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Students! Learn Leadership and Activism Skills

The 24th Phyllis Schlafly Eagles Annual Collegians Leadership Summit will again include training by the Leadership Institute. The conference will take place at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C., July 18-20, 2017.

Students will have the opportunity to tour the Capitol with special guide, Rep-



resentative Steve King. In addition to this exclusive private tour of the Capitol, students will tour the Supreme Court.

Attendees will learn from leaders who help to preserve liberty for all Americans. Speakers will include Congressmen Dave Brat and Steve King; activist leaders Janet Porter, Ralph Reed, and Burgess Owens; authors Paul Kengor and Daniel Dreisbach; media personalities Matt Boyle and Brett Decker; and many more experts and inspirational leaders.

The event is free to college students. They'll return to campus with tools for engaging in positive conservative activism and involvement in their communities.

For more information, contact Eagle Forum Education & Legal Defense Fund Communications Director Ryan Hite at ryan@phyllisschlafly.com or call (314) 721-1213. Register at PhyllisSchlafly.com/collegians.

Small Gardeners Reap Benefits

Growing vegetables is a great activity for children. There are many benefits to be had, not the least of which is enjoying fresh food. What is better than a tomato straight off the vine?

Whether starting from seeds or purchased plants, in a large yard or a pot on a balcony, there is much to be learned from growing vegetables. Children benefit from the actual physical activity; by developing a routine of caring for plants; and from time spent outdoors.

Planning, planting, weeding, watering, and investing time and effort into watching over plants is a good way to teach responsibility.

Growing the vegetables themselves makes children more likely to be interested in eating healthy food. They'll also have a sense of accomplishment — I grew that!

Science and math principles that children can learn in a garden include measuring the plot; watching rainfall



God, Property Rights Ousted from Schools

What changed when God and the Bible were ousted from classrooms in America? Everything. The forbidding of references to God and Christianity in public schools remains an impediment to teaching civics and helping students understand their nation. Most American schoolchildren are no longer taught something previous generations understood: property rights as a biblical concept.

A post by John Anthony at Richard Viguerie's ConservativeHQ website explains the negative fallout that has occurred since activist judges removed God from public spaces, including public school classrooms. Children educated in today's public schools are unaware that they are "protected by God" and that "liberty and property [are] synonymous."

When we don't teach students that their rights are "endowed by their Creator," perhaps the most important concept of civics education is missing. Violating property rights is one way government controls behavior. As Anthony explains, "When government controls what you own and how you act, you become its servant."

John Anthony says, "When our Founders wrote the Declaration of Independence, they knew that property rights were essential to freedom and prosperity." He continues, "That is why our Declaration protects the people from erratic governments by turning to God as the origin for our rights." Anthony says, "Our Founders saw this problem over 200 years ago. They understood the propensity of governments to confiscate

property rights; both to amass wealth and power for the political class, and to keep the population dependent." That is why they wrote:

We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

Property rights aren't just about property. An individual's personal information is also a "property right." When government controls private information and behaviors, it begins to amass wealth and "keep the population dependent."

John Anthony says:

In the 1700s people understood God and the Bible. *The New England Primer*, the main student textbook, contained passages from the King James Bible. Teachers used Bible verses and the Ten Commandments to teach children to read. When the Founders proclaimed that our rights came from our Creator, no future president or governing body could ever change or rescind them, because they did not render them.

The pathway to removing God from classrooms included the following:

- *Minor v. Board of Education*, the 1872 ruling following four years of court challenges that is often referred to as the Cincinnati Bible Wars, which removed Bible readings from classrooms.

- John Dewey's secular impact on education, including schools of education. Dewey promoted humanism, and "believed it was possible to be ethical and moral without religion and that God was not omnipotent."

- The 1962 *Engel v. Vitale* and 1963 *Abington School District v. Schempp* decisions that claimed "school prayer violated the First Amendment."

Liberty, Property, and Theft

At the time of the founding of our nation, "liberty and property were synonymous." Children educated in today's public schools are not taught that they are "protected by God" and they often don't understand property rights.

