

Motivation gets you started, but habits get you going. Now that you feel motivated to win a scholarship, we need to work on developing strong habits to get you going. Stephen R. Covey wrote a powerful book on *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Using his first three habits, we have created the 3 Habits of Highly Effective Scholarship Applicants. In order to win a scholarship, you must believe you are a scholarship winner. However, simply thinking positive thoughts will not get you there. That sort of belief is more akin to wishful thinking. Actions prompt true belief.

So in order to believe you are a scholarship winner, you need to take action and cultivate the 3 Habits of Highly Effective Scholarship Applicants:

1. Be Proactive
2. Begin with the End in Mind
3. Put First things First

Be Proactive

As Stephen R. Covey put it, being proactive “means more than merely taking initiative. It means that as human beings, we are responsible for our own lives” (70-71). If you want to win a scholarship, then realize you can take action to do just that.

Be proactive.

Take action.

Do something about it.

So how do you do that? Essentially, to win a scholarship, you need to learn to sell yourself. And in order to sell anything, you have to have something worth selling. Therefore, you need to become a scholarship winner, a person with the qualities that sell.

Take a second and think of qualities that you feel make a scholarship winner.

I bet you listed things like someone with great grades, advanced intelligence, lots of volunteer hours, and leadership positions. Well, that isn't entirely true. Let's take a look at how you can proactively cultivate the necessary qualities to help you believe you are a scholarship winner.

Leadership:

Yes, scholarship judges look for leadership, but that word means more than carrying an official leadership title. You do not need to be captain of the team or president of the club to have leadership potential. What about the guy who gets to practice early so he can warm up? This is

leading by example. Or the girl who pumps up her team to keep them motivated? Or the guy who teaches his classmates to have respect for the teacher? All of these people are leaders.

In what way are you a leader?

Be proactive today and start developing leadership qualities, and don't worry if you never make captain or become president. Just be proactive in cultivating leadership skills.

Volunteer Hours:

Scholarship winners are volunteers; however, hours do not sell you as much as longevity and commitment. Volunteer work shows judges several things about you: you care, you get involved, and you follow through on commitments. Serving for two hours every Christmas in a soup kitchen shows all of those traits. By proving others can rely on you, you displayed a strong sense of commitment regardless of the amount of hours.

If you have not done any volunteer work, and you do not know where to start, then think about your hobbies and/or future career. If you want to go into medicine, volunteer at a hospital. If you enjoy animals, volunteer at an animal shelter. If you like kids, volunteer at a day care. Again, it is not about hours, but rather commitment. So stay committed to whatever you decide to do, and pick the amount of hours that fit your schedule. Maybe you only volunteer once a month for two hours, but that is ok because you go every month faithfully.

Great Grades and Intelligence:

You do not have to fit the genius mold to win a scholarship. Scholarships are won by ordinary people who made the choice to be proactive. Read the criteria carefully for any scholarship you apply for. If you need a GPA of at least a 3.0, then that's it; that is all you need. Someone first checks to make sure you meet all the basic criteria, and if you do, then they send your application on to the judges who do not even see grades. They only see the material you put in the application.

Since all the judges see is the story you present them (through your essay, resume, and letters of recommendation), you just need the intelligence to recognize this massive opportunity in front of you and choice today to be proactive in creating a compelling story by obtaining the necessary qualities.

Letters of Recommendation:

As previously mentioned, you should take an active role in obtaining great letters of recommendation. You need to establish meaningful relationships with potential referees and

provide them with clear examples. The scholarship strategy course walks you through this process step by step.

Truly, winning a scholarship comes down to you and your beliefs. You need to take the actions required to motivate yourself to believe you are a scholarship winner. Dr. Covey examines what he calls the circle of concern versus the circle of influence. When you live in the circle of concern, you will have a hard time achieving your goals. In the circle of concern, you focus on the “ifs” and the “have’s.” Well, if I had Becky’s intelligence, then I could apply for a scholarship. Or If I was popular and smart like Nick, then I could apply for a scholarship. In this line of thinking, you focus only on your concerns, and you let your concerns stop you from being proactive.

When you live in the circle of influence, you focus on the “be’s” I can be a leader. I can be a committed volunteer. I can be the person who receives the best letter of recommendation. I can be a scholarship winner.

“The proactive approach is to change from the inside-out: to be different, and by being different, to effect positive change in what’s out there” (Covey 89).

So go BE a scholarship winner and embrace what’s out there.

Begin with the End in Mind

“Begin today with the image, picture, or paradigm of the end of your life as your frame of reference of the criterion by which everything else is examined. Each part of your life—today’s behavior, tomorrow’s behavior, next week’s behavior, next month’s behavior—can be examined in the context of the whole, of what really matters most to you. By keeping that end clearly in mind, you can make certain that whatever you do on any particular day does not violate the criteria you have defined as supremely important, and that each day of your life contributes in a meaningful way to the vision you have of your life as a whole” (Covey 98).

If you desire to win a scholarship, then set your sight on that. That is one of your life’s end goals. So begin with that end in mind.

However, you cannot just decide on an end goal. You need to visualize it. Just as someone building a home begins with a blueprint to visualize the end result, you must see your end result. If you have no idea what the end looks like, how can you there?

In order to visualize the end goal of winning a scholarship, you need to see what winning scholarship applications look like.

Our scholarship strategy course offers several examples of winning applications as well as listing behaviors and attributes of the scholarship winners to help you more clearly envision that end goal.

Put First Things First

While urgent matters insist on action as they stare you in the face, “important matters that are not urgent require more initiative, more productivity. We must *act* to seize opportunity, to make things happen” (Covey 151). This ties into our previous lesson on setting smart goals. If you do not have a clear goal, and/or you don’t work towards that goal often, you can easily go off course. You must decide to put first things first. You must decide to work towards winning a scholarship and make that a priority.

While Habit two is the mental creation (visualizing the end), habit three is the physical creation. Just as Dr. Covey said, every day we can work towards that end goal.

To achieve this, go and look at successful scholarship applications (your blueprint) and then set clear goals on how to achieve that. What do you need to do to build a winning essay (the floor), what do you need to do to build a winning resume (the ceiling), and what do you need to do to build strong letters of recommendations (the walls)?

After you know what you need to do, act and seize the opportunity to make it happen.

Today’s Action Item

Be proactive today by choosing one of two great action steps.

Action plan #1: Enroll in our course to help you envision your end goal and put your plan into action.

Action plan #2: List ways you can start being proactive and get out of the circle of concern and into the circle of influence. Once you find yourself in the circle of influence, research winning scholarship applications to envision the end goal, and then remind yourself daily to put first things first and work towards your end goal.

