
Educators and parents who have attended more than one or two academy graduations know the traditional phrases used in tributes to parents. They have also heard most of the stereotypical comments made by valedictorians in their speeches. These messages often indicate a minimal awareness of the pivotal importance of high school graduation to seventeen- or eighteen-year-olds. The simplistic tone of the messages underlines the graduates' limited inquiry into what the future holds for them and what they owe to their future.

The author of *Step Toward Freedom*, Linda C. Maddox, is a Christian mother whose family is active in church programs. She spent 25 years as a high school teacher and guidance counselor. Through involvement with her grown children, she has viewed firsthand the thinking processes older teenagers follow as they approach their high school graduation. Commenting on this, she says, "I would like to slide some advice, guidelines, a few 'don'ts,' and lots of 'dos' in on you. As you leave the warm nest of home and high school, I would like to do my part to send you off with both a blessing and a challenge."

Mrs. Maddox makes frequent references to biblical ideals and standards. Freedom is the theme that runs throughout this book. Her references to freedom are always couched in the concept of freedom in Christ and do not encourage anarchism or a do-as-you-please freedom.

Up front, the author says to graduates-to-be, "You probably feel: Now that I am done, I would like to do my part to send you off with both a blessing and a challenge."

The second is a five-part appendix that is a collection of checklists, case studies, and a selected bibliography. Each sub-appendix offers valuable insights into leadership skills or provides ideas for enhancing skills the reader already possesses.

Chapter 19, "Organizing Priorities," may be the most valuable chapter in the book. Smith's lead-off paragraph cites a common saying in real estate that one should consider three essential factors in buying properly: "location, location, and location." He ties the importance of an organization's mission to the importance of location in buying real estate. "If the leader is diverted into spending too much time on peripheral issues, the mission will suffer," says Smith. "The mission will also suffer if the leader does not encourage key subordinates to focus on the accomplishments of the organization's goals," he adds.

Other valuable chapters furnish helpful suggestions for performing the following leadership functions: "Counseling Subordinates," the value of one-on-ones; "Leading in Crises," cool-headedness and flexibility; "Complimenting Creatively," saying Thank you in many ways; "Creating a Strategic Vision," the role of planning; and "Establishing Standards," personal and institutional integrity.

Smith wraps up his book with this comment:

"People who are only as smart as their in-boxes, their immediate staff, their personal experiences, and their television sets, are not smart enough or wise enough to lead large organizations well. Great leaders have become great by hard work, by cultivating an inquiring and open mind, by reaching out widely to people for ideas and insights, and by reading broadly and critically."

Educational administrators can benefit from Smith's numerous ideas in enhancing and broadening their view of leadership. This should make them more effective leaders and better mentors of future administrators.—Clarence Dunbebin.

Peter Albert is a pseudonym of an associate superintendent of education in the North American Division.