



Relish is for more than hot dogs...

A Student's Guide to Making Your Own Sweet Success

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This guide is part of a set that also includes a technical assistance guide for parents, teachers, and others; and a CD/audiotape program featuring the words and experiences of the people in this guide.

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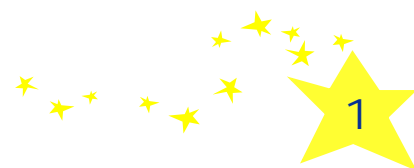


Relish is for More Than Hot Dogs: A Student's Guide to Making Your Own Sweet Success

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Relish...?



Hot Dogs .. ?



Success . . ?





Hello!

This *Guide to Making Your Own Sweet Success* is written for students and young adults. There's also a CD/tape that comes with the guide. The CD/tape shares real life stories from children, teens, and young adults who happen to have a disability.

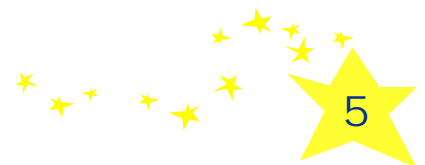
These stories are not really about what it's like to have a disability. They *are* about what it takes to “relish” or really enjoy life—and NOT just by putting relish on a hot dog!

What does it take to really enjoy or relish life? Part of the answer is:

- ★ feeling good about yourself,
- ★ feeling proud, and
- ★ following your dreams, no matter what.

On the CD/tape you'll hear how some young people do this in their lives. We hope you'll be inspired to think about how you do this in yours. And, maybe, you'll want to try some things you've never tried before!

Enjoy!



Believe in Yourself



I'm here. I'm me. Deal with it.
I'm not like everybody else.

Jackie

I just believe in myself and just keep going. I'm now a really good artist.

Aaron

I know more about computers than, I bet, 99% of the people I meet. And that's one thing, I think, that's a gift to me. I think it's really great that I can do that.

Dave

Your biggest enemy about self-confidence is yourself because, I think, if other people tell you you're stupid and you agree with them and you tell yourself you're stupid, then, I think, that's what gets you down the most—instead of other people saying it. 'Cause, if you think you can do better, then it doesn't matter what other people say.

Tillman



Don't Give Up!

Relish Life!

You Get Proud by Practicing

A person with high self-esteem will admit if they can do something—if they get help in doing it—or just move on and perfect something else. A person with bad or low self-esteem will keep doing and doing, get discouraged, and then give up.

Mario



Ms. Hall always kind of believed in me and made it easier for me, because she used to help me. And explaining things, she never acted like I was stupid or anything. So, I think that really helped.

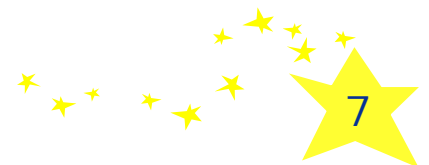
Tillman

Having a disability doesn't mean that you can't or shouldn't try to do things and live a full life.

Mario

Just take a breather and realize some of the positive things that I do in my life.

Aaron



Ask for Help when You Need it Accept Help when You Need it



Dominant 7 Sharp 9, I love that chord!
Jazz grabs me the most, because it's upbeat
and you get grabbed into the song.

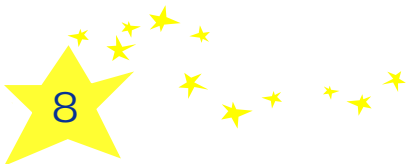
Matt

I remember when my class was running the mile in PE, I would lift weights. Lifting those weights made me feel better about myself, not only physically, but mentally, because I knew I was doing something. I wasn't just sitting there like the lump on the log.

Jackie

Yeah, we've seen a couple of movies together. We go to the mall together. We hang out over the summer, too, sometimes. Whenever we can.

Jackie and Holly



Do Things that Bring Out Your Strengths Don't Just Sit There!

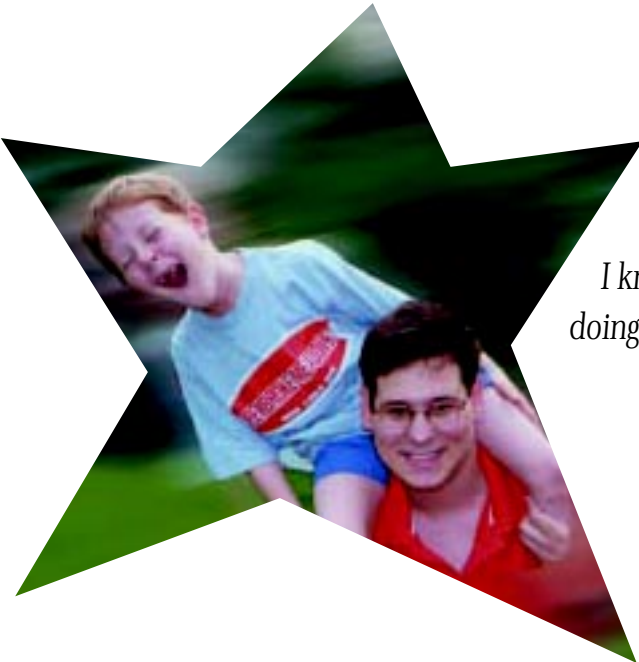
*I think of her saying, "Holly don't get afraid.
You've got to keep on trying and you can do it."*

Holly



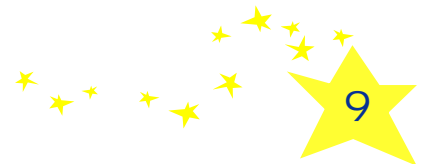
I remember when I was like taught to read. I threw up on the lady who was trying to teach me because I was so depressed. I was so afraid of it.

