

### Mother and Daughter Speak Out

Dear Highlands,

My daughter Beth took the Highlands Ability Battery during her junior year of high school. She is very intelligent, but she couldn't figure out what to do about college. She was panicked at the idea of even thinking about college.

Beth and I both learned some very useful information. What helped the most was learning that Beth's natural time frame was very short. What I thought was stubbornness was her natural way of looking at the world. Later, I took the test myself and learned that my time frame was very long – no wonder we were always frustrated with each other! Beth was relieved to hear the counselor explain that once she picked a major, she could focus on one semester at a time and I would no longer worry about her "short-sightedness."

**"Each one of us has a dream somewhere inside. It is your most direct link to the person you really are and what you really should be doing. Find your dream. Find out what it is and then go for it."**

**Tom Clancy**

We learned that Beth was a "specialist/introvert." She liked working from a specialized perspective. This convinced us that a small school would be best. The counselor asked Beth if she had an interest in art. Beth has a deep love for horses, but she hadn't thought about art. She decided to work on the school yearbook and took an art class her senior year, and loved it. That experience and a class visit from an illustrator helped Beth decide to look at a career in art. We heard about Savannah College of Art and Design. Beth liked what she saw and was accepted. Beth is

now a sophomore at SCAD where she enjoys the specialized, small classes and the personal attention of the professors. She has become interested in graphic design and is looking toward a career in that area. In addition, the school added an equestrian team, and she's able to keep up with her love of horses!

Without The Highlands Program, I never would have supported Beth's decision to look at SCAD. THP gave me the objective, concrete information I needed to advise and guide my daughter. We both agree that if she had gone to the University of South Carolina as a business major, Beth would not have made it through the first year! Now I feel confident that she will graduate in 4 years with a degree that will enable her to get a job and develop her interests.

I found that the ability Battery is for the parents as much as for the child. As the one who is paying huge amounts of money for college, and who is in the best position to guide and influence the child, the parent needs this information. It helped me gain tremendous insight into my daughter.

*Sharon*

Dear Highlands,

My mom wrote to tell you what she thought of The Highlands Program, and I wanted to let you know how the experience affected me.

I am the youngest of 4 siblings. All of us took The Highlands Ability Battery. The others all seemed to know where they were heading in life, but I was skeptical. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do or even how to think about it. All I knew was that I loved working with horses. Somehow, though, I felt I needed to get some sort of college degree, no matter what I did. I was planning to go to the University of South Carolina to study business, even though I thought I would hate it.



When I took the ability battery, some of it was fun and some was frustrating. I am a perfectionist, and I wanted to do well on everything. I had no idea what the assessment would tell me. The consultation really opened my eyes. The counselor told me things that I had never thought of. But when she mentioned them, my thought was, "That sounds just like me! How does she know me so well." Her comments hit home and really opened my eyes. I realized things about myself that were true, but I had never been able to put into words.

I learned that I am a specialist. I need to find something unique to myself. I also scored high in areas relating to creativity. As a result, I started taking art classes and loved them. I am now attending Savannah College of Art and Design and I really love it. I am majoring in graphic design, and I hope to go into some form of advertising or design. I still love horses, and I am on the equestrian team here. My dream job would be to find a field that lets me do a combination of the things I love – perhaps advertising in the equestrian world.

What I do know is that The Highlands Program gave me a strong sense of who I am and the kind of field I would enjoy. I also know that if my mom hadn't heard the information, she never would have supported me in a field like art. Now I am studying what I love with the encouragement of those who care about me. The Highlands Program was a great way to figure out what you want to do and to be happy with it. I can make my future decisions based on real information about myself.

*Beth*



## How Can Parents Help?

Beth's experiences in thinking about college are not unique. Students know that they should go to college to get ahead in the world. Some even have an idea of what they want to study or what they would like to do after college. Most students, though, have only vague ideas for the future. They often connect more to what others consider important than what is really most important to them.

