

EDITOR'S DESK

After graduation, go forth with confidence

Dear graduating seniors, Congratulations on reaching this milestone. Your class has faced a tough road through the end of your high school journey, and you should feel proud of what you've accomplished despite those setbacks.

As per tradition, I would like to offer you some advice as you set off on your next adventure, whatever that may be.

My first advice would be to believe in yourself. That may sound cheesy, but I know that when I graduated from both high school and college, I felt intimidated by the thought of all the people I would be trying to measure up to in the future. I envisioned college and the workforce as an army of people smarter and more accomplished than I was, who had expensive tutors and attended fancy private schools in big cities and spent their summers building schools in Africa.

It's true that in going from a school with a graduating class of less than 200 to a university with more than 30,000 students, I had more competition. I was rarely — if ever — the smartest person in the room. But I learned a lot, graduated in four years and landed a job in my chosen field, and not once did any potential employers ask me if I graduated at the top of my class (I didn't).

Believing in yourself doesn't have to mean feeling sure that you



Jade McDowell
NEWS EDITOR



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

Hermiston High School graduates walk down Southwest Seventh Street in Hermiston during the school's Honor Walk on Thursday, May 27, 2021.

will someday be the best basketball player or rapper or Instagram influencer in the whole world. Sometimes it just means believing that you're going to be successful and happy — even if it turns out you're not the best in the world at anything.

I promise you that if you are hard working, dependable and respectful, you will already be more qualified for the jobs you apply for than some of the applicants.

I'll even let you in on a little secret: Job postings are often a description of the employer's ideal candidate, not a list of absolute

necessities. And when employers struggle to find anyone who checks all of the boxes, they will sometimes settle for someone who is only 75% of the way there but seems like a hard worker who could be trained. The real answer to the age-old conundrum, "How do I get experience when all the jobs that would give me experience require experience?" is often simply, "I applied anyway and they still hired me."

A second piece of advice I would give you is to take time while you're young to make memories and build relationships. The older you get,

the more everyone tends to become entangled in responsibilities — being in a management role at work, raising children, caring for elderly parents, volunteering.

When people get to that point, they often look back at their 20s and wish they had spent more time traveling, or taking other opportunities that now involve much more pre-planning to be able to make work. It can also be more difficult to make friends when you've passed the age where Friday nights involve a bunch of people spontaneously piling into cars and hanging out at a bonfire until 2 a.m.

So don't get so caught up in the stress of figuring out what you're doing with your life that you forget to have fun. Go to that bonfire on Friday night and then wake up Monday morning ready to do something that will set you up for success. Life is about balance.

Each generation has its own challenges — I graduated into a deep recession that my generation has never fully recovered from financially, and some of my ancestors didn't get a chance to graduate at all before being shipped off to war. Your generation will be working to shape the world in the wake of a pandemic that feels like it turned everything upside-down.

That brings with it opportunity. The future may seem daunting now, but it's full of possibilities. Go make it your own.

COLUMN

Asking questions is the pathway to comprehension

Understanding the world around us is the goal we want all our children to achieve. We want them to understand and explain what they see, hear, and read.

It should be really simple. You see it, you talk about it, and you can write about it when you're older. For some reason, it just doesn't work that way for everyone. Problem solving is a natural ability humans can accomplish. Yet, many people need a little nurturing to become a master at the skill of understanding (comprehending) and problem solving (vocal, written, or demonstration).

One method for developing problem-solving skills in children is through using questioning.

Questioning activates the part of the brain used for problem solving. It doesn't matter what age, whether the child is 2 or 22, using questioning strategies aids in fostering everyone's ability to problem-solve when having to face a situation they need to resolve on their own.

Example: Which do you eat faster with, a fork or spoon? This type of questioning asks the brain to use existing information to respond to a new problem.

Sounds simple, but it's harder than you think! Living in a fast-moving world, it sometimes feels like we have to get things done quickly. Therefore we often tell or give the child resolutions to issues so we are able to move on. We do the problem solving for the child, therefore they quickly learn that in order to get the infor-

mation they need, they simply ask. Frustration hits when a child has not had practice, is asked a question and expected to respond orally or written, and is at a loss for what to do. Hurried adults become frustrated and often give a response something like, "Just figure it out!"

