

Congratulations Graduates!



"Hitch your wagon to a star." ~Ralph Waldo Emerson

"If you knew how much work went into it, you wouldn't call it genius." ~Michelangelo

"If we did the things we are capable of, we would astound ourselves." ~Thomas Edison

"Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind." ~Dr. Seuss

"Success is never final. Failure is never fatal. It is courage that counts." ~Winston Churchill

"If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them." ~Henry David Thoreau

"Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it." ~Goethe

"There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle." ~Albert Einstein

There's No Time Like the Present

—Now's the time to get a clear idea about one's values and goals.

It's never too soon or too late to determine and act upon a sense of purpose for one's life. Being able to identify our values, or what's important beyond material success, and goals are the first steps toward leading a productive life—and one of the strongest deterrents to substance abuse. People who have a sense of purpose don't have time to waste on alcohol and other drugs.

Business and organizations create mission statements to guide their daily activities and help them focus on what's important when making decisions. Successful individuals do the same thing. In *Make it Happen** author Edward D. Hess writes, "In a hyper-changing world, it is especially important that you be anchored by your life's goals and values. As you are bombarded by choices, change and challenges, your goals and values will allow you to make choices that you hope will move you toward your goals. They are your guideposts."

Most people's identities are formed from the way they think and behave in several areas of life. Therefore, we need to consider our goals

in each of those areas. Hess says he thinks of his life as having these components:

- **Work**
- **Family**
- **Play**
- **Relationships**
- **Spirituality**
- **Community**

These components are factors in almost everyone's life. While some may be more or less important at various ages and to different people, they are good starting place for figuring out what's important to you in each area and how to best act on your values.

Hess's book provides worksheets to help guide readers through a healthy soul-searching. The goal of the worksheets is to come up with the three top goals for the six components listed above. The next step is to evaluate all the goals and prioritize them. Do something each day to move in the right direction—toward your goals.

Don't write your goals in concrete—Do this exercise periodically. What's important to us changes over time. Review your guiding principles and goals every year or even every other year. Post them or tuck them into a spot where you'll see them every day—and, above all, act on them.

As Hess says, "You must choose to spend your time wisely, to do what you want to do in order to achieve those goals which affirm your values."



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*Make It Happen is a self-published book. E-mail: ehess@makeithappen.net for ordering information.

“Killer Clichés” About Loss



We have all been educated on how to acquire things. We have been taught how to get an education, get a job, buy a house, etc. There are colleges, universities, trade schools, and technical schools. You can take courses in virtually anything that might interest you.

What education do we receive about dealing with loss? What school do you go to learn to deal with the conflicting feelings caused by significant emotional loss? Loss is so much more predictable and inevitable than gain, and yet we are woefully ill-prepared to deal with loss.

One of the most damaging killer clichés about loss is **“time heals all wounds.”** When we present open lectures on the subject of Grief Recovery®, we often ask if anyone is still feeling pain, isolation, or loneliness as the result of the death of a loved one 20 or more years ago. There are always several hands raised in response to that question. Then we gently ask, “if time is going to heal, then 20 years still isn’t enough?”

While recovery from loss does take some time, it need not take as much time as you have been led to believe. Recovery is totally individual, there is no *absolute* time frame. Sometimes in an attempt to conform to other people’s time frames, we do ourselves great harm. This idea leads

us to another of the killer clichés, **“you should be over it by now.”**

It is bad enough that well-meaning, well intentioned friends attack us with **killer clichés**, but then we start picking on ourselves. We start believing that we are defective or somehow deficient because we haven’t recovered yet.

If we take just the two **killer clichés** we’ve mentioned so far, we can see that they have something in common. They both imply that a **non-action** will have some therapeutic or recovery value. That by waiting, and letting some time pass, we will heal. Let’s add a third cliché to the batch, **“you have to keep busy.”** Many grievors follow this incorrect advice and work two or three jobs. They fill their time with endless tasks and chores. At the end of any given day, asked how they feel, invariably they report that their heart still feels broken; that all they accomplished by **staying busy** was to get exhausted.

Now, with only three basic **killer clichés** we can severely limit and restrict our ability to participate in effective recovery. It is not only that people around us tell us these clichés, in an attempt to help, but we ourselves learned and practiced these false beliefs for most of our lives. It is time for us to learn some new and helpful beliefs to assist us in grieving and completing relationships that have ended or changed.

Question: I have heard that it takes 2 years to “get over” the death of a loved one; 5 years to “get over” the death of a parent; and you never “get over” the death of a child. Is this true?

Answer: Part of the problem is the phrase “get over.” It is more accurate to say that you would never forget a child who had

died, anymore than you would ever forget a parent or a loved one. Another part of the problem is one of those killer clichés we talked about, that time, of itself, is a recovery action. Although recovery from loss does take some time, it is the actions within time that lead to successful recovery.

The primary goal is to “grieve and complete” relationships that have ended or changed. Successful recovery allows you to have fond memories not turn painful and helps you retake a happy and productive place in your own life. In addition, regain the ability to begin new relationships, rather than attempting to replace or avoid past relationships.

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