Individual rights are routinely stripped by governmental overreach and because of failures in the education system, citizens don't even comprehend what they are losing.

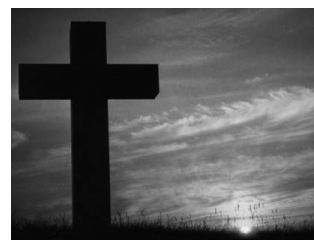
Anthony says:

Today Americans believe that issues like climate change and discrimination transcend property rights. That it is selfish to think only of your rights, and that global citizens must place humankind's good before personal rights. So divorced are we from understanding property rights, that millions of Americans unquestioningly applaud their loss as insignificant,

compassionate, or even necessary.

The removal of God from schools is why much of the public was accepting of the Affordable Care Act, often called Obamacare. Using Obamacare as an example, Anthony says, "The Affordable Care Act uses hidden taxes, collected in the name of healthcare, to snatch the property of one individual and redirect it to another."

One way the Obamacare mandates impinge on individual freedoms occurs



when physicians are required to ask patients about gun ownership. If the patient refuses to answer the question on a governmental form about gun ownership, the

government won't pay for the patient's visit to the doctor's office and the doctor won't receive payment for having treated the patient. This is both confiscation of personal property and a way to control citizens' behaviors. Anthony says that "your doctor's income and your personal information are each your private property."

Personal information should always be considered private property. Few citizens today are at greater risk of having their personal property stolen than public schoolchildren who are tracked, recorded, and have their information shared in an unprecedented manner.

Mr. Anthony emphasizes the words of James Madison, who wrote, "[It] is not a just government... where the property which a man has in his personal safety and personal liberty, is violated by arbitrary seizures of one class of citizens for the service of the rest."

Anthony refers to James Madison's 1792 treatise that says property "embraces everything to which a man may attach a value and have a right..." According to Anthony, Madison lists as property "merchandise, money, opinions, free communication of opinions, religious opinions and the practice dictated by them, personal safety and liberty, the free use of your faculties and the free choice of the objects upon which to use your faculties." Perhaps failure to teach these principles in schools explains why so many no longer understand freedom of speech and instead seek to limit or curtail it while accusing those with whom they disagree of being bigots or fascists.

Anthony says those in power always want more power. He says, "For over 100 years, our government has sought to trivialize God's role in our rights and presence in our schools to open the doorway for that power." Anthony concludes, "Perhaps it is time for another 'fundamental transformation' in our classrooms."

John Anthony is the founder of the Sustainable Freedom Lab.

(ConservativeHQ.com, 12-9-16)

EDUCATION BRIEFS

According to Caitlin Jeffers, who is an English major at Northern Arizona University, a professor lowered her grade because she used the word “mankind” in an essay. Jeffers said on Fox News, “She told me using the word ‘mankind’ was sexist and against women; apparently it has a history of holding women down in some fashion.” The professor wrote on the essay, “I would be negligent ... if I did not also raise this issue of gendered language and ask my students to respect the need for gender-neutral language.” (Fox News, 3-31-17)

Two 17-year-old New York high school students who enrolled in a specialized college-level law and government program at the State University of New York’s Oswego campus were appalled when their teacher gave them an assignment to defend Hitler’s extermination of Jews. Actual wording of the assignment includes: “This is an exercise on expanding your point of view by going outside your comfort zone and training your brain to logically find the evidence necessary to prove a point, even if it is existentially and philosophically against what you believe.” A representative of the Anti-Defamation League says that such assignments “have come up occasionally in recent years, especially since the Common Core learning standards push teachers to develop assignments that have students argue from a perspective with which they don’t agree.” (*Syracuse Post-Standard*, 3-30-17)

Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos has been assigned U.S. Marshals Service security protection instead of the normal in-house precautions. Trouble began on February 10, when “several dozen” angry, shouting protesters blocked her entrance to a D.C. school; one man was detained for assaulting a police officer. The extra security could be costing taxpayers \$1 million a month. (CBSNews, 2-10-17 and 4-7-17)

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‘Aspire’ to be Abstinent

Fourth in a series about making healthy choices

“Abstinence isn’t about not having sex. It’s about saving sex for someone who is willing to give back to you by making a lifelong commitment in marriage.” This is the premise of *Aspire*, a workbook in the abstinence series that helps young people make positive choices.