Aaron

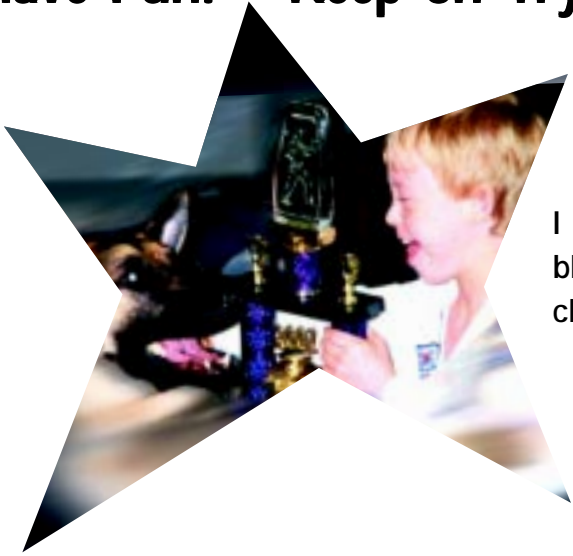


I know lots of the kids at the school now, because I have been doing this for three years, volunteering in the computer lab.

Dave



Have Fun! Keep on Trying Everyone gets afraid sometimes



I did a good job! I am ten years old. I am a black belt in karate. I am going to tournament championships next week!

Neal

And, that sense of success loads you up with self-esteem. Remember, the everyday smaller things count, too. Opening a package of food, chatting with a friend, tying your shoes, enjoying school, painting a beautiful picture, teaching other musicians your favorite jazz chords. It all adds up and what once was a desert in your soul becomes green and lovely.

Alyne

Now it took an hour and a half to get one snack cake open, but I opened it. And that was the first lesson. It taught me that whatever I want to do in life, I can do it as long as I believe it. Yeah, I was hungry!

Mario

Don't let fear stop you

Push Yourself

Never say Never

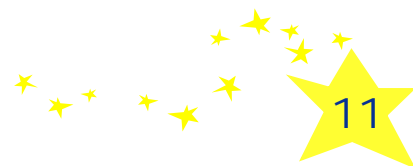
We didn't know at the time what a good thing we were doing, because that year helped rebuild his scattered self-esteem. Things like that, when you can have positive experiences . . . it just helps build yourself a ladder of self-esteem. If there is a setback, you're so high on the ladder that, if you get knocked down a step or two, you don't get knocked down all the way. You've got a safety net and you can just, you know, one step back, two steps forward. And you just remember all the successes you've had, and you can overcome any slight difficulty.

Dave's Mom



Try to push yourself to do other things, to help you get out in the world and doing things that you like doing . . . if you want to do that thing that you most feel passionate about, don't be afraid of it. You must do it because if you don't, you'll never get there. You'll never go up the next step and I believe that if you go up the next step, there's a gazillion other steps you can go up.

Aaron



Mario **D**uncan is a man on a mission.

As a child, his goal was to get into that Little Debbie snack cake!

As an adult, his mission in life is to replace fear with understanding; to help others see *people first*—and not allow disability to get in the way. As a motivational speaker, Mario encourages other young people to pursue their dreams.

Because of Mario's experience, attitude, humor, and wisdom, we asked him to share more insights with us. Here's what he had to tell us.



*How do you get started? Start with something you're interested in.
Hang out with those who share those interests.*

Take charge . . . make decisions. Start simple. Decide what to wear, hair style. Move on to bigger things.

*If you want to get good at something, there are no shortcuts.
You've got to do trial and error—lots of it. I don't like to fail, but I do it regularly.*

When I wanted to drive a car, I started with go-carts and bumper cars.
I figured if I couldn't learn to drive them, there was no way
I was going to be able to drive a car and get a license.

Is it okay to ask for help? It's more than okay to ask for help.
You *should* ask for help when you need to. Go to someone you can trust.

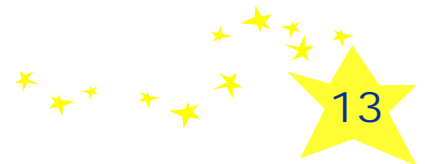
You have to be willing to put yourself out there and keep putting yourself out there, even when it's hard, or you get shut out.

I knew I wanted to be a public speaker when I grew up, so I talked to the mirror. Sure, I looked silly, but I had to practice talking to learn how to say the words. Then I just practiced, practiced, practiced.
This is true with anything you want to do in life.

