

H.O.P.E. **Hearing Other People's Experience** Real Stories, Real Students, Real Audacity to *SUCCEED*

The H.O.P.E. Series is back! This time with a compilation of intriguing, heartfelt, inspiring stories that capture the true essence of college life. These stories present a raw, warm, and welcoming inside view necessary for every potential or current college student. The stories address some of the challenges a college student may encounter but highlights

the ability to overcome and the audacity to succeed. Standing on the motto the ***tassel is worth the hassle.***

See what awaits....

Stories about the Academic Roller-coaster, the Financial Maze, and knowing It's Not Too Late just to name a few.



About the Author

Veronie Lawrence, affectionately called "Dr. Vee", is an award-winning author and educator. A storyteller herself, H.O.P.E. College Edition is the second installment in the H.O.P.E. series. These stories, teach life lessons, transform ones thinking, and provide tangible results amid life challenges. Dr. Vee empowers all those she connects with to *"Intentionally take Action to Manifest results."* Dr. Vee's origin is British/ Jamaican, she currently resides in New York City.

Visit her at www.oneseedsolutions.com.

Endorsements

"After reading this volume and lived experiences depicted, I was in awe of the authenticity...To all readers, once you pick up this important work, your life will change for the better. H.O.P.E. College Edition is a must read!"

-Adreil A. Hilton, Ph.D. Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs & Enrollment Management Southern University at New Orleans

"Imagine if the wisdom of mentorship also came with a detailed blueprint. H.O.P.E not only documents the journey to success of recent college graduates, it also demystifies life's hard times by helping students understand that there are never any losses in life, only lessons..."

-David C. Banks, CEO/President of The Eagle Academy Foundation. Author of SOAR; *How Boys Learn, Succeed and Develop Character*

"HOPE is filled with rich experiences and tangible takeaways that would benefit any student who aspires to attend post-secondary students regardless of their station in life..."

-Dorothy A. Escribano, Ph.D. Interim President/Provost Emeritus, The College of New Rochelle, New York



H.O.P.E. **Hearing Other People's Experience** Real Stories, Real Students, Real Audacity to *SUCCEED* DR. VERONIE LAWRENCE

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Hearing Other People's Experience

COLLEGE EDITION



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Real Stories,
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DR. VERONIE LAWRENCE

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This title is also available on Amazon and BN.com as an E-book product.

Hearing Other People's Experience (H.O.P.E.) College Edition; Real Stories, Real Students, Real Audacity to Succeed may be purchased in large quantities for educational, business, or sales promotional use. For information email DrVee@oneseedsolutions.com

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Edited by
Monica White, Ed.D.
Grand Pearl Communications, Inc.
www.gpcwrites.com
&
Jennifer Misick, Ph.D.

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Tonya Thomas
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Request for Dr. Veronie Lawrence to speak
One SEED Solutions, LLC
Email: DrVee@oneseedsolutions.com
Office: 1-833-SEEDS-01

DEDICATION

To my mother Gwendolyn C. Lawrence
To my Godmother Hermine M. White
To my Pastor, The Rev. Dr. J.G. McCann

You believed education was the key to bring forth
change for self and others. Thank you for seeing what
I could not and encouraging me to strive for greater.

Praise for Hearing Other People's Experiences, College Edition: Real Stories, Real Students, Real Audacity to Succeed

The multitude of issues facing our people while attending college are not often shared, yet these obstacles resonate with many college graduates. The H.O.P.E book is a well-documented collection of narratives that offers personal testimonies and life to the proverbial phrase, "If they can do it, so can I." Congrats to all those college degree recipients who stayed on the course despite the barriers.

—Dr. Ted N. Ingram, Professor, Bronx Community College,
Co-Author, *Engaging African American Males in Community College*.

This book allows the readers a window seat into the homes of college students that are living these everyday TRUTHS...keep speaking truth to POWER.

—Dr. Charise Breeden-Balaam, Food Insecurity Expert, Community College of Philadelphia, Visiting Lecturer, PA.

