

Be As Good As You Can Be

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During the summer of 1988, our family had an experience I would like to share with you. On July 5 of that year, we were in southern Utah visiting my parents in the small town where I grew up. Not far from there, in one of Utah's national parks, there is a waterfall where I had been swimming many times as a young boy. On this day I decided to take my family to the waterfall swimming, something we had done twice before during the previous month. We arrived at the waterfall about 1:15 p.m. and immediately noticed that the river was much higher than it had been previously because of recent heavy mountain rains. The waterfall was much wilder than normal and the water was extremely dirty. We commented that maybe we shouldn't swim because it looked too rough, but our sons begged us to let them swim with their two cousins who had never been swimming at a waterfall or cliff jumping before. We finally decided to let them swim. My wife, our two youngest children, my mother-in-law, and I sat on the bank and watched as they swam and jumped into the falls.

For approximately half an hour our four older sons—Scott, Conan, Tyler, and Chad—jumped off the cliffs into the base of the falls, and each time the force of the currents would push them out into the main stream of the

river. We were almost ready to leave when the boys decided to jump one last time. They lined up at the top of the ledge with our nine-year-old son Chad jumping first. We all watched as Chad jumped into the water. We watched him go down under the water and then surface. But something was wrong. As his head came up we saw that he was being pulled backward toward the falls instead of being pushed out into the river. While being pulled back, he was sucked under the water by the undercurrents.

As my wife, LeAnn, and I screamed, our oldest son Scott jumped into the pool, trying to grab Chad. He couldn't reach Chad and, in fact, was nearly pulled into the undercurrents himself. I quickly jumped into the water with my clothes on trying to find him. The current was so strong that I couldn't even get close to the falls. In despair I tried several times to climb the cliff on the side of the waterfall so that I could jump in from the top of the falls and try to get Chad. Each time I tried to climb, I would slide down the wet sandstone back into the water. LeAnn also jumped into the water, but because

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of the strong currents, she could not get close to the base of the falls either. As she tried to climb the edge of the wall, she turned her ankle and broke it. She finally fell down on the side of the river, clasped mud in her hands, closed her eyes, and cried aloud, “We’ve lost him! We’ve lost him! Our Chad is gone!”

Our third son, Tyler, who was only 11, started pacing up and down the river in despair. Conan, our second son, ran to the top of the cliff and jumped in again. He knew he might land on and hurt Chad, but he felt he had no choice. He hoped that by jumping in, he might push Chad to the surface or out into the river. Conan jumped and then surfaced, but still no Chad. Then he offered a silent prayer. After jumping in immediately after Chad, our oldest son Scott offered a silent prayer, broke off a tree limb, and started probing into the water at the base of the falls for Chad.

LeAnn’s mother was panicking and looking around the edges but soon turned her attention to flagging down cars up above on the highway. She sent Tyler back up the trail to the highway. Tyler, watching his grandmother cry, offered a silent prayer and immediately ran to the highway, stood in the middle of the road, and flagged down oncoming cars. We all knew that Chad would soon drown. He was under the water being tossed to and fro in the under-currents. The water was extremely cold and vicious, and there were all kinds of holes in the ledges that he could get caught in. For approximately five minutes we searched for Chad. It was the most traumatizing five minutes of our lives. Still no Chad.

We had all but given up hope when I turned around on the cliff above the falls, spread out my hands in despair, and said to my weeping wife, “What can I do?” As I said these words, I spotted Chad floating facedown downstream. He had gone under the water past all of us. We were all looking in the waterfall, and he was downstream ready to go around a bend in the river. I yelled, “There he is!”

Our two oldest sons reached him first. As they lifted him from the water, he was very heavy because he was full of dirty river water. They laid him on the bank just as LeAnn and I arrived. At least now we had hope because we knew where he was. As I looked at my son, his lips were purple, he was not breathing, and he had no pulse. I immediately started mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Conan yelled, “Give him a blessing, Dad! Make him come back.” Between breaths I offered a quick priesthood blessing.

