

# **Education, Do You Really Need It?**

***...And What You Gonna Do With It?***

Joe Jackson

## About the author



**Joe Jackson**

I retired from my first career in quality avionics electronic manufacturing at age 46. That's much too young to quit working. (Though I don't view what I'm doing now as work.)

I decided to pass on my experiences to help others find success and happiness in their lives. That's why I created, and manage, Free Spirit Enterprises LLC. I write about those experiences, and new adventures as I travel the country camping, sightseeing, scuba diving, and kayaking.

Enjoy my offerings, and if you see me somewhere in this beautiful country of ours please introduce yourself.

My other products:

- <http://www.livelifesuccess.com>
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## What do you need school for anyway?

### Learning How To Do What You Gotta Do

"Knowledge without application is useless. Education does not guarantee success; only the application of education will do that." *Glenn Bland*<sup>1</sup>

How does the term "knowledge is power" fit into your beliefs? Here's my thinking: Knowledge is not power; knowledge put to wise use is power.

All the knowledge in the world is useless if no one does anything with it. If knowledge isn't used it accomplishes nothing.

"Knowledge is only potential power. It becomes power only when, and if, it is organized into definite plans of action and directed to a definite end." *Napoleon Hill*<sup>2</sup>

Once you know what your goals are and have your life plan on paper, it's time to think about what your first step is toward turning those goals (and plan) into reality.

The first question to ask yourself is: "What must I know so that I get myself to these goals?" Learn a 7-step process for goal setting in "[Designing Your Life's Success Path](#)" if you want ideas for creating your future objectives.

"In a time of drastic change, it is the learners who inherit the future." - *Eric Hoffer, philosopher*

It's all in the preparation. If you don't get ready for the path toward your goals, you'll get no support from the people you associate with. Believe me people know when you're prepared and when you're not... and you need the support of others for a successful journey.

To prepare for the road ahead, decide what you need to know, then go get that knowledge -- get educated.

There are two kinds of education: general & specialized. Both are important to your future, but not in the same ways.

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<sup>1</sup> Glenn Bland (Glenn Bland, SUCCESS! THE GLENN BLAND METHOD (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1972), p. 64

<sup>2</sup> Napoleon Hill, THINK AND GROW RICH (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1996), p. 75, 76

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"General knowledge, no matter how great in quantity or variety it may be, is of but little use in the accumulation of money." *Napoleon Hill*<sup>3</sup>

You can't make your way in life if you don't learn what that way is for you. General (or formal) education is learning how to learn your way.

Early in our lives, we can't choose the type of education we get. Our parents and the government make those choices for us.

It's all formally structured so that every one of us goes through the same type of learning process. Then as we reach our teenage years they allow us to start choosing the subjects we want to study. Of course we gotta pick those subjects from a list that they give us.

When we're young we must suffer people telling us what to study because someone always thinks they know what's best for us. And I guess they're right to think that way for us until we reach a certain age.

"They know enough who know how to learn." *Henry Adams*

What do you think the reason for school is? Do you think that you go to school to learn how to live when you become an adult? Or do you think you have to go to school just because someone said you have to?

Let me tell you the real reason you go to school: ***School is to teach you how to learn.***

What do you think about that? Do you believe it?

I didn't know that fact when I was younger. But over the years I've realized that finishing formal school only gives you a license to start learning how to live a rewarding life.

"schooling does but little more than to put one in the way of learning how to acquire practical knowledge."  
*Napoleon Hill*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Napoleon Hill, THINK AND GROW RICH (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1996), p. 75

<sup>4</sup> Napoleon Hill, THINK AND GROW RICH (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1996), p. 79

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I came to understand that formal education is important. It teaches our young how to learn, and how to act on that learning. And it teaches them how to succeed in our social environment.

There is so much to learn about how to live that your brain can go into overload if you don't know how to soak it up. And when you are soaking it up you are *learning*. Spending time in school gives you discipline and teaches you how to soak it up!

