Trey Songz: His Music Has Meaning

Overcoming Obstacles

Morgan State University: The HBI Equity Case

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TREY SONGZ
among the most promising R&B artists

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Dr. Felicia Durden
Charity B. Strothers
Carla M. Dickerson
Crystal Styles
There is a chill in the air and school has been back in session for a few months now. Teachers are back in their classrooms giving students much needed instruction and guidance.

I can remember my first teaching assignment as a high school history and government teacher. When I received my teaching contract in the mail it was one of the greatest days of my life. Upon reflection now, I was twenty-one years old soon to be twenty-two and my career in education was just beginning.

One of the first things that I did was to get a mentor at my school. I just figured I needed someone who was experienced and knew more than I did about the profession. I was so green that the advice and wisdom my mentor gave me was invaluable. He called me by my last name which I thought was strange but he was the consummate professional so that set the tone.

An original piece of advice he gave me was to get order in my classroom. He said without order and discipline learning could not take place. He added that there would be chaos every day. The next thing he told me was to call every parent to tell them how privileged I was to have their child in my classroom. My mentor said establishing a positive relationship with them at the beginning would help me in the long run. He was right. During field trips for example, I always had more than my fair share of parent volunteers. It was because I had developed a relationship with them.

Those two pieces of advice served me well throughout my career in education. While my public school position as a social studies teacher shifted to higher education as an administrator and a teacher, I never fell to remember those two principles.

It did not take very long for me to realize that my students trusted me. They believed what I said and responded to me in a positive way. I was a role model for them. Many of my students told me they wanted to go to college and become a teacher. That was a great compliment, one that I have never forgotten.

I still believe today that being a teacher is one of the most honorable professionals that you can have. Parents trust you and communities trust you. When students see their teachers outside of the school setting they are acknowledged in a positive way.

Teachers hold the public trust. They are viewed as leaders and shapers of the future. Yet some would say that teaching is a fall back profession. In other words if you can’t be what you want to be, then you can always be a teacher.

Sometimes I will ask students what they want to be. I don’t see as many hands going up when it comes to being a teacher. Yet I believe strongly if you want to change the world then become a teacher.

Yes, you may have to be a surrogate parent and yes, you may have to provide lunch money or clothes for some of your students! Yet those acts of kindness may influence a life in a positive direction. Teachers have always been difference-makers. Examples of their influence loom large. Ask any successful person about their journey and they will probably mention the name of a teacher.

The demands on a teacher these days are much different. As a result the teaching profession is losing too many of its shining stars. Most are challenged by ever changing state demands, parents taking up for their disruptive children and marginal pay. These are all legitimate concerns and until some things change there will be a mass exodus each year of highly qualified teachers. So give teachers the voice they so desperately need to control their own destiny. Re-shape policies at all levels that penalize good teachers for their students’ poor performance. Let teachers know their communities care about them.

Over time, we have created a lot of “days” for individuals and groups on our calendar. I am sure that all of us can name at least three days. Let’s have a national teachers’ weekend where if you are a certified teacher all of your purchases are made at a discounted price. All it takes is one community or city to recognize the importance of teachers and their value to society. Is this idea radical? It depends upon your perspective. Our children and grandchildren are being taught by teachers. Where would our children be without our teachers?

Consider your college major as maybe teaching is in your future. Talk to some of your teachers as I am sure they will provide you with some sage wisdom on the profession.

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Cover Story

Trey Songz

Over the past ten years, no one has better blended the sounds of hip-hop and R&B and pop better than the Grammy-nominated international superstar TREY SONGZ. And now for 2014, after dozens of hits, and more than 20 million albums & singles sold, his sixth studio album…TRIGGA is here.

Put your hands in the air if you’re loving tonight…

With TRIGGA, Trey Songz has found the true meaning behind his music and prepared his most intimate album yet. The album is an honest and courageous set of songs that will solidify his bond with an adoring fanbase who have been open ever since he exclaimed “I gotta make it!”

TRIGGA will extend the legacy of I GOTTA MAKE IT (2004), TREY DAY (2007), READY (2009), PASSION, PAIN & PLEASURE (2010) and the triumphant #1 RIAA Gold-Certified album CHAPTER V (2012). The album will add to the hit parade of jams like “I Need A Girl,” “LOL Smiley Face,” “2 Reasons” & “Heart Attack.” And let us not forget the classic change-the-game-sounds of “Successful,” with partner Drake, the permanent go-to-bed-cocky records like “Neighbors Know My Name” & “I Invented Sex,” the club banger “Bottoms Up” or “Say Aah,” the best, most literal, did-he-just-say-that? club anthem ever made that brought all that heat and sex appeal and provocation to longing ladies everywhere who thought they were safe at the bar.

