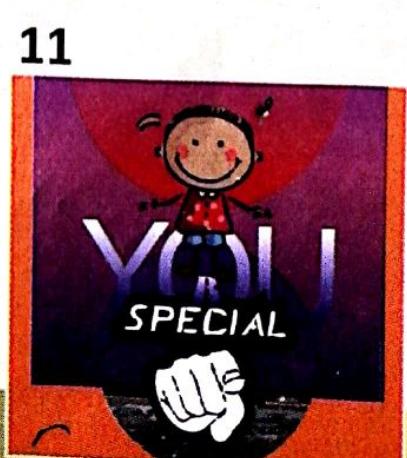
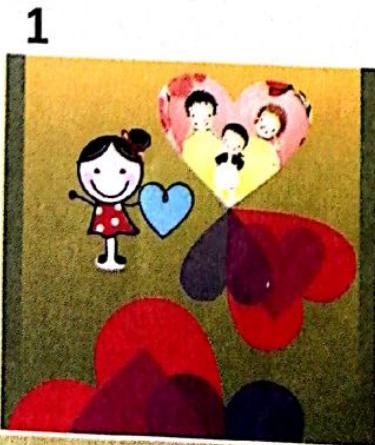


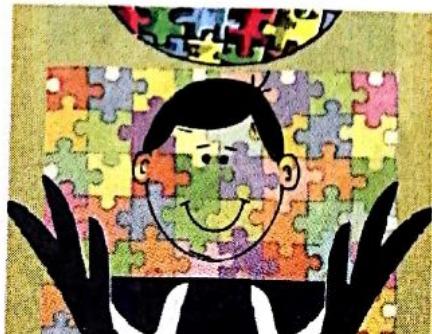
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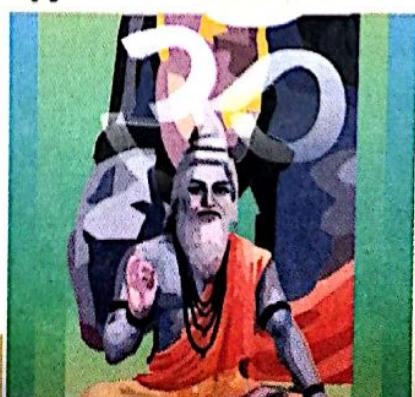


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1. Love Your Life

Think

Many years ago I read a story about a poor family. New Year's Day was approaching and everyone was in a festive mood. On the eve of the New Year's Day, while the couple and their daughter were having dinner, the wife told her husband that three wise guests wanted to visit their home at separate times tomorrow but she didn't know who to invite first. "Oh," the husband said and curiously looked at her. "Who are these guests?" The wife smiled pleasingly and said, "They are wealth, success and love." The husband paused and thought for a while. "I think we should invite wealth first because it will make our lives a little easier next year," he said. Their young daughter was quietly listening to their conversation. "But Father," she said, "I think we should invite love first." "Love?" her father asked curiously. "Yes, Father, if we invite love first, success and wealth will follow. If we invite wealth first then success and love will get left behind." The father tenderly placed his hand on her cheeks. "How right you are, darling," he said. "Love must always come first, because, if there is love, everything else is there and the whole world will be a happy place. If there is no love, everything else gets left behind."

Feel

If we fall in love with our lives and our futures, we will try our hardest to make them successful. And if we are successful, wealth will follow. If we love our family and friends, we will always try to be kind and considerate to them. If we love the place where we live, we will always try to keep it clean and tidy. If we love the world, we will always look after our environment.

Do

Love manages to bring out the best in people; it brings everyone together, stops wars and makes our world a happier place to live in. So, as we begin our New Year, let us pledge to invite love into our hearts, our homes, our schools, our communities and the world. Go out there and fill the world with your love and witness the change in the way people react to you.

2. Love Yourself

Think

Whenever I speak about love in front of students I have always heard a ripple of mirth pass through the class. However, love is one emotion that everyone wants to feel. The love of family, friends, a boy or a girl; it is all about loving others.

Feel

Yet the most important person to love is yourself. If you do not love yourself, who will? I know sometimes you will feel that you don't deserve to be loved, but don't be too hard on yourself because you are young, and you are still learning and finding out about the world. It is all right to make mistakes, as long as you learn from them. You may make several mistakes before you learn, but that is fine too because there is no greater teacher than experience. Love yourself and you will learn to love others, hurt yourself and you will learn to hurt others.

Do

Love is a beautiful emotion, all good things come from love. Everything you will ever want and need in your life comes from love, but you must first love yourself because when you love yourself everything you do will be done to be good to yourself. This is not in a selfish way but in a way that makes you grow as a person; you will see that everyone else loves too, and you will feel happier inside. This will show on your face as you will smile and laugh more. You will have seen what happens to people who have happy personalities; everyone wants to be with them, be around them and be their friend. The whole world will love you if you learn to truly love yourself.

3. Your Mother and Father

Think

Your family must be the most important group of people in your life. We are not all lucky to be born into happy families. You will have heard about it from your friends; sad, sorry stories about how unhappy they are, how their parents will not allow them to go out, their mother and father arguing all the time, and their brothers and sisters not getting along with each other. Yet you must know that your mother and father love you more than you can imagine. You would not have become the child that you are now if they had not loved you. Situations where a child is not loved by their mother and father are rare.

Feel

When you are down, it will be your parents who come to you, put their arms around your shoulder, wrap you up in their warm embrace and say a few soothing words to lift you from sadness; and don't you feel like all your troubles have floated away? They are not perfect and they will be the first people to own up to that fact. They will not get everything right, but know that they are trying very hard. It isn't easy for them to go to work, run a house, put food on the table everyday, dress you, buy you something that you may want just because Utsav's or Jagruti's parents bought it for them. Be patient with them and tell them that you appreciate all the effort they are making in raising you. They like the feeling of your embrace as much as you like the warmth of theirs.

Do

You are the way you are because of the unselfish love of your mother and father. Ask those who do not have that privilege and hear them say how lucky you are. Always remember that and don't ever take them for granted. Because, one day, before you know it, they will not be there and then you will know how much you miss them. You will be sorry that you didn't tell them enough times how much you loved them and thank them for everything they had done for you. You must cherish them always.

4. Brothers and Sisters

Think

I wish to speak to you about your brothers or sisters. Rivalry between siblings is common. Living in the same family as you do, you will inevitably step on each other's toes, encroach upon the other's space, want something that the other has or tease each other. At times you may dislike each other. Yet you should all know that you are more alike than you would like to believe; you have the same parents, some common genes and the family blood that flows through your veins. Maybe it is because you are so alike that you find it so difficult to get along, or is it that too much familiarity makes you dislike each other so much? Either way, one day when you are older and your parents are no longer there to resolve your differences, and you are lonely and have no one else to turn to but your sibling, you will see that there is no greater friend than your brother or sister.

Feel

It is a bond that was sealed from the moment you were born, uttered your first cry and introduced yourself to the family! At that moment they probably embraced you without question and it is this love, the love between a brother and a sister, between a brother and a brother and between a sister and a sister, that without question is something you will not get anywhere else. Your love for your siblings is pure, because despite the strife, you have been giving it since you were born and you do not ask for anything in return. That love is rare, and no one can come between love that is so selfless, because after living together for so many years you will know each other so well, and the bond between you will be so strong that no one can, or will be able to, create a rift if you choose not to allow them.

Do

Treasure that bond with your siblings always, put the silliness behind you, forgive and forget and your parents will be so proud that they have such fine children. I have read somewhere that a family that eats together, plays together and prays together, stays together.

5. True Friendship

Think

We live in a world of high-speed information where communication is so easy and cheap. No doubt you have latched on to this opportunity that new technology has provided and I dare say each one of you at some stage or another are in contact with your friends: through texting, Facebook, Twitter, e-mail, etc. Some of you may claim that you have hundreds of cyber-friends all over the world while others may have only a few. Yet out of all the friends you have, how many of them can you call your true friends? Very few, I imagine. Some of you may disagree with me and say that you know so much about your friend's life that you would put them on your list of true friends. In that case, I am sorry to tell you that you have not understood the real meaning of true friendship.

Feel

Next to your family, true friends are some of the most important people in your life. They are there when you are in trouble and need them; they listen to you when you need a sympathetic ear to listen to how you're feeling; they give advice and they are not judgmental. They accept you the way you are, they forgive and they forget; true friends will not always agree with you, and they will stop you when you're about to do something silly. When your heart is torn they put their arms around you and give you a hug, they smile when you smile and they cry when you cry. True friends are there when everyone else walks away. They share your joy and your pain, and when you tell them something in confidence they keep it a secret. True friends are near even when they are far away. True friends are supportive and inspiring.

