

DEB MCADAMS

The secret of success: tenacity

The caps and gowns don't even cool off before they come back out of storage. Right now, there are 130 candidates for juris doctor, 518 candidates for master's degrees and 1,517 candidates for undergraduate degrees. If all of them have paid their parking tickets and library fines, they will comprise the largest group of May graduates ever.



The difference between people who realize their dreams and those who don't isn't necessarily money, good looks or connections. It's a way of thinking.

Some will go on to realize their wildest dreams. A few will sell Hush Puppies. Others will go back to the farm with yet another land-management technique. Some will be hopeful, and some will be cynical, but all of them will possess something that 78.5 percent of the 158.6 million Americans older than 25 don't have: a college education.

All kinds of statistics indicate that college graduates enjoy a better quality of life than nongraduates. They earn more, smoke less and travel farther. They have fewer children, who are less likely to die in infancy, than do undereducated and marginally educated people. They are more likely to own a house and have health insurance than nongraduates. Yet every adviser, professor and journalist has reminded these graduates that life is tough "out there," and good jobs are becoming harder to find.

The job market is more competitive than it was 30 years ago, when the government was pouring money into the economy and many useless, midlevel bureaucratic jobs were created. Now companies are hiring more temporary employees to reduce layoffs and to avoid paying benefits.

Finding a good job may take a lot of hustling, but hustling for a job is no hardship. Hardship was three days of total darkness caused by dust blowing on the Great Plains. Dispossession based on race and relocation to reservations and internment camps was hardship. Life may be tough "out

there," but it was a lot tougher in the past. Sending out a few hundred resumes doesn't constitute hardship. It constitutes tenacity.

Tenacity is one of the first determinants of getting anything, including a job. People who are discouraged by rejection and settle for less than they hoped for often complain that life has somehow cheated them. Theodore S. Geisel, Dr. Seuss to some, called them "... people just waiting, waiting for a yes or no, or waiting for their hair to grow, or a string of pearls or a pair of pants or a wig with curls or Another Chance."

Sometimes people don't succeed because it's easier not to. The difference between people who realize their dreams and those who don't isn't necessarily money, good looks or connections. It's a way of thinking. It's "I'll just keep trying," instead of "What's the use of trying?" Another Chance is more likely to materialize for people who look for one.

Another Chance is also more likely when bridges haven't been burned. The world is starved for common courtesy. There's no shortage of arrogance and self-interest on the market today. Everyone is sick of people who are obsessed with their image to the exclusion of simple good manners. "Please" and "thank you" are a couple of potent keys to success.

Feeling successful depends on one's capacity to be satisfied in a given moment. The desire to improve isn't the same as the pursuit of status sym-

bols. If money brought happiness, Kurt Cobain's little girl would still have a daddy.

Fitness expert Frank Butterfield suggests, "If you do one thing, be the best that you can be, not better than someone else. We are all simply different from each other, not better than one another. We compete against ourselves, our insecurities, to create our own excellence."

Accumulating minivans and electronic gadgets doesn't ensure security or satisfaction. A tremendous amount of security comes from knowing what one can do without. The United States is the third most populous nation in the world and its largest consumer of resources. One-third of the oil produced annually is used in the United States with obvious consequences. Diseases of overconsumption, especially heart disease, are the nation's most common killers. One of the most important contributions anyone can make today is to tread more softly on this earth.

A college degree is not a ticket. It's a powerful tool people can use to determine the direction of their lives. Only one-fifth of Americans older than 25 will obtain that tool, and only a fraction of them will have the persistence, the patience and the character to fulfill their expectations. May the next 2,165 UNL graduates be among those who do.

McAdams is a junior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

KIMBERLY SPURLOCK

Color of messenger irrelevant

I was sitting in a broadcast journalism class the other day, and we were critiquing video projects. We began to review one five-minute project about racism at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, which was produced by another UNL student.

The project talked about how UNL students deal with this problem. The producer/reporter, who is white, had interviewed several black UNL students and asked them to talk about their experiences with racism at UNL.

The black students gave their honest feelings about racism and held nothing back. At the end of the piece, the producer/reporter appeared and gave a final analysis about racism at UNL.

The project was well-constructed and would help many people understand how a lot of black students on this campus feel.

At the conclusion of this video project, our professor asked for our opinions on the project. All of the students responding liked the project, more or less, gave their views and commented on how truthful it was.

Another student, who is white, expressed a similar opinion. However, he said that it was good that this project was produced by a white person, because it made the project seem more real or valid. Had it been produced by a black person, he said, the piece would have lost some authenticity.

In other words, a white person speaking on racism is more believable than a black person. Some people would see the black person as only complaining or reaffirming his or her own beliefs.

This response upset me very much. There I was, sitting in a broadcast journalism class with only white students in my presence, and I hear another student say that when I become



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a professional journalist, I should compromise myself or my work for the sake of those who won't believe me because I'm black.

There I was listening to someone tell me, a black journalism major, who lives, talks and writes about racism every day, that what I say is not as powerful or as important or as credible as when a white person says it.

I have no problem with white people, or anyone else for that matter, shedding a little light on racism, discrimination or whatever. It's many of those white people who need to write and report these injustices in America anyway, so that they know it exists.

But when I sit down at a computer terminal, and I write a story on racism, or I decide to write a column about racism, I don't take time to ponder how others will feel about the truth. I can't alter my writing for a particular segment of society. I will not compromise my work to satisfy certain individuals.

When I write my columns, I write my truths (as well as a heck of a lot of other people's truths). You may not like my truths, but they are still that.

This student in my broadcast journalism class said he would still have found the video project believable even if it were a black person who produced it. He was only considering the other white people in the audience who would probably only find the story credible if it was a white person pro-

ducing it.

As my professor told this student in class, if those individuals in the audience are turned off by the person (messenger) who is sending the story (message), then they were never turned on in the first place.

I know many people may not agree with all of my columns, but I also know that I cannot please everyone. And if I compromise what I feel needs to be said for the sake of individuals who may be offended, then I'm selling myself out as a journalist and as a person.

My columns are written from my perspective — from my truths. If anyone is turned off by the message that I bring because I'm black, they have already made a decision about my writings before reading them.

I am angered by a lot of columns that I read in the newspaper. But sometimes (not all the time) those same people who have offended me have agreed with me on other issues.

If I was dying of AIDS and I came to UNL to talk about the disease, would you refuse to listen to my story because I am black? If your answer is yes, I suggest you dig your own grave, because you are already dead and need to lie in it.

Spurlock is a senior broadcasting, news-editorial and English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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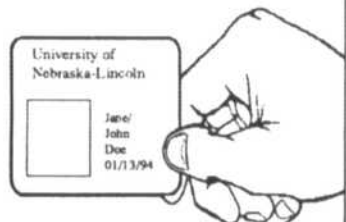


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