His best, most anticipated album of his career, TRIGGA will also turn on legions of new fans who want a R&B pop & soul master who wears his heart on his sleeve. Fans like Trey, then they love Trey, then they never ever want to be without his music. And then he always brings that new fresh beat…

“Nana” is TRIGGA’s lead single and it has pushed its way up the video & song playlists dripping with the sweat of its leading man. The song flips that classic “oh nana” dancehall refrain into an anthem for the new millennium, a soundtrack for couples everywhere who want to take care of each other.

“I love hard,” says Trey Songz. “When I love you I love you to death, but if I’m not rocking with you then I don’t think you exist in my world…”

Stability came in high school when Trey moved back to Petersburg, Virginia, a small town south of Richmond. Trey’s mom, April Tucker, had him when she was seventeen-years-old and raised him as a single parent until she married Trey’s stepfather when he was seven. An Army brat, Trey spent most of his earliest years moving from town to town as the family would follow his stepfather who would be stationed to different military bases.

“I went to eight schools before ninth grade. That prepared me for who I am in my life today…”

Stability came in high school when Trey moved back to Petersburg, and it was then that he discovered his music talent. With the sounds of Otis Redding, Donny Hathaway, Prince & Michael Jackson in his head, Trey threw himself at every talent show and small club performance building a name for himself one verse at a time. Trey Songz has always been an artist who brings real situations from his life into ours. So if you liked the irresistible emotion that fueled “Heart Attack,” “Can’t Be Friends,” the yearning ballad “Yo Side Of The Bed,” or the chart-topping multi-platinum hit “Bottoms Up (feat. Nicki Minaj)” then get ready to fall in love with the new jam, TRIGGA’s second single, “Smartphones.”

Tremaine Aldon Neverson was born in Petersburg, Virginia, a small town south of Richmond. Trey’s mom, April Tucker, had him when she was seventeen-years-old and raised him as a single parent until she married Trey’s stepfather when he was seven. An Army brat, Trey spent most of his earliest years moving from town to town as the family would follow his stepfather who would be stationed to different military bases.

“I went to eight schools before ninth grade. That prepared me for who I am in my life today…”

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Cover Story  Continued

Trey Songz

time. After graduating high school he moved to New Jersey with producer / mentor Troy Taylor and laid the foundation for a career that has never looked back.

“Performing is amazing. To see a song come from conception to singing it to thousands and thousands of people all around the world is the most gratifying experience…”

If you want to witness the power of music, go to a Trey Songz show and sit next to one of “Trey’s Angels.” Far more than a fan club, “Trey’s Angels” is an army of devoted fans in dozens of cities worldwide who are inspired by the R&B superstar to live strong, great lives. They even have their own mobile app – The Angels Network, affectionately known as “TAN,” a straight real-time connection from Trey Songz to his fans.

The “Angels With Heart Foundation” is an organization Trey founded in 2010. It began as a call to action to engage his fan club and has now become a worldwide movement. Through this foundation, Trey encourages members to give back and, most importantly, have a positive impact in their neighborhood through community service with local charities and random acts of kindness.

The late Ahmet Ertegun, founder of Atlantic Records, once professed Trey to be “among the most promising R&B artists we have had on Atlantic since we started the company 60 years ago.”

It’s that kind of talent that has always pushed Trey Songz to explore different creative paths. His first acting role was in Texas Chainsaw Massacre 3D. Then he played across from leading lady Paula Patton in the hilarious Baggage Claim, stealing the film with his antics with another woman (“That girl is craaaaazy!”). Trey knows he can entertain in many ways, but it always comes back to the music.

TRIGGA is a perfect blend of R&B Soul and Pop feel-good with irresistible sing-in-the-shower falsetto hooks. It will take you to the club, bump you in the car or just get in your head and help you rock out the summer #hashtag share at a time.

Rock with TRIGGA, love with TRIGGA, cry with TRIGGA, lay down with TRIGGA…and you will always always remember his name... BCT

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Entertainment Briefs

Welcome back to BCT’s entertainment briefs! We’re giving you the latest news on your favorite celebs. This time around we’re focusing on television, movies and music!!!

The new season of The Real Housewives of Atlanta is here! With everything that has occurred since last season ended, this season should be explosive! The number one question on everyone’s mind seems to be how will the Apollo and Phaedra divorce will play out on the show.