Do

Choose your friends wisely, because they are as rare as a golden nugget on the city streets. When you find them, treasure them like you would your own life. Trust them always, protect them and forgive them. True friends are as important in life as your family and if they are your true friends they will, in time, become part of your family. If you have found one true friend in your life, then you are one of the luckiest people in the world.

6. Being Kind

Think

I have heard the words "Be kind and the whole world will come to you" many times in my life. I have tested its power like no other human quality and I have always found it to be worthy of the power it wields. Kindness is like honey; sweet and smooth. It warms the hearts of all those who learn to give it without expecting anything in return. "Join the company of those who make the barren places of life fruitful with kindness", as one famous person once said, "and we will join the ranks of those who receive without asking."

Feel

A kind gesture brings the best out of the people who give it and also from those who receive it. Give it freely without asking for anything in return. People will look at you with suspicion at first if they are not used to seeing you like that, but in time you will feel them returning your kindness towards them and you will win the praise of all those you know. Your life will become a most joyous journey, rich beyond all your imagination and you will see that we receive what we give.

Do

Try this experiment today and observe its power. When you go for your breakfast and greet your family, wish them a heartfelt good morning with a smile. Make a gesture of kindness in a little act of giving something: a hug perhaps, even making a piece of toast or washing the dishes. Say "Thank you, Mum", if she has made your breakfast. Do any little act and watch their reaction. Do the same for the people on the street, a random act of kindness that they would never have expected. Do that with your friends, your teachers, someone you had a little tiff with, and smile with kindness.

7. Don't Be Afraid

Think

As you begin your life's journey, I would like to speak to you about fear. Firstly, you should know that any person who says that they are never afraid is telling a lie. The journey of life forces us to do so many new things on a daily basis that being afraid sometimes is a natural feeling, especially in someone of your age. When you were very little, you had no fear, you were curious and you wanted to explore. Your parents would have allowed you to crawl everywhere under their watchful eye. At times they will have stopped and taught you that when you are near a flame, for example, you must not touch it because it will burn you. Fear is necessary sometimes because it forces you to think and stops you from doing something silly that you will regret later on.

Feel

As you grow up you will be called upon to make some important decisions in life. Fear can stop you from taking control and prevent you from being decisive, and at these moments you must not allow it to influence your decision. What is more important is for you to think things out carefully, and if you don't know what to do, speak to other people, read books or search the internet. When making crucial decisions in your life it is important to gather as much knowledge about the topic as possible and make an informed decision. Armed with this knowledge, your decision is more likely to be to your advantage than not. Making decisions is part of life, and you will be called upon to make more decisions the older you get. Fear can only play a part if you allow it. Great men and women have said that fear can stifle all progress, and mankind would not have achieved the huge progress it has made if it had allowed fear to get in the way.

Do

There are risks in any great adventure, which is what life is; you cannot allow these risks to stifle your life. Your journey through life can put hurdles in front of you but it cannot stop you from following your dream and achieving great things. Believe that you can, and you will succeed.

8. Follow Your Heart

Think

Out of all the organs of the body, your heart stands apart because it always tells the truth. I have heard somewhere that the heart is very great indeed, as it is through the heart that great inspiration comes for life, and not from the brain. You may have heard the saying that people often quote: "Follow your heart, my friend, follow your heart."

Feel

It is your heart that defines you and makes you unique as a person. The heart always gives good advice, but often we don't listen to it and claim afterwards that we did not know any better. With every moment of your life, the heart pumps blood around your body. Your organs depend on your heart to perform this duty and nourish them. It is because of the heart that the eyes can see, the ears can hear, the tongue can taste, the nose can smell, and the body can feel. Should the heart stop performing its duty of pumping blood, all our senses and organs would stop working, and we would die. Our heart is the powerhouse of our body. The heart has the capacity to do enormous good, it also has the capacity to guide us through our life with the truth it speaks, if only we learn to pause, listen and embrace the messages it is sending to us.

Do

Try to find a solitary corner every day, either in the early morning or just before you go to sleep, and in the silence of the solitude, close your eyes and simply listen. You will be surprised what daily truths leap out from your heart. When you first begin this exercise you will find that your mind wanders off thinking about all sorts of things. Don't fight this feeling, but let it drift from one thought to another. Too often you are told to fight this aimless drifting, but the function of the mind is to think, so let it drift. If you practice this every day, in time you will learn to become still and that stillness will bring silence to your heart and you will feel it beating. It will then speak to you, answering all the questions you ever had in your young life. It will guide you and show you the way for your own unique life, unique because you have a heart like none other, individual to you, and only that can show you the way ahead. Be still, be silent and listen to your heart.

9. Truth

Think

A long time ago a very wise man told me that if you tell a lie, you only have to tell more lies to hide the first. I know that when you are young, you will sometimes make mistakes, but you should know that no one grew up without making any mistakes. When your parents or teachers ask, you will often want to hide your mistake because you are afraid of the punishment you will be given by them. However, it is not the right thing to do. I always tell students to face up to their mistakes, apologise, and your punishment will be less severe than if you try to hide it. If you never face up to your mistakes, you will never learn from them, and if you get away with it the first time, you will try and hide it the next time as well. What will then follow is a series of lies to hide the mistakes you make until your mistakes get bigger and bigger as you grow older. Your lies, too, will get bigger to hide the bad things you do. If you choose to let your mistakes grow, you might one day do something seriously wrong, like committing a crime. You might try to hide this by telling a lie, but this time you should know that adults will not dismiss the matter. The police will be involved and they will do everything they can to discover the truth to ensure the serious crime does not go unpunished, as it sends the wrong message to everyone.

Feel

A child does not become a criminal in one night. These things always start with little lies and grow bigger as you get older. If you had owned up to your little mistakes and told the truth, you may have been punished, but you would have shown courage in telling the truth. You would have learnt a lesson that what you did was wrong and in all probability you would not have repeated the same mistake again.

Do

When you do something wrong it is best to own up and tell the truth. You don't have to do this in front of everyone; you can speak to a person you can confide in quietly and trust that he or she will deal with it in the right way. Telling the truth is always the right thing to do, except when your truthfulness is going to cause someone physical harm.

10. Do, Don't Worry

Think

People spend 40% of their time worrying about things that will never happen, 12% on needless worries about their health and 10% about petty things and issues. They only spend 8% of their time thinking about important things that really matter.

Feel

There are two kinds of worries; one kind is about problems you can solve and the other is about problems you can't solve because it is not within your capacity to solve them. You are either too young and you don't have the experience or you don't have the resources. If it is not within your capacity to find a solution to a problem, then it is pointless to worry about it.

Do

When you face any problem, you must first sit down and gather all the information and decide if it is within your capacity to find a solution. If not, you must find the right person to speak to and hope that they will be able to help you. Other people will look at your problems differently and you will be surprised at how quickly the solution is found. When the information you have gathered points to a solution you should still always check with someone you trust that it is the best answer to your problem. You will often find that the worries you are facing in your life have been faced by friends or peers in your class, in which case it is a common concern and the solution is often found very quickly by sharing it with the adults who look after you. Endlessly worrying about it without seeking help is never the answer, because it will only make you feel alone, and in time make you ill. Older siblings and friends will have gone through the same worries that you are going through and will know how to deal with them, so speak to them and share your worries. Problems are an important part of life, as are finding solutions, but worrying about them is never the right answer. Always share your worries and your life will be much happier.

11. You Are Special

Think

I want to speak to you about how special you are. Ask your parents how they felt when you were born and more often than not you will learn that it was a very special time for them. Your first smile, your first word, your first step; they will have all been very special moments for them. Over the many years you have lived they will have treated you with special care. They have fed you, bathed you, dressed you, played with you, taken you on holidays, bought you many things you will have wanted and shared many moments with you that you will remember as special.

Feel

Believe me when I tell you that you are the most special person in the world and there is nobody else like you. God has given you your own special gifts and you have the capacity to achieve special things and create a very special life for yourself. The only thing left for you to do is to find your own special things.

Do

As you grow up, learn what you are good at and what you can do better than other people around you. Write them down in a little book that you keep by your side, and somewhere, in all the good things you will write, lies your own special answers for what you should do with your own special life that only you can create. Make each day special; try and learn something new every day and one day when you are older, you will find your own special answers for life. Don't ever let anyone make you feel or think differently.