We recalled the CPR training that we had just been through. At the time I was our ward Scoutmaster and our oldest sons were Eagle Scouts. Everyone remembered something we had learned: keep his neck up, have his arms extended, clear his throat, close his nose, and force air down his throat. We watched carefully for a pulse or for breathing. For more than a minute we got nothing. Finally we got a thready, beady pulse and some breathing. Just small breaths, but he was breathing. Soon there was coughing and a feeble, broken, light voice saying, “Help me. Help me. Get me to the bank.” We all thought he had brain damage because of his broken, high-pitched voice. It didn’t even sound like Chad. None of us will ever forget how he looked as we pulled him from the water. His entire body was limp like spaghetti. His fingers, his ears, his nose, his mouth, and his lips were all purple. His eyes were open but rolled back into his head. His mouth seemed to be locked open. Indeed, he looked and acted dead.

As soon as I gave him the priesthood blessing and commanded him to recover, we rolled him on his side. He then threw up a lot of dirty river water. About then Tyler came running down from the highway with three people. Two of them were a German couple who spoke no English but had a blanket with which we covered Chad. The other was a young woman, 25 years old, who worked as a nurse in a hospital emergency room in Scottsdale, Arizona. She

had a black bag full of medical instruments. She first took Chad's pulse, which she said was fading in and out. She treated him for shock and for the numerous cuts and abrasions on his head where he had been thrown against the rocks. For about 35 minutes she kept him alive until the park rangers came with another nurse, oxygen, and more medical supplies.

The ambulance arrived in about 45 minutes. They rushed Chad to a small medical clinic in a nearby town. A doctor who was visiting the clinic examined him, said he couldn't treat him there, and sent him on to the Richfield hospital. My wife, LeAnn, was in the same ambulance because of her broken foot. In Richfield they took X rays and saw that Chad's lungs were filled with silt, sand, and water. They told us he would probably get pneumonia and have swelling of the brain and other complications. My brother joined with me to give him a priesthood blessing with oil. They then sent us on our way to Provo.

When we arrived at the emergency room in Provo, the staff there immediately turned their attention to Chad. They took more X rays. When they put the X rays taken in Richfield and Provo side by side, they couldn't believe they were from the same patient. His lungs had cleared considerably, although one corner was still collapsed and still had water and silt in it. He continued to throw up river water and bile for about 13 hours. He spent another two days in the hospital and several more days recovering at home. Today he is fine and currently has one more month of his mission to serve in Chile.

Chad later told us that when he first went under the water, he was sucked into a whirlpool and was repeatedly banged against cliff walls. He said he would push off the walls with his feet only to find himself in another whirlpool. He said this happened at least three times. The last thing he remembered was saying a prayer. He said he was in the middle of a whirlpool almost standing still. He said that

because of the force of the water, he could not fold his arms completely. He offered a simple prayer that said, "Heavenly Father, I'm thankful for this day. I need your help. Please help me, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen." Then he remembered no more.

As I look back on that experience, I realize there were many things that made Chad's recovery possible. First there were the many miracles given to us by Heavenly Father. One of the first things Chad said when he regained consciousness was, "Who grabbed my hand and pulled me out of the whirlpools?" He was insistent that he had seen someone grab his hand. It was none of us. There is no rational explanation of how he came out of the strong undercurrents and whirlpools. Another miracle was the nurse from Arizona who, together with her husband, had passed the waterfall and gone on about a mile and then decided to come back and take pictures because "it was so beautiful." Another miracle was the unbelievable clearing of his lungs. Another was his miraculous recovery after being in the water for more than five minutes.

There were many more miracles that I won't take time to mention today. In addition to the miracles, though, there were other factors that contributed to Chad's recovery. We were so thankful for the first-aid training we had received and knew from Scouting. Without first-response knowledge, Chad would not be alive today. We were also grateful for the ability to pronounce priesthood blessings and call upon powers from heaven. We aren't sure why Chad was brought back to us. Everyone told us he should have died.

Just as there were certain preparations we and others had made that brought Chad back to us—first aid and nurse training, power of the priesthood, faith, help from Heavenly Father, and quick response by others—there are preparations you can make that will help you weather the storms and waterfalls that lie ahead in your life. Today I would like to talk

about some of the steps you can take to prepare for the whirlpools that will try to suck you in as you face the future.

When you graduate you will enter a world that is changing faster than ever before. It is a topsy-turvy world with declining morals, declining job security, increased social problems, fast-paced business changes, and increased global competition. It is also a world with more opportunities than ever before. Let me give you three indicators of how fast the world is changing:

1. First is the number of patents issued by the U.S. government. The first patent under the current patent numbering system was issued in July 1836. Since that time, the number of patents issued has increased every year but one, with last year having the largest increase and being the highest at almost 600,000 patents (see www.uspto.gov/web/offices/ac/ido/oeip/taf/issuyear.htm). Products and services covered by these patents will change the way we work and live in the future. In fact, it is amazing to think that the capacity of the world's most powerful and biggest computer 40 years ago is now contained in a little computer that fits in your pocket. And if experts' predictions are right, in only a few more years the power of today's biggest and most powerful computers will also be contained in a small pocket-size computer.