I believe that formal education is valuable because it teaches you how to find answers to questions that come up throughout your life...and it teaches you how to get along with other people.

"Any man is educated who knows where to get knowledge when he needs it, and how to organize that knowledge into definite plans of action." *Napoleon Hill*<sup>5</sup>

But I also believe that we best serve ourselves when we act on the earliest opportunity to take control of our own destiny. You only recognize opportunity when you have the knowledge that lets you realize when the opportunity is there waiting for you.

You won't be ready to act when those opportunities cross your path if you don't have a plan to get you ready. "[Starting Your Life Success Plan](#)" gives you help shaping your plan. Then to create that plan, start with questions like these:

- What is the best method for getting the knowledge I need to pursue my chosen career?
- Should I attend a college or university?
- Will I design a self-study curriculum?
- Will I follow a self-study curriculum designed by someone else?
- What types of learning events will I use to refresh and sharpen my skills and knowledge for a recurring improvement process (lectures, seminars, workshops, tradeshow)?
- What time do I have available for study?
- How much of that time will I commit to study?
- What materials do I need to initiate, and then continue, my learning process?
- What sources make those materials available in ways that benefit me most?
- What titles will be in my library?

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<sup>5</sup> Napoleon Hill, THINK AND GROW RICH (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1996), p. 77

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- Am I learning everything I need to work in the field I desire?
- Is my library growing at a rate that helps me accomplish my plan?
- Am I accomplishing my reading goals?
- What materials do I possess to help me continue my education?
- What materials don't I have, that I need, to continue my education?
- Is the plan that I have in place working to get the materials I need, so that I have those materials when I need them?
- Does that plan still make sense?
- What new sources for needed materials have I learned about?
- Are there any other learning techniques I can try?
- Would any upcoming learning events increase my value to my employer by a multiple of two or more if I attend them?
- What other subjects, that I'm not studying at this time, will accelerate my growth if I learn them?
- Have I applied the amount of study time, or more, that I committed to in my plan?
- Can I find more time and commit it to study?
- Did my study efforts during the recent review period give me the results I expected?
- Have I detailed the results of my learning experiences to reflect on...when opportunities arrive in the future?
- How can I magnify the benefits I got from my recent studies?
- Is my education growing according to my plan?
- Is the rate of my educational growth working for me?

When I turned 16, something happened that I've never forgotten. Not because of what actually happened at that time (as it turned out I hadn't learned enough to understand how important the incident was to my life. I didn't realize the value until ten or so years later.).

When I was in my early teens my Father insisted that the only way I'd succeed in life was get a formal education that would prepare me for a decent job, then stay on that job for 30 years or so and earn a

retirement. That seemed reasonable to me at the time. I had dreams of retiring to travel and enjoy life and that's the vision that he planted in my head.

Of course, I wasn't thinking at the time that when I retired from a career of building other guys' dreams I might be too old or might not have the health to enjoy all of those things that I wanted to do. Most of us don't bother to look that far ahead when we're that young.

But I started thinking that I'd reached the point in life where I wanted to start working toward retirement.

I told Dad that I wanted to quit school. He sat down with me at the kitchen table that evening and listened to the reasons why I wanted to quit. It's the first time I really remember him listening to me. I'm sure he had done so before but this time really stuck in my mind.

Then he told me all about what would happen if I quit school and after that, he told me what would happen if I didn't quit school.

Back then quitting school at 16 meant that the only work I'd qualify for would be something like stocking shelves in a grocery store, flipping burgers at McDonald's, digging ditches or carrying boards to a builder.

That's low-paying, physical labor type work that I already did after school. (And I knew I didn't want that type of career forever.) Dad also explained I'd be stuck in there all my life. (Today, without a high school diploma you can't even get some of those jobs.)

But finishing school promised me the learning foundation to work into a high-paying job that, in turn, led to a comfortable life.

