

GOING SOMEWHERE?

BY RILEY M. LORIMER

If you want a rewarding future, get an education!

How many times in your life have you been asked, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” As a child you could have replied with anything from “A veterinarian” to “I’m going to be the first person to set foot on Pluto,” and people would have smiled and said how bright you were. Now that you’re a bit older and the “growing up” part of the question is quickly approaching, Pluto is probably drifting further from your mind, and your real future may seem more important than ever. Because before you can blast off for any future, you need fuel in your rocket. And the fuel that will take you to your dreams faster than the speed of light is education.

President Hinckley has said, “The Lord wants you to educate your minds and hands, whatever your chosen field. Whether it be repairing refrigerators, or the work of a skilled surgeon, you must train yourselves. Seek for the best schooling available. Become a workman of integrity in the world that lies ahead of you” (“A Prophet’s Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” *New Era*, Jan. 2001, 10).

There are many different ways to pursue education. And as President Hinckley said, all worthy forms of education are valuable. Your future is incredibly important—to you and to the Lord—so consider carefully what path you might pursue. But don’t worry! Choosing a way to continue your education doesn’t have to be a stressful or frightening process. Consider your choice prayerfully and do some research on what options are available to you. Three relatively common paths are: (1) college education, (2) vocational training, and (3) apprentice-



ships and internships. Take a look at a couple of LDS youths who have chosen these routes. Perhaps their experiences will help you to make some decisions of your own.

College: A Major Decision

For Chelsea Baugh, going to college was never really a question. “Education has always been important in my home,” she says. “My parents have encouraged college since we were toddlers.” So from the time she learned what college was, Chelsea worked hard to achieve her dream of attending a university.

Now a student in a four-year university undergraduate program, Chelsea is realizing that the hard work has just begun. Between classes, homework, friends, and the LDS institute of religion council (of which she is the youngest member), she is busy all the time. But Chelsea loves her college experience and is excited about the education she is receiving. “Education is important because even if you don’t get a job—if you decide to be a stay-at-home mom for example—you’re going to use your education in every aspect of your life.”

Life in college has been challenging at times. At one point, Chelsea decided to change her major, which can be a frightening choice because it will affect your entire future. “My decision involved a lot of pondering, a lot of thinking about what I wanted in life, and a lot of praying,” she says.

If you’re planning on going to college, Chelsea has some good advice: “Plan early. Start disciplining yourself in junior high school to study. Get involved in high



school with athletics, clubs, friends—whatever you're interested in. And take seminary and gain a testimony of it so that when you go to college you'll have a desire to go to institute. That gospel learning will help you keep your life in balance."

Vocational Education: A Practical Approach

Somner Price had always known that he wanted to spend his life in a profession where he could help people. He thought about becoming a doctor but wasn't sure that the years of schooling required were for him. So when Somner, who is now 18, learned that his high school offered the option of taking vocational education courses in nursing at a local applied technology college, he jumped at the chance.

For his entire senior year, Somner spent his mornings in regular classes at his high school and his afternoons at an applied technology college. Some days on the road to becoming a certified nursing assistant (CNA) were more fun than others, and it certainly wasn't all easy. Somner did his clinical practice work in a nursing home for elderly people. His duties included feeding, bathing, and taking the blood pressure of the patients. And while it was sometimes difficult, he found it very rewarding. "I decided to be a nurse because I wanted to help people," he says. "And I felt like I was doing that."

In addition to the blessings of serving others, Somner sees very practical benefits to his decision—when he graduated

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For his entire senior year, Somner Price (right) spent his mornings in regular classes at his high school and his afternoons at an applied technology college.

In addition to her painting, Ellesse Sorbonne (opposite page), seated next to her self-portrait, is now pursuing an interest in photography through an internship with a portrait studio in her hometown.



from high school, he left with a diploma and the certificate of a nursing assistant. "I feel like my vocational training has put me a step ahead. Now when I come home from my mission, I'll be able to start into the next levels of nursing with some experience."

Vocational education and applied technology will give you training in a particular profession, and nursing certainly isn't the only option available. Computer technology, media design, cosmetology, auto mechanics, and welding are just a few of the professions that you can pursue through vocational education.

Somner's advice for choosing an educational route? "Make it something you know you'll enjoy and something that fits your personality. I talked to my parents and other people I trusted, and they all had good advice. Just do what you love. Do what you're good at."

Apprenticeships and Internships: Learning on the Job

Doodles covered every scrap of paper in the Sorbonne home from the time Ellesse, now 20, could hold a crayon. Recognizing her talent, Ellesse's parents enrolled her in art lessons at age five, and she began to develop her skills in drawing and painting. During junior high, Ellesse began her first apprenticeship as a painter, and that's where her real education began.

"I remember the first time I went to my teacher's studio," she recalls. "He told me I needed to start to relearn how to draw, and I was a little offended because I felt like I had been studying art forever. But actually, I could never be more grateful for that. Having to go back to the basics was very humbling. The experience was so good for me."

Eventually, Ellesse left that studio and went on to apprentice with another painter.





Her experience there proved equally valuable. She came to appreciate the value of watching a master at work. Her new teacher, who is also a member of the Church, helped her to recognize the source of true beauty. “Everything he taught me was an acknowledgement of truth and beauty and how that’s not just within us. It’s from a greater source—from the Greatest Master.”

In addition to her painting, Ellesse is now pursuing an interest in photography through an internship with a portrait studio in her hometown. As evidenced by Ellesse’s experience, apprenticeships and internships are available in a very broad range of fields. Apprenticeships and internships are often part of a school program to enhance in-class learning. They can take place in your hometown or halfway around the world, and you can gain experience in teaching, public affairs, carpentry, journalism, fashion design, and accounting, just to name a few of the choices.

“Anyone who has the opportunity to apprentice or intern should go for it,” says Ellesse. “There’s so much you learn from doing and observing that you can’t get from books.”

It’s Your Future—Be Smart

However you choose to pursue your education, be certain that you are always learning. Study the scriptures and the words of the prophets. The Lord also tells us to study “things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms” (D&C 88:79).

And if you’re not sure yet what you want to do, don’t worry. “Take whatever you’ve been given and learn more about it, because the intelligence you gain will take you places,” says Ellesse.

Counsel with the Lord and with your parents, and you will be guided in the right path. Take advantage of every opportunity to educate yourself. Reach for your dreams and believe in yourself, and who knows? Maybe one day you’ll get to Pluto. **NE**

Where is your education going? Find helpful resources at www.besmart.com.