2. A second indicator of change is increased worker mobility and decreased job security. Job security has now decreased to where, in 1998, the median job tenure for workers 25 years and older was 4.7 years. In future years your typical job will average five years or less, and you will constantly be on the lookout for your "next" job. (See www.bls.census.gov/cps/pub/tenure_0296.htm.) The promise or thought of lifetime employment is a myth that few of you will experience. Americans are being "downsized," "right-sized," and cut from their jobs in record numbers. For example, even though the period from 1993 to 1997 were years of high

corporate profits and a robust economy, more than two and a half million workers were laid off by companies in the U.S.

3. Third, the way we work and do business in the U.S. is changing. We have moved away from a manufacturing-based society to a service- and information-based society. Information and ideas are now more valuable than tangible goods. In the old economy, land, labor, and capital were important. In the new economy, information has infinite value. Bits are now more valuable than atoms. Even a car can be viewed as a computer chip with wheels. As an example of the power of information, if you look at the list of *Forbes* magazine's most recent 400 richest Americans, three of the top 14 are associated with companies that didn't even exist five years ago, including price-line.com, amazon.com, and e-bay.com. And, if you add executives from Microsoft, Dell Computers, and Oracle Corporation, only three of the 11 richest Americans are not from technology companies (see www.forbes.com/tool/toolbox/billnew/net98.asp?condition=25,99). As an example of the value of information, consider one of the most successful Internet companies: "Yahoo! Inc. collects some 400 billion bytes of information every day—the equivalent of a library crammed with 800,000 books" (Heather Green, "The Information Gold Mine," *Business Week*, 26 July 1999, EB 18).

Frank Ogden said, "As this bulldozer of change rolls over our planet we have a choice: to become part of the bulldozer or part of the road" (*Last Book You'll Ever Read* [Toronto: Macfarlane, Walter and Ross, 1994], chapter 1; or www.dr tomorrow.com/lastbook/flbchap1.html). That you students will enter a world of fast-paced change upon graduation is certain.

In my few minutes today I would like to consider with you how you can be successful and happy in this world of change. After all, you won't be at BYU forever, even though it may seem like it right now. If you continue to view the world from the perspective of an

earlier, vanishing age, you will be unable to realize your full potential. As Norbert Wiener said, “We have modified our environment so radically that we must modify ourselves in order to exist in this new environment” (www.brint.com/papers/change/index.htm).

Specifically, I would like to discuss with you four strategies that I believe can bring you happiness and success in this uncertain and changing world that you face. What you will quickly realize as I proceed is that these strategies are very consistent with gospel teachings. In fact, I am more amazed each day that as the world changes faster and faster, activities and solutions that will make you successful and happy are more and more consistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Success Strategy 1: Having a Sense of Value and Purpose Beyond Your Work

Speaking about her book *Disconnected: How Six People from AT&T Discovered the New Meaning of Work in a Downsized Corporate America*, author Barbara Rudolph stated that it will be much more difficult in the future “to find a sense of purpose and autonomy in work” (www.abcnews.go.com/sections/business/DailyNews/chat_transcript_980806_rudolph/index.html). She believes that workers will become more emotionally detached from their work and that because of this detachment there will be more social instability in America. She argues that workers who define who they are by their jobs will find that they will have less meaning in their lives in the future than they have had in the past. They will be more lonely and more unhappy. Fortunately, with our knowledge of the gospel it is easy to have a purpose beyond our jobs. We know that we are much more than workers. We know that we are children of God and can become just like Him. We know that the family unit is the only enduring organization in the eternities and that building a strong family is far more important than anything we will ever do at work.

I remember talking with a student of mine at Stanford a number of years ago. I asked him what he was going to do when he graduated from the Stanford MBA program. He said that he was going home to take over the family business—the Almond Roca Company. Sure enough, today Mark Haley is the president and CEO of that company. I thought at the time how lucky this young man was. In essence, a profitable company was being handed to him by his father. Today I have a bigger vision and know that we are even more blessed than he was. For, as it says in D&C 84:38, “And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father’s kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him.” We have been given the same promise by our Heavenly Father that my student, Mark Haley, was given by his father. So my first suggested success strategy is to never forget what is really important in your life.

