

Making Your
Young Adult Years

Productive

**You can succeed in
your young adult
years as you become
more independent,
work on your
education, and make
important decisions.**

By Garth A. Hanson

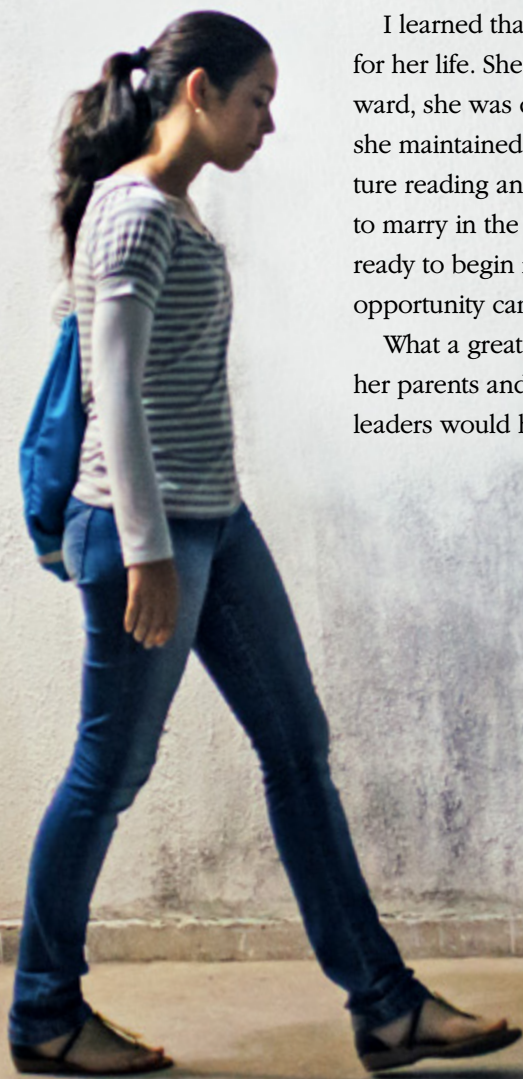
Marilyn, a second-year university student, moved into my singles ward just as I was called to be the bishop. She asked for an appointment to meet with me in my first week there. She was so excited when she came to see me. She bounced into my office with a smile as big as one can have. We greeted each other and sat down.

I learned that she had a direction for her life. She was active in the ward, she was dedicated at school, she maintained her personal scripture reading and prayer, she wanted to marry in the temple, and she was ready to begin married life when the opportunity came along.

What a great interview! I knew her parents and Young Women leaders would have been proud.

She really glowed.

Marilyn is one of many young single adults I have worked with over the years. I have taught at four universities, served as a mission president, and served at the Provo Missionary Training Center. I know this about young adults: You are important to the Church, and the Lord has a plan for your life. He has provided all that you need to make good things happen, but you have to do your part. He expects you to be prepared for important decisions. And you can consult Heavenly Father so He can help you make the right decisions. He knows your name, He knows your needs, and He wants what is best for you. But you must do the necessary things to be able to receive His loving guidance.





As a young single adult, you are more independent and have fewer people to help you make decisions. You are a family of one. You have access to support and encouragement, but you make your own decisions—critical decisions, such as education, career, lifestyle, marriage, and Church activity. The Lord expects you to be able to find and weigh options and to make good, gospel-centered decisions.

Seven Suggestions for Successful Young Adult Years

1. Realize that you are somewhat on your own as you leave your parents' nest. Your relationships with your parents are not the same now as they were. Do what you can to keep those relationships but also maintain your independence. You may not be able to please them with all of your decisions, but you are moving toward your own marriage and family, and you will do the best you can.

2. Grow personally. Establish a personal routine that includes daily prayer and scripture study, weekly church attendance, and regular attention to your physical fitness and personal appearance. If possible, regular temple attendance should be a part of this plan.

