

Penny's Eleven Lessons on Being Pretty Smart

Tips from "Pretty Smart: Lessons from our Miss Americas" by Penny Pearlman

Our Miss Americas don't always know where life will lead them, but wherever they land, they work at making it a place they want to be. I hope you will take to heart the lessons our Miss Americas have shared.

1. *True beauty is forged on the inside.*

Nurture your character, natural gifts, integrity and positive attitude and your face will reflect your internal glow. When you actualize your highest self, you are at your most beautiful.

2. *Follow your heart and nurture your natural gifts.*

Your most "soul" satisfying life will come when you follow your passions and your dreams. Focus on the heat that lights your fire and the outcomes you want to do achieve, then go out and do what others say can't be done. Let your enthusiasm lead you.

3. *Choose success.*

You choose your future by the very choices you make today. It is simple to choose, but it is not effortless. Once you turn thought into action, decision into determination and belief into movement, you are on a firm path to achievement. Ultimately, only you are responsible for your destiny. When you are loyal to your dream, you make a promise to yourself. Only you can keep it.

4. *There is more than one right answer.*

Keep an open mind about possibilities and alternative paths to your future. Be open to suggestions, new ideas, information and change and recognize that you may have to do things differently in order to get different results.

5. *Trust the universe to deliver – eventually.*

A belief in yourself and your goals as well as patience and persistence will keep you going when you don't think anything is working. You have to trust that your efforts will yield you the results you desire – in time. It takes many years to become an overnight success. Patience rewards those who stay the course.

6. *Be a weed.*

Weeds grow out of cracks and through concrete. They grow with little nourishment or encouragement. Just because the environment isn't supportive or nurturing, or someone comes along and tries to pull them out, doesn't mean they won't keep growing. They send down strong taproots and rely on their own resources to flourish. They are tenacious about surviving. Weeds don't give up, no matter what.

7. ***Be willing to embrace change.***

You can either get run over by events or use them to your advantage. Examine your attitudes and behaviors and determine which ones keep you stuck, then do something about it. You can start any time, any place. When you shake things up, even just a little bit, amazing stuff starts to happen.

8. ***Employ powerhouse habits.***

Persistence, discipline and commitment trump intelligence every time. The most successful people aren't necessarily the most brilliant, but they are the most tenacious.

• ***Act today.***

You have to turn good intentions into action in order to turn dreams into achievement. True success comes from being willing to don work clothes and break a sweat. It's the people who act today that wake up in the world they want tomorrow. Someone will act today. Let it be you.

9. ***Make your own luck.***

When you do your home work you are ready when opportunities present themselves. Luck happens when preparation meets opportunity. If you are not in the place where and when opportunities happen, no amount of luck will make a difference. So don't forget to show up for luck to happen.

• ***Find joy in the journey.***

The pathway to your dreams is never straight. The landscape will vary from lush mountains to barren deserts, but as long as you are traveling, new vistas keep opening up and new opportunities appear around the next bend. The journey is not just about achieving a specific end but being the best you can be on that journey. Your journey towards your dream should be savored, regardless of the outcome. Who knows what other wonderful things might happen along the way?

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