That chat made a huge difference in my life. That was my first lesson about "doing it alone," and in "[You Can't Be A Hermit...AND Reach The Stars](#)" you'll find more of life's lessons I received in spite of my "loner" personality.

I'll never know the result of the other path had I taken it, of course. I did complete high school but rather than go on to college I joined the Navy and got schooling there. I did make it to college later on.

As far as getting a decent job the Navy education turned out to be a good move. I had natural mechanical abilities and the Navy taught me electronics. The combination landed me a position as a civilian

employee with the Navy where I found success over the years. I certainly satisfied my Father's expectations of getting a job and keeping it until retirement. I even got the unusual opportunity to retire at the early age of forty-six.

The fact that I stayed in school and got a solid foundation of learning took me as high as I could go in my career. When I retired, I was at the top of that ladder. It would never have happened if I'd quit school.

But that isn't all. Because Dad got me to believe that learning is one of the most important activities for everyone's future, I went on studying subjects that I enjoyed. I still do today. My recent studies are in writing the words that sell products and services. It's taking me into a new career...a business of my own.

Dad passed on to me his faith in the power of learning. And the learning I'm doing taught me a new career. It also gave me confidence...you see because I've learned so much about writing words that sell; I know I'll succeed in my new business too.

My Father was a very smart man. He convinced me to stay in school, and he taught me the importance and power that education gives you. That made a HUGE difference in my life.

Back then I never really understood the value of education. Now I know that not only is learning important, but the learning process that you go through means even more for what you do in your life. Formal education sets you up to get along in life, but it's what that formal education teaches you that gives you permission to learn how to succeed in life.

When I took my first black belt test in martial arts the Master said that I was going through a door. All the work that got me to that test was merely basic preparation to start learning martial arts and now I'd earned the right to begin that learning process.

During our early years, formal education is the basic preparation that makes us ready to learn how to live life.

Many people look at graduation from high school, and college, as a completion to the learning process. They think the commencement ceremony celebrating their graduation means the learning process is over. But commencement means, "to begin" and too often the graduate ignores that meaning.

Today we see major corporations going through a process of streamlining that they call "rightsizing," "downsizing," "re-organizing" and "re-structuring" -- just to mention a few of the terms.

It's a trend of firing employees with years of experience. They're getting rid of the employees who have promoted, over time, into higher paying positions by gaining experience on the job to improve their skill levels.

Corporations understand that they can go to the colleges and high schools and hire students that graduate with the latest in technical knowledge. The company doesn't have to take on the expense of motivating the employee to learn the latest information, doesn't have to pay for the schooling and they get the employee at a much lower salary because they hire him into an entry level position.

The only way to survive, when working for someone else, is to develop an ongoing course of self-study that makes you so valuable to the company that it can't afford to let you go.

Does that change your whole view towards education?

To maintain, and increase, your value to the company you must constantly learn about all of the latest developments in your field. You'll need to spend time reading various related articles in newspapers, magazines and periodic journals. And you'll need to attend formal courses on your own time.

These days there is no such thing as a forty-hour workweek. Skill improvement efforts require time commitment beyond scheduled working hours.

Often, applied study beyond formal school, or after getting that first job, stops for most people. They got their job so why bother? For that reason ongoing study and learning doesn't always happen.

But you need to understand that progressing into the higher levels of your career just won't happen without continuous learning. And only promotion into those higher levels gets you your most desired goals.

Read "[The Art Of Personal Growth](#)" for guidance toward creating a you that lives those dreams you chase after.

So, what knowledge do you need to follow your goals?