I look back on my life, and, although I have had a wonderful career and hope to have more productive years, what has given me the most joy has been coaching my son’s baseball games, attending my daughter’s clogging competitions, fishing, being in the mountains, and just being with my family. The pitfall you will all have to be very careful of is that the things that matter most in your life often don’t have deadlines or timetables like your job and other commitments will. There are generally no scheduled meetings that say you must spend time with your spouse or do things with your children at a certain time or by a certain date. You will have to be proactive to make your family and the gospel priorities in your life.

One of my favorite stories comes from a book entitled *Love at Home—Starring Father* by George D. Durrant. In that book he tells of his time as a mission president in the eastern states. When he arrived in the mission field, one of his first orders of business was to throw a big rope over a high limb on the huge ash tree that towered over the mission home’s front yard. A few months later he attended a mission

presidents' seminar. Each president, asked what he felt was his best idea so far, reported on some program he felt had enhanced the missionary work. When President Durrant's turn came, he said, "The best thing I've done so far is to build a swing." He described the swing and explained that his major goal was to be a good father and how that swing had become his symbol of this setting of priorities. (From *Love at Home—Starring Father* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1978], 18–20.) You will never be happy in the future unless you anchor your life on things of eternal worth. And you will find your greatest happiness comes from being with your family, from performing service for others, and from living and serving in the gospel.

Success Strategy 2: Keeping Yourself Nimble and Maximizing Your Options

We know that one of the reasons Heavenly Father sent us to this earth was to see if we could make good choices. A prerequisite to making good choices is having freedom. In fact, it is the ability to make choices that gives us freedom. I believe that a very important success and happiness strategy in this fast-changing world is to do everything possible to maximize your options and choices and, hence, freedom. Although we live in a free country and have few, if any, externally imposed constraints, many of us lose or limit our freedom by actions we take and by choices we make. When the future is uncertain, as it is today, it pays to have a broad range of options open. Option theory rewards flexibility.

Let me give you a simple and, I hope, obvious example. Let's say you are going to walk from this Marriott Center to McDonald's on 1230 North. You would like to walk at a steady pace but get there as soon as possible. You would probably start by walking from here to the entrance of BYU, where the sign reads, "Enter to Learn; Go Forth to Serve." From there, to reach McDonald's you merely need to walk west on Bulldog Boulevard or 1230 North

and cross the street to the south. As long as you stay on the north side of 1230 North, when you come to an intersection you can choose to walk either west or south and still make progress toward your goal of reaching McDonald's. You will have two options, so you won't have to wait for a stoplight. However, as soon as you cross to the south side of the street and walk by Wendy's, Teriyaki Stix, or Provo High School, you have lost one of your options—you can now only make progress toward your destination by going west. If you reach an intersection when the east-west light is red, you have no choice but to wait until the light turns green, allowing you to continue walking west. It is the same with life. In a rapidly changing world you want to keep as many options open as you can and keep yourself nimble so you can move quickly and take advantage of these options. As long as you keep your options open, you have more choices and freedom and will be more successful and happy in the future. There are several things you can do to maximize your options and keep yourself nimble and ready to act. I will mention five.

1. Do everything you can to build a good reputation. People with tarnished reputations lose options in life. Sometimes this loss of options occurs at work and sometimes it happens at home. Let me give you a couple of examples. In the play *All My Sons*, written by Arthur Miller, there is a place where a son sees that his father cheated in the business world. Up until then his dad had been his hero. When he confronts his dad, his father says that everybody does it, and you have to cheat to be successful. The son replies, "I know you're no worse than most men but I thought you were better" (act 3). This father had just lost options with his son.

In another example, I am aware of a woman who worked for a corporation for 37 years. We believe she was honest for the first 34. During the last three years she started embezzling. Eventually she stole \$686,000. After she was

caught, the company took her home, her cars, her retirement account, and most of her other assets. Through seizing all these assets, the company recovered about \$400,000. She lost her reputation for honesty and the respect of her friends and was sentenced to serve one year in a federal prison. She is now out of prison but must make monthly restitution payments of \$333 per month to the company. If she misses one payment she violates her parole and goes back to jail.