It is vitally important that teens get the message about abstinence and making healthy choices from someone — whether it’s their parents, their school, or their church. Culture and media are unlikely to positively influence them or to discourage destructive behaviors.

Developing character, knowing how to cope with peer pressure, making good decisions, and learning healthy relationship skills is vitally important for young people to end up meeting their goals.

For more information about abstinence or to order *Aspire*, contact Renate Ferrante the executive director of CCAP at RenateCCAP@gmail.com or by phone at 239-272-5092.

Living Life On Purpose

Chapter one of *Aspire* emphasizes that students must make plans and have goals. The workbook says, “Without a plan for the future, people often press ahead in life without really knowing where they’re going. Years later they are discontented, discouraged, and unsure of what their life is all about.”

Workbook exercises encourage teens to think seriously about choices they’ll face and emphasize that what they do as teens will impact their future.

Students are asked to list one-word descriptions of their “hopes, goals, and dreams.” Then they list what they “will have to do to make it happen.”

Aspire tells students:

The high school years are a time when the pressure is greatest, and sexual activity has the potential to take your life in a very different direction than you ever imagined. Resisting pressures toward sexual activity is one of the best things you can do to keep your life on track and to accomplish your future goals and dreams.

The real-life story in this chapter is that of Ty Gooch, a young man who made an early commitment to abstinence. Ty is an athlete who played football at Northwestern University and competed in the Rose Bowl. He wanted to be respectful and says he realized that “every woman [he] went out with was someone’s daugh-

ter or sister, and would one day be someone’s wife and someone’s mom.” He says that although he experienced steady pressure to engage in sexual activity before marriage, “Through it all, it was my commitment to my future wife who I hadn’t even met yet that helped me to make the only choice I knew I should make.”

Ty says of himself and his wife Renee, “We have had the joy of starting a family together and we wouldn’t wish for anything else.” He says, “By building your character and exercising self-control, you will build a solid foundation for your future.”

Each chapter of *Aspire* ends with an affirmation. The affirmation in this first chapter is: “I will live my life with a sense of purpose.”

Standing Strong

Planning ahead helps teens resist pressure to do things they should not do, like smoking, taking illicit drugs, engaging in sexual ac-

tivity, or behaving in a violent manner.

Questions for students to consider in the second chapter include: “If a friend invited you to a party and you went and saw people drinking alcohol, what would you do?”

It helps students avoid mistakes when they realize alcohol changes their attitudes and that they can actively avoid activities that could compromise their futures.

The workbook says that many teen-aged girls who have sex didn’t plan for it to happen and that over 70% of them regret or have mixed feelings about the encounter afterwards.

Engaging in sexual activity has negative consequences beyond teen pregnancy. It forces negative and long-lasting physical, mental, emotional, financial, and social changes on young people.

Marriage is the “safe place” where sexual activity is protected and the above problems are avoided. The workbook says the one question to ask before engaging in sex is: “Am I married?”

The affirmation in this chapter is: “I will resist negative pressures in order to accomplish my future goals.”

Thinking Ahead

Sexual activity has immediate and long-term consequences but teens are often given the message that they should “live for today and forget about tomorrow.”

The third chapter of *Aspire* points out that teen sex and alcohol use are both

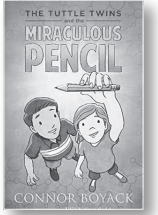
(See ‘*Aspire*’, page 4)

“A GOAL WITHOUT A PLAN IS JUST A WISH”

Book of the Month



The Tuttle Twins and the Miraculous Pencil, Connor Boyack, Libertas Press, 2014, \$9.99



Like all the Tuttle Twins books, this one is based on an important principle of American liberty, and features a work by an expert on the subject.

The Miraculous Pencil explores free markets and is developed around Leonard Read’s famous essay “I, Pencil.” Read created the Foundation for Economic Education in 1946.