12. The Power to Choose

Think

The greatest freedom human beings have is the freedom to choose. So many children who are born into privileged circumstances throw away their lives because life is too easy for them. They have not experienced the hardships that light the fire that could lead them to a golden future. Sometimes, when we have everything we need in life, we develop a habit of drifting aimlessly through it, and it is when things do not come to us easily that we learn to appreciate their value.

Feel

If you are one of those who wants to build a bright future for yourself, you will have to learn to take charge of your life. You will have to stop making excuses and aspire. Today you are very lucky to live in an age when you can find out about things and learn. You have people around you to whom you can turn for help and support, yet too often we do not take advantage of these opportunities and we continue to drift.

Do

You must learn to take control of your life if you want to achieve great things because nobody will do it for you. Your parents and guardians will support you whenever they can and teach you right from wrong when you are young, but eventually a time will come when you will have to choose what you want to do with your life. If you do not choose wisely when this time comes and seek good counsel, you will make a mess of your life. Do not waste time trying to work things out for yourself, but instead ask your parents, teachers or anyone who is in a position to help if ever you feel lost. Ask God for help. Asking is the beginning of receiving. You have the freedom to create a beautiful life. Seek help by asking questions and making the right choices, and create an extraordinary life.

13. The Power of Silence

Think

You live a life where you are forever in a rush from the moment you wake up. You will rush your shower if you have one in the morning, you will rush your breakfast, and before you know it you will be out on the road rushing to school. At school you will go from one lesson to another and in between you will be chatting to your friends, possibly about football and television programmes.

At break time the boys may be busy playing football while the girls may sit chatting while eating their snacks. Some of you may be busy doing your homework that you have forgotten to do the night before. You may all be so busy in your own ways that some of you may even forget to eat your snack that your mother has carefully prepared for you. When the bell rings at the end of break you may pick up your bags and rush to your next lesson.

The same may follow at lunchtime, with a quick lunch and going back to your homework, football and aimless chit-chat about anything and everything. After school some of you may be involved in team sports, attend a homework club or take part in other activities that your school may offer. The rest will go home and have a snack while watching their favourite television programmes. If your parents are at home, they may tell you to do your homework while your mother prepares the dinner. The conscientious amongst you may do the homework well while the rest may rush it. You may watch more television, read or play games on the computer, Xbox, Nintendo or other gaming machines and before you know it, it will be time for bed.

Feel

At no stage will you have sat down in silence or stopped to think about the events of the day. Finding time for silence is important for your life because it allows you to look within yourself, and it enables you to think about things before making important decisions in your life.

Do

There is a lot of truth in the saying 'silence is golden'. If you can learn to find some time for yourself in silence every day, you will surely have a golden future because you will learn to listen to what your heart is saying.

14. The Value of Respect

Think

The most important relationship you will form is with yourself. You have to live with who you are and what you are, where you come from and where you are going. If you fail to develop this deep connection with yourself, you will never respect yourself. In order to become a good and worthy citizen of your community or your country, you must understand all the goodness within you and all the changes you need to make in your life. When you respect yourself, you will also respect others.

Feel

I have always found that when I approach people with respect, I can get them to do almost anything I want them to do. Approach your friends with respect, asking them to help you to do something, and observe their reaction. You will see that respecting what other people are without being judgemental, enables them to see your own inner goodness and immediately makes them more receptive to anything you say.

You will not always agree with people but that doesn't give you the right to be disrespectful to them. These days when people don't get what they want, they riot, vandalise property and start fights. It is a quick road to ruin. Approaching everyone with respect wins you many allies that you will inevitably need in your own march through life. Respect is the first step of that long march.

Do

Approach your teachers with respect and you will see that they will help you with any problem you have, even going as far as giving up their break and lunch times. If they are busy they will give you a time when you can go and see them. The same is true for friends, family and anyone else you meet on the street. Everyone wants to be treated with respect, to be told that they are important and that their contribution is valuable.

In Indian culture, we have the ancient tradition of respecting our parents, teachers and guests – *Mātru devo bhava, pitru devo bhava, āchārya devo bhava, atithi devo bhava*.

15. Learn to Forgive

Think

Nobody in this world can claim that they have not been harmed by another person. Whether we like it or not, all human beings have weaknesses and imperfections that sometimes lead them to make mistakes, such as saying something harsh to someone, cheating, lying or taking advantage of other people's goodwill. Yet people have great strengths as well. A person can do ten good things but when they do one thing wrong, we will quickly forget about them and only remember the bad thing. We will resent them for it and hold a grudge for a long time over that one error.

Feel

I have seen long-standing friendships destroyed because one friend has said something hurtful to the other, and all the good times they have shared since they were very young are forgotten because of it. We could argue that they weren't really good friends anyway, because if they were, they would have apologised, forgiven each other and moved on.

Do

It isn't easy to forgive when the scar is still fresh because we feel hurt, let down and want to teach them a lesson. I would urge you not to spoil your relationship with someone who has been a long-standing and good friend to you. It will only hurt you. Instead, sit down and talk to them about it and you will be surprised at how it becomes something so trivial that before you know it you will both be laughing about it. Say sorry, shake hands, hug and forgive. It takes a generous heart to forgive, forget and move on.

16. Set Goals

Think

In the second year of secondary school I ask students to start thinking about how they want their lives to unfold over the next ten years. What is important to them? What subjects at school interest them? What profession do they want to pursue and why? How do they intend to get there? After planting these questions in their minds, I give them two to three months to think about their life and do some research about what they want to do. Their aim is to prepare a powerpoint presentation which they have to present in front of their peers.

There is great anticipation, interest and excitement when the time for the presentations arrives. At the end of each presentation, I give the other students a chance to ask questions. Throughout the presentations, humour, laughter and curiosity fill the classroom, and when the questions are asked I always find that students enjoy the whole experience.

Feel

You will not be surprised when I tell you that money is almost always an important aim. Some want to pursue careers which will allow them to earn a lot of money. Others want to start their own businesses. Some feel being happy is more important than earning a lot of money. A small number of students want to help people and choose professions that will allow them to serve people.

Do

The purpose of the whole exercise is to force you, even though you are only young at the time, to think about your future. I have always found that nothing focuses the mind more than when the road we want to take in our lives is clear. The goal focuses the mind; it inspires, gives hope and energises every aspect of our lives to reach for it. Think about where you want to take your own life, set a goal, write it down, remind yourself about it every day and begin your journey.

17. Create a Plan

Think

Setting a goal for your life is all well and good but you will not reach your destination if you don't create a plan of how to get there. When a gardener plants the seeds of an apple tree, she has to make sure that the soil is fertile and that every so often it is watered. When the sapling is still small, she will hold it up with a stick so that its roots have the chance to establish themselves. While it grows into a small tree after many years of nurturing, and the fruits begin to hang from the branches, she will continue to feed it fertiliser and water until they ripen. Only then will the apples she picks be sweet and juicy. Did you know it takes between 6-10 years before an apple tree is fully mature and bears fruit!

Feel

When you are young you are still learning, but a time will come when you have to decide what you do with your life. Having once decided, you will have to create a good plan to set you on your journey. A good plan has a short, medium and long term vision, and you will need to decide where you want to be in two, five and ten years' time. You will have to review your plan regularly to make sure that you are on track and if not you will have to modify your plan to get back on track.

Do

Think carefully about your plan; read books and magazines to find out if there is a future in that goal. It is no good having a goal for your future if it is not going to give you the type of life you want to create for yourself. Find people who already do what you want to do and speak to them to try and get work experience in that field. Find out about the future prospects and all the positive and negative aspects of what you want to do. Your plan will be a hundred times better if you do your research well, otherwise you will stumble through it and end up stumbling through life. You cannot afford to stumble through life if you want to build a bright future for yourself and everyone you love.

18. Believe in Yourself

Think

The greatest President of America failed in business in 1831. A year later he ran for state legislator but was defeated. He then started another business in 1833, but that also failed, and after another ten years of hard work he ran for Congress and faced another defeat. Undaunted, he tried again in 1848 and was once more defeated. Still, he did not give up and managed to run for the Senate in 1855, only to lose. His desire to serve his country was so intense that just one year later he ran for the Vice President but lost. He then ran for the Senate in 1858 and was defeated. Almost thirty years after he began his long journey to fulfil his ambition to serve his country, Abraham Lincoln was elected to become the 16th president of the United States in 1860.

Feel

Like Lincoln, you will face many difficulties in your young life when trying to achieve something. Accept it as part of life and rather than feeling defeated, look at each experience as an opportunity to learn. Believe in yourself and carry on striving hard. There are no easy roads to success and everyone who has ever tried to achieve something special has faced problems, but they have never lost heart and always continued to march forward.