This season welcomes two new members to the cast, Demetria McKinney and Claudia Jordan. Demetria was on the hit TV show “House of Payne” for six seasons. She is also a great singer. Demetria recently released a new song and video titled “100” featuring Da Brat.

Claudia is currently a co-host on The Rickey Smiley Morning Show. In the past she has appeared on Celebrity Apprentice, The Price is Right and Deal or No Deal. Is Claudia coming after Kordell Stewart? Yes, that Kordell as in Porsha’s ex husband.

Speaking of Porsha, she seems to no longer be one of the full-time housewives. Regardless if that is true or not, the good news is we will see a lot of Porsha this season! Between these stories and the entertainment the other housewives bring, this should be another great season!

Are you in the mood to watch a great movie? Please check out Beyond the Lights. Beyond the Lights was directed and written by Gina Prince-Bythewood and stars Gugu Mbatha-Raw, Nate Parker, Minnie Driver and Danny Glover. After a young police officer saves a new artist’s life, sparks begin to fly. You will have to watch the movie to see what happens from there!

With one of the hottest songs in the streets, Detroit female rapper and Columbia Records’ Dej Loaf is ready to shake things up! Known for her hit song, “Try Me” and the remix featuring Ty Dolla Sign & Remy Ma, Dej Loaf has had an immediate impact! Be on the lookout for her as she continues to come with more hot songs in the upcoming months!

Be on the lookout for the following new releases:
- Eminem and Various Artists – Shady XV
- Nicki Minaj – The Pinkprint
- Stalley – Ohio
- Lil’ Mo – The Scarlett Letter
- Rick Ross – Hood Billionaire

That’s it for this edition of entertainment briefs. Happy holidays and be on the lookout for the latest news about your favorite celebs in the next edition of BCT!!!
Court Affirms Discrimination in ‘HBI Equity Case’
Judge’s ruling mandates changes in Maryland higher education

Robert M. Bell
Civil Rights in Education

David J. Burton, ’67
Pace McConkie

As asked to outline the October 2013 ruling of U.S. District Court Judge Catherine C. Blake in the case Coalition for Equity and Excellence in Maryland Higher Education, et al. v. Maryland Higher Education Commission, et al., Pace McConkie relishes the opportunity. McConkie, a longtime civil rights lawyer and the director of Morgan’s Robert M. Bell Center for Civil Rights in Education, has been following the case closely since its inception in 2005.

“It’s been a long process, but you have to feel good...” he says. “It has long been acknowledged that Maryland operated a de jure segregated (higher education) system, and after Brown v. Board of Education it had to dismantle that system.... Well, it’s been 60 years since Brown. And in that 60 years, this is the first time that a federal court has weighed in and made findings of fact and conclusions of law that Maryland is still operating its system in violation of the law (and) that it has to fix it.”

The Coalition represents students, alumni and supporters of Morgan State University and Maryland’s three other Historically Black institutions (HBIs) — Bowie State University, Coppin State University and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. In its case, the organization identified a number of policies and practices that the Coalition claimed maintain and perpetuate a separate and unequal system of higher education segregated by race. Those include discriminatory funding practices, unfair allocation of missions to the State’s public colleges and universities and the approval and unnecessary duplication of HBI academic programs at Traditionally White Institutions (TWIs). The Coalition put the total funding deficiency at HBIs as a result of those policies and practices at $2.1 billion.

While the Court found that gaping funding disparities continue to exist and should be addressed by the State, it did not find that existing practices for funding or allocation of missions by the State are clearly linked to the pre-Brown era of de jure segregation. However, it sided with the Coalition and mandated a remedy on the matter of academic programs, program approval and the unnecessary duplication of HBI programs. Upon delineating a framework for a remedy, the Court asked the State and the Coalition to attempt to mediate a remedial agreement and appointed Judge Paul W. Grimm to oversee and facilitate the negotiations. Should the parties fail to reach an adequate agreement in a reasonable amount of time, the Court will conduct a remedial phase of the trial and order a remedy and final judgment consistent with its findings of fact and conclusions of law.
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Morgan is very proud of being among DiversityComm’s top 25 colleges and universities for African Americans, Hispanics and Women for the past four years. The University is also included on Forbes Magazine’s list of Top Colleges in America, which is based on data compiled by the Center for College Affordability and Productivity. Add to that Morgan’s recognition by The College Database for providing “high quality education at an affordable price,” and you have a fairly complete picture of the value of a degree from Morgan State University.

www.morgan.edu
Some observers have interpreted Judge Blake’s ruling as a partial win for Maryland HBI’s, but Coalition President David J. Burton, MSU Class of 1967, strongly disagrees.

