

From Orientation and Outreach notes: Summer 2006

College is much more than just the fast track to a high paying career. Although academics are the primary focus of the university, it is important to explore your own ideals, establish personal values and ethics, examine your spirituality, and to take a stance on issues dear to your heart. Part of your responsibility is to use your college education to make the world a better place for all humankind and by your actions affirm that all people deserve fair, equitable and compassionate treatment.

The great Quaker educator, Parker Palmer, professes that we must look inside ourselves for guidance on our life path, that we must see ourselves as others see us in order to become all that we can be. Over a century ago, Henry David Thoreau wrote “what lies behind us and what lies in front of us, pales in comparison to what lies within us.” So while you are being taught about calculus, physics, philosophy and history, also take the time to learn about yourself. You need to look inside yourself, as well as inside your textbooks, to understand your piece in the puzzle of life.

Education poses questions, as well as presenting answers, contains roadblocks, detours, winding roads and bridges to multiple destinations. You will have stumbles, as well as successes and you will be faced with moral and ethical choices that will shape your future. Reflect on how your new knowledge supports or refutes your own values, ethics and personal beliefs. It is important to regularly take the time to contemplate who you are becoming, and in learning about yourself, realign the purpose and direction of your education and life path.