The H.O.P.E. College Edition is an engaging and essential resource, a primer for promising and current college students.

—Ms. Monique Fortune, MDiv, Adjunct Lecturer, Fordham University,
Author, *When Words Become Air; A Volume of Poetry*

HOPE, the college edition, provides us with powerful testimonies of college graduates that are a true reflection of what perseverance looks like when we create our own blueprint. While society would have us believe that our journey through higher education and life must follow one path, this work shows that there is no timeline in which a student must complete a degree. The only dreams that we cannot fulfill are those that we stop believing in. This book is a must-read not only for young people but, for adults that have stopped dreaming. Create and cross your own finish line.

—Kimberly C. Felder, Director of Corporate & Community Partnerships,
NYC Department of Education

And then there was H.O.P.E.--the students' stories in H.O.P.E. offer us a candid look at how to define strength and tenacity as driving forces for success. The lessons shared in each story are nuggets of wisdom that College students can embrace as valuable guides for taking the journey toward a degree and for those who are seeking strategic direction for maneuvering obstacles. I totally embraced the book as H.O.P.E offers an outstanding and solid read as a transformative tool for those on that journey toward that college degree.

—Betty J. Roberts, Ph.D. Retired Senior Higher Education Executive

Imagine if the wisdom of mentorship also came with a detailed blueprint. H.O.P.E not only documents the journey to success of recent college graduates, it also demystifies life's hard times by helping students understand that there are never any losses in life, only lessons. H.O.P.E delivers inspiration, a collection of sage advice, and a "how-to" guide to help you understand yourself, so you can unleash your greatest potential.

—David Banks, President & CEO of The Eagle Academy Foundation
Author, SOAR: *How Boys Learn Succeed and Develop Character*.

As an educator of more than 35 years, I have worked with countless students from various backgrounds, many with similar issues that Dr. Lawrence highlights in her phenomenal book. HOPE- is filled with rich experiences and tangible takeaways that would benefit any student who aspires to attend post-secondary students regardless of their station in life. This book is a need complication to add to the culture of academic success in higher education. Thank you, Dr. Lawrence.

—Dorothy A. Escibano, Ph.D. Interim President/Provost Emerita
The College of New Rochelle, NY

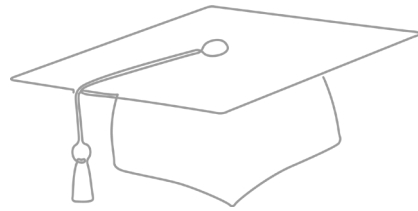
After reading this volume and lived experiences depicted, I was in awe of the authenticity. As Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), we have a host of obstacles to overcome and earning a college degree is vital to one's success. To all readers. Once you pick up this important work, your life will change for the better. H.O.P.E. College Edition is a must read!

—Adreil A. Hilton, Ph.D. Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs &
Enrollment Management
Southern University at New Orleans.

H.O.P.E. College Edition is more than a compilation of stories, but a masterful weaving of the journey of overcomers! Each story has a nugget of inspiration and motivation for current and future college students. Open this book and be encouraged to make it to the finish line.

—Stephanie S. Young, Ed.D., Educator and Consultant Educational Access
Serving Youth (EASY) LLC, TN.

