

## Six Simple Words, Four Fulfilled Years

Entering high school is a volatile time for young students. Freshman often get overwhelmed by the change of pace and workload that comes about in transition from middle school to high school. It can be tough to navigate life and try to find balance in the big, bad, and new world you find yourself in. When I was one of these youngsters just trying to find my way, my mom gave me some advice that would become my motto: work hard, play hard, rest easy.

The leading portion of the phrase, “work hard,” is arguably the most important guideline to follow in high school. The strength of a person’s work ethic is, in my opinion, the strongest indicator of their future success. A prominent part of working hard is discarding the thought that you are too good to do certain tasks. My chemistry teacher once playfully announced to the class that, should we not understand the material, he could get us an application to work at Subway. What he didn’t know was that I worked at Subway at the time. When I got the job, my mother told me that she was glad I was working there because she knew that, if times get tough for me, I wouldn’t be afraid to go to a local restaurant and pick up a mop until I was back on my feet. My teacher also didn’t know that I would go on to ace his class.

Some people may try to convince you that putting in effort at this level is pointless, that high school doesn’t matter in the grand scheme of life. This is true in the sense that a potential employer is not going to refer to your report cards from when you were sixteen years old, but time is linear and achievements are compounding. Putting in extra work in high school could afford you extra advantages going forward. This isn’t to say that you can’t lead a successful life without an impressive high school career; it is simply easier to start out ahead in a solid position than to put yourself behind through neglect. Take every assignment, every task, every

opportunity to do something well and run with it. Develop the mentality that everything that you do matters and deserves your attention, and your work won't go unnoticed.

“Play hard” could be dangerous advice to give to some, but I feel that it is important to include nonetheless. Find some source of fun in your life and, within reason, indulge. This doesn't mean you should go absolutely bonkers with friends and engage in illegal activities because you think some student told you to in an essay. It means that you need to find what you enjoy doing and incorporate it into your school life. If you love sports, participate in as many as you can. If woodworking is your passion, take a shop class. If you enjoy being creative, enroll in art classes in school. Even if an activity doesn't serve a purpose other than to make you happy, it still holds merit.

If your regimen includes a hearty blend of both working and playing hard, it is vital to your physical and mental health that you rest easy. If you are truly applying yourself in other areas of life, it is not lazy to take time for yourself. You need to allow yourself to recover. Stay up late when you really need to as per the “work hard” guideline, but find a day where you can sleep however much you need. It's okay.

“Work hard, play hard, rest easy” provides a much-needed balance in one's life. Working hard will help you reach your goals and set you up for future success. Playing hard will help you find happiness and lead you to making connections with people with similar interests and values. Resting easy allows for recuperation. My hope is that everyone can achieve this balance that my mother outlines with her motto, even those who are not fortunate enough to have her personally ensuring that it is being carried out.