Do

The world is full of people who have taken chances and faced many obstacles, yet they have never given up. The world is richer because they persevered and believed in what they were trying to achieve. Eventually, they found their moment and were successful. The world would have been a poorer place if all these men and women had given up and lost self-belief at the first sign of difficulties. Believe in yourself always, never lose hope, and your chance will also come.

19. The Olympic Motto

Think

The Olympic motto is 'Citius, Altius, Fortius'. The three Latin words mean 'Swifter, Higher, Stronger'. Baron de Coubertin borrowed the motto from Father Henri Martin Didon, the headmaster of Arcueil College in Paris who used the motto to describe the great achievements of the athletes at his school. Coubertin felt it could be used to describe the goals of great athletes all over the world and it thus became the Olympic motto.

As we all know, the athletes who win the three Olympic medals are the best in the event at the time. The motto doesn't say 'Swiftest, Highest, Strongest' so being the best isn't given the same importance as taking part. The real competition isn't against the other athletes, it is against ourselves to get ready for such an event.

Feel

Life is really like that too, and our greatest battle is with ourselves in our daily existence:

- Getting up every morning
- Working hard and doing our best in anything we do
- Rising up when things are not going our way
- Constantly challenging ourselves
- Looking for ways of improving
- Making the best use of whatever the circumstances.

The list is really endless, and at the end of it all our lives become what we set out to achieve. So, don't look for the easy way down the well-trodden path.

Do

If you can live each day to make it better than the previous, you will have tried your best, and in time you too will win your own medals in life's struggle.

20. Aim for Excellence

Think

Have you ever looked at the sky lately and seen how bare it looks? It is because not many people dare to soar. The higher people climb, the greater the space, and the larger the offices and fewer the people. Out of every thousand people just one stays the full course and reaches the top. Out of thousands who have striven to reach the summit of Mount Everest, only 600 people from twenty countries have ever made it so far. Others have succumbed to the harsh weather, and either given up or perished.

Feel

A large multinational company has only one chief executive, who, like all those others who have reached the top, has had to aim for excellence his whole life, work long hours and remain focused on his task against all adversity. All chief executives have shown intense commitment to excellence and in time they have been rewarded. Excellence is not arrived at by chance but through constant effort. They have thought of excellence in their every action and have taken risks when others have hesitated. When trouble has come their way, they have stood firm and resolute to that single aim for excellence, even if they have been the only ones.

Do

As a child of this world, once you have decided to aim for excellence in your life, seek the help and assistance of everyone you know. Your journey will be more enjoyable with others by your side, as there will surely be times when you will want to give up when the going gets tough. The support, guidance and encouragement of others can be a huge source of inspiration at such times, and no one achieves excellence without a mentor to guide them.

21. Learn to Look After Yourself

Think

We brush our teeth every morning to make sure that they are clean and we don't get bad breath. We take a bath to make sure that we are clean and our friends don't run away from us holding their noses. We eat to make sure we remain strong and healthy. We live in a house so that we are protected from the cold and the heat of the sun. Your parents go to work so that they can provide you with all the basic things you need to survive. Everything we do, we do to make sure that our bodies enjoy the best that life can offer. If we were to get out of our bodies, we wouldn't need to work, brush our teeth, wash, eat, live in a house or use a car to go to places. We live our lives to serve our bodies.

Feel

If we learn to serve our needs well then we will have the best comforts that life can provide. It is the first lesson that we all have to learn: look after yourself and the world will look after itself.

I once heard a story about a father who was irritated by his son while he was reading a newspaper. Frustrated, he tore up a picture of the world from a magazine into small pieces and asked his son to put it back together, expecting the puzzle to keep his son occupied for some time. The son looked at the puzzle, on the back of which was a picture of a man. He knew what the shape of the man should be and set about putting it together. Within ten minutes he went to his father with the completed puzzle. His father was surprised and asked him how he had managed to do it so quickly. The boy said, "I put the man at the back of the puzzle together and the world came together." His father smiled and hugged his son. "That's right son, the world is together if each person is together," he replied.

Do

If you want to build a good, happy and successful life for yourself then you will have to learn to look after yourself. Only when you are happy in your own life will you be able to contribute to society and to the rest of the world.

22. Think

Think

Most people never really think. If we learn to think properly, our minds have a limitless capacity to create new and ingenious solutions to any problem that we are likely to face in our lives.

Feel

The quality that separates the outstanding student from the average student is their capacity to think, analyse, evaluate and examine a question from a very individual and unique point of view. This ability enables them to look at a question and quickly arrive at an answer. It becomes more and more relevant the higher you climb up the education ladder. The questions you will be asked will not just be about presenting facts but they will force you to look at charts or graphs and digest information in a passage and provide an answer.

It is a skill that also becomes more relevant at work the higher you climb up the levels of the company. While the workers in a factory perform repetitive tasks, the manager is paid to think and make decisions. It means gathering information from all available sources, studying it and arriving at a solution or plan of action. People who generate ideas and provide solutions to problems are valued by companies because it is ideas which enable companies to grow and stay ahead of the competition.

Do

Scientific research has shown that people only use 10% of their brain in thinking. The other 90% is lying dormant waiting to be brought into use. The more you train yourself to think, the greater your chances of growing as a person and fulfilling your ambitions in life. You must have noticed that the students who get the highest marks in the class also know how to concentrate and have a great attitude to work!

23. Do Your Best

Think

Throughout my teaching career I have come across so many students who have risen from the bottom of their class at age eleven to near the top by the time they are sixteen. Many have not been the most gifted children in life and have found studying hard, and many have come from under-privileged family backgrounds. Yet they have all possessed one important quality: they have had a deep inner desire to do their best.

Feel

While others have chosen to take the easy path and given up when things became tough, they have striven hard and persevered until they have understood what was being taught to them. I have seen them grow up over several years and, when I go on my daily walks around the school, seen them working away in libraries, with a pile of books spread in front of them. I have seen them working with their friends to find an answer to a difficult question. When things have become difficult they have approached their teachers for help, often sitting with them in their free lessons while others sit in common rooms aimlessly chatting.

At times they have appeared lonely but when asked they have always assured me that they are really fine. When the moment has called they have delivered the best results and many have gone on to study medicine, dentistry, engineering, accounts or humanities at some of the finest universities.

Do

You don't need to be the most gifted person to create the most wonderful life for yourself. What you need to do is deliver the very best you can in anything you take on in life. I always tell students that God always helps those who learn to help themselves. Never take the easy route or follow the crowd to be popular.

24. Know Yourself

Think

Life is such that we are constantly called upon to do things, and in so doing, we never really sit down and think about what we are because we are busy doing what other people want us to do. If you continue on that path you will never really know what you are as a person. You will never really find out about your strengths and weaknesses, what you are good at and what you should stay away from.

In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Polonius says, "And this above all, to thine own self be true. And it must follow as the night, the day – thou canst not then be false to any man." Living a good and happy life means getting to know yourself, and only when you do will you know what your talents and abilities are and what you are capable of achieving as a person. An honest assessment of what you are will allow you to chart a clear plan for your life. It will tell you what you should get involved in and what you should avoid.

Feel

It is no good trying to be a dancer when you have two left feet, or following an engineering career when you are no good at physics and mathematics. It is not difficult to find out what you are good at because as you go through your schooling you will be tested and examined many times. In time you will know which subjects you are good at and which you find challenging. You will be told to try harder and if you are a conscientious student you will put in the extra effort and improve your marks. At the same time you will learn that it is clearly a great struggle for you and you should stay clear of that particular subject when you are given the option to choose, which in most schooling systems will be when you are fourteen.

Do

Learn to make notes about things you enjoy, and the decisions you make about your life will be so much more beneficial and accurate.

25. Keep Good Company

Think

New students join our school every year, and I always make sure I spend at least one lesson with them every week for two years. It gives me a chance to speak to them about anything and everything that is affecting their life and in time I get to know them very well. In most cases we are able to change them for the better, but sometimes no matter what help and support we give, we are not able to influence them. I always find that in such situations the influence of their so-called friends outweighs all other positive influences.

Feel

It is fascinating to see how the students who are focused and hard-working always seem to find each other and in time almost always become good friends. Even at such a young age these students know what is good for them and find like-minded friends who have the same inclination. The same is true of students who have lost their way; they attract friends who have the same attitude problems as they do. Their relationships with these students are as unstable as their attitudes, and sadly some of them never form strong bonds with anyone, drifting through life aimlessly from one crisis to another because they are too arrogant to listen to good counsel. Sometimes 'good students' seeking acceptance become mixed up with them and end up being pulled down with them. At times the students with negative attitudes can come under the influence of a caring mentor, where they are shown the error of their ways, and in time they change for the better. It is a joy to see such a transformation.

