

“Education: The Pathway to Success!”

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I am grateful for this opportunity to be with you and to share some thoughts. By my accent, you may realize I am from Brazil and my native language is Portuguese. You might think, “If a person like him, with a strong accent and grammar mistakes can become a General Authority, I have a future.” And you are right. You have a future! And do you know why I believe you have a future? It is because you are where you are now, looking for a better education.

The title of my message is “Education: The Pathway to Success!” I really believe this is true. Let me share with you a little bit about my family background as a context to this message.

Family background

My father, a simple and hardworking man, had only four years of basic education. My mother only had two years. They came from humble families, with no means to offer them a better education. Their dream was to give their children a better chance in life and, in their view, education was the way.

One of the jobs my father had for many years was a school van driver. The reason he took that job was to get scholarships at good private schools for me and my siblings. I remember getting up early in the morning to join him in our daily trip from our humble home, in our humble neighborhood, to drive to the nice homes, in the high-class neighborhoods to pick up the other kids. At the end of the school day, there we were again, driving through the nice neighborhoods on our way back to our humble home.

Why not us?

I remember looking out the window of the van as we were driving by those houses thinking, why? Why do we live where we live and not here? What do we need to do to have this type of life? Well, as you know, there is a price to be paid and a process to achieve prosperity. This pathway can be built through higher education.

Can regular people do it? Yes, we can! In the past, a second language and a higher education were for few people, who were usually “born under a lucky star.” That is not the case anymore. Thanks to things like the Church’s Perpetual Education Fund, the EnglishConnect program, and BYU-Pathway Worldwide, this better education is available to everyone willing to pay the price to succeed.

My personal pathway

When I was in school, English classes in regular schools were never enough to really learn the language. It required private English courses that my family could not afford. When I served my mission, English was not part of the missionary study as it is nowadays. When I finished it, my English was just like when I started — very basic. Thanks to a visionary mission president, I got the chance to go to the United States for a few months to learn English.

In order to pay my mission president back the money he lent me, I had to find a job. The only one I could get with my poor English was on a cattle farm in Idaho. I remember how hard it was to work during wintertime on that farm. Even harder was to communicate with my boss and his family. They were a loving and wonderful family but knew zero Portuguese. I remember how impressed I was with their dog named “Gray.” Gray was so quick to obey

my boss' requests, when I had no clue what he was talking about. My conclusion: Even the dog knew more English than I did.

Upon my return to Brazil, I was accepted at a good university. I could not afford the tuition, so I used a type of Perpetual Education Fund loan like the ones used today. During those four years of school, I got married, two children were born, and I was called to serve as the bishop of my ward. Those were busy days, never to be forgotten. Years later, after a lot of hard work, I received a scholarship to the MBA program at Brigham Young University. My parent's dream, which became my dream, finally became a reality. Higher education was now part of our family legacy.

Why do we do what we do?

I hope by sharing these experiences I could inspire you. Achieving your educational goals will bring a better life for you and your family. But why do we do what we do? I also hope that you understand another important reason educational goals are important. In Moses 1: 3, 4, 6, we find good reasons why:

“And God spake unto Moses, saying: Behold, I am the Lord God Almighty, and Endless is my name; ... And, behold, thou art my son; ... And I have a work for thee, Moses, my son;”¹

You are one of our Heavenly Father's children. You have a divine potential, and the Lord is on your side. He also has a mission for you in this life, just like He had for Moses. This life has a purpose, and one of them is to give us the chance to achieve our potential and fulfill our mission. This mission could be different for each one of us, but there is something in common. Our Father in Heaven expects us to help Him with His plan. He expects us to be faithful to His gospel and to help others do the same. He expects us to help with the establishment of His kingdom in these latter days.

How can we do our part? Becoming more qualified to be an instrument in His hands is part of that process. This qualification is emotional, spiritual, temporal, as well as educational. In some way, the education and abilities you will develop can become a resource to bless the lives of others.

Conclusion

In conclusion, education is the pathway to success! But not just to be enjoyed by you and to make you prosper. Your success should be a resource to help Heavenly Father and His plan. If you see your progress through this lens, I promise you He will bless you even more, and your goals will become His goals, and vice versa. I know this by personal experience. I am so grateful for the sacrifice my parents made for me in my youth, but I am even more grateful for a Heavenly Father that was always there for me, to help me along the way. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

¹ [Moses 1:3-4, 6](#)