

Paths That Prepare You for Your Future

By Leah Barton
Church Magazines

I don't think it's any 14-year-old girl's dream to find herself in a dusty barn, hoisting a rusty shovel, cleaning out a smelly horse stall. But there I was after school every day until I was old enough to get a different job.

It definitely wasn't my ideal situation to work during high school, but I understood then that if I ever wanted a job I actually liked—one that didn't involve cleaning up after animals—I needed college, and to go to college, I needed money. I knew that for me, education was the right step toward a (hopefully) fulfilling career.

The nice thing is that the path I chose is just one of several that can help you learn to work and provide for your own needs. This is called becoming temporally and spiritually self-reliant. As you consider your options, try to choose the path that you feel will best prepare you.

These stories are from people who were your age just a few years ago. By following the examples of these young adults, you can find your own path toward successful self-reliance.



CONSIDER THE NEEDS AROUND YOU

By Oudom Piseth, Cambodia

In order to achieve my goals, I always tell myself that working hard is very important, but another way to excel is by working smart. After my mission in England, I returned to Cambodia and looked at the job market. I looked at things like the length of training to get each job and the cost of training.

I found that the training program to be a clothing merchandiser is short but challenging, and not many people were doing it. I saw it was a good opportunity and decided to take it. I have now finished the program and am working as a merchandiser for a clothing company.

Finding the right career can be very hard, but I have the Savior to help me and lift me up.

Whether you go to college, seek employment, or learn a trade, you are developing an attribute that is essential for building the kingdom of God.

USE EDUCATION TO OPEN DOORS

By *Iolanda Teixeira, Cape Verde, Africa*

My mom always encouraged me with the phrase, “Education is the key to success.” I wanted a better future for myself and especially for my family, and to do this, I needed to continue my education. Without the money to go to college at the time, I applied for a scholarship to attend a vocational school to study computer systems and maintenance.

Throughout my studies I faced various challenges, but this did not stop me from moving forward with eyes fixed on better days. Prayer helped me a lot; I always seek counsel from the Lord. I have always been committed to my studies, and today I remain committed to my work, giving my best as a computer technician and a marketing assistant.



BACKGROUND IMAGES BY JOSH TALBOT; INSETS BY GETTY IMAGES

WORK NOW TOWARD THE FUTURE YOU WANT

By Ann-Sophie and Laurence Cavin, Scotland, UK

Ann-Sophie: I always wanted to study at a university, but my plans about what to study changed a lot during my teenage years. After finishing high school, I volunteered in a hospital for six months. Since then I loved the idea of being a nurse, but I didn't think I would be able to do it.

In my ward's self-reliance class, we were asked to pick a job we would like to have even though we might not have the qualifications.

I prayed about what to do, and nursing kept coming into my mind. I decided to follow the promptings of the Lord.

Pursuing this path hasn't been easy. To get started, I researched the nursing program and what it would take for me to study. I talked to people who went through a similar process. The first time I applied to the nursing program, I was put on the waiting list. But I didn't give up; I applied again and eventually got in. Sometimes you have to be patient and trust in the Lord as He has His own plan for you.



Laurence: When I was younger, I set a goal to be the best I could be no matter what subject I studied or what job I had. I always tried to learn and improve to give myself the best chance for success.

I currently work as a manager for a clothing company, but I want to join the police force. In Scotland, you have to live in the country for three consecutive years before applying for the police. Since I was outside the country for two years serving a mission, I have to wait a few more months before joining.

Although this has been a big roadblock, I haven't given up. I have a good job to provide for my family, and I have worked hard to make sure I get a good reference for future jobs.



DISCOVERING YOUR PATH

Like these young adults, you will find that various paths can prepare you to take care of yourself and your future family. With that goal in mind, you can plan for success. Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, “Let us do the best we can and cultivate a reputation for excellence in all that we do. Let us set our minds and bodies to the glorious opportunity for work that each new day presents” (“Two Principles for Any Economy,” Oct. 2009 general conference). As you focus now on learning and working, you will create habits that will help you feel more confident about the future. ■

Editors' note: Consider asking your bishop to introduce you to the self-reliance specialists in your stake. They can help you discover possibilities for your future education and work.

1.

KNOW YOURSELF

What are you good at? What do you enjoy doing? Answering these questions can help you identify a potential career that fits any skills, interests, and talents you already have.

HINT: Consider asking your parents, teachers, and friends what talents they see in you. You might be surprised at what they say!

2.

KNOW THE WORLD AROUND YOU

What jobs are in demand where you live? Which companies are hiring? It's wise to pick a career path in an area that is growing and will likely have opportunities in the future.

HINT: Colleges, universities, or trade schools often know what skills are in demand and what industries are growing.

3.

KNOW WHAT YOU NEED TO DO NEXT

What preparation is required for the job you want? Where will you get the training and education you need? How will you pay for it? In order to achieve a long-term career goal, you'll need to know how to get there.

HINT: Consider talking to someone who is already doing what you want to do. Ask them questions. Most people enjoy giving advice and offering suggestions.