Do

Be careful who you associate with; pick friends whose desire for success is as strong as yours. If you want to soar to great heights in your life, learn to pick partners who are willing to make the difficult journey with you. Positive people plant positive thoughts in your mind and lay strong roots which hold you up in all adversity, helping you to reach your destination.

26. Money

Think

We all need money to survive in this world. It is the reason your parents get up every morning and go to work. It is said that the love of money is at the root of all evil and in the wrong hands can cause a lot of sorrow. In the right hands, money can do a lot of good and bring happiness to many people all over the world.

Feel

Some people are happy to be able to buy the basic needs to live a good life, while others want to be able to buy all the best things in life. Whenever I ask questions about money to students, they always place it as one of their highest priorities in life. Some of them openly admit that they want to live in grand houses with swimming pools, drive the fastest cars, travel first class and have the most luxurious holidays in the most exotic places.

Do

These things are clearly important to some students and may be to you as well. I don't want you to feel guilty over it. I daresay that because you wish it, you will be extra focused in your life in order to make sure you achieve that ambition. Whether you are happy to live a simple life or one in the fast lane, money will be needed. While I do not think you should make money the main object of your desire, I do believe you should do everything in your power to make sure you make as much money as you need to make you happy and make a contribution to society. There are a lot of unfortunate people in the world who are not in that position. If your money can make a difference to them and at the same time allow you to live a happy life, there is nothing wrong in earning as much money as you can.

27. Develop Good Habits

Think

Our life can be what we make of it. Our destiny and the way we live our lives is in our hands, yet too often we take the easy road and forget that how we conduct our lives and what we do and achieve is entirely up to us. The list of people who have risen from the depths of poverty to gain fame, fortune and public recognition is very long indeed. They have not sought excuses but found a way to overcome their disadvantages and moved on.

How many times have you heard your alarm clock go off and hit the snooze button to grab a few more minutes of sleep? I imagine you have then fallen back to sleep, got up late and have had to rush to school. When you are tired, it isn't easy to ignore the aches and pains and get up, but you must if you are to develop good habits, a rhythm that you control rather than something your body controls. Wake up at the same time everyday and observe how your body adjusts to when you want to wake up and not when it wants you to wake up. Athletes preparing for the Olympics will wake up at a set time, train and eat at the same time, and rest for a set time so that their bodies become in tune with the demands of their sport.

Feel

The same is also true for your mind. You should train your mind to do what you want it to do, otherwise you will find that when you sit down to study, you will try and put it off by doing all sorts of odd things because you haven't developed a good habit from the start. I know students who get up early and manage to find time to study. They are always alert, calm and completely at ease with the demands of going to school, and often amongst the top students in their year. At the same time they don't miss out on all the fun that goes on in their lives.

Do

Try waking up in good time for school so that you don't have to rush; try studying for a few hours every day, find time to play, and give your body and mind time to rest and recover. You will soon reap the positive benefits of your good habits.

28. Education

Think

A wise man once said, "If I had my time all over again, I would not 'educate' myself but learn to concentrate, then all the knowledge of the world would be mine to use as I wish." This is an incredibly powerful statement. Ask any teacher and they will tell you that the most important quality a student needs is the ability to concentrate, and the best students have an uncanny talent for it. Some students can study with music playing in their ears, others can study in a rowdy class, yet others need silence to study.

Feel

While you are young you have no choice but to go to school to learn the basic things like reading, writing and arithmetic. They are important to living a good and productive life because without these basic skills you will not be able to learn anything. It is good that going to school is compulsory and that in many countries going to secondary school is also compulsory, because apart from learning many subjects and skills, you also learn to socialise with people. You will be required to work with people your whole life.

After you successfully complete your schooling, some of you may decide to go to university and study a subject upon which you will build your career. Others may be eager to begin working and start earning money, and it may be the way to achieve what you want to gain in your working life. There is no one way of building a career, but what is important is for you to understand that learning anything in life is never wasted. Sometimes you will find that something you learnt years ago is suddenly very useful to you. A successful career has many routes, though it is a well known fact that those students who go to university will generally earn a higher salary. In some countries it is seen as the only way to escape poverty.

Do

What you must decide is whether you are a person who can tolerate years of studying, and if you can then it is a really good way of building a good future.

29. Reading for Learning

Think

The ability to read is fundamental to all forms of academic learning and to lead a fruitful and productive life.

Feel

If you are planning to follow an academic path through your young life, you must master the techniques of reading.

Do

The 'SQ3R' formula encourages a systematic and an active approach to reading. It is divided into five strands: Survey, Question, Read, Recall and Review.

1. SURVEY: Survey the book, article or chapter as a whole. It means examining the chapter quickly by reading the first and last paragraphs and looking at the various section headings.

2. QUESTION: Before you start to read anything, look at the title and think of some questions that you may want answered. More questions will arise as you read, but write them down and see if they are answered. The process of asking questions concentrates your mind on what you are reading and helps you to think about the author's argument and relate it to what you already know and what you need to find out.

3. READ: Once you have identified these initial questions, you should read the whole chapter, article or essay without making any notes and make sure you get an overview of the content. You cannot get a grasp of the main ideas until you have read it the first time. Once you have done this, divide the article, chapter or essay into small sections or paragraphs and read it carefully to understand its meaning.

4. RECALL: You are now ready to make notes. Write a brief statement in your own words down the side of each section about the content. Writing the main point in your own words enables you to process the information and integrate it into your own thinking, and subsequently your own writing.

5. REVIEW: Ask yourself if you have grasped the main ideas. Have the questions you wrote initially been answered? Do your notes reflect this and make sense? Do you know what the article, chapter or essay is about? This process of active reading is time-consuming but ultimately beneficial to your understanding and formulation of ideas.

30. Preparing for Examinations

Think

Examinations are here to stay unless we can find a better way of testing students, and you will therefore have to get used to them.

Feel

The reason some students succeed in examinations and others fail is largely, but not entirely, due to their preparation. In much the same way that preparation for various things in life delivers success, well-planned revision is essential to success in examinations.

Do

1. Make a revision timetable long before your examinations and make sure you stick to it. Read your notes and make summaries of your work. Use a variety of methods, such as, reading revision websites, working with friends, testing yourself, and most importantly of all, getting used to the style of questions by writing past examinations papers.
2. Your habit of waking up early will be very important on the day of the examination. Make sure you have a good breakfast (for the afternoon examination, have a light lunch). Use the summary you made when revising to review the key points and make sure you have all the essential writing tools as well as calculator and protractor. Arrive in good time for the examination and find time to relax with your friends.
3. Quickly read through the entire paper at the beginning of the examination. Start with questions you feel most confident with and finish them in good time to allow yourself enough time for the rest. If you have to write an essay, prepare a brief plan with the key points you want to mention. Drink water if you are allowed to take a bottle into the examination hall and make sure you finish the paper in good time so you can read through your answers at the end.
4. It is important to pause between questions, take deep breaths, remain calm, and keep your mind alert and focused. If you have started your revision months before the examinations and have been working steadily throughout the year, you will find that preparation for examinations is not that hard after all.

31. Learn to Think Logically

Think

The ability to think critically and accurately requires a lot of personal leadership. It is not something that can be imposed on you by others and requires you to be very self-disciplined.

Feel

You will need to direct and monitor yourself, and when your preconceived ideas and opinions are proven to be misinformed by the process of self-evaluation, you will need to be prepared to correct yourself instead of hanging on to your old, biased views. At times it will be hard, but what it will do is take you on a road to self-improvement and instil a rigorous standard of excellence in your life.

Do

When evaluating an article, keep the following questions in mind:

1. What is the main purpose of the article?
2. What is the key question that the author is addressing?
3. What is the most important information?
4. What are the main conclusions?
5. What are the key concepts or ideas the author is trying to convey in the article?
6. Do they make any assumptions and are they justified?
7. What are the main implications of following the author's reasoning?
8. What are the main implications of not following the author's reasoning?
9. What are the main points presented?

Learning to reason logically and succinctly will set you apart in your approach to everything you do and take you on the road to self-improvement that will prevent you from making many costly mistakes. Whole careers and companies have been destroyed because people did not reason logically, and arrived at answers or solutions which were completely at odds with what was actually required. Clarity in thinking gives clarity in response that is logical, objective and unbiased. It will, more often than not, point to the right decision. In addition, don't crowd your judgement with emotions.