“I think the judge...gave us a broad victory,” Burton says. “I think a lot of people may have felt, ‘Well, you didn’t get the big bucks.’ (But) she gave us a lot more than that. She gave a future to resolve this in a way that will be a lot more far-reaching than a financial settlement. And I think she gave us a blueprint to make this right.”

Cautious Optimism

The remedy as outlined by Judge Blake in her ruling “is going to require several things,” says McConkie. “It is going to require an enhancement and improvement of existing academic programs at the HBIs. It is going to require an infusion of new, high-demand programs at the HBIs that will not be duplicated at the Traditionally White institutions. It’s going to require a transfer of programs from the TVIs back to the HBIs, and it’s going to require a merger of programs and, possibly, institutions,...

“All of these programs are going to have to be successfully implemented,” he continues. “That requires money. It requires buildings and other facilities, labs, faculty, staff, money for marketing, recruitment. And, in fact, it’s going to require millions and millions, maybe billions of dollars over time.”

An Oct. 9, 2013 article in the Baltimore Sun presented Maryland’s HBI presidents as cautiously optimistic the ruling would lead to good things for their institutions.

“That could mean anything,” MSU President David Wilson was quoted in the article. “It could mean Morgan could have a school of public health. It could mean Morgan could have a statewide center of nanotechnology.” The article also stated that Dr. Wilson was “reviewing the opinion to determine its short- and long-term implications.”

McConkie and Burton expect the legal remedy to aid HBIs in their “dual mission,” a mission acknowledged by Judge Blake: providing higher education to those who have been excluded historically and preparing all students to participate and compete successfully in the global economic community.

“We want these institutions to be of such a stature and nature that they are viable choices for any student regardless of race or ethnicity,” says McConkie. “But in doing that, also, it enhances the educational opportunities for African-American students who choose to attend them. And the fact is that they remain overwhelmingly minority-serving institutions.”

Burton is founder and president of Diverse Manufacturing Supply Chain Alliance, an organization that works with Fortune 500 and other large companies to diversify their manufacturing and logistics suppliers by “leveling the playing field.” He sees many parallels between discrimination against minority institutions in the private sector and in academia.

“I was well aware of the subtle nature of disparity and how it incrementally creeps (and) accumulates over time,” he says. “without (anyone’s) seeing the pervasive and insidious effects of it.”

After learning about and researching the duplication of Morgan’s M.B.A. program at Towson University in 2005, Burton decided a lawsuit against the Maryland Higher Education Commission was necessary.

From McConkie’s perspective, the potential impact of Judge Blake’s ruling could hardly be bigger, or better, for higher education in Maryland. The ruling, he believes, has implications that are rational “and far-reaching, beyond just what happens on campuses... Civil rights (in) education, employment, housing, voting rights and political empowerment, the criminal justice system: everything is essentially linked. And when you advance the cause of civil rights in one area, you inherently advance the cause in all areas.”

But McConkie believes that for too many Marylanders, the ruling is like huge news in another universe.

“And that’s problematic,” he says. Burton urges citizens, especially Morgan alumni, to stay abreast of the case.

“I would like to extend appreciation to all in the community who have supported this and ask for them to stand with us as we move forward, because sometimes people tend to breathe a sigh of relief when something happens good like the judge’s ruling,” he says. “But let’s not lose sight of the fact that the real challenge is the execution and that the real threat is the lack of oversight. And that’s when the support of the general community will really be important.”
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Crystal Styles

This is a topic of discussion that has irked me for a loooonnng time ladies. (Yes-I made up a word). I mentioned this issue under “Crystal’s Side Note” in Black College Today July/August Edition ‘14. Check it out on Crystal-know.blogspot.com, if you missed the article. Anyway, why is it frustrating, for some, when your hair texture reverts back to its natural state, after being heat pressed or Keratin treated? Why do women find ourselves running from the rain and humidity? Is it not OK to sweat out my freshly pressed hair. I must tell you though, over the past 4 years of transitioning into my natural, I am now a bit annoyed when my tresses are pressed TOO straight…go figure, right. I’ve gone from wanting to keep my bone-straight relaxed look, to not wanting my hair pressed too flat. I now enjoy the body, bounce and fullness that texture offers.

TELL ME YOUR CHOICE?

