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## Some Lessons for Success and Progress of Success of a Graduate

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First of all I take this opportunity to thank the Vice Chancellor, Dean, Heads and Members of the Board of the Faculty of Management Studies of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura for inviting me to deliver the 2018 Convocation address for the Third Session at this memorable and prestigious event. It is a privilege for me to share some thoughts with you, on this vital occasion in your lives, wherein you are assembled, after several years of strenuous studies, to secure your degree. Let me congratulate all the graduates! To secure a Degree from a recognized state university, particularly a BSc Business Administration from USJ, is a great achievement in one's life.

Rather than making a more sophisticated and scholastic address about a selected topic I decided to do this convocation address with regard to some lessons learnt from my own experience, vicarious experience, and my reading and research which will be useful for the current graduates who are here in front of me. Alternatively these lessons can be perceived as requirements for or principles of success and progress of success of a graduate.

### **Lesson Number 1 - Believe that Attitude is a Major Factor that Makes the Difference between being Successful and being Unsuccessful**

Right attitude means appropriate beliefs (cognitive), feelings (affective) and intention to behave (behavioural) with regard to the field you have selected or you have been fallen. It does not matter whatever the field of your interest is. What matters is that you should have a right attitude about the field. Right attitude involves positive thinking too which refers to perceiving your life positively, perceiving your future optimistically and having favourable self-concept (your evaluation about yourself, linked with self esteem). Think that you CAN do. Think that you can SUCCEED. You should not have doubts about your life, and the field you have selected or you have to be in. Think that there were people who had been highly successful in the field and therefore it is POSSIBLE for you also. Think optimistically about yourself, the future and the world.

Your attitude about life matters significantly. Life is not a great tragedy. It is a great natural gift and indeed it is the greatest opportunity you got to work, contribute, make a significant positive impact, and enjoy. If life has many problems, believe that there are solutions for all problems. If life is a mystery, it is possible to discover. If life is a spirit, it is possible to realize it. Of course life is a journey, and you are supposed to complete it.

## **Lesson Number 2 - Be an Internal (a Person With Internal Locus of Control rather than an External (a Person with External Locus of Control).**

Locus of control is the extent to which an individual believes that his or her actions determine his or her outcomes obtained in life (success, job performance, achievement of a qualification, getting promoted etc.). It is possible to classify individuals into two main categories, i.e., internals (individuals with internal Locus of control) and externals (individuals with external locus of control). Internal locus of control is possessed by an individual who believes that he or she controls his or her destiny (what happens to him or her in life). External locus of control is possessed by an individual who believes that other factors (other people, situations, luck etc.) determine his or her destiny. If you believe that your behaviour determines everything that happens to you, you are an internal. If you believe that your behaviour has no impact on what happens to you but other people and luck determine your fate, you are an external.

There is empirical research evidence that internals had higher job satisfaction, to be more likely to assume managerial positions, and to prefer participative management styles (Mitchell, Smyser and Weed, 1975). According to research done by Professor Spector (1982) internals had higher work motivation, a strong belief that effort leads to performance (higher instrumentality as per the Expectancy Theory), receiving high salaries, and displaying less anxiety compared with externals.

Be an internal. You should believe that your presence is the result of what you did in the past. Your future will be the result of what you are doing now. With regard to almost all vital events of your life you should be a driver not a passenger. You should construct your future and don't let others or luck construct your future.

## **Lesson Number 3 - Perform the Current Job Excellently**

Without successful performance on the current job it is not possible to achieve success on future jobs of higher status and responsibilities. Know the Job Description of your current job and understand how job performance is evaluated. Perform the job with high job involvement and high job commitment. Excel in almost all the aspects or dimensions of job performance including quantity of work, quality of work, attendance, punctuality, cooperation, safety and economy. To do your current job excellently is a key to getting confirmed on the probationary appointment and to improving the probability of getting next promotion.

## **Lesson Number 4- Go beyond Your Job Description and Engage in Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

Organizational citizenship behaviour is an important type of employee behaviour which is above and beyond the call of duty, and it is your willingness to engage in voluntary behaviours that help the organisation achieve its goals. Some of the specific behaviours include performing additional duties such as working overtime, extra duties, and cooperating with fellow workers, helping co-workers with

their job problems, raising constructive suggestions or speaking up to prohibit harmful behaviour to the organization, creating a good image about the organization to outsiders, and participating in activities of social responsibility. In simple terms it means a state where you perform willingly more than what you are supposed to perform (according to the job description) for the success of the organisation.

### **Lesson Number 5 - Engage in Pioneering**

Don't stop thinking and creating a new thing because others have not done or embarked on yet. Believe that you have ability and also a right to create and innovate. Without creativity and innovation there is no competitive advantage; no progress of success. Explore opportunities in which you can be a pioneer. If your thinking derived from your new idea and if it is indeed beneficial to others and society significantly, complete it and then present it.

### **Lesson Number 6 - Set a Good Example**

Before disciplining, instructing and directing others, you should set a good example. What you preach, you should practice in reality. Actions talk louder. Your exemplary life is effective and instrumental in changing others in the way you want them to change.

In the life of a highly successful academic, many things are practiced first. Then he can give advice. Before expecting something significant from others he first engages himself in his field and performs that successfully. Before he expect punctuality from others he become punctual first. Before influencing academics on not cancelling lectures he does not cancel lectures. Before he expects self-discipline from others, he demonstrates his self-discipline to others. Before teaching about balance between work life and family life he gain that balance first. Before he start teaching about managing career and time to others he himself manages his career and time successfully.