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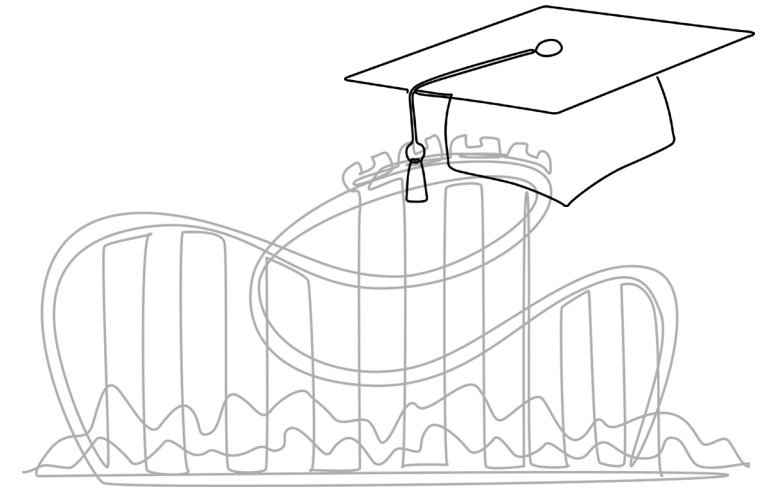
coupled with quasi-explanatory research through real-life interviews provided the backdrop of the emotional context to the educational journey captured in this series.

Through my personal and professional experiences, I have found that self-efficacy is an essential variable to achieving the college education dream and relevant academic success skills. Skills that become building blocks for academic tenacity and levels the playing field. Skills that must be reinforced in and out of the classroom and offer a roadmap through challenging times. This installment in the H.O.P.E. series is more than a collection of stories. It is a unique complementary resource that should be included in the academic success toolkit for any student commencing or continuing their college journey. This must-read collection of stories highlights students' college experiences on their journey to college graduation from the early 2000s to the present. The stories and academic success skills presented as an appendix provide a holistic framework that adds to higher education culture.

Although my time as a first-year college student was some time ago, the skills I learned have supported my educational journey throughout my post-secondary studies. If I can survive my college experience, from having to sit out a semester, care for an ill parent, transfer to another school near the end of my journey, and lose college credits, then so can you. This book aims to inspire you and to plant a SEED: Support, Education, Empowerment, and Development.

This book is for you, the student, to understand that negative experiences do not define you. You, through your experiences, both negative and positive, are writing your unique journey. I hope the pages in this book motivate you to stay the course if you encounter a detour. Know that detours are not meant to derail you but to redirect your path. Let these experiences allow you to become laser-focused on achieving your goal. You, students, give us hope for a better tomorrow. Our responsibility is to provide you with the tools you need to be the best version of yourselves for tomorrow. This book can be a guide for you to achieve success.

“The only source of knowledge is an experience.”—Albert Einstein



SECTION 1

THE ACADEMIC ROLLER COASTER

Get Ready! College has a new level of expectation waiting for you. The academic rules have changed since high school. Your success or failure of this leg of the academic journey lies solely with you, the student.

Academic highs and lows are part of the college journey. How you handle it will determine the level of success you will have in achieving your goal of obtaining a college degree. There are several factors to academic success that are both inside and outside of the classroom. For example, many students may experience their first low grade. Oh, the stress! Also true, though, a failing grade does not have to completely derail you. Many students move beyond these obstacles; it does not stop them. In fact, an overwhelming majority enroll the following semester repeating the course or charting a new plan of action for success.

You need to remember in difficult academic situations that you can recover from it. Failure is not a denial. Even if your journey is prolonged and your reward is delayed, you can still be successful. The academic roller coaster will challenge you

sent me to college to get into foolishness, and she was expecting to see someone, and that someone had better be me, graduating in four years.

Even after losing two semesters of education, being suspended from college, and transferring, I still managed to graduate meeting my mothers' wishes. Thank God for a winter commencement. I completed my studies in fall 1994 and graduated in 1995 with a bachelor of science degree in accounting. As a life-long learner, I have gone on to earn four more degrees. 🎓

What is the greatest lesson learned?

Don't let fear be your decision-maker. One obstacle or one punch may knock you down, but that does not mean you're out for the count. Get up, reassess, reinvent, and move forward.

What advice would you share with first year college student?

Success in college means you must learn how to manage multiple situations simultaneously. Set goals, manage your college experience, and don't let it manage you. Remember I AM—Intentionally take Action to Manifest your results.

