

I want to be successful. Right now, I'm 15. I want a nice car, like the people in my neighborhood. They seem rich and respected. I want that life. How do I become successful?

Jason B

Respect is important to everyone. Even people with more money than they can spend may be unhappy with their lives because they aren't respected by their loved ones, friends, colleagues or community.

A few things that may help you achieve the life you want:

- 1 Know that money can't buy respect.
- 2 If you are dishonest, you won't be respected by the people who think you've lied.
- 3 Specialize in a small aspect of the field you eventually choose.

My father was the best in the nation at his job. He was an attorney. But to be the best attorney in the nation would be pretty hard. We have a lot of lawyers. How do you determine which one is the best? He specialized in one small aspect of the law, large corporate taxes. His knowledge of big company taxes was so deep, his advice was sought after by other companies and even the federal government. People respected his opinion. Congress listened to his advice. He was even in a movie. Now it was a movie about taxes and even his son wouldn't watch it, but other people in the field listened to every word.

Picture yourself as a professional athlete. You need your hands to work perfectly, otherwise your team won't win and you'll lose your job. Now let's imagine you break the second bone in your pointer finger (proximal phalanges). You make a lot of money, you are respected in your sport, and you can't play with a messed up finger. If your finger isn't perfect, you may never be able to play again. Do you want to go to just any orthopedic surgeon and hope he knows what he's doing with that small bone? Or would travel to the one doctor who is considered the best at repairing that tiny bone?

You don't have to be a doctor or lawyer to have a specialty. I have a friend who never went to college, but instead specialized on setting up conveyor belts inside bottling plants, like Coke. Big bottling companies know that if they don't have a well-constructed processing plant, they will end up with jams and that means money. Because my friend specialized, he travels the world, charging companies more money than his competitors.

As you begin your career, no matter what job you choose, you'll find one aspect that you really seem to enjoy. Specialize in that tiny area. Become the best in the nation at it. Share your expertise. Write articles, go to conferences, and be a guest speaker. Create a network of people who have a similar job and discuss how to get better and more knowledgeable at your given specialty. Soon, people will begin to search you out and ask your advice. They will respect your knowledge, your honesty, and your willingness to help others who ask for assistance.

If you have a question about your child's attendance at school, feel that your child refuses to go to school, or have a question about your child's education,

you can Email Dr. Kay at DrJimK@yahoo.com and your question with his answer may be published in this magazine.