32. Learn to Be Objective

Think

We are bombarded with so much information everyday through newspapers, radio, television, advertisements, the internet, social media and so many other forms of communication that we do need to be careful about what we accept as truth and what is pure propaganda. Almost all newspapers have political affiliations and the style of their articles and the messages they put out in print are often biased towards a particular political party or preference. Advertisers make all sorts of wild claims about the products they sell, often hiding the real truth in the small print.

Feel

Increasingly, everything we hear, see, read and watch needs to be reviewed objectively with a clear mind. There are ways of doing this if we are prepared to learn. A well cultivated thinker will:

- Raise vital questions and challenges before making any judgements
- Gather and assess relevant information and use well-formed ideas before making an interpretation
- Come to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions and test them against known standards
- Keep an open mind with alternative opinions and be aware of the assumptions, implications and consequences of solutions
- Communicate effectively with others in finding solutions to complex problems.

Do

This skill to review information objectively and give a reasoned response is important for anyone who is thinking about entering higher education. Your ideas and thoughts will be constantly tested and questioned throughout your life, and the decisions made, good or bad, will be determined by your ability to be unbiased. It is a skill that can be learnt with practice and clarity in your thinking using the tools mentioned above.

33. Dealing with Problems

Think

Problems occur daily in life. People have to work with one another. Whenever people come together, there will inevitably be times when they will not agree with each other and you will find this to be the case with your friends at school, with teachers and with your family. No two people will always agree. Learning to deal with people and problems is a part of life and the sooner you learn this, the happier, more fruitful and productive your life will become.

Feel

When you are young you always have people around you to help you and life doesn't seem all that bad. As you grow through your school years, you will become more and more independent. The decisions you make may also become more and more important, and some of them may have life-changing impact. You will learn to deal with problems in your own way, and sometimes you will stumble and make the wrong decisions. The most important thing to remember is not to suffer them on your own. If you have problems with your friends, the best thing to do is speak to them, and if they are your true friends they will be happy that you spoke to them directly. The same is true with your family; remember that they love you. Their love for you is unconditional and your parents and brothers or sisters are your staunchest supporters. Speak to them frankly about anything that troubles you and they will always find a way to help you.

Do

Schools have teachers and counsellors to help you, and in many schools nurses as well. If it is an academic problem, ask your teachers, and if you are shy to ask in front of everyone or afraid to make a fool of yourself in front of your peers, ask after the lesson, during the break or at lunchtime. If they are busy, make an appointment at a time when it is convenient to them. If you have personal problems, speak to your form or class teacher, or make an appointment with the school counsellor. Some schools will have 'Vertical Mentoring Schemes' in which older students mentor younger students. The support for you is there, all you need to do is ask for help. Even adults can't cope with their problems on their own.

34. Be a Team Player

Think

If you are a member of a sports team, you will know that the success of the team depends on the trust and support you give to each other. Your school orchestra is an ensemble of many different instruments; each produces its own beautiful sound, yet left to play on their own, they will sound like a disjointed cacophony of tunes that will not be at all pleasing to the ear. It requires a conductor to bring everyone together at just the right time and produce music that you will want to listen to. This is also true for a pop group or a band, where the singer must sing in harmony with the beat of the drums and guitars to produce music that you will enjoy. One raindrop alone can do little harm, but when they all come together and fall relentlessly, they send a torrent that will break the banks of rivers and tear everything in their path. In much the same way, it only takes a small group of thoughtful and committed people to change the world.

Feel

If you are going to succeed in your life you will need the help and support of everyone around you. Yet before they can help you, they will need to know that you are willing to participate in the game. You cannot be a bystander if you want your life to mean something. You will need to join a team that thinks like you and wants the same things. Work with them in mutual support and learn from each other, show gratitude when it is due, forgive each other when mistakes are made and make sure that they do not happen again.

Do

You are a member of the human race and you are here to contribute to the common good of mankind, something which you will not be able to do alone. The success of a company is the result of the combined efforts of all employees, and the success of a football team is the result of all the players fulfilling their role, helping and supporting each other and trusting each other when passing the ball. When they come together the passing is so fluid, the movements so graceful and the final goal inevitable. The combined effort of many brains is more powerful than the brain of a single person, so learn to be a team player. The rise to your own success will be so much easier.

35. A Farmer's Sorry Tale

Think

I once read a heartbreakng story about a farmer in South Africa who saw many of his friends become rich by discovering diamond mines. It is a famous true story known as 'Acres of Diamonds'. The story goes that the farmer sold his farm and with the money he got from the sale, he too went searching for his own diamond mine. He spent his entire life wandering from one area to another without success. Tired and distraught after many years of searching, one day he threw himself into a river and drowned.

Feel

One day, the man who had bought his farm was crossing a stream running on his land and had spotted a sudden flash of bright colours flashing from the bottom of the stream. He bent down and picked up one large stone that was shining. It was a pretty, curious looking stone, the likes of which he had never seen before. Thinking that it would look good on the mantelpiece, he took it home and didn't think about it again.

One day a visitor came to his home and picked up the stone, examining it carefully. He turned to the farmer and asked him if he knew what he had found. The naïve farmer told him that he thought it was just a beautiful crystal. The visitor looked at the farmer and told him that it was one of the largest diamonds he had ever seen, perhaps the largest ever discovered. The farmer said that his stream was full of such stones. It so happened that the farm turned out to be one of the largest diamond mines in Africa, and if only the first farmer had done his research and found out what diamonds looked like, he would never have had to go prospecting for diamonds and he would have been one of the richest men in Africa.

Do

Some of you may get frustrated that you are told to do many things in life without having any say, like going to school for example, but this is your preparation for life. If you are to spot your own diamonds in life, you must be ready for it. Many young people who do not have the opportunities that you do would give anything for such privileges.

36. Be Ready for Opportunities

Think

Thomas Edison wrote that he failed a thousand times before he was able to perfect the simple light bulb, yet he learnt from each mistake and improved each time. The knowledge he gained along the way was important to reach his final goal. Thomas Edison was ready for his opportunity because he made careful notes about each test he conducted, clearly identifying what worked and what didn't work, so that when his eureka moment came, he was ready to understand its significance and ready to grasp it.

Feel

Opportunities come every day for people, yet most of us pass them by because we are not ready, or not well prepared to grasp them. Do not think that going to school and sitting in classrooms for endless hours is a waste of time; it is your chance to prepare for opportunities that will certainly come your way if you concentrate, work hard and study.

Do

Whether you want to be a great sportsperson, singer, scientist, actor, writer or the best in any other profession you will have to train for it and learn and improve your skills to be ready for your opportunities when they come. There are no easy roads to success.

37. Prepare for Competition

Think

The minute you walk onto a football pitch, you are in competition with the opposition. When you are on the athletics track, on the badminton or tennis court, in the classroom, or when writing examinations, you are always competing. Competition is part of life and the sooner you get used to it the better prepared you will be to face it.

Feel

When you grow older and apply for a course at college or university, you will be in competition with the other applicants and only the best candidates will get through. When you apply for a job, you will not be the only applicant, and the quality of your application will decide whether you are selected for an interview. Even at the interview you will be questioned and compared with the other candidates.

Yet you can prepare for the competition. The team that wins will be the team that is most prepared, best trained and knows the strengths and weaknesses of both itself and the opposition. The candidate who gets the job will be the person who is most knowledgeable about the job and has researched the company thoroughly. Their application will be carefully written and they will put on a polished performance at the interview.

Do

Preparation is the key to overcoming adversity and winning. If you want to be a great sportsperson, you must train hard and work with the best coaches. If you want to achieve success in your education, study hard and seek help from your teachers, and if you want to go to the best universities, make sure you get the best grades and understand what the entry requirements are. If you want to work for the best company, make sure you research them thoroughly and prepare well for the interview. People fail because they don't prepare; preparation will increase your chances of success tenfold.

38. Lincoln's Letter

The 16th President of the United States of America once wrote a very inspirational letter to the Headmaster of his son's school:

"He will have to learn, I know, that all men are not just, all men are not true. But teach him also that for every scoundrel there is a hero, and for every selfish politician, there is a dedicated leader. Teach him that for every enemy, there is a friend. It will take time I know, but teach him, if you can, that a dollar earned is of far more value than five dollars found. Teach him to learn to lose and to also enjoy winning. Steer him away from envy, if you can. Teach him the secret of quiet laughter. Let him learn early that bullies are the easiest to lick. Teach him, if you can, the wonder of books, but also give him quiet time to ponder over the eternal mystery of birds in the sky, bees in the sun and flowers on a garden hillside.