How do you feel about your hair reverting back to its natural texture after being heat pressed? Does it irritate you? Are you frustrated? Ashamed to be out in the public? Or, are you ok with watching your hair bounce out in the public? Or, are you ok with watching your hair bounce out in the public? I want to admit that I too have struggled with this same hair foe…not wanting to maintain their natural hair, discovering its natural texture after being heat pressed? Does it irritate you? Are you frustrated? Ashamed to be out in the public? Or, are you ok with watching your hair bounce out in the public? I must tell you though, over the past 4 years of transitioning into my natural, I am now a bit annoyed when my tresses are pressed TOO straight…go figure, right. I’ve gone from wanting to keep my bone-straight relaxed look, to not wanting my hair pressed too flat. I now enjoy the body, bounce and fullness that texture offers.

RAIN DON’T BOTHER ME

Textured hair is gorgeous hair, as is chemically-straightened hair, if that is your choice. All women should feel good about the decision to either wear your hair chemical-free, or chemically straightened. In reality, running from humidity or fretting about sweating out your tresses is absolutely not just a natural woman’s worry. Relaxed-hair women also face the dilemma of trying to maintain smooth edges and manageable kitchens. PSs..if you’re not familiar with the terminology kitchen, send me a quick message on Crystal-Knows, I’ll tell ya’. Hint: It is textured hair lingo, with a negative connotation, from back in the day.

YOUR CHOICE BUT KNOW WHY..

This is a tough conversation for many folks, but it’s always a good idea to recognize the knowledge behind the know-how. Are you consciously aware of why, for generations, many women have been, and still are, more comfortable with chemically-straightened hair or bone-straight pressed hair, even though it is completely different than the texture of hair growing from the scalp? Of course, these embraced ways stem from a trained mindset inherited from decades of folks telling women that our textured hair is not acceptable, that the images of straighter hair means better hair.

LIFT HER UP

I sure hope by now, with such a dynamic of positive, natural-hair images depicting smart, highly intelligent, professional women of color, that this support helps you show off your bold locks, curls, twists and coils. You probably don’t think much about it, but the presence of beauty vloggers and bloggers, online, serves as strong reinforcement in support of your beautiful self! It’s awesome and invigorating to witness young adults and school age children rockin’ their own hair—the hair that grows naturally from their scalp—women believing that their ethnic hair is absolutely just as beautiful as any other texture.

DON’T BE OFFENDED

Now relaxed ladies, please do not feel offended by my comments on natural hair. This article is intended to be food for thought and evoke good topics of conversation. It is in no way intended to be offensive toward those who choose to wear your hair chemically-relaxed. As a matter of fact, segments of natural women have decided to return to relaxers for reasons such as: not having enough time to maintain their natural hair, discovering that they are causing heat-damage by overpressing in an effort to keep their hair straight, even feeling that tight-natural-curls just do not suit their personality. They tried it but natural just wasn’t for them. And I say—do what’s most comfortable for your own self-esteem. At the end of the day, you must feel good about who you are as a whole woman.

We’ll talk again in the next edition of Black College Today Magazine!
The season is upon us for warmer clothing, holiday gatherings, colder weather, and colds. Warm weather and 7 o'clock sunlight are things of the past. People migrate from the out doors to inside in efforts to stay warm and get closer to the ones they love during the holiday season. Germs no longer have as much of a vast area to roam, and they began to spread. Here are a few tips to keep you healthy during the cold season.

Wash your hands frequently:

This tip is almost the single most important but it's also the most neglected. Many students don't realize how many germs actually come in contact with their hands. From shaking hands to opening doors, washing your hands is in my opinion is the best preventative measure. Not only does washing your hands help prevent you from becoming sick, it also prevents you from spreading germs. You should wash your hands before and after each meal. After you use the restroom and simply if you've been a couple of hours since you washed them last. Always use warm water and antibacterial soap, washing for a minimum of 15 seconds. Allowing yourself enough time to sing the "happy birthday" song twice, this is a sufficient amount of time needed to clean your hands. Hand sanitizer is a quick alternative to soap and water when neither are available. However, hand sanitizer is not the most effective method of cleaning your hands.

Keep your hands out of your face:

Often I find myself adjusting my dry contact or fixing my lipstick. This however, is one of the most dangerous habits to have in relation to catching a cold. Your eyes and mouth are the 2 most common ways that a virus can enter into your system. Let's consider a scenario; right before class you touch a dirty doorknob or shake your friend's hand who has just sneezed in it, and in the middle of lecture your contact falls out. Now you've taken that dirty finger and put it right in your eye. Many people overlook the importance of the eye. However, your eye provides easy access to your brain. Therefore, in addition to keeping your hands clean, keep them out of your face.

