

Work hard at work worth doing

From our friend Brian Coppess, Ed. D., Associate Principal at Urbandale High School

This morning I was reminded on the radio that the Iowa State Fair begins today. Glowing memories overcame me as I considered my many Fair adventures. As a college student, I vividly recall being awed by the sights and sounds of the midway as Styx's "Grand Illusion" resonated from the grandstand. Ensuing years meant sharing the wonders of the Fair with my wife and eventually my children. The way we experience the Fair has evolved as the boys have grown, but each of us has a unique, genuine bond to Iowa's late summer marvel.

For as long as I can remember, the Fair was also a signal that school would be starting soon. Young children, teens, and adults alike know that leisure days at the Fair would soon be replaced with the excitement and hustle and bustle that comes with the first day of school. Considering the freedom that summer allows students and educators, it's understandable why some regard the beginning of the school year with something less than exuberance. Thomas Huxley puts that reluctance into perspective: "Perhaps the most valuable result of education is the ability to make yourself do the thing you have to do when it ought to be done, whether you like it or not." When one's outlook is to embrace the potential of the upcoming school year, it becomes reasonable that the Fair must end so school can start.

As the transition from summer activities to school endeavors occurs, it's one's attitude and character that determine how much will be garnered from this year's adventure. When everything else feels out of your control, know that you will be remembered by your attitude and character. In the book, The Diary of Anne Frank, the young Holocaust victim revealed

insight beyond her years when she wrote, "The final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands." As you reflect upon Anne Frank's wisdom, understand that this year's educational opportunity will be what you make of it. Do your best. Character counts!

"One of the best prizes that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing" – Theodore Roosevelt