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Our actions should mirror our own self-interests whereby being faithful and honest to one's pursuits. To acquire personal freedom (to act, choose, operate freely) you must respect yourself and avoid interference.

Interference is anything that allows us to be lulled into passivity. For example, when we permit the influence of others to alter our truth or when we yield towards societal pressures and practice the "go-along-to get-along" mentality. These occurrences bend our resiliency by allowing other person(s) and/or factor(s) to guide our decision making. Becoming non-authentic often leaves one directionless and/or anxiety filled. These expressions can weigh upon our creativity and inspiration on an enterprise scale. The principle edicts dictate us not to assimilate; rather, to do what we have confidence in.

When one marches to the rhythm of others, your authenticity, individuality, and self-ownership are misaligned.

Instead of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts, the sum of the parts diminishes, resulting in an altered whole.

Acquiescing to the demands of others cannot move your career forward better than if you had managed your own path. Be authentic, truthful to yourself and give birth to greatness!

10 Approaches to Awaken the Greatness Within:

1. Love yourself. Discover what you believe, value, and like about the uniqueness of you.
2. Galvanize your strengths. Become self-aware and discover the tremendous talents you have within inspiring positive feeling towards self.
3. Be authentic. Honesty is key in all relationships and your relationship with yourself is no different. Do whatever feels most natural to you.
4. Pursue inward joy and peace. Possessing a peaceful inner presence is key. Avoid being self-critical. Seek genuine happiness.
5. Be present. The act of being present is a meditation without meditation. The stillness here though comes from our actions of breathing, listening, observing, discharging and breathing again.
6. Develop an attitude for gratitude. Gratitude promotes cooperation and makes our society civil and kind.
7. Strategize setbacks and manage negativity. Expect and account for the unexpected. Although you can't control the words, actions and/or feeling of others, you do control your responses and reactions.
8. Set boundaries. Establishing boundaries encourages self-love, even when we risk disappointing others.
9. Establish a personal mantra. Mantra, or vehicle for the mind, is the ancient practice of repeating a positive word or phrase multiple times for the purpose of motivation or encouragement.
10. Journal. A tool for problem-solving, life management, and creative expression, penmanship has been considered a stream of consciousness that loosens up your expressive muscles.

As we all seek to advance the world where we live and serve, our initial start must be within. The starting point of discovering who you are, your gifts, your talents, your dreams, is being comfortable with yourself. Cultivate a routine of focusing on you to awaken the greatness within!

How has the John McLendon Scholarship impacted your career?



Chris Jones

Temple University
Assistant AD/Major Gifts

Since its establishment in 1998, the John McLendon Minority Scholarship Foundation has awarded over 100 postgraduate scholarships, making a profound impact on the landscape of athletics administration and the lives of young men and women. To showcase the achievements of past John McLendon Minority Postgraduate Scholarship recipients, the Foundation presents "Where Are They Now?"

Chris Jones received the McLendon Scholarship in 2013. A native of Goldsboro, N.C., he earned his bachelor's degree in physical education and his master's degree in athletics administration from North Carolina Central University (NCCU). Jones is also an alumnus of the Dr. Charles Whitcomb Leadership Institute, formally known as the NCAA Leadership Institute (2018).

Jones, who has over seven years of athletics development experience at the collegiate level, was named Temple University's assistant athletics director for major gifts in October 2018.

I can vividly recall my last year in graduate school serving as a graduate assistant and applying for the scholarship. I hadn't been a member of NAADD long, but I was familiar with John McLendon. The gymnasium, and where I worked, was named McLendon-McDougal Arena. I was well aware of the trailblazer that John McLendon was to the game of basketball and his connection to North Carolina Central University. Furthermore, I knew it would be an honor to be associated with an award named by such a legend in our profession. I'm forever grateful to the John McLendon Foundation for the scholarship, which put me in a position to successfully finish my degree and become employed full-time in intercollegiate athletics.

Why did you pursue a career in athletics administration?

I have always had a passion for people, serving others as well as athletics. In graduate school I was introduced to athletics development, and I quickly realized that was a way for me to marry a few of my passions, people and athletics.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your job?

One of the most rewarding aspects of my job is that every day I have the opportunity to build and cultivate relationships with individuals that have

a vested interest in the mission of the university, the department of athletics and a strong desire to enhance the experiences of our student-athletes via their philanthropic efforts. Serving as one of the vessels on a great team to make that happen is indeed a rewarding feeling.

What career advice would you give your younger self?

Exude patience and understand that a career in athletics administration is a marathon as opposed to a sprint. In doing so, take the time to truly learn what you're doing and hone your skills. Have tunnel vision from the standpoint of not worrying about how others are progressing. Everyone's journey is different. Focus on ways for you to get better and expand your skill set. Soak up all you can along the way and develop sincere, meaningful relationships with people in the business.