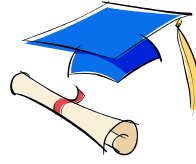
Parents and counselors can help students think through the process. Most students welcome the opportunity to talk about their dreams, so long as they feel that they are talking to someone who can listen and not be critical or judgmental. Here are some tips for talking to your teenager about his or her dreams.

- **Don't rush to judgment.** It's not important that a teenager find the ideal career right now. It is more important that he or she actively try out some different ideas about careers. Students frequently change their goals in college as they gain more experience.
- **Suspect pat answers.** When an answer about college or career comes too quickly, try to understand where it comes from. Has the desire to become a doctor come from real experience (working with sick people, a love of biology, family experience) or only because it seemed the best way to earn prestige?
- **Welcome complicated hazy, half-thought-out answers.** It's easy to become frustrated when you get cloudy ideas. But be glad that you are getting something to work with, however hazy, and try to find the source of the ideas. When did your student get interested in that? Why?
- **Encourage hands-on experience.** What students experience for themselves will have 10 – 20 times the impact of what you tell them. Encourage work or volunteer experiences in areas they are interested in. It will help solidify good ideas and help them understand why other fields may be wrong for them.
- **Your example is more compelling than anything you can say or teach.** Almost all teenagers will eventually adopt the values and career examples of their parents. If you love what you do, that is an example your teenager will emulate.
- **Help your student pay attention to what he or she is really interested in.** Interests are a clear example of where to find passion and creativity. Help your student pursue subjects and ideas he or she finds compelling and interesting. When it comes time to choose a college or career direction, students who have actively pursued their interests have a clear advantage.

### For Information On Career Planning And The Highlands Ability Battery

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## Students ... Are You Ready for College?



Take this short quiz to find out.

Being ready for college means passing all the right courses in high school, right? Not entirely. We have found that the most important preparation involves figuring out the most essential things about yourself and what you see yourself doing in life.

Use the following scale to describe how these statements describe you. Write the number of your response in the blank at the beginning of the statement.

Not at all like me	Not very much like me.	Sometimes yes, sometimes no.	A little like me.	A lot like me.
1	2	3	4	5

- \_\_\_ I have some fairly specific *interests* that I would like to pursue in college.
- \_\_\_ I have a picture of the *role* I want to play in my career in the next 10 years.
- \_\_\_ I have a picture of the *lifestyle* I want to be living in the next 10 years.
- \_\_\_ I have a general picture of the *kind of work* I would really love doing.
- \_\_\_ I have a general picture of the *kind of work* I would really be good at.
- \_\_\_ I have some pretty clear *goals* that I would like to get out of college.
- \_\_\_ If my plan for my career doesn't work out, I have some other ideas.
- \_\_\_ I have a pretty good idea how I could best use my talents in my career.

Now, total all the number you have inserted: \_\_\_\_\_

## How'd you do?

**35-40** – You seem to have a very clear vision for your future – what you want to do after college, how you want to live your life, what roles you would be good at and why. You have thought about alternative plans in case your original ones do not work out as expected. When you go to college with this kind of preparation, you are almost always more successful...and much happier.

**28-34** – You have looked at some facts about life and work after college. As you can be more clear and more specific with yourself about your talents, your interests, what you really want to do in your career, and what you feel would be worth putting your time and energy into, you can gain an increasingly powerful Personal Vision. This is a tool you can use throughout your career.

**20-27** – You may have some ideas about the future. However, doing some work on your natural abilities and what roles are easy for you to perform can go a long way to helping you start to get a clear picture of what you would like to do with your life. You can also help yourself by paying attention to what interests you. This can be the source of a great deal of energy and enjoyment in your career.

**Less than 20** – The place to start in creating a Personal Vision is with your natural abilities. They tell you where your natural talents lie. Your natural abilities make it easy for you to do some things. Other roles are naturally more difficult for you. By learning objectively about your natural talents, you can have the basic groundwork of a Personal Vision....one of the most powerful predictors of both success and enjoyment in college.