Veronie “Dr. Vee” Lawrence, Ed.D.
CUNY-Hunter College | Class of 1995



SEEDS

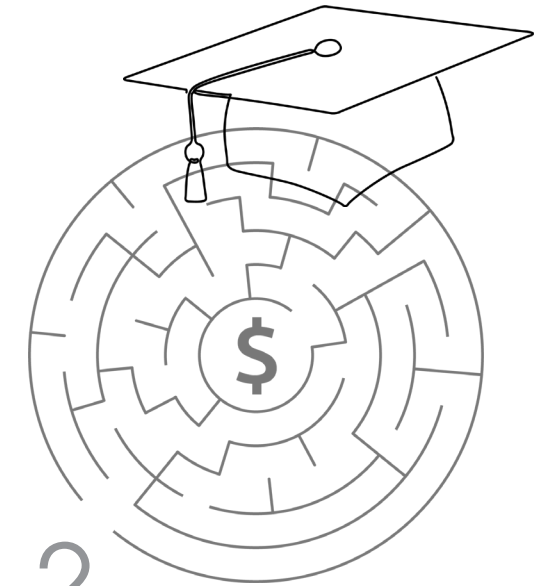
DR. VEE'S SEEDS FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

These stories show the remarkable drive that each student made when faced with the highs and lows of the academic roller coaster. That drive is fueled by academic tenacity, which is an internal mindset that produces positive external results in academic performance, commitment, and sticktoitiveness. Academic tenacity is not about being the smartest, it is not giving up in the academic arena when the odds are stacked against you. Although academic tenacity can be elusive at times, all college students, including you, will benefit immensely when it is practiced early in the journey to assure their success.

Here are some things to consider for a wonderful ride and ultimate success. Just like any roller coaster, you may be in for a wild ride with a range of emotions from gleeful joy to fear. Still, the overall experience is a great one.

You can learn a lot from other roller coasters you've encountered in life. For instance, when you get ready to ride a roller coaster, you know what you are getting into and you do what is required for a successful ride: Follow all rules, ask questions if you don't understand or suspect something may be wrong, and ensure that your safety restraints are on and secure. This preparation is also apropos for the academic journey.

So, here are a few tips to help you on your academic ride. Be prepared each semester and seek support from professors, advisors. Also, know that midterms and final exam times can be rocky. You may scream or want to pull your hair out, or maybe you feel like your world is going to fall out from underneath you similar to a rollercoaster. However, if you stay the course, the end results in academic achievement and the lasting friendships make the academic roller coaster worthwhile, so hold on and smile!



SECTION 2

FINANCIAL MAZE

The stories in this section show how to navigate the financial maze of the college experience. In a time when the cost of education has risen 10-fold, financial issues can be a central part of the problems related to attending college. The phenom social media mantra-like song, “*Where the Money Reside*,” is more than a catchy song lyric. It is at the core of what families, students, and colleges ask as students move through their academic journey. The lack of finances or money management is the primary reason why college students’ journeys are unfortunately disrupted, delayed, or sometimes denied. However, this does not have to be the outcome.

Financial literacy can go a long way to ensuring you complete the college degree. This includes knowing when to apply for Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), finding scholarships, and understanding a FREE credit card is not FREE.

These stories highlight the financial hurdles and breakthroughs students overcame to persist in their college dream of graduation.



SEEDS

DR. VEE'S SEEDS FOR THE FINANCIAL MAZE

Following the money in many situations often highlights the problem or the solution. The Financial Maze many students must navigate while in college can create countless detours. However, these stories detail that a detour does not mean derailment. I have witnessed entrepreneurs' birth during their college experience as students learn to be creative in their financial endeavors, from managing semester refund checks, full or part-time employment, on-campus work-study, SGA stipends, etc. Any of these can alleviate the financial strain students may encounter, especially in their last semesters closer to graduation. Research shows financial funding becomes increasingly difficult to obtain during the final semesters after earning 90+ credits.

Here are a few tips:

- Pay yourself first from all refund checks, jobs (full, part-time, or work-study), and scholarships.
- Don't live off credit cards.
- Borrow what you need, not what you want.