To keep on track toward your success, create a checklist to identify the areas of learning needed to start your journey on each new path. Here are some questions to help you start your checklist. Make changes to fit your unique situation:

- What tasks must I accomplish to reach my ultimate goal?
- What task descriptions define my requirements for skill, education, and training?
- What training do I need to perform all tasks that get me to my goal?
- Do I need to qualify for specific skills to perform any of the tasks?
- What skills do I already have for performing the required tasks?
- Do I need to refresh or update my knowledge or skills on a periodic basis and, if I do, how often should that be done?
- How will I track new discoveries in my skill areas?
- How will I identify my need for getting new knowledge for those new discoveries?
- What type of training and qualification records will I keep for review purposes?
- How often will I review my records to verify my competence and determine any need for additional education?

Keep records. You'll need them for future reviews to validate that you're on the right path, decide when to adjust your education efforts, and provide excellent references when you prepare your resume.

You'll learn for the rest of your life one way or another. Here are a couple of examples:

In the mid-teens most kids in America want to get a driver's license. Ya gotta learn how to drive first.

When you're ready to get a job, start a business, or both. Ya gotta learn how to do the work.

When you're ready to become a father or mother, ya gotta learn how to raise kids. This is a tough one..most

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of us learn this stuff the hard way, and some of us really never get good at it.

These days most formal education happens in school because the parents aren't able to teach for various reasons. So what school teaches you first is how to learn...or how to find those answers that you need to perform your obligations in life.

Your true learning comes outside of school. That is where you teach yourself -- that is where you learn what you need to survive and succeed.

"Formal education will make you a living. Self-education will make you a fortune." *Jim Rohn*<sup>6</sup>

Decide what you are most interested in doing -- what you enjoy more than anything else -- and what you want as (or honestly feel is) your life's work.

**And start teaching yourself all about it on your own.**

Use these questions from Brian Tracy to start your self-education:<sup>7</sup>

- What additional knowledge do you need to be the best in your field?
- What additional skills must you acquire to do your work in an excellent fashion?
- What subjects do you need to study and master?
- What skills can you improve that will help you the most in your work or career?
- What are the key result areas of your job?
- What must you be excellent at doing to lead in your field?
- What are your core competencies today, and what new competencies must you develop to excel in your field in the future?
- What is your plan to excel in each of these areas?
- What is your plan to acquire these critical skills?
- What one skill or ability, developed and done in an excellent fashion, would have the

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<sup>6</sup> Jim Rohn, *THE TREASURY OF QUOTES* (Irving, Texas: Jim Rohn International, 1994), p.42

<sup>7</sup> Brian Tracy: *Focal Point. A Proven System to Simplify Your Life, Double Your Productivity, and Achieve All Your Goals* (New York: AMACOM, 2002), p. 165

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greatest positive impact on your life and your career?

Take adult education classes or visit the library. All you need to do is read an hour each day about that one subject. You can read more than that if you like, but reading only one hour each day for one year makes you knowledgeable about that subject.

Start putting that knowledge to use by practicing it. And keep studying, concentrate on increasing your time applied to two hours a day. In two years, you'll be competent in that subject area. Few people ever do that in such a short period.

According to Michael Masterson achieving a "level of competence" in any one complex skill takes 1,000 hours of study and practice. And to master that skill requires 5,000 hours of study and practice."<sup>8</sup>

That means hours of activity applied directly to increasing the knowledge and ability for performing that one skill.

Find a job that requires that knowledge, get hired, and commit to a full eight or more hours every day. In other words, do the job...and a little more! In two-and-a-half years, everyone around you will recognize you as the go-to-person for that skill area.

And your employer will look to you when a position of higher responsibility comes along.

All because you learned how to learn from your formal education.

The world is your teacher. **Everything starts with education!** You only need learn how to do it. Doesn't that make sense?

First you learn how to do a thing; learning how makes it easier for you to do it. Then you practice, practice, practice...until you get good at doing that easy thing.

That's what success is all about. This isn't hard or complex. You can't do something outside yourself until you first make it happen inside yourself.

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Masterson, AUTOMATIC WEALTH *The Six Steps to Financial Independence* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2005), p. 137

When I was in school I remember thinking (about stuff like history, and social studies, and even some math) that there was no way I'd ever use this stuff in real life. Wow. How incredibly wrong I was. And I learned one lesson about how wrong I was years later when I trained for certification as a scuba diver.