### **Lesson Number 7 - Avoid Machiavellianism and Be a Person of High Degree of Good Personal Character.**

Machiavellianism is a personality characteristic which determines the degree to which a person focuses on obtaining and using power to further his or her own ends, regardless of the impact on others according to Professor Dunham (1984). It is a personality trait that involves willingness to manipulate others for one's own purposes according to Professor Greenberg and Professor Baron (1997). If you are high on Machiavellianism, you behave in any way that will meet your needs without considering your impact on others. You attempt to achieve your goals at the expense of others' wellbeing. You will not become a team player.

Prof. Greenberg and Prof. Baron (1997, pp.92-93) write:

*"In 1513, the Italian philosopher Niccolo Machiavelli published a book entitled "The Prince." In it, he outlined a ruthless strategy for seizing and holding political power.*

*The essence of his approach was expediency: do whatever is required to get ahead of another Among the guiding principles he recommended were the following:*

- *Never show humility; arrogance is far more effective when dealing with others.*
- *Morality and ethics are for the weak; powerful people feel free to lie, cheat, and deceive whenever it suits their purpose.*
- *It is much better to be feared than loved.*

In our society there are some people who accept the principles of Machiavelli though some do not accept them. Clearly (and fortunately!) the vast majority of people do not adopt the philosophy proposed by Machiavelli, but some do seem to embrace many of these principles (Greenberg and Baron, 1997). Machiavellianism personality characteristic can be present to any degree, although moderate levels of Machiavellianism are more common than extreme levels (Dunham, 1984).

Those who are very high on Machiavellianism are more difficult to be influenced by others. They do influence others to achieve their personal goals by using lying, fake praise, or any other tools available. They have little or no guilt over harming others. They are not remorseful and have no fear and shame to do sins. Indeed these people do not have good personal character. Their presence will create a lot of potentially dangerous political activity.

**Personal Character** is the totality of persistent moral qualities or attributes a person has. It is the degree to which a person has virtues (honesty, patience, gratitude, humility, respect, benevolence, tolerance, self discipline, caring, loyalty, etc.) and vices (jealousy, deception, desire for others' things, greed, selfishness, anger, hostility, reprobation, retaliation, stinginess etc). **Good character** is morality or civility. Bad character is immorality or incivility. Good personal character is what a person must possess not the bad personal character. Here there are two terms to be emphasized, i.e. virtue and vice. **A virtue** is a good habit. It is a good attribute that is useful for you and other persons. Patience is a virtue. Honesty is a virtue. **A vice** is a bad habit. It is a bad attribute that is harmful for you and other persons. Anger is a vice. Jealousy is a vice. Virtues need to be built, enhanced and if possible maximized within you. Vices need to be minimized within you and if possible they need to be eradicated from you. Hence your personal character is the degree to which you have virtues and vices. That is your ability to build and improve virtues and minimize or eradicate vices. **Nature of character that has virtues to the maximum extent and has no existence of vices can be called as the highest level of good character.** That is excellence in morality. You should reach this level of excellence in morality. It is of course a difficult task. However you should come to that level if you want to be a person of excellent personal character. Indeed your religion, your parents, your teachers and general society want you to be a person of excellent personal character.

## Lesson Number 8 - Be a "Green Person "

Simply a "green person" is an environment-friendly one; a person who gives the possible maximum contribution to environmental sustainability. The term 'greening' has four meanings such as preservation of the natural environment (safeguarding or keeping safely), conservation of the natural environment (being careful in using or saving), avoidance or minimization of environmental pollution (avoid contaminating the planet), and generation of gardens and looking-like natural places (Opatha, 2013).

Thus, a person who wants to be a "green person" is required to play four roles such as preservationist, conservationist, non-polluter, and maker; and this person is named with a generic label, i.e. nature-lover or eco-activist (Opatha and Arulrajah, 2014). Four types of conserving behaviours include Reducing use, Reusing, Repurposing, and Recycling-labelled as the 4Rs (Ones and Dilchert, 2012).

## Lesson Number 9 - Be a Balanced Person

According to research (Pande, 2014), organizations do need balanced people as employees and unbalanced people, not all but many, may become problematic owing to stress induced depression. Work-family balance is your ability to meet your employer's expectations and your family members' expectations to the extent that makes them happy. It needs having sufficient time, energy and competencies to meet commitments at both work and home. Never forget that the family is on the line. Prof. Vries (n.d., p.15) writes:

“The family is on the line (not only the job or career) . If we were seldom with children in their early years, what will our legacy be? How will they remember us? The most important influence on the life of any child is the parents, who shape character and values through personal guidance and unconscious suggestions.”

Make sure not to be a negaholic, an alcoholic, and a workaholic at the expense of non-work aspects of your life.

## Lesson Number 10 - Be Happy Pleasant, Good, and Meaningful to Live a 'Full Life'

As per the Authentic Happiness Model by Prof. Martin Seligman (2002), there are three types of lives, i.e. **the pleasant life** (in which the person maximizes positive emotions and minimizes negative emotions; is devoted to pursuit of positive emotions), **the good life** (in which the person gets immersed and absorbed in the task at hand. This life involves attempting to engage in activities the person likes), **the meaningful life** (devoted to pursuit of service to others). If you are a professional, you need to go beyond serving yourself in your life. Then only your life will be meaningful. The meaningful life, like the good life, involves the individual applying their signature strengths in activities, but the difference is that these activities are perceived to contribute to the greater good in the meaningful life (Baxter, 2010). According to Prof. Seligman (2002), there is a life called 'Full Life' and the pursuit of all the three pathways is important to live the full life. Indeed, research supports that the 'full life' leads to an increased satisfaction with life above and beyond the independent contributions of each pathway.

Be proud of your legacy as graduates of this university. I wish you success and progress of success in your future endeavours.

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