Both the essay and this book explain the complex process involved in making a pencil. Author Connor Boyack says, “Remember the economy is made up of people buying and selling things. If people tried to make everything on their own, they wouldn’t be able to and life would be hard.”

The book teaches that people from all over the world working together in ways that allow products to be created is called spontaneous order.

Children not only get insight into economics but an appreciation of all the many amazing products we take for granted, including the lowly pencil.

Students will understand that “making a simple pencil [is] not so simple at all,” beginning with planting and watering trees, cutting them down and loading them onto a truck. Just getting the wood for the pencils is a big operation, involving many people, much equipment, and many supplies. Also necessary is fuel for the truck, rubber for its tires, and rope to hold trees steady while in transit.

When looking at a real pencil, students consider the components of lacquer paint, materials used to make erasers, and even the small metal ferrule that attaches the eraser to the pencil.

Then there is graphite, mined from an open pit, heated, compressed, and combined with clay, wax, and chemicals to make the “lead” for the pencil.

The informative text is complemented with illustrations by Elijah Stanfield, which make the pages pop. His drawing of the whimsical pencil factory that the children imagine and the plain, brick building where the pencils are actually assembled shows that amazing things often come in plain packaging.

The 55-page book includes a Glossary of Terms, which defines the economic words central planning, competition, economy, division of labor, and spontaneous order. There are also five discussion questions.

For an additional \$4.99, parents or teachers can go to TuttleTwins.com to download a 21-page PDF workbook offering activities suitable for a variety of grade levels. The website also has video supplements and a link to the original essay on which the book is based.

MALLARD FILLMORE / by Bruce Tinsley



FOCUS: An Open Letter to President Donald J. Trump

‘Mothers and fathers across America witnessed your promise to end Common Core — and they signed that contract in the ballot booth.’

by Denis Ian

Reprinted with permission.

Dear Mr. President,

I don't know how to speak with a president but I can speak well enough with any father. So, let us speak as fathers ... and of the dreams we dream for our own children.

Then we should imagine that we are dreaming for all sorts of children ... because that is your new job ... and that was my old job for a long, long while.

I should say straight away that my own children are grown and flown, like most of yours. But, as you know, families grow ... and new stars join the troupe and steal the spotlight. Like your Barron ... and my young Aidan.

I've seen you lose yourself in that boy's face. I have. It's the sort of thing I pay attention to because I do the same. All the time. That "circle of life" stuff gets extra-real in people our age. And finally ... we learn to pay attention to what really matters. The sweet, small stuff ... like a child's face.

You are a busy man. I am not so busy anymore.

You are the president of a great country ... and I am the chief of a very small tribe. You were once a business man ... and I was once a history teacher. And what busies you hardly busies me.

My responsibilities are now sweet and simple. I only have to be on time for baseball games and perhaps explain old civilizations now and then.

You have only to worry about our nation ... and perhaps the rest of the world.

See? We do have things in common. So, now we can talk.

Children teach us to keep our promises. Nothing winces a father more than the face of a disappointed child. Break a promise ... break a heart. I've sinned that sin. I'm sure you have, too.

And now everything about your life is suddenly larger than ever before. Your challenges. Your promises. And perhaps even your disappointments.

But for a moment, let's shrink your world so it looks more like mine, and that of the folks who placed their hopes and dreams in you. The people who believed your promises. Not-so-famous people ... except to the children who look up to them, and who hang on their every promise.

Childhood is a quick moment. It's the maker of first memories ... and we make big deals of firsts. First words. First steps. First everything.

We should never forget that school is life's first great adventure. That break-free moment that puts the first crack in every parent's heart. That anxious *adios* ... even if it lasts for just a few hours.

We fanny-pat them, cup their tiny

faces for one last boost, and send them off to the first brave solo-moment of their brand new lives.

We are both joyed and jittered by this daring episode. But for many parents, things are not as we remember.

Schools have been nightmared. Children guinea-pigged ... poisoned by impostor-reformers and their pedagogical idiocy.