When you're underwater watching and studying the beauty of the reef and the fish swimming around, your body builds up nitrogen. How much depends on how deep you go and how long you stay. The deeper you are, and the longer you stay there, the higher the pressure, and the higher the pressure the more nitrogen build-up.

If you keep track of the nitrogen content of your body and keep it within reasonable limits you have no problem. As you go back to the surface and the pressure lowers, the nitrogen is released from your body.

But if you let the nitrogen build up too high not all of it gets out and bubbles form in your body as you come up.

Now too many bubbles forming in your body, and you're in trouble. It's called decompression sickness (or the bends), and if you don't get emergency medical help it could kill you.

It's like what happens when you open a soda can or bottle after shaking it...bubbles and pressure trying to get out too fast.

It's a very serious thing. And it's easily avoided when you know how to deal with it. You just make sure you don't stay down long enough for the nitrogen to build too high.

So how do you know whether the nitrogen content of your body is getting too high and it's time to swim to the surface of the water?

Well, here's where school comes in. You figure out how long you can stay at a certain depth before your body absorbs more nitrogen than is healthy for you. Ya gotta know how.

It's a math thing. You do a calculation that tells you how much nitrogen you build up for each minute you stay at each depth. Then you know how long you can dive before you have to go back to the boat or to shore. More than three minutes at 100 feet and you risk danger, and you can safely dive for an hour at 25 feet. But you can't dive for an hour at 25 feet and then go to 100 feet. It would hurt you.

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Here's what else you learn in school. You learn how to get along with others -- or not -- depending on how you use your lessons. This is harder to learn at home because there is less experience available.

In school, and out in the world, there are lots more people around for you to look at. You see how they act and you learn all the different ways that you can interact with them.

You start learning the right ways to act from your parents at home. Then you go to the mall or grocery and see how people act there. Most importantly, you see the way students and teachers behave. From these experiences you develop your manners...or lack of manners.

Without education to teach you how to learn to do, you'll fail in life. I pray you'll learn more from school than history and math...I pray you learn how to do.

## **Additional Resources**

Expand your successful life experience with my additional reports:

"Measure Your Successes In Life"

<http://www.livelifeofsuccess.com/measurelifesuccess.html>

"Starting Your Life Success Plan"

<http://www.livelifeofsuccess.com/startplan.html>

"Designing Your Life's Success Path"

<http://www.livelifeofsuccess.com/desscessplan.html>

"The Art Of Personal Growth"

<http://www.livelifeofsuccess.com/personalgrowth.html>

"Figure Out Who You Are"

<http://www.livelifeofsuccess.com/whereareyou.html>

"You Can't Be A Hermit AND Reach The Stars"

<http://www.livelifeofsuccess.com/hermit.html>

"Get A Strong Vision And Pass It Around"

<http://www.livelifeofsuccess.com/getvision.html>

"Finding - And - Keeping Your Vision"

<http://www.livelifeofsuccess.com/keepvision.html>

"Finding Your Way Through Life"

<http://www.livelifeofsuccess.com/findingway.html>

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"How To Retire A Millionaire"

<http://www.livelifeofsuccess.com/millionaire.html>

"Never Give Up On Your Dreams"

<http://www.livelifeofsuccess.com/finish.html>

"Chase Your Dreams With Determination"

<http://www.livelifeofsuccess.com/chasedreams.html>

"It's All Up To You"

<http://www.livelifeofsuccess.com/uptoyou.html>

Or get it all in my life of success book:

"SUCCESS IN LIFE IS A PROCESS,  
...And That Process Is Measurable!"

<http://www.livelifeofsuccess.com/lifeprocessofsuccess.html>

I wish you happiness, and success in everything you go for in life.

Joe Jackson, <http://www.livelifeofsuccess.com>