*What about my disability?
This disability, it couldn't master me. I had to master it.*

When you're younger, it's more important to get outside recognition. It helps build your confidence until you feel it inside on your own. When you have that confidence on the inside, then it's not as important. It's nice, and everyone needs recognition now and again. But—it's *more* important to give yourself recognition for who you are and what you've done.

*Look, it's important to have a social life. You can't be afraid to put yourself out there. Put yourself out there first, **not** your disability. Let people get to know who you are. And then, don't be afraid to talk about your disability.*



You Get Proud by Practicing . . . You Get Proud by Practicing . . .

So, gentle reader, we encourage you to

Find your passion. Celebrate your Self. Dream.
Celebrate your successes. Learn from your flops. Don't give up.

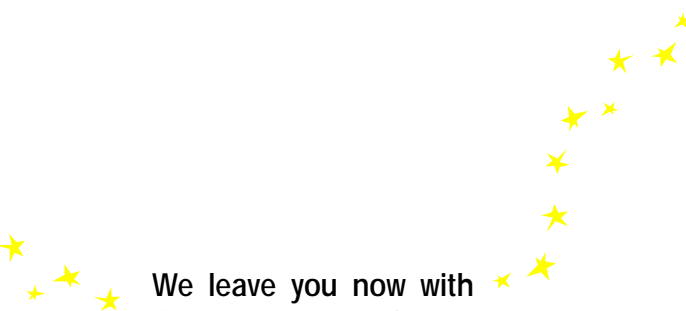
And, most important of all . . .

Live in the ways that make you hum, purr, shout, and jump for joy!

Each person under the sun has gifts to share. Artistic talents, computer savvy, athletic endeavor, the gift of friendship, a kind and compassionate soul, or an eager “can do” attitude—these are just some of the gifts we humans have to share with the world. There’s no single right answer, no one and only way, and no gift that is “the best.”

What’s important is to find *what is right for you*. When you find it, you’ll know it—and practice, practice, practice! Then, “relish” and success in life will be yours and . . . oh, so, sweeeeet!

You Get Proud by Practicing . . . You Get Proud by Practicing



We leave you now with
the inspiring words of
poet and advocate
Laura Hershey, from
her work “You Get
Proud By Practicing,”
excerpted here.

If you are not proud
for who you are, for what you say, for how you look;
if every time you stop
to think of yourself, you do not see yourself glowing
with golden light; do not, therefore, give up on yourself.
You can get proud.

You do not need
a better body, a purer spirit, or a Ph.D.
to be proud.
You do not need
a lot of money, a handsome boyfriend, or a nice car.
You do not need
to be able to walk, or see, or hear,
or use big, complicated words,
or do any of the things that you just can't do
to be proud. A caseworker
cannot make you proud,
or a doctor.
You only need more practice.
You get proud by practicing.

There are many many ways to get proud.
You can try riding a horse, or skiing on one leg,
or playing guitar,
and do well or not so well,
and be glad you tried
either way.

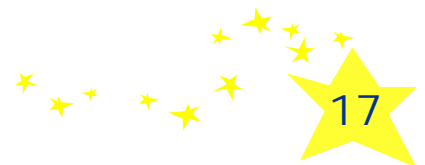
You Get Proud by Practicing . . . You Get Proud by Practicing . . .

You can show
something you've made
to someone you respect
and be happy with it no matter
what they say.
You can say
what you think, though you know
other people do not think the same way, and you can
keep saying it, even if they tell you
you are crazy.
You can speak your love
to a friend
without fear.
You can find someone
who will listen to you
without judging you or doubting you or being
afraid of you
and let you hear yourself perhaps
for the very first time.
These are all ways
of getting proud.
None of them
are easy, but all of them
are possible. You can do all of these things,
or just one of them again and again.
You get proud
by practicing.

You Get Proud by Practicing . . . You Get Proud by Practicing

Power makes you proud, and power
comes in many fine forms
supple and rich as butterfly wings.
It is music
when you practice opening your mouth
and liking what you hear
because it is the sound of your own
true voice.
It is sunlight
when you practice seeing
strength and beauty in everyone
including yourself.
It is dance
when you practice knowing
that what you do
and the way you do it
is the right way for you
and can't be called wrong.
All these hold
more power than weapons or money
or lies.
All these practices bring power, and power
makes you proud.
You get proud
by practicing.

Remember, you weren't the one
who made you ashamed,
but you are the one
who can make you proud.
Just practice,
practice until you get proud, and
once you are proud,
keep practicing so you won't
forget.
You get proud
by practicing.



Acknowledgements

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To learn more from Mario Duncan, contact him at the Ability Center of Greater Toledo, 866-885-5733 (toll free), or visit his web site: www.marioduncan.com. Mario is available for speaking engagements and gives over 300 dynamic motivational presentations each year.



To hear more great music from the Matt Savage Trio, go to his web site: www.savagerecords.com.



To read more about and from Laura Hershey, you can visit her web site www.cripcommentary.com, or write to her at P.O. Box 9004, Denver, CO 80209.

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