"In school, teach him it is far more honourable to fail than to cheat. Teach him to have faith in his own ideas, even if everyone tells him they are wrong. Teach him to be gentle with the gentle people and tough with the tough. Try to give my son the strength not to follow the crowd when everyone is getting on the band wagon. Teach him to listen to all but teach him also to filter all he hears on a screen of truth and take only the good that comes through.

"Teach him, if you can, how to laugh when he is sad. Teach him there is no shame in tears. Teach him to scoff at cynics and to beware of too much sweetness. Teach him to sell his brawn and brain to the highest bidders, but to never put a price tag on his heart and soul. Teach him to close his ears to a howling mob, and to stand and fight if he thinks he is right.

"Treat him gently but do not cuddle him, as only the test of fire makes fine steel. Let him have the courage to be impatient and let him have the patience to be brave. Teach him always to have sublime faith in himself, because he will then always have sublime faith in mankind. I know this is a big order, but see what you can do. He is such a fine little fellow, my son."

39. "I Have a Dream"

This extract from Martin Luther King's speech exemplifies what can be achieved if we are truly passionate about pursuing our dream. Read it, you will feel inspired.

"Though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.' I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today!"

"I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of 'interposition' and 'nullification', that one day right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today!"

"I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and 'the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together'. This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that one day we will be free."

40. Tackle Bullying

Think

Bullying is a problem in most schools. Bullying can be verbal if you are told by others that you are no good and lowest of the low in society. It also can be physical, emotional, or sexual. Bullies will use any means at their disposal to abuse their victims, be it through texts, e-mails or social networking sites. Bullies isolate their victims and start all sorts of false rumours that will cause a lot of emotional grief.

Feel

Cyber-bullying has caused a lot of misery to a lot of children all over the world, and in some serious cases has led the victims to committing suicide. You will find many of these stories on YouTube. Cyber-bullying is illegal and a criminal offence and there are means by which the bullies can be caught. Every time somebody makes a call from a mobile phone, the number is recorded by the network provider even if the caller withholds their number. The police can gain access to these records and track the person making the call.

Do

<http://www.bullying.co.uk> is a very useful website for all victims of bullying. It gives advice on all forms of bullying, with how best to handle the problem. The most important point to learn is you must not face the problem on your own. Schools have bullying policies and will have many different types of strategies to help you. You must report any form of persistent bullying to a responsible member of staff such as your form or class teacher. If you find approaching any one of them difficult, you must tell your parents or a close friend.

If you are a victim of bullying, tell someone you trust and speak to them about what is happening. Help is at hand and you will receive support, though sometimes it can take time. Get your parents involved early. Allowing the bullying to continue will only make your life miserable; you could suffer depression, become aloof, and lose faith in life and living. You are a child of this world and you have every right to live a happy life. Seek help early on if you become a victim of any form of bullying.

41. Food, Exercise & Health

Think

Every time there are chips on our school menu, all I see students taking is a plate full of them! Sometimes we give them a chance to set the menu for a week, and always sandwiches, chips, pizza, cakes and fizzy drinks are among the first items they choose. While these foods are tasty, I think you will not be surprised when I tell you that they are not always good for you.

Feel

When you are young, your body can withstand almost any ailments and minor injuries; its capacity to recover is enormous. Even when you fall and cut yourself, your body heals much more quickly and because you recover so quickly many of you feel invulnerable. Yet you all know about smoking; one cigarette will not harm your lungs. Even the effects of smoking for years will not be obvious when you are young, but all research shows that cigarettes cause lung cancer in people who smoke over a long period of time.

Do

Whether you are looking at your eating habits or smoking, the effects will not be felt when you are young because the harmful effects of any abuse to your body are cumulative; that is they build up over many, many years. While I am not asking you to stop eating what you like, I am asking you to eat everything in moderation. Eat healthy foods, do regular exercise, play sports, and you will enjoy a healthy life for longer. People often say that they will start to look after all these issues when they are older, but I can assure you, if you don't form good eating habits when you are young, you will find it extremely hard to change when you are older.

42. Take Measured Risks

Think

Every time you do something you take risks. Taking risks is part of life, and the more you try something you have never done before, the more challenges you face and the greater will be your chance of accomplishing something extraordinary. Nothing in this world was achieved by people who capitulated at the first sign of a problem.

You can reduce your chances of failure if you learn to take measured risks. When you want to go somewhere, you would never do so without planning the journey. You would find out the address, look up the map and check if the destination can be reached by using public transport or whether it is easier to drive there. If you are driving you would plan the journey on your Sat Nav. Yet there is a risk in your journey; you might have an accident or the car, train or bus may break down. However, it should not prevent you from making the journey because if any of these things happen, there are alternative solutions to overcoming them. You will be careful throughout the journey, be watchful of all the hazards, traffic conditions, pedestrians crossing, etc. You may get to your destination late, but you will get there.

Feel

The same applies to anything you want to do, achieve, make or build. If the plan is well thought out, all the risks are carefully considered and alternative solutions planned for and if you have sought advice from the right people, then there is a good chance you will achieve what you set out to.

Do

Risks become increasingly higher when you try to do something that no one has ever done before. Mount Everest was not climbed at the very first attempt but each time people learned from their experience and others found better ways to overcome them and eventually the summit was reached. Dutch teenager Laura Dekker would not have become the youngest person to sail solo around the world had she not trained for all the difficulties she would have to overcome. Thinking about the possible problems before you begin your task and preparing or training for them is as important as planning for them. This is called taking measured risks. By so doing you increase the chances of success.

43. Think About the Future

Think

Sometimes parents come and tell me that they would like their child to follow a certain profession, but when I examine their performance I often find that their personality and their ability are not suited to that profession because their strengths lie elsewhere. Sometimes they listen and reassess their aim, at other times they ignore the advice and discover the hard way that they are not suited to what they want to do after all. It is such a waste of time.

Choosing a career that you will follow for the rest of your life cannot be done on the basis of your parents' preference, nor something you select because your friends think it is a good idea or because it pays well. They are flimsy reasons and will eventually lead you to quit. A very close friend of mine entered a profession because it paid well and managed to reach the post of Financial Controller in a multinational company. The long hours and constant pressure, however, eventually got to him and within ten years he quit the company to do something entirely different that he enjoyed.

Feel

In this age of high-speed information you are lucky to have all the guidance you need in making one of the most significant decisions of your life. You only have to type a word and your computer screen will be filled with a long list of websites that can help you. The most important reason for entering a profession and making a career out of it must be because you are deeply interested in that field. Your deep interest will enable you to learn everything you need to know about it. As your expertise grows, you will rise through the company. In time you will know so much that you will be recognised as an expert in the field, become highly sought after and earn the high salary that such a position would merit.

Do

Think hard about what you enjoy and build a career around it. You are more likely to rise to the top of the profession because you will stick with it through good times and bad because of your deep interest in it. I have lost count of the number of times I have heard people grumble about their job. You don't want to be one of them.

44. Developing Good Character

Think

I want to speak to you about building a good character. I remember reading somewhere that the character of a person is that which he or she truly is in thought and action. I have thought hard about how a good person would act, and I believe that persons of good character would always act in a manner that would do no harm to anyone or anything.

Feel

It is a very hard thing to do but we can get close to that aim if we conscientiously look at ourselves daily, learn from what we do right and what we do wrong, and strive to improve. The following five powerful tools will help you to learn and reach that goal:

Do

1. The power of faith: always have faith in yourself that you have the capacity to achieve great things and you will.
2. The power of conscientiousness: you must continue conscientiously to strive hard to improve, no matter what the difficulties, and to show courage.
3. The power of fear: always be afraid of the consequences of acting wrongly in thought, in what you say and how you behave because that fear will stop you from doing wrong things.
4. The power of energy: you must have abiding energy to face up to all that is wrong and choose the right.
5. The power of insight: you must learn to pause and think to gain a good understanding of how you must act before acting and be prepared to destroy the root cause of that which is wrong.

45. Foundations

Think

I want to speak to you about building a strong foundation. You may find this hard to understand but a firm foundation for your life prepares the groundwork for your future. All civil engineers will tell you that the ground below a tall tower block has to be strong and well prepared to withstand the huge weight of the tower that will rise above it. If it is poorly constructed, the ground will subside, sink and collapse as the weight of the material of the tower block presses down on it. Life is like that. When you are young, you want to enjoy life, play with your friends, go to parties, crack jokes, laugh and generally feel happy. While these are things that you should do, do so in moderation and keep one eye on your future.