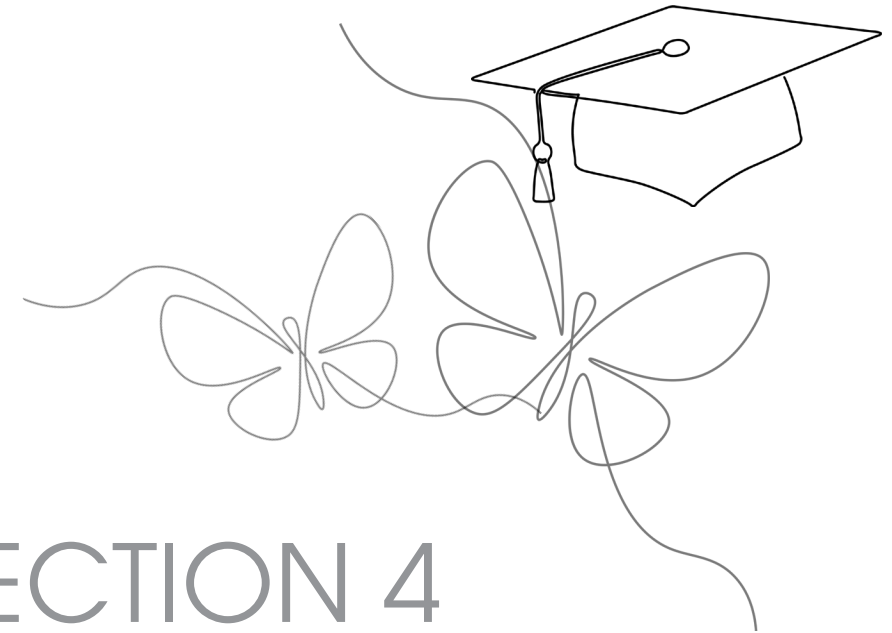
SECTION 3

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Feel good...look good! The college experience can be exciting as students live in a new environment, study various courses, and strive to win gold in achieving academic success— graduation. Yet, throughout the years, I have witnessed those very issues become the cause of tremendous stress.

The theme of this section is Emotional Well-being. Finding the balance between life challenges, and managing all of what college life has to offer is the core of emotional well-being. The academic pressures of papers, exams, and the desire to belong may heighten physiological distress or emotional imbalance. These stories underscore the innate desire to overcome the internal and external pressures derived from academics and life. The experiences they thought would have or should have broken them actually built them and made them better. When other self-remedies failed, these students dared to ask and sought help, taking a break, if necessary. They understood that they needed to heal the hole they were experiencing in order to be whole.

To be successful as a student, particularly a college student, an all-inclusive holistic health approach must be a part of the recipe for success.



SECTION 4

SELF-DISCOVERY

The college experiences will introduce students to many dynamics from exploring new places, new courses, and cultures to name a few. When students fully embrace the college experience, they will embark on the theme of this section is self-discovery. One might argue self-discovery happens at various stages of ones' life. However, there are no clear markers to identify when or how. I think, and I believe many would agree, the college years are undoubtedly a time of self-discovery.

The power of relationships whether it be with self or others is a powerful and fulfilling path during the academic journey and life. During this time I have had the privilege to see students flourish as they begin to determine their needs, advocate for themselves, adapt to the ever-changing environment. College becomes a safe space for self-discovery; it is the time and place when students can learn from their mistakes but more importantly lean into the lessons from those mistakes.



SEEDS

DR. VEE'S SEEDS FOR SELF-DISCOVERY

The self-discovery that happens during the college years is often a liberating experience. It is a time when students will assess their identity and the identity they want to develop. This time of discovery shapes who students say they are versus the label the world would ascribe. The self-discovery process is the catalyst to who students will become and how they show up in the world.

What you learn about yourself in self-discovery goes beyond the classroom and self. The discovery will transform students' thinking enabling them to be critical, concerned citizens. Even older students can experience self-discovery and learn new things about themselves as they reconcile new skills into personal and professional development that produces outcomes for a better life. This, after all, is the goal for students of any age.