Have you provided the opportunities for your child to know how to figure things out or have you assumed they should know? The child is showing they have not developed their problem-solving ability and without prior practice, everyone becomes frustrated. The teaching moment is now.

Use questions to help them draw their own conclusions, right or wrong, and learn from the experience.

Starting with giving the child a simple choice is best. Remember it is okay if they choose something different than what you think is best. Many times they will but this is where learning takes place. So if they have a choice of pop or ice cream and they choose pop, but others have ice cream, they may change their mind after everyone gets their treat. You just have to remind them that it was their choice for the pop, and next time they might be able to choose ice cream.

I can almost guarantee there may be a tantrum but remember, don't solve it for them. Don't offer to trade. Now, if they ask you to trade, they are starting to use their own problem-solving, and it becomes your choice whether to trade or not. This method works no matter the child's age.

Asking questions like, "Do you think that's the best choice?" or "Which do you

think would go faster?" or "What would you do with all that money?" forces them to trigger the thinking process and go into problem-solving.

The struggle comes in guiding them with questions in order to draw their conclusions. The world all of a sudden moves into slow motion, and the child is faced with questions. The number one thing the child is fearing is making the incorrect decision.

Thus, we move into the child's world of decision making using questions helping them make their decision or draw their own conclusions. When given more and more opportunities to allow them to nurture the skill of problem solving, they will get quicker.

If you have a child you notice is struggling with problem solving, choose a time to work with them. Trying to have a teaching moment when the whole family is waiting might be difficult for everyone. Seek out a time you are able to spend time with them and guide them in developing their problem-solving skills. You might consider starting with one situation each day, allowing them to make their own decision.

Start asking questions, and you'll see your child's ability to problem-solve, discuss, and even write about situations make remarkable growth and their ability to answer school questions as well.

Dr. Scott Smith is a 40+-year Umatilla County educator and serves on the Decoding Dyslexia-OR board as their parent/teacher liaison.



Scott Smith

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Affordable housing for seniors needed

I'm writing concerning the article on senior housing. What we need is affordable housing.

When I was seeking memory care for my husband, the cost was higher than we even made. There was a waiting list at Guardian Angel Homes. He would have been number 16. Then when I thought I might be able to pull it off with help from the veterans, they raised the price. The other homes were too high also. One wanted \$1,300 a month for his level of care. If you do not want to go on Medicaid, assisted living at these prices are not possible for most seniors.

My husband passed at home, a labor of love for me but really hard. Affordable housing please!

Lin Starke
Irrigon

Editor's Note

Do you have questions about the Hermiston Herald or feedback on its articles and other features? Email News Editor Jade McDowell at editor@hermistonherald.com.

CORRECTIONS

It is the policy of the Hermiston Herald to correct errors as soon as they are discovered. Incorrect information will be corrected on Page 2A. Errors committed on the Opinion page will be corrected on that page. Corrections also are noted in the online versions of our stories.

Please contact the editor at editor@hermistonherald.com or call (541) 564-4533 with issues about this policy or to report errors.

SUBMIT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters Policy: Letters to the Editor is a forum for the Hermiston Herald readers to express themselves on local, state, national or world issues. Brevity is good, but longer letters should be kept to 250 words.

No personal attacks; challenge the opinion, not the person. The Hermiston Herald reserves the right to edit letters for length and for content.

Letters must be original and signed by the writer or writers. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Writers should include a telephone number so they can be reached for questions. Only the letter writer's name and city of residence will be published.

OBITUARY POLICY

The Hermiston Herald publishes paid obituaries. The obituary can include small photos and, for veterans, a flag symbol at no charge. Expanded death notices will be published at no charge. These include information about services. Obituaries may be edited for spelling, proper punctuation and style.

Obituaries and notices may be submitted online at hermistonherald.com/obituaryform, by email to obits@hermistonherald.com, by fax to 541-276-8314, placed via the funeral home or in person at the Hermiston Herald or East Oregonian offices. For more information, call 541-966-0818 or 1-800-522-0255, x221.