3. Be active in your ward or branch. Get to know the leaders, make yourself available for callings, and attend activities. Your bishop would love it if you asked for an initial interview when you're new in the ward. Then stay in touch with your leaders.

4. Develop your own personal "board of directors." Find people who know you and can counsel you on important matters. Your parents and a significant Church leader should be members of that board. A good friend, an educator, and a professional person who works in an area of your interest could round out that board. The board never meets together, but you talk with them as needed. Counsel with them and seriously consider what they say.

5. Develop a one-year, three-year, and five-year plan. Counsel with members

of your personal board of directors about your plan. Follow that plan and adjust it as necessary. Make good things happen. Be someone who is going somewhere.

6. Make formal education and financial independence part of that plan. Select an area of interest and make progress toward an educational goal. Time is important, and there is urgency in getting your life put together. You can do this.

7. Be active in finding a spouse. Men especially could set up a plan to have a date every week. Most of the dates need to be in twosomes rather than in groups. Sometimes marriage comes later. Develop a healthy attitude, and do not suffer internally by feeling you are flawed. You are a child of God. Push on with a productive life.

FIVE-YEAR PLAN
THREE-YEAR PLAN
ONE-YEAR PLAN



Developing Independence

I am impressed with the Lord's plan. He has seen to it that most children have solid support from birth to the age of maturity, about age 18. Most youth have parents, teachers, Church leaders, relatives, and friends who help discuss their options. They are often corrected or supported as important decisions are made.

As a young single adult, however, you are more independent and have fewer people to help you make decisions. You are a family of one. You have access to support and encouragement, but you make your own decisions—critical decisions, such as education, career, lifestyle, marriage, and Church activity. The Lord expects you to be able to find and weigh options and to make good, gospel-centered decisions.

Jane was a 20-year-old woman in the ward where I served as bishop. I received a phone call at 5:00 one morning from Jane's mother. She was angry and almost shouted at me: "It is your responsibility to keep Jane away from Sam. She is getting too serious with him, and she has to finish college [in three years] before she gets married. You keep those two apart!"

Jane and Sam (names have been changed) had dated for several months. Sam was a returned missionary doing all the right things. I would

have been very pleased to have my daughter consider marriage with a young man like Sam.

I told Jane's mother I would look into it. When I told Jane of the call, she was upset but gained control, and we talked. She decided to visit her mom soon and share her plans. In a spirit of fasting and prayer, she would explain to her mom that Sam was a viable option for marriage.

She did this, and Jane and Sam were married a few months later. Sam became a great friend to Jane's mother.

Jane made this decision for herself as she relied on Heavenly Father and personal revelation. She was active in the Church and had been careful in her interaction with Sam. She was ready for marriage. She did need, however, to keep her parents informed and work through her mother's concerns.

Success Takes Effort

In summary, here's what I've learned from the hundreds of young adults I've known: Those who handle decisions best are those who make activity in the Church a significant part of their lives. They are either supporting themselves financially or making significant contributions toward their financial independence. They have a healthy personal life, which often includes a job and education.

Don't feel alone when making decisions. You have resources in friends, parents, Church leaders, counselors, and associates, but remember that none of these people can make your decisions. The final decision belongs to you—after making it a matter of prayer (see D&C 9:8–9).

The young single adult years are important years. They can be fun and pleasant, but they should include much purposeful activity that involves study, work, and service, which can also be enjoyable. There is some urgency in finding a spouse and in being actively involved in education and church.

Brother Tad R. Callister, Sunday School general president, told this story about finding a spouse. His mother had overheard his prayers one night. "When I finished, she said, 'Tad, are you asking the Lord to help you find a good wife?' . . . I replied, 'No,' to which she responded, 'Well, you should, Son; it will be the most important decision you will ever make.'¹ That sounds like excellent advice.

Making progress through your young adult years takes a constructive effort but is manageable. As you make the effort, you will be greatly blessed. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. Tad R. Callister, "Parents: The Prime Gospel Teachers of Their Children," *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 33.