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Walking through the open door – the importance of seizing opportunity

American author H. Jackson Brown Jr. said, “Nothing is more expensive than a missed opportunity.” Whatever you do in life is going to cost you something. The question is, is it worth the money. Education is an opportunity worth seizing. One of the most obvious reasons is because of the money. I don’t think it’s a big secret that College grads on average earn a higher wage than those with just a high school education? A 2010 Time magazine article stated that in 2009, the average person with a college degree earned about \$1015 a week, while the average high school dropout earned just \$454. The college grad makes over half. It’s even worse when you see that the unemployment rate is 5.2% for those with a college degree and 14.6% for dropouts.

But it’s not just about the money. There are other advantages as well. When we pursue higher education, we learn tolerance and the acceptance of new ideas. In many cases a college education opens our minds up to new concepts and allows us to look at the world from a much broader perspective. That is important in our ever-increasing present day global view. It also challenges what we were taught and tests what we have learned in our formative years against the opinions and beliefs of others. We are given the tools to really think for ourselves as we make contact with some of the greatest minds in whatever our particular chosen field will be.

Thinking for ourselves is important because we can take what we learn, build on it and take it the next step of the way.

Education frees the mind and allows the imagination to soar. Instead of worrying about the pitfalls, we begin to look at possibilities because we understand that we don't have to be limited by someone else's boundaries. Where would society be if Thomas Edison had not pursued the creation of the light bulb, or Jonas Salk had given up on trying to find a vaccine for polio? Look at all the many uses George Washington Carver got out of a peanut? They were not held by someone else's boundaries, and neither should you.

There is a scripture in the book of Revelation chapter three, verse eight, which says, "I know thy works: behold I set before thee an open door," An open door...what a wonderfully hopeful passage. When you have laboring and proving yourselves, it's good to know that all of your hard work and efforts are not in vain. There is a door, an opportunity that has now been opened up to you.

This opportunity is so great, that no one or no thing whatever it may be can shut, stop, or prevent it from happening. Your future is wide open and you have a free course to build your kingdom.

Once this doorway, this opportunity, is opened, it can never be closed again. The knowledge that you gain through entering this open door, you will always keep and no one can take it away from you. It can never be shut. Whatever you learn, you know forever. This is the power of knowledge. Power is a measurement of an entity's ability to control its environment including the behavior of other entities. It is a powerful thing when you can take an ideology

and establish a nation. It is a powerful thing when you can block unfair legislation because you know what the outcome will be. And it is because of this power that we come to realize the importance of seizing opportunity.

Knowledge and therefore education is power. It provides for us a better understanding of who we are and what we should be about. We are no more slaves to the former things prior to going through this door of emancipation. We no longer function in the excuses that were once so generously doled out by the hand of ignorance. We now operate in the freedom of that truth. We discover who we are and take our rightful place in the world all because we have a freed mind.

There is nothing better than a freed mind. A freed mind has the power to change its surroundings because it has entered a new understanding and lives in that truth. It is because of a freed mind that social and racial inequities are eradicated. It is because of a freed mind that barriers of hate are destroyed and the walls of legislative bureaucracy come tumbling down. It is because of a freed mind that major thought systems, policies, and environments must make a paradigm shift for the betterment of society. With a freed mind we are able to contribute to the world in which we live armed with this formidable proficiency.

That's why seizing the opportunity and walking through the door is so important. When we do this, society changes for the better. We live better, healthier, more productive lives. Good plans don't stay hidden away in locked draws but are implemented. Is seizing the opportunity worth it? I want to encourage you this morning to seize your opportunity. Take advantage of being enriched, refined, empowered, and refreshed by walking through this door and living your dreams. Today an open door is set before you.