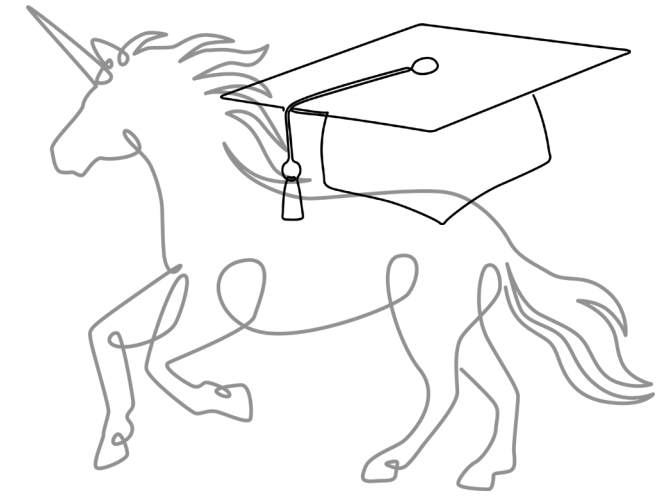
SECTION 5

FAMILY MATTERS

In the mid-nineties, there was a television show titled Family Matters, also the theme of this section. The show's heart was about the nuclear family and extended family supporting each other to achieve a common goal and make life easier. The college experience is no different, whether it's the family one is born into or having the privilege to pick friends who become family. Family dynamics are essential to the learning process, not only academically but personally.

In 2018, the UK Council on Student Affairs conducted an online study of 1700 students about their perception of the impact of family on their studies and college experience. Of those surveyed, 87% indicated they maintain some form of verbal or non-verbal communication, whether text, facetime, phone calls, etc., at least once a week, if not more. The family connection often aids students in their transition into college life; it fosters an increased sense of belonging, self-belief and decreases personal and academic stress.

Creating a balance between college life and a family is crucial. If family matters overflow into academic life, the results are often detrimental for the student.



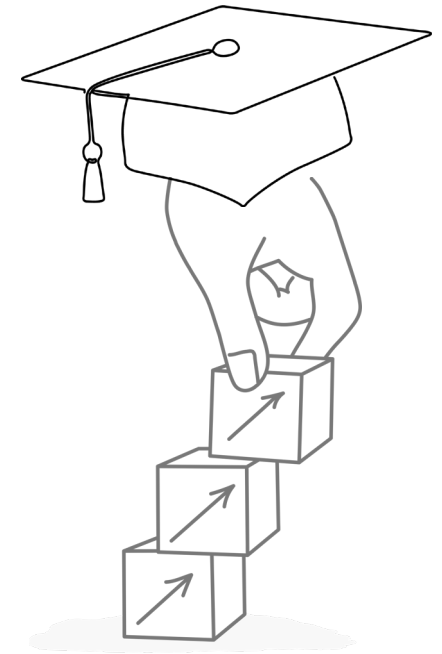
SECTION 6

NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS

It's never too late to experience college and all that it has to offer. The college journey is something all should experience if they so desire. Time nor age should not be a determining factor. This has been most evident in the past few decades.

The U.S. Department of Education reports that there has been a 15 percent increase in non-traditional students returning to the halls of academia. A non-traditional student is someone who did not attend and complete college right out of high school and is older than a traditional-aged college student (18-24). Whether a non-traditional student decides to satisfy a personal goal, reaches a career obligation for promotion, or completes unfinished business, non-traditional students must understand there is a space and place for them.

Colleges and universities across the country are taking strides to accommodate and meet the needs of this population. Many non-traditional students have a vast amount of life experience and obligations than their younger, traditional counterparts. Thus, the need for flexibility of courses, online classes, and a sense



SECTION 7

BUILDING BLOCKS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS SKILLS

WIDELY USED RESOURCES IN HIGHER EDUCATION