

2006 College Survival Essay Scholarship – WINNER!

Success

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A friend of mine once said to me, “Success can only be measured by what is presented.” Booker T. Washington once said, “...Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed.” So I ask myself; which is more imperative when interpreting success, the journey or the destination?

When I graduated from high school I received more cards congratulating me on my success than I ever had for any other occasion in my life. As far as anyone could see I had succeeded. I was wearing my golden cap and gown, I was receiving my diploma, and I was going to college. Success in everyone’s eyes, yet I did not feel successful. Maybe because deep down inside I knew that I wasn’t. I knew during my high school graduation that success goes beyond the robe and tassel. Even as I grabbed my diploma from the principal’s hand I did not feel a sense of success.

At my high school graduation I knew that unlike most of my classmates, I did not earn my diploma through hard work and determination but through summer school and a lot of extra credit. Though we all wore the same robes, received the same diploma, and would even be going to the same universities, we were not all successful. Our success lay within our own GPA’s and that is where we differed. Just because I made it to the desired culmination of my high school career does not mean that I was successful, but adequate.

When I think about success in my life one memory stands out. I remember my last cross country race during my senior year in high school. It was the race for the medals. I was too far behind to win a medal but I kept running anyway. As I approached the last 40 yards I began the fastest sprint that I had ever ran. It was the sprint that my teammates cheered for all season long but I had never delivered. On this last race, I gave them a sprint. I passed six runners on my way to the finish line placing myself six places ahead of what I would have placed had I let my fatigue and frustration take over. When it was all over I felt successful even though I had not won a medal. Even if no one else could see it, I succeeded.

For me, success is the journey as well as the destination. My position in life means nothing to me if I know that I did not work as hard as I could have or if I cheated in some way to get there. As hard as I may work and as noble as I may act, if I am not satisfied with myself in the end it was all for nothing. Success to me means giving my all, knowing I have sacrificed a little, learned a little, and changed a little. Success means being sincerely happy with what you have, whatever that may be, and knowing that you have rightfully earned it.