

10 Tips for the Graduate

by Cheryl Richardson

1. *Relax.*

Nowadays there's too much pressure put on kids to make the "perfect" career choice. Give yourself plenty of time to chart your own course.

2. *Spend more time on the who than the what.*

Knowledge is great but it will never take you as far as your courage, your integrity, your reputation for someone who keeps his or her word, or your commitment to be of service to others in some important way.

3. *Follow your heart.*

Stop worrying so much about what everyone else thinks. The most important relationship you'll ever have is with you.

4. *Develop your "maverick muscle."*

Be willing to bend the rules, learn how to disappoint others gracefully, get comfortable with people not liking you, and always strive to be an original thinker.

5. *Be practical.*

The skills that will carry you the furthest through life are your ability to communicate with others both in speaking and writing.

6. *Build your courage muscles.*

Starting tomorrow, practice doing one small thing a day that frightens you.

7. *Don't go to the hardware store for milk.*

When you're excited about doing something or trying to make an important decision, make sure you turn to those people who will encourage you to take a chance. Surround yourself with positive people. Remember, if you needed milk, you wouldn't go to the hardware store. And by the way, you're mom was right.

You do become who you hang around with. Choose wisely.

8. *Live by this mantra: where there's a will, there's a way.*

Don't give up when things get hard.

9. *Keep your body sacred*

- it's the only vehicle you have to carry you on this journey called life.

10. *Stay connected.*

Your connection to technology, email and instant messaging, will never replace your connection with those you love. Always remember that it's who we love and who loves us that matters most at the end of our lives.

Finally, at the time you were born you were given an amazing gift - a gift that most of us forget about as we grow older. It's the power to design your own unique life. You are an artist. The canvas is your life.

From this moment on, take ownership of this gift and use it wisely.

If you do, your life will become an extraordinary work of art.

Congratulations!