In other words, she must spend the rest of her life either working or in jail. She has lost options. And, to make matters worse, the IRS came after her and told her that she had \$686,000 of income she didn't report on her tax return. When she finished negotiating with the IRS, they called the \$400,000 she repaid the company a loan but assessed taxes on the \$286,000 she will never repay (at \$333 per month, she's not even paying the interest). With fines, penalties, and interest, she owes the IRS more than \$200,000 and has entered in an agreement to make tax payments to the IRS of \$540 every month. She is now a convicted felon who works in a fast-food restaurant at fairly close to minimum wage. She is 70 years old and has no home nor other assets. This lady has lost not only her reputation but the freedom to live where she wants, work where she wants, buy what she wants, travel where she wants, and even marry who she wants, because her husband divorced her. You will have many more options in the future if you build a good reputation, a good name. As it says in Ecclesiastes 7:1, "A good name is better than precious ointment."

2. A second option and freedom-maximizing strategy is to get as much education, as much learning as possible. You must become a lifelong learner if you are going to succeed in the future. With the fast-paced changes we are experiencing, the content knowledge you learn at BYU probably won't be relevant very long. You must get as much education and learning

as you can throughout your life. Consider the following quote by Brigham Young:

We might ask, when shall we cease to learn? I will give you my opinion about it; never, never. . . .

We shall never cease to learn, unless we apostatize from the religion of Jesus Christ. [JD 3:203]

Personally, I am a certified public accountant, or CPA. When I graduated from BYU and sat for the CPA examination in 1971, there were only 15 professional standards that I had to learn to prepare for the exam. Today most of these standards have been superseded and aren't relevant anymore. In addition, we now have almost that many new standards being issued every year. The accounting profession, like all other professions, has had to change and become more dynamic to keep up with fast-paced changes in business and in the world. If I had to rely on what I learned at BYU to practice as a CPA today, I would be sued for malpractice. Indeed, the purpose of college is not to learn facts but to learn how to learn.

3. The third option-maximizing strategy is to maintain good health. When you lose your health or you become addicted to harmful substances or habits, you lose freedom. Personally, I am not quite as fit as I would like to be. I exercise regularly but have trouble watching what I eat. As a result, I have lost some options that others have. I remember one day riding motorcycles with my boys on Boulder Mountain in southern Utah. We were riding up a very rough and steep trail. Because they were all young and physically fit, all four of my older boys cruised right to the top on their motorcycles. I tried to follow them and tipped over. I tried again and tipped over a second time. After the third attempt and crash, I laid the bike down, hiked to the top, and told my sons to go back down and bring my bike up for me. Because I wasn't as physically fit as they were, I had lost an option. Section 89 contains a

promise about these health options if we live according to the Word of Wisdom:

And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings [meaning maintaining good health and following the Word of Wisdom], walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones.

And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;

And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint. [D&C 89:18–20]

4. A fourth way to maximize your options and be nimble is to preserve your financial freedom. We now live in a world where everyone borrows—in fact, in the U.S., for every net saver, there are approximately 19 net borrowers. After your graduation, almost every day in the mail you will get solicitations from finance and other companies wanting to extend credit to you. They will use glowing terms and phrases about giving you financial freedom, but what they really want is for you to enter into financial bondage to them. Because I knew a few months ago that I would be giving this talk today, I have saved most of the debt solicitations I have received in the mail during that period. Here they are. There are 61 letters inviting and enticing me to go into debt.

When you take upon yourself debt, you lose freedom and options and the ability to act quickly and independently because someone else tells you how to spend your money. If you are encumbered with too much debt, you may not be able to change jobs, move, make an investment you should, or even serve when called upon by the Church. Debt is probably okay for your education, buying a home, buying a first car for work, or making investments in such things as real estate. But debt is not okay for most other things. So if you want to be happy and successful in the future, work hard to maintain your financial freedom. There is something very comforting—even spiritual—

about living well within your means. Many scriptures warn us that debt takes away our freedom. Consider Proverbs 22:7, for example: “The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.”

