

Education is Freedom

The Future is in Your Hands

James W Keyes

James Keyes is a global business leader, educator, artist, and commercial rated pilot. He is the former CEO of 7 – 11 and Blockbuster Inc.

**Whatever the circumstances of your birth,
some of us are born free. Freedom is
something we learn**

We must learn to be free. This doesn't mean simply learning the basics.

When difficult choices must be made, our individual pursuit of freedom may at times conflict with the freedom of others.

The objective is simply to learn so that wisdom, (a higher degree of knowledge) is the lifeblood of a civil society and learning is the oxygen that fuels our personal enlightenment.

**The importance of what I emphasize the C
suite of learning
change
confidence
clarity
critical thinking
curiosity, creativity , collaboration, cultural
literacy and character are all essential to a
democratic process.**

Mans flight through life is sustained by the power of his knowledge.

**In your flight through life, education is the
wind beneath your wings.**

If you live to learn, then you will be on your way toward learning to live.

Lifelong learning is a journey. It begins with curiosity.

**My father often said “ Get an education son,
it’s the only thing they cannot take away
from you”**

**“Education is the key to unlocking the world
, a passport to freedom” Nelson Mandela**

Freedom is elusive, it represents an internal conflict between free will and societal norms. Freedom is an elusive dream.

**No one will make us free or set us free.
Freedom is a destiny you choose and
comes with the responsibility to yourself
and to others.**

For C suite

What to learn : change , confidence, clarity

How to learn: critical thinking, curiosity and creativity

Why we learn : collaboration, cultural literacy and character

Freedom to learn is freedom to earn

Today, more than 150 million girls across the age band of 6 and 17 are not in school

Teach a woman and you help the family, you help the family, you help the community, you helps the community , you helps the world.

The industrial revolution caused a need for standardization and a demand for an educated workforce

School bells were introduced to mirror factory bells and standardized testing was introduced to measure individuals against a norm.

Today's educated workforce needs a very different kind of education. The system is unlikely to respond quickly to address these needs in the future.

When students ask me what they should be doing, I tell them three things

1. pursue what you enjoy

2. consider the odds of success in achieving any career goal and

3. give yourself a chance

The idea of self improvement is paramount to the American dream. This is true for anyone , anywhere in the world.

Any dream is ones ability to grow to one fullest development undeterred by the barriers of social order restrictions o any obstacles.

In the USA, the average Hispanic or black or Latino household earn about half as much as the average white household.

Fear can threaten out ability to experience happiness or joy.

Fear comes in many forms – we can fear as a person, as a family, as a country. Our inability to manage fear can be the biggest hurdle to achieving our personal dream.

Shining a light on an issue, uncovering the root cause and determining the true nature of risk is the best way to eliminate risk.

Seeking knowledge is the same as turning on a light. If we seek knowledge, it eliminates fear and strive for truth rather than fall back into anger and frustration

Pilots are a good example, they go through biannual trainings to replace fear with knowledge, preparation and a conditioned response that evokes confidence.

The simple lesson is preparation leads to familiarity, which can shield us from the adverse consequences of fear

**Ignorance leads to fear, fear leads to hate
and hate leads to violence**

Many of the challenges society faces can be traced to our individual and collective refusal to learn.

For society to improve each of us must improve, for society to flourish, each of us must flourish.

Change equals opportunity

Nelson Mandela said : *I never lose, I either win or I learn.*

**Oprah Winfrey said the the greatest
discovery of our times is ” a person can
change if he/she changes his/her attitude”**

Believe in yourself and others will believe in you.

The 7-11 mentor told me “ products will come and go but convenience will never die”

The word confidence comes from the Latin word *fidere*, which means to trust.

You cannot be confident if you don't trust yourself

**Preparation will give you the confidence to
achieve anything you set your mind to.**

Lucky people have 4 characteristics:

1. They believe in themselves

2.They listen to their intuition

3. They have positive expectations

4.The adapt a resilient attitude

There is a fine line between confidence and arrogance that we must all traverse.

Humility is the recognition that we must be grateful for what we have.

Much of what happens is outside of our immediate control.

In any field the outlier individual is often discouraged, threatened or bullied to conform.

Clarity defined as quality of being coherent and intelligible, is fundamental to communication.

Clarity is an art form grounded in simplicity

No one teaches us how to learn and no one teaches us why we should learn or how we should learn

There are two types of learners, the first is a curious one and the second is the reactive one, remembers only information they find relevant.

With an abundance of information, and media surrounding us, it is easy to outsource our thinking to others.

Critical thinking is the process of analyzing information, evaluating evidence and making reasoned judgements.

Socrates urged his students to have the ‘interrogative soul’ in order to challenge authority who he felt may be irrational or motivated by self interest.

The Japanese followed the Deming method of critical thinking which was Plan, Do See

Knowing a great deal is not the same as being smart, intelligence is not information alone but also judgement in which information is collected and used.

Rote memorization and the ability to pass multiple tests does not measure or teach critical thinking.

Intellectual curiosity is the root of all knowledge. It is the spark that kindled the discovery of fire.

Curiosity makes the mind active. Curious people always ask questions and search for answers, those that are not curious become receptacles of information.

**Important aspects of curiosity are:
survival, happiness, achievement,
empathy, relationships, health.**

Socioeconomic power, gender, class race, or ethnicity can all stifle curiosity in one way or another.

Think of curiosity as a caged animal, ready to spring free and play.

Without the spark of creativity, there will be no innovation, no appreciation for beauty, no emotion in daily life and little if any progress.

Creativity helps build your confidence and improves your overall well being

In business, creativity provides a company with a competitive advantage. It is like having a camera with superior lens

Creativity cannot be delegated to any department.

Getting creative needs you to step out of your comfort zone, to practice and make time for creativity

Collaboration is indeed multiplication, it is the power of many acting as one.

A culture of high performance happens when team members feel free to share their thoughts fearlessly.

Ego, jealousy, greed and fear are all enemies of collaboration.

**Cultural ignorance is real, it surrounds us
everyday.**

The concept of trustworthy is the corner stone of character.

It takes an open mind to be intellectually honest, intellectual honesty requires us to look at all sides of an issue to understand another's point of view.

Being thankful for what we have is often undermined by negative feelings or dissatisfaction with our current situation.

Practicing mindfulness is one way to think about it, sitting down and being grateful for what you have.

**Only through forgiveness and compassion
can we get another aspect of character –
community.**

Persistence and determination are integral to character.

It is never too late to build character , it is work in progress.

Technology is changing the way we teach and learn.

In 1801, inventor James Pillans invented the first blackboard. In 1795, Nicolas Conte invented the modern pencil.

In the mid 1950s, a 3 M employee named Roger Appledorn invented the transparent film used in overhead projectors and teaching changed.

In 2022, there were 6.8 billion smartphones in the world. While it is anything but an ideal teaching device, it is an important step in providing access.

Going deep or going wide is an aspect of learning. Wisdom or true knowledge, lies at the intersection of knowing and experiencing a great many things.

Physical chains are chains that hold us captive

Societal chains are customs and mores that restrict what we do.

Mental chains are the most oppressive threats to personal liberty.

Education to Wisdom route

- 1. Overcoming the tyranny of our minds**
- 2. Practicing relentless positivity**
- 3. Owning humility**
- 4. Living a life with compassion**

Change does not define us, rather our response to change will establish who we are and how people see us.