

High expectations and valued roles as a pathway to a fulfilled life

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Philippa is a very active young woman with firm ideas about what she wants to do with her life. These ideas are coming from her many work, training and educational roles that are opening up new connections for her as well as offering the chance for her to develop new skills.

Not everything turns out well at first. Most of us start something that doesn't end as we had hoped but Philippa has been ready to keep trying different things because she really wants to work. She tried work in retail and completed a Certificate 2 at school as her pathway into the industry but the tasks involved were not suited to her abilities.

Philippa volunteered in a Lifeline store to gain work experience but was still hoping for paid work. An opportunity opened up for paid employment at a fast food outlet and Philippa has been working there for six months.

Philippa enjoys this work but also wanted to create further opportunities for her long term future and, together, we discussed other places where Philippa might like to work based on her interests and skill set. She decided that maybe she would like to work in a library and I approached the librarian at the school where I work to see if Philippa could do some work experience. The librarian agreed and Philippa has now been a volunteer in the library one day a week for a year.

Having had this experience, Philippa decided that this was a career she would be interested to pursue and is now a student enrolled in a Certificate 3 course in Library Studies. Philippa's volunteer work in the library is being tailored so that she has experience doing things that she will be learning during her TAFE course.

Philippa feels confident and expectant of an active and positive future because our family always has high expectations for all our children. We believed that Philippa would be able to do many things herself and we supported her to learn.

For example, I taught Philippa to ring up and make enquiries or appointments for herself. I would script the conversation for Philippa, practice with her and then be in the background should Philippa need help when calling people. Now Philippa is able to make calls entirely on her own and without a script. I think it has been these small successes that encouraged Philippa to attempt the greater challenges in work and study that she is now tackling.

My advice is to always aim high and don't give up when supporting your sons and daughters to have a full life. Keep knocking on doors. Some won't open, others will appear terrific but eventually close and Philippa had a long list of disappointments about opportunities that didn't materialise. Other doors will open wide and allow for future possibilities. I am confident that the future will include more opportunities for Philippa to pursue her interests and ambitions because Philippa has always been encouraged to believe that she can accomplish many things.



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