So many seem intent on reinventing childhood ... swapping out sandboxes and monkey bars for hypnotizing iPads and abusive testing circumstances. Many classroom reforms are simply ludicrous ... and doing harm.

There's so much wrong with this reform, it's a miracle schools haven't been pitchforked by parent-mobs.

They're calling out school leaders for odd-ball curriculum changes. Even demanding legislation for ... are you ready, Mr. President? ... for recess. For play time. For six-year-olds.

It's that sick, sir.

They're frustrated by politicians-turned-Socrates who dismiss their concerns ... and permit creepy-freaky social engineers to bend the lives of their children.

Stay In Your Lane, Mr. Gates

by Denis Ian

Reprinted with permission.

‘The whole country should be furious about this unelected, unaccountable billionaire manipulating the public and putting himself in the position to be calling the shots in education for every public school!’ — *Teri Sasseville, Georgians to Stop Common Core*

Bill Gates is not allergic to failure.

Nor does he own any unique genius when it comes to education.

The confounding question is how did this colossal egotist manage to dupe an entire nation?

Had he invested a single afternoon with a public school faculty, every flaw of Common Core would have been revealed straight away, well before it became a source of national embarrassment ... and a source of utter distress for children, families, and teachers.

Who whispered in his ear that he was this didactic messiah?

Gates was seduced by his own supposed brilliance — self-tantalized that his technological IQ had purchase in the real world of teaching and learning.

It didn't.

Others knew this straight away but the genius did not.

Genius is almost always very narrow ... and few geniuses switch lanes with much success. DaVincis are extra-rare.

Gates was too married to his flimsy thesis. Too cemented in his belief that human variables were of small consequence. Certain that educational nirvana

Master-teachers — once the most trusted regents of our children — have been exiled to the edges of every reform discussion. Their common-sense expertise suddenly dismissed as Dark Age know-how.

These spring months turn children into school-loathing messes because fraudy-gurus insist that “grit and rigor” are imperative antidotes to wasteful childhoods of discovery and play.

These hoaxers demand that hyper-dramatized assessments be homaged as the new tools of educational excellence.

Real-deal teachers are threatened into silent compliance. Hundreds of thousands of enraged parents are refusing abusive testing in state after state ... Georgia ... Texas ... New York ... Michigan ... Florida.

The outrage is exploding.

This is what happens when schools are hijacked by an interfering government and bungling bureaucrats.

It's what happens when disconnected theoreticians pretend to understand children and dare to claim parental re-gency over them.

It's what happens when self-anointed wizards decided that only government can

wrench us out of the educational Middle Ages ... and make us as advantaged as Sweden. Or Singapore. Or Switzerland.

And caught in this cyclone of nonsense are small people. Young children, like your Barron and my Aidan. But not as well protected.

So ... millions of innocents are anguished ... and their parents agonized.

Never has there been a more toxic reform effort than Common Core and all that churns around it. It is a harmful failure. A disturbing, national mess.

Mothers and fathers across America witnessed your promise to end Common Core — and they signed that contract in the ballot booth.

Never was the “art of the deal” so serious for so many.

They asked for their schools back and for childhood to be restored.

They asked that childhood education be balanced again — in challenge and joy — so they, too, can dream dreams for their children.

So they signed on the dotted line.

Now you are the president of a great people. And I am still the chief of a small tribe. And one day, Barron and Aidan will read of this ... and know if we both kept our promise.

Let's not disappoint anyone.

this nation.

A handful of elites led by Gates gutted a central pillar of this society, sweeping away long-established precepts of pedagogy and installing ouija board assumptions based on computer-spew. It has been a tortured decade.

The single glimmer of hope in all of this might be the re-awakening of the anti-elites — the folks who actually make this society work. They're not so complacent any longer.

They are less inclined to suffer this sort of elitist intrusion any longer. They've rocked elections, cheered a return to normalcy, and shown that they will not be dogged by know-it-all who think they own a special privilege to tear things down and build memorials to themselves.

Bill Gates may have inadvertently set off a series of events that have reverberations beyond the realm of education. He may have ignited a war against disconnected elitists and their weighty egos.

