

Commencement Address, June 11, 2009

Bob Prior

Dear Graduates,

Now that you have spent the last two years with us ... for some the last three years ... four, do I hear four?

We are sending you now to a much grander classroom called “the world.” We are pleased to send you out into this world, because the biggest part of your education is beyond the confines of any classroom.

But as you prepare to leave us, I have one question? “Are you crazy???” It’s scary out there! Look, I have some add cards . . . please stay . . .

There’s always more we can tell you. Like, why is it that two trains in New York and Chicago always leave at the same time heading towards each other?

Well, there are bigger questions in life, and that’s why I encourage you to enroll in a new course called, Life 102. Welcome to your first class. Let me read the syllabus to you.

Life 102 Syllabus

Course Description: Life 102 is the second in a series of two Life course. Auditing is not an option.

Prerequisites: An open mind; the ability to think for one’s self; and an Associates degree or a certificate in an area of study; . . .or Life 101 with a grade of C or better.

Course Objectives: To enjoy life, not alone, but with others; to lift yourself up but not hold others down;

to be honest with yourself and with others, and to take pride in your work;

to work hard enough to thrive, but not so hard it kills you (refer to Final Exam);

to keep your word; and to pave the road for those who follow.

In this course the student will learn the importance of respect and of patience, ... and good grammar while texting and sending e-mails.

Course Content: Life. This includes, but is not limited to, making relationships work within your family, with your friends and acquaintances, and in your job. Yes, Life is all about relationships.

Student Learning Outcomes: The successful student will enlighten a younger generation by sharing his or her own personal experiences of struggle and triumph,

not so that those younger might **never** struggle themselves, but so that they know there is hope in the midst of challenge and that triumph doesn't come without effort.

(... something you graduates know all too well.)

The successful student will be respectful of self and of others. Respectful of a spouse or partner; respectful of family -- of elders and of children; respectful of a boss and co-workers; of friends; of the well-to-do and of the poor.

Tests: Life tests will be frequent and unannounced, and there are no practice-tests and no make-up exams, and before you even ask: Yes, it will *ALL* be on the test.

Grading: Refer to the final Exam

The Final Exam: This is an oral exam, and its not what *YOU* say, but what others say about you.

What they say will be judged on their sincerity, their passion, and whether they have a funny story to tell about you.

Your whole grade will depend on the final exam.

Let me take a moment to go over a few of the content items in this course

The chapter on Being in Relationship

We are all self-centered -- we have to be to survive -- but being in a relationship means seeing beyond our own needs and getting a glimpse of the needs of others.

Other people are just like you. They have thoughts, needs, and desires. They want to be loved and respected. Can you imagine what your relationships would be like if everyone came from a foundation of respect first?

The chapter on Being a Role Model

Whether you like it or not, you are a role model. Who is it that looks up to you?

Some of you might be the first in your family to earn a degree. By this very act of accomplishment, you have become a role model.

Think of the respect and admiration others must have for you.

The chapter on Being a Parent

Being a parent is a lot like being a role model only with more dirty diapers.

Behave and act the way you want your children to behave and act. Show them what it means to be an adult, because when they try to act grown up, they will be acting like you, for better and for worse.

Also, don't forget to be in relationship with your children.

The chapter on Respect

Respect each other. Coming from a position of respect makes relationships stronger. For example, Men -- always put the seat down. You know what I am talking about! You see, it's a matter of respect.

End:

So, are you with me? Is this a class you are willing to enroll in? I hope so. I've got some add cards.