

Young Men of Purpose

A Complete Mentoring Guide for Developing
Successful Young Men

*“Written to inspire young men to effectively manage their lives,
overcome obstacles, and passionately pursue their goals.”*

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Founder of Young Men of Purpose Mentoring LLC

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ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

“An educated man will have endless opportunities in life.”

Your education is like a marathon, not a sprint.

If you want instant gratification, you may struggle with the concept of school because success in school requires patience, dedication and commitment. There are no shortcuts to earning a high school diploma or college degree. Long-term success in school requires a consistent effort.

Every runner has to first prepare for the race.

You have to prepare for school in order to give yourself a chance to succeed. You cannot finish a marathon without training for it long in advance. If you want to go to college and have a great career, prepare yourself by working hard in school and accept the challenges that will come throughout your educational marathon.

Runners have to pace themselves in order to finish the race.

When you run a marathon, you run at a consistent pace to ensure that you finish. If you seek instant gratification, you will do well in school for a moment but the experience is short-lived. But if you pace yourself consistently, the success can be sustained over time.

Understand that every phase of school is designed to prepare you for success in the real world. A high school diploma or college degree is not earned overnight so you have to be patient.

Every marathon runner has to push to the finish line.

In order to finish a marathon you have to push yourself even when you do not feel like continuing.

The race is not always easy, so every runner has to remain dedicated if they plan to cross the finish line. Dedication is also critical to achieving your educational goals. You may not feel like studying or completing the homework assignments, but if you push yourself to finish the tasks, it all pays off at the end. How you handle the difficult times in school will determine whether or not you finish the race.

When runners finish a marathon, they feel rewarded.

The harder you work towards achieving something, the more it will mean to you once you achieve it. When you reach your academic goals and graduate from high school, college or trade school, you will feel rewarded for all of your effort. In addition to experiencing the joy of completing school, your education will help you find a career that will provide financial stability for yourself and your family.

Chapter Focus:

This chapter will guide young men to develop an appreciation for the benefits that come with academic achievement.

If you plan to ACHIEVE in school, focus on the following categories:

Associations

If you want to achieve, then select friends and maintain relationships with those who share similar goals and aspirations. Together you can succeed by supporting each other through the difficulties faced in school. School should be among the most enjoyable experiences of your life. If you form healthy friendships, you will enjoy fond memories for a lifetime. However, you must be on guard and stay away from peers who try to influence you in a negative way.

Communication

Communication with school officials is critical to your success. Communicate with your teachers in order to learn their expectations for your success. Asking questions helps teachers to understand how to help you so never be ashamed or too proud to ask for help if you are uncertain about something.

If you do not feel comfortable asking questions during class, ask after class. Communication shows teachers that you care about your education. Not surprisingly, they are more willing to help students who want to help themselves.

Communication also means connecting with your counselors and administrators. Never burn bridges with these individuals by being rude or disrespectful because you will need their help to achieve your goals. Students who connect with school officials usually benefit from their help along the way.

Habits

You cannot expect to get great results if you don't develop great habits. If you want to become a great student, you must be willing to do what others won't. A great way to strengthen your knowledge is by reading, writing, studying and developing other essential skills on the weekends or on your vacation breaks. If you want to be the best, you will have to work harder than everyone else.

Inspiration

I believe that every young man will have at least one teacher, mentor, or coach who will inspire them to do great things in life. I started my career as a social studies teacher, primarily because of an experience I had in 8th grade. I was used to being able to clown around with my friends without getting in trouble. As a result, I usually did not perform to the best of my academic abilities.

My social studies teacher was an older man who believed in keeping a disciplined classroom environment. He never allowed me to be distracted in his class, nor did he allow me to be a distraction to others. He commanded my respect, while showing a genuine interest in me as a person.

During one grading period, my teacher challenged me to improve my grade before the next report card. With his help, I set a short-term goal to raise my grade. Within that grading period, I pulled my grade up from a D to an A. Shortly after report cards were issued, my teacher acknowledged me, in front of my peers, for this achievement.

There was no award or certificate for what I'd accomplished, but the verbal affirmation from my teacher planted a seed in me to want to do great things for the rest of my life. Teachers can be inspirational if you listen and allow them to guide you.

Effort

Your effort will cause you to either achieve or underachieve in school. If you put forth your best effort, you will not have anything to regret about school. If you do not give your personal best, you will always wonder what you could have achieved if you had tried harder. The only way you fail in school is by not putting forth the effort.

The following tips are ways to give your best effort in school:

- Pay attention and participate during class.
- Complete your homework on time and study for tests.
- Be a good citizen at school and avoid being put out of class, sent to the office, suspended or expelled from school.
- Have a great attendance record.

Vision

Men who are successful in the real world took advantage of their opportunities while in school. Some of the greatest times of your life will take place at school. The activities, friendships and events provide fond memories, but these memories are even better when you take care of your academic responsibilities and graduate. Value your education, and make sure you get off to a great start. Your educational experience is a journey for which you must be prepared. Having a vision will help you focus on the big picture and the impact that having an education will have on your life.

Exuberance

To have exuberance means to be full of energy, excitement and cheerful towards school. Have fun participating in extracurricular activities and events sponsored by your school. Whether you are playing a sport, involved with the music program or participating in a club, it will build character and make your school experience exciting. Get excited about school and leave a positive legacy.

Plan of Action:

1. Write out your vision for your education. Make sure you understand the “big picture.”
2. Do an inventory of your friends, and make sure their academic goals match yours.
3. Take an honest look at your habits to determine which ones are good and bad.
4. Find out what extracurricular activities are available at your school, and sign up to participate in at least one of them.

Statement of Affirmation:

I understand that if I receive an education, I will have endless opportunities in life. I will graduate from high school, I will go to college, I will become a lifelong learner and I will realize my dreams.

This is my life, and I am a young man with a purpose.

Please visit YoungMenOfPurpose.com for more information and additional excerpts.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Roy Dobbs is an award-winning educator, who has served as a teacher, coach, Dean of Students, Assistant Principal, and Principal in both traditional and alternative school settings. In addition to these educational experiences, Roy Dobbs has served as the Principal of an all-male middle school. As the founder of the Young Men of Purpose Mentoring Program, he inspires today's young men to become tomorrow's leaders through teaching the importance of character, scholastic achievement, and service. He resides in Indianapolis, Indiana, with his wife, Kristen, and three children.

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Building Character, Citizenship, and Academics