Common Core is a wheezing reform kept alive only because the nation is stunned at the disgusting amount of money that's been invested in the nonsense.

Sooner rather than later, this reform will be mothballed ... and perhaps some geniuses may have learned an important lesson: Stay in your lane.

Denis Ian is a retired secondary teacher from New York. He taught social studies for nearly 34 years in a well-respected public school district and was involved in numerous reforms and educational innovations during his career. He's now devoted to the anti-Common Core movement and contributes to several blogs across the nation.



'Aspire' (Continued from page 2)

shown in the media as “cool and fun,” and usually without consequences. This point is made by the question, “Can you think of a movie or TV show you saw recently in which people contracted a sexually transmitted disease (STD)?”

Yet, the fact is that each day in America approximately 54,000 cases of STDs occur.

The workbook explains the various types of viral and non-viral STDs that those who have sex outside of marriage are at risk of contracting. Contrary to what some schools teach, condoms often don't prevent the spread of STDs.

Graphs in the workbook show that STD cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis are rampant among teens and those aged 20-24. The youngest three age groups account for more cases than all the other age groups combined. Students are asked to offer reasons for this.

The affirmation for this chapter is: “I will protect and maintain my physical health and well being.”

Protecting Your Mind

Chapter four tells students that most homes include three or more television sets; that teens today use media for an average 7-1/2 hours a day or 52 hours a week; and that the average for people their age is nearly 75 hours per week of media exposure.

At today's pace, by age 70 the average person will have spent at least ten uninterrupted years watching TV. Students track their own weekly media exposure in a workbook exercise.

According to a Kaiser Family Foundation study, “Youth who spend more time with media report lower grades and lower levels of personal contentment.”

The workbook introduces students to the actress Tina Marie Holewinski. She walked away from her Hollywood career once she saw the truth — media will do anything to make money. She says, “Much of today's programming glamorizes sex, drugs, alcohol, and violence.”

Tina Marie says, “Teens are being misled to believe that it's cool to dress provocatively, get drunk at parties, or have sex in order to fit in.” She says about the many celebrities who make tantalizing shows that lie to teens, “They make shows for other people's kids but don't allow their own kids to see them!” She

suggests that teens not only avoid such shows but that they also demand better programming.

Since true stories are one of the best ways to engage students, they meet Eric who battled an addiction to pornography.

ASK YOURSELF IF WHAT YOU'RE DOING TODAY IS GETTING YOU CLOSER TO WHERE YOU WANT TO BE TOMORROW.

believe-to-achieve.tumblr.com

They also meet Tara, who at 13 was taken advantage of by a 27-year-old man who saw her as the ideal of his online porn addiction. Tara thought she was *in love* with the man. She was manipulated and abused, and subsequently needed intense counseling in order to recover.

The workbook says that 64% of teens admit they “do things online that they wouldn't want their parents to know about.”

One feature of this interactive, consumable workbook series is that it encourages parental involvement. Students are encouraged to share the book, the information it contains, and the ways they respond to the questions and exercises with their parents. Every chapter ends with a Talking it Over page, which is intended to be completed along with parents. One question in this chapter's parental participation section asks families to describe together “what your life would be like without the media.”

The workbook makes the point that not all media is bad, “but rather that it has enormous influence in the lives of most Americans.”

The affirmation in this section is: “I will control the media rather than allowing the media to control me.”

The Power of Self-Control

Chapter five starts out by addressing how character and judgement influence self-control and decision-making. The first real-life story is that of Charlie, a young man who drank at a party, and then chose to give a friend a ride home. “Charlie veered off the road and smashed [the] car into a tree.” Charlie's friend died in the crash. The workbook asks probing questions about the implications of this situation.

Impairment influences judgment. Using research done by Columbia University, students discover that teens who use drugs are five times more likely to have sexual intercourse, and those who use alcohol are seven times more likely to have sex.

A real-life story in this chapter of *Aspire* is about Shane, a young man who had a lonely summer after he dropped friends from whom he had to break away in order to get himself on a new path.

