

October 27, 1966

Arlen Ault
Valley View Elementary School
941 Orchard Drive
Pleasant Grove, Utah

Dear Arlen:

Thanks very much for your nice letter of October 14. Yes, I can remember very well being a fourth grader. I enjoyed it very much, and hope that you are enjoying it too. You are very wise to be interested in developing habits that will enable you to become a successful citizen.

The most important things that we do in our lives are the things that we do when we are young. It is unfortunate that more boys and girls do not realize that this is the time to develop good habits and do the things that will determine what they will be when they are older. Things do not just happen in this life. One must plan for them, and the earlier one starts to plan the better.

One of the important things for young people to do is to learn to listen to their parents and their teachers. These older people have the benefit of experience and can help you avoid making mistakes. Please listen and do the things that your parents and teachers tell you to do.

It is important for young people to study and to practice. When you are young you learn much faster and easier than when you are older. Time spent in practicing the piano or studying your lessons is much more valuable for a youth than it is for an adult. I would strongly advise you to always leave plenty of time for learning to do things that require practice.

Character is a very important thing on which you should start to work now. To develop character you must learn to be honest, trustworthy, loyal, friendly, helpful, courteous, kind, brave, clean, reverent, obedient and thrifty. These things are included in the scout law and are most important. If each day you can learn to do these things it will help you to grow up and have good character.

Another thing that it is important to do is to decide early what you want to do for a living when you grow up. Then you can start to learn the things that you will need to know. You do not need to wait until you go to college if you want to be a scientist. You can go to the library and start reading books on science when you are just a fourth grader. As a matter of fact, the best scientists, the best musicians, the best medical doctors, the best engineers are those who decided at an early age what they wanted to be.

Another thing I would advise you to do is to obtain a belief in God and hold on to it. We are spirit children of our Father in Heaven and we have a spiritual side as well as a physical side. Like our bodies, our spiritual side needs to have nourishment. It must be fed spiritual food. Spiritual food comes to us through prophets and has been written down in books such as the Bible. We need to study and read about spiritual things and learn how to live the way our Father in Heaven would have us live. There are too many people living in the world today who neglect their spiritual nature. Most of the great problems such as crime and war and loss of personal freedom come about because there are so many people who ignore the spiritual half of themselves. If you want to help make the world a better place, you must develop your spiritual half.

There are other qualities that are worthwhile for young people to develop. These are qualities of patience and perseverance, of not giving up on a difficult task or job, but doing the work until it is finished. Since everyone is going to have to work when he grows up, it is important to know that work can be enjoyable. It can actually be fun, it can be pleasant, and the time to learn this is when you are young.

A young person should use good judgment in picking his associates and companions. People of your own age have great influence over you and help you make your day-by-day decisions. Since your day-by-day decisions make you what you are, it is important that your decisions be the right ones. You should pick friends who are willing to work, who obey teachers and parents, who get good grades in school, who regularly attend church, and who show respect to teachers, parents, policemen, and others in

authority. Stay away from young people who travel in gangs, who steal, swear, cheat, tell dirty stories, disrespect others, lie, or have bad reputations.

Many problems in life come from not knowing how to handle money. In fact, when you grow up you will find that money problems are one of the biggest problems of most families. For this reason, it is very important for you to learn now how to spend money and how to save money. It is well for every young person to have some way he can earn money. He should always save a portion of his earnings, pay a tithing to his church, and the rest he should learn to spend wisely. If you can do these things, money will never be a problem to you when you grow up. It is good to ask your parents' advise when you want to buy something. Because of their experience, they can usually help you use wisdom in your spending.

There are many other things that I could tell you, but perhaps these will suffice for now. I wish you success in your school work and in becoming a good citizen.

Very truly yours,

H. Tracy Hall

Director of Research, BYU