, etc).

Watch the amount you say also. In early 2005, I was invited to participate in a career talk at my alma mater. The students were all graduate students. One of the guest speakers was a Ph.D. candidate from another university on the West Coast and the vice president of a national student organization. During the break out sessions, the visiting Ph.D. candidate was part of my group. The first thing that struck me about her was that she spoke too fast and too much. I don't think she even stopped to catch her breath. I overheard her talking to one student at a mile a minute and a good 10 minutes later she still hadn't stopped talking. It was exhausting to overhear her and even less desirable to want to talk to her one on one. Although she was doing what good leaders should do, talking about the other person not herself, she was dominating the conversation.

In the classroom and later in life on the job, people will look for clues about your personality. One of the first clues comes from talking to you. Be mentally in control of the context and amount you say. I've noticed this with male and female college students. The notion that sound travels doesn't seem to occur to many. Discretion in public conversations is a distant concept to many.

Express appreciation for others.

Nothing will be accomplished without the cooperation of team members. People are less likely to cooperate if they think they're being used or if they feel unappreciated.

*“Compliment teammates. Talk up their accomplishments.
And if you are the leader, take the blame but never the credit.
Do this, and your team will always fight for you.”*

John C Maxwell, author
The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork

Reward team members.

If you want good workers to continue at maximum performance, you have to reward them when they perform. In business, good work is rewarded with monetary and nonmonetary awards. In college, you're limited to nonmonetary awards like

certificates of appreciation, plaques. Research has found that what is most important to the recipient is recognition and appreciation. Often how it is shown is less important. So, if it's a certificate of appreciation or a trophy, issue it with a heart-felt statement of appreciation. Always, and, most importantly, give a sincere "thank you." I'm most impressed by leaders who can make the smallest task and the person who did it seem like (and feel like) the most important job and person in the world.

Watch favoritism.

This can be with rewards like performance awards but also the reward of recognition including recognition as small as saying, "Good idea." All players have a place where they add the most value. Strong players are needed, but don't forget the value of weaker members (better read, developing talent). As author John Maxwell put it, "A great starter alone is simply not enough if a team wants to go to the highest level. Any team that wants to excel must have good substitutes as well as starters."

Accountability is important.

People need to know what they are responsible for. A common mistake is thinking everyone is responsible for the whole project. That may sound like a good bonding principle but instead it can lead to divisiveness and resentment. Hold people accountable for their actions and their actions alone. The project may be a group project but members should be accountable for their contribution. The real person responsible for the whole project is you, the team leader.

Deemphasize self.

The best teams can move without the team leader. Empower people to make routine decisions. If the team can't hold a meeting without you, something is wrong.