## AOW #5 Due September 24, 2012 Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## [The Key to Success: It May Not Be What You Think It Is](http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2012/09/13/the-key-to-success-it-may-not-be-what-you-think-it-is/)

Text to Self Connection: Which do you think are key and why?

## By [Christy Matta, MA](http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/author/christym/)

Directions:

1. Mark your confusion.

2. Show evidence of a close reading using SOAPSTone and Active Reading Strategies.

3. Write a one-page reflection on your own sheet of paper.

What do you think is key to becoming successful later in life? Good grades? A high school or college degree? Knowledge or skill necessary for a particular job? Critical thinking? IQ?

Predict: What are the keys to success?

As markers of success, researchers often look at performance in school, completion of degrees, ability to maintain employment, earning a livable income, refraining from illegal drug use and not divorcing.

In America today, the emphasis tends to be on cognitive achievement. Success in life, we so often believe, comes with knowledge and skills. But intellectual skill is only one small factor that contributes to success in life. So what are the keys to success in life?

Evaluate: How are these people qualified to evaluate success in life?

According to a recent article in the *Wall Street Journal*, psychologists, neuroscientists, economists and educators have been studying factors that contribute to success and have been producing evidence that intellect is not central to life success.

James Heckman, an economist at the University of Chicago who in 2000 won the Nobel Prize for economics, has investigated the question of success. Mr. Heckman has convened conferences of economists and psychologists to understand certain questions: Which skills and traits lead to success? How do they develop in childhood? And what kind of interventions might help children do better?

Clarify: What are they saying here?

As the answers to these questions emerge, the evidence points not to intellectual ability as central to life success, but to non-cognitive skills. These non-cognitive skills — in other words, personality traits — appear to impact life success more than we have typically assumed.

Connection/Evaluate

Yes, what you know is important. And training and skill level on a job do contribute to success at that job. But other qualities such as persistence, self-control, conscientiousness, self-confidence and curiosity matter, perhaps more.

Like knowledge, these personality traits can be developed, but unlike knowledge that is taught in class or book, they come from life experience. Most of the qualities that contribute to overall life success come from our experiences with adversity. Facing difficult challenges and overcoming them builds self-confidence, teaches self-control and tends to foster an attitude of conscientiousness towards others, who may also face difficulties.

Question/Connection:

Problems in developing these traits occur when individuals are over protected and rarely face real challenges or when an individual or child is faced with overwhelming adversity or significant life challenges over which they have no control. Abuse or experiencing multiple crisis that occur one after the next without time for recovery are two examples of overwhelming adversity that can impact those personality traits connected with life success.

Fostering these personality traits, therefore, is complex. We must allow those we love a degree of failure, so they can learn to overcome life’s challenges. Even those who have experienced overwhelming adversity must come to trust themselves and their ability to succeed when faced with setbacks.

Clarify:

**Confidence, courage and persistence are learned when we struggle.** The challenge is to allow ourselves and others to struggle, in order to learn persistence and self-trust, while remaining aware that too much adversity can also erode a sense of self.

Speaker:

**Topics for Reflection:**

* History is filled with stories of individuals who overcame adversity and failure to reach success. Pick one of these individuals and discuss not only how they overcame adversity, but what why you admire them.
* The article states “Problems in developing these traits occur when individuals are over protected and rarely face real challenges…” Do you think that today’s teens are too overprotected by their parents when it comes to experiencing setbacks or failure?

Tone:

Subject:

Purpose:

Audience:

Occasion: