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Making The Grade

By Annagail Lynes

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by: **Annagail Lynes**

"Here—" I said, handing my mother my progress report as I walked into her room. I braced myself for the inevitably screaming I was sure to hear. "My teacher says you have to sign this." My mother looked at the card, then at me. "How could you be getting a 'D' in Earth Science?"

Some students have a natural ability for academics. They receive excellent marks, yet rarely crack open their textbooks. Others have to study night and day to get the same marks. It's not that some students are smart, and others are dumb. It is a matter of tapping into what study methods work for each student.

Here are seven ways you can study more effectively and improve your grades:

Track Assignments

The first step is to keep track of assignments. Some loose-leaf binders come with school-year or all-year calendars. If you don't find one you like, consider buying a teachers' planning calendar from an office supply store. It can be inserted into the front of your binders and used to record assignments. Your teachers may provide you with assignment sheets. These sheets can be slipped in front of the calendar. The day the assignments and tests are announced, work out a study schedule.

Commit To A Regular Time And Place For Homework

You should study every day to continue to make progress. Homework time doesn't have to be a hassle if you are flexible with your schedule. Some students like to start their homework right after school. With their homework finished, they are free to go out or watch television. Other students prefer to relax first, then do their homework with a fresh perspective. Once you have committed to a homework time, stick to it.

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Where you study is as important as setting a regular study time. You may enjoy studying at your bedroom desk or lying on the floor in the living room. No matter where you study, the environment should be noise-free and well-lighted. You should be able to spread out your books and papers. Also make sure you have all the supplies you need within your reach.

Be Conscientious

Every night make sure your homework is done, is correct and is orderly. Neat homework and projects earn higher grades. In the business world, if you make a sloppy presentation, you will lose the client's account. Also turn your homework in on time.

After the test and assignments are handed back, sit down with them and see where you made mistakes. Why were the errors made and how could you prevent similar errors in the future? Write notes on the assignments and tests. Make a file for the test and notes, for cumulative tests later.

Use Memorization Techniques

In order to remember lists, try inventing a combination of letters (an acronym). Each letter will give you a clue to an idea you need to remember. For example, BRASS is an acronym for how to shoot a rifle—Breath, Relax, Aim, Sight, Squeeze. You could also make up a sentence where the first letter of each word is a hint to what you need to recall. For instance, Dumb Martians Just Sit Nearby Eating Tender Noodles is the phrase to remember the order of the Eight Is Enough children—David, Mary, Joanie, Susan, Nancy, Elizabeth, Tommy, Nicholas.

For remembering names, devise a relationship between the name and the physical characteristics of the person. For example, Shirley Temple might be remembered as having "curly"—which rhymes with Shirley—hair around her temples.

When you have an ordered or an unordered list you need to memorize, you can create a story linking the ideas together. The more crazier, the better. If your vocabulary words are success, assistant, cemetery, scrutinize, you might create a story of a successful assistant scrutinizing tombstones in a cemetery, searching for her boss' grave.

Studying For Tests

Write down a study checklist of what will be covered on the test. Make a list of notes, formulas, ideas and text assignments that you are responsible for.

Create flashcards—put topics or questions on the front and answers on the back. Have a friend, parent or sibling quiz you. Keep running through the flashcards while you brush your teeth, are on the bus, when you are in the restroom and when you are doing chores.

Produce a mock test. One with only the questions and another with only the answers. Hide the answers in a drawer or give them to a parent. Take the test and when completed, compare your responses with the ones on the answer sheet. Keep repeating this process until you know the material

backward and forward.

If you want to make studying for a test fun, team up with a friend and play the game show Twenty–One. A parent or sibling should host , reading off the questions. You and your friend compete against each other until one of you reaches twenty–one points.

Avoid Getting Involved In Too Many Activities

If you want to participate in an extracurricular activity, you can reschedule your study time. However, if baseball, ballet or any other activities make you stay up late trying to finish your homework, then you are involved in too many activities.

Play Educational Games

After the homework is finished, pull out a board game. Monopoly encourages mental calculation when counting money and determining moves, and Clue requires logical deductive skills. Try to figure out the measurements when doubling a recipe in the kitchen.

Playing word games with your family or friends can improve spelling skills. Scrabble, anagrams, Wheel of Fortune and word jumbles can teach you to spell new words.

II Timothy 2:15 says to study to show yourself approved unto God.

If you care enough about your grades to take the time to develop conscientious study habits, you receive better marks, learn self–discipline and will have more options when it comes to selecting colleges. No matter what you choose to do in life, you should have a good education to fall back on. Not everything in life comes easy. The key is to make up your mind to work hard for the things you want. And not to let anyone or anything get in your way.

Annagail Lynes is editor of VisionHope Magazine. She specializes in writing articles for young adults about dating, school, parents, peer pressure and other youth–related issues. Get your Free Sample Issue of VisionHope, plus free articles and free pen pal ads at

Self–Acceptance, Growth and Learning

By Robert Elias Najemy

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Many people believe that they must be dissatisfied with themselves, or that they must reject themselves, or feel guilt or shame in order to have a motive for self–improvement or growth. They wonder, «If I accept and love myself as I am, what motive will I have for continuing to change, grow or improve? »

Accepting ourselves, as we are, is not a deterrent to continuing our efforts to learn, grow and improve ourselves. We can easily accept ourselves and still continue to improve our character and increase our knowledge.

The First Grader

Perhaps the example of children in grade school will help us to understand this. These children in the first grades of grade school do not reject themselves because they are not in a higher grade, or because they do not know as much, or are not as capable as those children in the higher grades. They accept themselves as they are, and are happy with themselves with their present level of abilities and knowledge.

Yet, no child would accept remaining in the same grade the next year or year after year.

In the same way, there is no conflict between accepting and feeling comfortable with our temporarily limited abilities and lower level of conscious, and our need to continue growing. It is natural to accept and love ourselves at his present stage of growth and simultaneously to attend to learning, evolving and improving ourselves

Growth is a natural instinctual need. Scientists have discovered that when a person learns something new, this creates the excretion of endorphines and other positively reinforcing chemicals in the brain. Learning brings pleasure, when it is natural and not connected to fear of rejection and failure.

But there are yet other motives for action and growth, and these are love and the need for creativity. We need to love and to create, just as we need to sleep and eat. These are basic needs, even if they are higher on the need–hierarchy scale.

Thus, even if we do not have self–rejection or dissatisfaction as a motivating force, we will always have love and creativity as motivating forces to grow, create and produce.

Let us grow naturally without fear or self–doubt.

We are all in the first grade of the school of spiritual growth.

But we need to prepare ourselves to be in the second grade next year, and the third the year after and ?..

(Adapted from the "The Psychology of Happiness" by Robert Najemy available at <http://www.Amazon.com> and <http://www.HolisticHarmony.com>. This book and other writings can be viewed at <http://www.HolisticHarmony.com> where you can also download FREE articles and e–books.)

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Robert Elias Najemy is the author of over 600 articles, 400 lecture cassettes on Human Harmony and 20 books, which have sold over 100,000 copies. He is the Founder and director of the Center for Harmonious Living in Greece with 3700 members. His book *The Psychology of Happiness*; ISBN 0-9710116-0-5 is available at www.amazon.com and <http://www.HolisticHarmony.com>. where you can view and download FREE articles and e-books.

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