Shane listened to a teacher and a coach who approached him separately to warn him that they believed he was “hanging around with the wrong crowd.” Two of the people Shane stopped socializing with were Charlie and the young man killed in the car crash whom the students had met earlier in the chapter.

The workbook says, “Walking away from his friends was very difficult to do and at times he questioned the wisdom of his decision. It wasn't until years later, looking back, that Shane realized this was one of the most important decisions he had ever made.”

Aspire says, “Because the use of drugs and alcohol compromises a person's judgment in the area of self-control, avoidance of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs is an important part of the abstinence commitment.”

The student affirmation for this chapter is: “I will exercise self-control and build my character.”

Marriage Rocks

The sixth chapter of *Aspire* starts off by asking students to describe the kind of person they hope to marry. They are also asked to consider the qualities another person will see in them.

The workbook says, “If you want to marry a caring, giving, loving person, you're probably going to have to be a caring, giving, loving person.” It continues, “Now is the time to become a person of character.”

Students again hear from Shane, the young man from the previous chapter who broke away from former friends. The continuation of Shane's story includes a young woman he met in college, Kelly. The couple has now been married for over twenty-two years; they have a great relationship and four children. Shane says, “Although we faced much pressure from friends and society in general, we were both able to save sex for marriage — and looking back we're very glad that we did.”

Aspire asks students, “How do you think their decisions in high school and college have contributed to a healthy, lasting marriage and family life?”

In the workbook, there's a list of things couples can do together to help build a solid relationship, including talking about future plans and goals; keeping open communication; doing volunteer work together; spending time with each other's family and friends; and setting and communicating clearly about physical boundaries.

Aspire makes the point that although it is “commonly believed that cohabitation is a good way to prepare for marriage,” that isn't how it plays out.

In reality, after one year of living together only 30% of couples end up getting married.

And for those couples who start out living together, their chances of getting divorced are 65% greater than for those who don't live together before they marry.

In the true story of Cori, students are told what really happens when sexual activity becomes part of an uncommitted relationship. Sexual activity precludes the development of the relationship in important ways. Cori had sex with her boyfriend, who became her fiancé, and then her husband. There were negative consequences to their pre-marital physical relationship “because we were focused on the physical.” Cori and her husband never got to know each other well. She says, “We had developed a false intimacy and this became increasingly obvious after we were married.” They had differences in their character, values, and beliefs that were masked by their early sexual intimacy. Their marriage ended after five years.

The affirmation in this chapter is: “I will, from this day forward, save all sexual activity for marriage.”

Making a Fresh Start

Chapter seven is helpful for teens who have “gotten themselves on a path that is not taking them where they would like to go.” It offers hope that they can recover by making different choices, and makes them aware of some of the dangers they face if they continue on their current path.

Early sexual relationships outside of marriage often leave young people open to dating violence, abusive relationships, controlling behaviors, and even serious illnesses, like HIV/AIDS.

The affirmation for this chapter is: “I will let go of the past and live for the future.”

The Big Picture

In chapter eight of *Aspire*, each student is asked to revisit the goals they listed in the first chapter, narrow them down to three, and then use this to create a statement of purpose for their life.

Students are asked to sequence sex, parenthood, marriage, and education goals in the order that will most likely help them to accomplish what they desire. The workbook offers statistics about choosing abstinence, academic achievement, and future income potential.

The affirmation for this chapter is: “I will make wise decisions now to protect my future.”

The final page of *Aspire* lists Eight Affirmations for an Excellent Life, all the affirmations from each previous chapter; and students can make a commitment by signing the page.

**IN THEIR OWN (GOOD) WORDS**

For, if one is aware that these know-hows will naturally, yes, automatically, arrange themselves into creative and productive patterns in response to human necessity and demand — that is, in the absence of governmental or any other coercive masterminding — then one will possess an absolutely essential ingredient for freedom: a faith in free people.

Freedom is impossible without this faith.

— Leonard E. Read (1898 -1983)
Author of “I, Pencil” and founder of
the Foundation for Economic Education