

**Special Issue: Careers**

**The Treasure You Will Take With You**

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*Learning is the first step in helping you fill many shoes in life.*

Ardeth G. Kapp, "The Treasure You Will Take with You," *New Era*, Jan.–Feb. 1985, 9

Her life-long dream had turned into what now seemed like a nightmare. During the long, hot summer days of picking potatoes and cucumbers, Alice had envisioned herself walking across the campus as a student at BYU. It was the goal that had kept her going when she would otherwise have given up.

Her determination had brought her to BYU for fall semester. And now the frustration, the pressure, the anguish that she faced seemed more like a nightmare than a reward for such effort.

She hadn't planned it this way. In fact, after arriving she had hardly planned at all.

Alice was one of the students in my class. Somehow she hadn't realized the big difference between going to school and learning.

Alice found the social side of college life more enticing than studying and learning. The urgency of preparing for her final exams hit her only after the opportunity for preparation had almost passed. It all seemed like a nightmare now. She must not fail, but she was unprepared. She had not committed herself to an education; she was just going to school.

She remembered people often asking her back home, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Growing up had seemed so far away until this day. Now she was searching for the answer to that question, not for them but for herself. What did she want to do with her life and how did an education fit in?

We must all face that question eventually if we are to be responsible for our lives.

When you find the answer, you'll have a sense of what you want to learn or what kind of job you may someday have or how you can become a better mother and wife, because of your education. You'll catch a glimpse of a bigger picture—a purpose, a destination, a course of action for this life that determines what you can become through the eternities. It's when you catch even a glimpse of the excitement, the benefits, the opportunities, the richness of life that an education can provide, that the discipline required to study becomes a small price to pay.

With your eye toward eternity, education is the treasure you will take with you and give you so much the advantage in the world to come (see **D&C 130:18–19**). And for today, it opens doors to opportunities that would otherwise be closed tight. Nephi writes, “To be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God” (**2 Ne. 9:29**). If we lack wisdom we are to ask, and when we seek diligently we will know the truth. And the truth shall make us free (see **John 8:32**)—free to make wise choices; free to experience life with ever-changing, wonderful, new horizons; free to speak up and speak out for what’s right; free to influence those who are seeking truth; free to prepare in the time of youth for a rich and rewarding lifetime; free to hold on to the love of learning your whole life long making every day more zestful.

Sister Camilla Kimball said, “What we must be concerned with is preparation for life, and that preparation is continuing education. Whether it is to earn a living or to rear a family, men and women both need to have the knowledge that enhances their natural talents” (address at Spencer W. Kimball Tower dedication, Brigham Young University, 9 Mar. 1982). Preparation for life is for young women who marry and those who may never marry. It’s for women who will have children to help educate and others who will not. It’s for women who will need to support themselves and their children at some time in their lives.

For some of us, this may mean going to college or a trade school. To others, it may mean home study. To all of us, it means looking at the long-term goal of making education a lifelong process, not just a two- or four-year event after high school called “higher education.”

One might ask, does pursuing an education contradict our goal to marry and have a family? Definitely not! We need to be educated for our families as well as ourselves!

With all the contradiction and confusing voices, we are going to need our own clear direction more than ever before. A young woman should always keep the goal of marriage and family foremost in the choices she makes. But she must also be prepared for other rich and wonderful experiences in building the kingdom.

A woman who is now a mother of 11 children, dreamed in college of the lights of the stage, while taking classes in philosophy, economics, and political science and majoring in theater. Now she’s on her own stage performing magnificently well. She has chosen to enrich, protect, and guard the home. This past summer she and another Mormon woman ran a campaign from their homes and were elected as two of four delegates to help choose a new leader for a political party. These same women later organized a rally in the city park on an issue they felt strongly would negatively affect life in their province in Canada.

I asked this sister how she manages to be so influential. “You have to know parliamentary procedure in public meetings,” she replied. “If you do, you can safeguard democracy and your home by using the rules effectively.”

“When and where does one learn these rules?” I asked.

She laughed and said, “Last night at supper, it went like this.”

Sarah: “Honorable chairman, the soup is good.”

Chairman: “Can I have a motion to that effect?”

Sharon: “I move that we go on record stating the soup is good.”

Chairman: “Could I have a second?” Seconded. “Any discussion?”

Amy: “It’s too spicy.”

Chairman: “We will proceed to vote.”

The results of the dinner: The soup passed. The jam passed unanimously. And the motion in favor of the water was tabled for another time pending further investigation.

A mother who is well educated can help instill that same enthusiasm for learning in her children.

Classes in home economics and child development and family relations can help strengthen our future families. And so can teaching and nursing, law and debate, political science, engineering, medicine, history, communications, and even statistics!

The question has been asked, if a woman is trained in such broad areas, will she be lured away from the home? In many ways, her education can strengthen her home. Down the road, higher education may give her *more* opportunity to be with her family, to set her own working hours, to have the know-how to go into business, to prepare her to meet the economic needs of her family if she must become the provider. Knowledge and intelligence are tools that can be used in righteousness or unrighteousness. Proper use can help us better protect and guard our homes.

Those who have a choice will be found protecting and guarding their families on the home front by the hearth. Others will be in foreign fields on occasion, working to keep the enemy away from our doors. Those fields may include participation in the PTA, in political parties, in civic organizations, and in various professions. Whether we are married or unmarried, with many children or none, education is important and is available right within the walls of our homes. No one needs to be deprived. We need to educate ourselves and prepare to defend our values and be a strong influence for righteousness.

When Queen Esther of the Old Testament was placed in the position to save the Jews in Persia from being put to death by appealing to her husband the king, her uncle Mordecai said to her, “Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as

this?” (**Esth. 4:14**). Just as Esther was in the palace of the king to help her people, you have important things to accomplish, many of them established before you came to this earth.

President George Q. Cannon wrote, “God has chosen us out of the world and has given us a great mission. I do not entertain a doubt myself but that we were selected and fore-ordained for the mission before the world was, that we had our parts allotted to us in this mortal state of existence as our Savior had His assigned to Him” (*Gospel Truth*, comp. Jerreld L. Newquist, Salt Lake City: Zion’s Book Store, 1957, 1:22).

As you seek to know the Lord’s will and choose to carry it out, he will be there to guide you, to love you, to watch over you, to help you progress and learn. And because of your much learning, there will be many opportunities when your influence, your wisdom, your voice, and your vote will make the difference—not on whether the soup passes, but whether righteousness is defended.

What you become when you grow up will be what you prepare for now.

*Gospel topics: education, employment, self-reliance, women*

[illustrations] Illustrated by Beth Whittaker

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