5. A final option-maximizing strategy I want to mention is staying free from guilt or maintaining a clear conscience. It is impossible to feel guilty and be happy. I remember a number of years ago when one of our children was shooting his bow and arrows in the backyard. As parents, we had told him several times not to get his bow and arrows out unless we were in the mountains, especially when we were not at home. On this day he had some friends with him, and they started messing around. He got his fancy new bow out to show “the guys.” He thought he was focusing on the target, but instead he shot an arrow over our fence, across the road, and right through our neighbor’s garage door. This happened early in the day. He lived with the guilt until about 10:00 that night when he could stand it no longer. Finally he came into our bedroom crying and admitting what he had done. I immediately got out of bed and got dressed. Hand in hand we went to the neighbor’s home, and my son told him what he had done. We offered to pay for a new garage door, which we did. Although our son still felt badly about doing something he was told not to do, he was a lot happier facing the consequences of his actions because he didn’t have to harbor that guilt any longer. He knew that until he told his parents and the neighbor, inside himself he was a liar with a guilty conscience. I personally don’t believe you can ever reach your potential, have freedom or peace of mind, or be happy if you are harboring guilt. The scriptures make it clear that we cannot live in sin and be happy.

Considered together, these five activities of (1) building a good reputation, (2) engaging in continuous learning and education, (3) maintaining good physical health, (4) maintaining financial freedom, and (5) staying guilt free

will bring you choices and opportunities in the future that others won't have and will allow you to act quicker than others to seize upon opportunities that will come your way in this fast-paced world.

Success Strategy 3: Adding Value Every Day

In the business world today, the time focus is shorter than ever before. Whereas organizations used to focus on annual performance—on how much profit they earned in a given year—they now focus more on quarterly and even monthly or daily performance. As the time focus becomes shorter and shorter, managers tend to make short-term decisions that make them appear to be more profitable. With this short-term focus, employees start to be treated more like assets that can be bought and discarded than as individuals who must be invested in and nurtured. When the officers of an organization know they will be evaluated on quarterly or monthly earnings and that laying people off will probably make them appear more profitable, they tend to care less about people as individuals. To be successful in this environment you must find a way to add value to your work every day. It is no longer “what you did for me yesterday” that counts; rather, it is “what you have done for me today.” The day you stop adding value to your employer that is at least as great as the amount they are paying you, your job is at risk.

There are many ways you can add value. You can develop some expertise or skill that others don't have, you can work harder than others, you can have a better personality and disposition than others, you can work with customers better than others, or you can learn and adapt to change faster than others. You will add value best if you work at something you truly enjoy—something that you love to do. I can honestly say that I have looked forward to coming to BYU to work every day for the past 22 years. I love teaching, researching, and working with bright young students and colleagues.

Success Strategy 4: Avoiding Self-Defeating Behaviors

So far I have discussed three proactive success strategies: maintaining a sense of purpose and value beyond your work, maximizing options and keeping yourself nimble, and finding a way to add value every day. Regardless of how well you accomplish these, however, there are a few personal characteristics and actions that, if pursued, will limit your future success and happiness. I call these “inhibitors of success” or “self-defeating behaviors.” Although there are probably others besides those I'll mention here, these five are particularly relevant to job success and happiness. I have watched each of them destroy the careers and lives of otherwise wonderful and talented individuals. These inhibitors, each of which I'll only spend a minute on, are:

1. Self-pity
2. Lack of humility
3. Not being able to set and maintain priorities
4. Selfishness
5. Suffering from what I call the “intent” syndrome

No matter how talented and blessed they are, some people seem not to be able to avoid falling into the self-pity trap. We have all seen it before. In this trap people feel sorry for themselves. They start to feel that everyone has a better life than they do and that they have been dealt an unfair deck by Heavenly Father and society. They believe everyone has a happier family than they have, a better job than they have, are more attractive and more healthy than they are, and have more money than they have. Although self-pity always hurts a person, it is particularly problematic in the business world. Self-pity is a tool of the devil. It is one of his primary ways to induce discouragement, which can lead to hopelessness and unproductivity. And unproductivity is deadly when you need to be adding value every day.

Fortunately there is a quick remedy to this problem. If you ever start feeling sorry for yourself, the best solution is to reach out and serve others. When you think about and serve others, you forget about your problems and soon realize that everybody else's life is not better than yours. I know of a man who, although he suffers from a severe wound he received in Vietnam and could feel sorry for himself, spends every Sunday afternoon rocking crack-cocaine babies in a hospital. It gives him a perspective that his problems really aren't that terrible and gives him a sense of fulfillment.

A simple exercise I would recommend for all of us is to write on a piece of toilet paper all the ways in which we feel sorry for ourselves and the reasons why we can't be successful and happy. Then we need to go to the bathroom and flush that paper down the toilet and move on. We limit ourselves much more by what we think we can't do than by what we really can't do.