Change your linen:

If you live in the dorm, consider how often you wash your linen. When I went off to college my mother made sure I had 2 sets of bedding and told me to change my linen twice a month. Of course when I got to college everyone thought that was way too often. However, take into consideration how often you sit on your bed fully clothed with the attire you had on all day. Then consider the number of people who sat on your bed fully clothed with the attire they had on all day. Considering also those people that you don't know about if you have a room mate. Now, calculate the number of germs, which are living in and on your linen. Even if you aren't able to change your linen as often, at the least change them or give them a good spin in the washing machine. Be mindful of laying around on your bed without a bath and fully clothed.

Visit your Pharmacy:

Visit a pharmacy, find one you like and make it your primary pharmacy. Get to know your pharmacist. This seems unconventional. However, pharmacists have a wealth of knowledge and receive more educational training than Physician Assistant's and Nurse Practioners. In the event you become sick they can recommend products for you, and even let you know when it's time to visit the doctor. Make sure to get your flu-shot. Many students feel invincible because they are young. However, truth be told you probably come in contact with the most pathogens. Influenza can be life threatening. Do yourself a favor and get the influenza vaccine. Be on the look out for different organizations around campus and in the community offering free flu-shots. An alternative if you are near a Costco, their pharmacy is available to members and non-members and they offer the flu-shot for patients without insurance for only $14.99. This is the cheapest price at which you can get a flu-shot without insurance. Be sure to check your insurance policy to see if you are covered. Purchase a few cough and cold medicines from the pharmacy. No one likes to go to the store to get medicine when they are sick. If you keep them on hand you won't need to. It is always a good idea to have ibuprofen and Tylenol around, for minor aches and pains. Having soup, water, cough drops, and disinfectant spray purchased is also a good idea.

This season dress appropriately.

Even if you happen to have a few warm days during the winter season, remember its still winter! Do however; take advantage of warmer days by opening up your room windows to air out the space. Clean your dorm often with Lysol and bleach. If you are away from home, knowing where you can go to receive medical attention is essential. As well as having your insurance information readily available, should you need it. Eating a well balance meal and keeping your stress level as low as possible, will help you beat sickness. You may not always be able to prevent a cold, but you can always be prepared.
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When thinking about what to write for the fall semester article the first thing that came to mind is the idea of overcoming obstacles. We all face obstacles in life and it is important to put obstacles into perspective so we can move forward. The new school year offers a wonderful opportunity to do this. The new year brings new hope and starting points.

When thinking about overcoming obstacles I would like to share 4 tips for success.

**Tip #1: Be truthful:**

The first step in overcoming your obstacles is to be truthful with yourself about what the obstacles are and what power you have in overcoming the obstacle. In order to overcome you must first acknowledge what you need to overcome. This will involve coming to grips with what part you hold in the problem, so you can stop the blame game. It is so easy to blame others for our shortcomings, but until we can take responsibility for our own lives overcoming obstacles is nearly impossible.

**Tip #2: Set small goals:**

Rome was not built in a day, and you will not overcome your obstacles over night. Be patient with yourself and realize that each day is an opportunity to work on achieving your goal. Keep a record of your small victories, as this will help motivate you to continue on your pathway to change.

**Tip #3 Focus your efforts:**

Make overcoming your obstacle a focus for your life. You can always become distracted by papers, bills, family, etc., but you have to maintain focus on your goal so you can achieve it. Obstacles are hard to overcome and are typically something we want to avoid focusing on. You have a make a concerted effort to focus daily on working on overcoming.

**Tip #4 Learn:**

As you focus on overcoming learn from the experience. In the process of overcoming obstacle you can learn a lot about yourself. Ask yourself the following: what motivates you to change? What easily distracts you? Just making note of these two things can help you go so much further in life.

As you work on overcoming those obstacles remember to be kind to yourself, take your time and celebrate those small victories. Before you know it that obstacle will be in your past. Have a wonderful semester.

Dr. Felicia Durden is an accomplished Educator with over twelve years experience in Education. She holds her Doctorate of Education degree in Educational Leadership, Master’s Degree in Curriculum & Instruction and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English Literature. Dr. Durden has taught grades K-12 and currently serves as Assistant Director of Reading and Writing in a large Urban School District in Arizona. She has taught English Composition at the College level as an adjunct instructor for over 5 years. Dr. Durden has a passion for assisting student growth in reading and writing.
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