Feel

Going to school, playing sports, learning to play an instrument, paying attention in class, learning to read and write, doing homework, revising for examinations are all things you should also pay attention to and take seriously. While they may seem dull and tedious, they are helping you to grow, helping to lay the foundation upon which you can build your future.

Do

Watch the students in your class and study how each of them conducts their lives and soon you will realise why some of them are at the top of the class and others are lagging behind; watch also why some students are good at sports and others are just playing. If you have aspirations to be a musician, you will have to learn to sing or play an instrument; if you want to go to university, you will have to spend time studying; and if you want to be a footballer, you will have to spend time training. Whatever you want to achieve in life can be achieved if you start doing these things from an early age and lay the foundation for your future success. I always say to students, "There are no easy roads to success." Every successful life requires preparation, a strong foundation that they begin building when they are young.

46. Faith in God

Think

When we are young we are often so preoccupied with friends, family, sports, parties and school, that the thought of God seems so far away. As we grow up, we begin to learn about God through our various associations and in the process some connect with Him while others let the thought of God pass them by, thinking they are still too young with their whole life in front of them to complicate it with this most personal of matters.

Faith in God is a very personal association. Yet, in these days of fast-pace living there is a need for us to connect with Him because there is a need for us to develop an inner personal strength to cope with the trials and tribulations of modern pressures. If you haven't noticed already, you should know that the sharp tooth of competition ebbs and flows at every edge, waiting to knock you down, and only those with an inner fortitude and self-belief are able to find their way through.

Feel

That inner self-belief can be found by first looking within and connecting with God. And through that connection find our inner peace, that silent, sentient conscious that enables us to know our fearless true self in the face of adversity and gives us the strength to cope with life's journey.

Do

If you are not one of those who can look within, you will find this inner strength by understanding God through association with places of worship, by reading scriptures or listening to stories about God or his prophets, or through association with a true spiritual master – a guru, who has devoted his entire life in the service of God. Whichever faith you belong to, you will know that the lives of all great prophets have been filled with obstacles, yet all of them have overcome these barriers and risen above them to spread their message. We all remember them, worship them, read about them and celebrate them so that we can also find the same inner strength that is so necessary in this modern world.

47. A Spiritual Master – A Guru

Think

When we are young, we rely on the help and support of our parents; when we start school, we rely on the guidance of our teachers; at university, we learn from the professors; and when we begin our first job, we seek the assistance of our managers. In fact, I would not be wrong by saying that some people even employ a so called "Life Guru" to guide them through life. Each is essential in their way, and through their merits very capable of enabling us to grow, continue to learn and develop as we go through the wonderful journey that is life.

Feel

Yet, I can't help but feel that neither of these very accomplished teachers could guide us through our spiritual life, neither should we expect them to, because the spiritual aspect of our life is a very personal matter and can only be guided by a spiritual guru who has selflessly devoted his entire life in the service of God and humanity.

As the teachers and professors have devoted their life in the mastery of their subject, so has the spiritual guru devoted his life to God. Through that long association with God, the spiritual guru is more aware of God's presence and is thus able to teach us about Him and inspire us to take that first step on the long journey to God-realisation.

Do

Whichever faith you belong to, search out your own spiritual guru, make sure he has no personal motives but the service of God. Once you have found him, worship him like God without regarding him as a mere human being, revere him and serve him with great respect, and in time, you too will realise God.

48. The Value of Play

Think

The muscles of your body need to move to gain in strength as you grow up. There is no better way to do this than by playing sports. Apart from being fun and teaching you the skills of being in a team, socialising and strategy, it will also enable your body to grow stronger, fitter and healthier.

Playing sports is also refreshing and allows you to forget the stresses of life. A healthy body is essential for success in life. Playing sports exercises your heart; it forces you to breathe harder and pumps more oxygen into your blood; it forces you to drink more fluid; sweat removes toxins from your body and cleanses it. If you are bodily fit, you will feel like working hard and excel in life. Success in sports fills your heart with excitement and a sensation of having achieved something. This gives you confidence in your ability to compete and succeed.

Feel

Competitive play prepares you for life, because there are play and games in life too. It teaches you the spirit of sportsmanship and fair play. It instils discipline because your desire to be good at it will force you to strive harder and become better. Perseverance in the face of adversity is part of life's daily trials and playing sports teaches you not to quit.

Do

You will not always win in sports; all the greatest athletes have faced defeat but they have all picked themselves up and tried again and again to win. But losing will also teach you to face defeat with grace and shake hands with your opponents. No one achieves great things in life without sometimes facing defeat and failing. Losing has its place because it forces you to try harder and teaches you never to give up in the wider context of life.

49. Your Curriculum Vitae

Your CV, as it is commonly known, is the first piece of information about you that the employer is likely to see. It is a short list of facts about your personal details, your education, work experience, skills, and hobbies. It is therefore important it catches the eye of your potential employers. If you are to impress employers, you must make sure that:

1. It is neatly word processed and properly laid out
2. It is not too long – maximum two sides of A4 paper
3. It emphasises your education qualifications and honours
4. It underlines your achievements, strengths and successes in other areas, such as, work experience and what you learnt
5. The layout should be in the following order:

Personal details: Name, address, telephone numbers including the mobile number, e-mail address

Your education details: Include the subjects you studied, at what level and the grades achieved

Your work experience: You may not have done a lot but include any work you have done – temporary, holiday, part-time or voluntary work

6. Without being boastful, write something about what you have learnt at work (for example, dealing with customers, working in teams, following instructions, communication skills, etc.)
7. Write about what interests you have and what you do to relax
8. Give names, addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of two referees
9. The letter of application is crucial if you are to get past the first hurdle. What should guide you is how the skills you have will make a positive contribution to the company and how you will serve the company. Too often, people go to an interview asking for jobs, when the approach really should be about what you can do for the company, not what the company can do for you. This will mean you will have to do some research about the company and learn what it does, its vision, its main products, the clients it serves, who are their competitors, etc. It will prove critical if you are invited for an interview.

50. Preparing for Interviews

An interview is like an examination. You can never write an examination without preparation; so should you treat an interview. The fact that they have invited you means that they are impressed with what you have written in your curriculum vitae.

1. Before the interview research the company thoroughly so that you are prepared for any questions on what it does and to ask questions at the end of the interview. Most companies will have a website; if not you can phone to request an information pack. Make sure you find out about what they do, make or sell. Who are their customers? What sort of organisation are they? What is the job likely to involve? How you can best fit your skills to match the job?

The last question is particularly important because you need to persuade them that you have the skills to do the job you are going to be employed for.

2. Find out about the interview process; how long it will last, who and how many people will be interviewing you and whether you are required to make a presentation – this will most certainly be the case for more senior positions. Think about the possible questions you may be asked and write them down. Plan your answers carefully – make a list of key points you will mention in response to each question.

3. Plan your journey and give yourself enough time to get to the place of interview – it is a good idea to make the journey a few days before the day of the interview to check out the area and measure the journey time.

4. What you wear is usually decided by the type of job you will be doing. If you are not sure, phone the company and find out. No matter what you are required to do, aim to appear neat and clean.

5. Collect all the information required for the interview: CV, application form, any notes you have made about the company, questions you want to ask, identification, references, and education certificates to verify your qualifications – make a check list to make sure everything is in order.

6. Aim to reach early; at least half an hour before to give yourself time to relax and calm down.

7. At the interview it is normal to be nervous, but it is also important to make a good first impression – take deep breaths to calm yourself.

51. Your First Job

If you are one of those people who have recently landed their first job, you must count yourself lucky. Young people often have very high expectations when they begin their long climb from the bottom. If you are to make that first job rewarding, then you must learn the rules of engagement:

1. Always look smart and presentable – of course it depends on the job you do
2. Go to the job with an open mind
3. Be punctual and don't take too many days off
4. Make sure you meet the deadlines
5. Be respectable towards everyone and don't crack jokes at the expense of someone else, it might be misinterpreted as arrogance – everyone will not have the same sense of humour
6. Be courteous, say please and learn to say thank you
7. Ask if you are not sure
8. Be a team player
9. Show willingness to learn
10. Learn about all the roles in the company
11. Offer to help if someone seems overwhelmed with work
12. Get to know the people in senior positions
13. Keep an eye on vacancies and opportunities
14. Don't think making tea is belittling
15. Develop an attitude of serving the company
16. Look for ways of improving your efficiency and saving money
17. Remain alert and informed about the plans of the company
18. Look out for competition and competitors outside the company – how they do things and deliver service to the customers or clients
19. Be proactive and interactive.