A second self-defeating behavior and, frankly, one I worry most about in you students is a lack of humility. You students are so sharp—you're smart, you're talented, and you're young. You are even good looking. You have everything going for you. It would be easy for you to forget to be humble. And, in fact, I've had a few friends tell me that they've met BYU students who thought they were better than others because it is so tough to be admitted to BYU and they made it whereas others didn't. I hope that isn't the case. The very moment you cease to be humble, you start on a road that makes you less valuable to others, less willing to listen and learn from others, and less fun to be around. And, as we said before, if you aren't continuously learning, you will limit your future options.

A third self-defeating behavior is the inability to be organized and set priorities. We all know what is important. For example, you know when you have tests and other deadlines. Yet many of us tend to be procrastina-

tors—to wait until the last minute. One of the greatest predictors of success in the workplace and even in the family is the ability to set priorities and follow through with them. When you fail to establish priorities, you let yourself be driven by others—as if you were a floating log being tossed to and fro by the currents of a river. Being organized and being able to set priorities will become even more important in the future as you have to juggle voice mail, e-mail, pager mail, fax mail, land mail, and all other types of correspondence and communication at work and in your personal life.

Selfishness is the fourth of my five self-defeating behaviors. When you are selfish, you think more of yourself and your needs than of others. I know a man who, because of his selfishness, has lost his family, his job (several times), and his friends. He is a lonely man because he doesn't know how to think about anyone besides himself. No matter how talented or educated you are, if you can't be a team player and let others receive credit, you will not be successful in the future. Indeed, selfishness is a surefire way to failure in the business world.

The final inhibitor of success or self-defeating behavior that I want to mention is what I call the "intent" syndrome. It is a fact that we all judge ourselves by our intentions and judge other people by their actions. And, for most of us, our intentions are much better than our actions. I don't know about you, but I intend to get up earlier, work harder, eat less, exercise more, and be a better father and husband. I personally think this is one reason why there are so many divorces in the world—husbands judge themselves by their intentions and judge their wives by their actions, and wives do the same thing. Both think they are better than they are and that their spouses are worse than they are.

None of us is as good as we think we are, and yet we are probably not as bad as other people think we are. When we judge ourselves

by our intentions, we tend to rationalize our shortcomings and give ourselves more credit than we deserve. We also tend to judge our colleagues and others more harshly than we should and ourselves too leniently. We also tend to do less at work and at home than we think we are doing.

One of my research specialties is fraud. When you talk to someone who has committed fraud and been caught, they usually say something like “I intended to pay that money back. I really did.” We look at them and say, “You dirty, rotten crook. You stole money.” You see, we judge these people by their actions; they judge themselves by their intentions. If you want to be successful, try not to let the gap between your intentions and your actions become too large. And don’t judge others too harshly or give yourself credit for more than you are really doing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, some current business writers believe that it will be harder to be successful and happy in the future. I disagree. With the right kind of preparation and the Lord’s help, just as we were able to bring Chad back to life, you will be able to succeed in the future. With your knowledge of who you are and what is important in life and by maximizing options, adding value each day, and avoiding these inhibitors of success, the changing world you face presents great opportunities, not threats, for you. With your background, training, knowledge, beliefs, and standards, you are much better poised to take advantage of future opportunities than are most others. Let me

congratulate you for your values, for your commitment to the gospel, for your righteous living, and for your hard work. You have all the ingredients to be highly successful and happy. You will be great and, if you remember the things we have talked about, you will be successful and happy. Be grateful for what you have.

The other day I had a student in my office who said, “Professor Albrecht, I have five job offers and don’t know which one to accept.” He was discouraged about the decision he had to make and didn’t know what to do. I told him to get on his knees and thank Heavenly Father for the five job offers and for being so blessed. I told him that there are many people who don’t even have one job offer. We should all be thankful for what we have.

I want you to know that I love this university and love being a faculty member here. It was while I was a student at BYU that I developed my testimony of the gospel. It was at BYU that I decided to serve a mission, even though no one in my family had served. It was at BYU that I met and married my sweetheart and wife. It was at BYU that I learned the value of an education and set priorities for my future life. Indeed, much of what I am and much of the way I define myself, I owe to my BYU experience. I hope and pray that you have the same kind of experience at BYU that I did.

I love the gospel. I know it is true. I know that as the world changes faster and faster, you will find solutions for happiness and success in the gospel and in the lessons you will learn at BYU. I wish you all success in the future. I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.