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Wake Up, Phinias, Wake Up!

Phinias is a day-dreamer. But that is not necessarily indicative that he is lazy, or incompetent. He is, poor fellow, just impractical, blind to realities. Often the hall griper, or the bolshevik of the campus, he doesn't see the real reason for his troubles.

If he would devote a bit of sound thought to himself, his first amazing discovery would be that day-dreaming is the biggest reason for his discontent. It is this weakness that keeps him in an imaginary world where he is king.

This imaginary world is all his, created only for his pleasure. Its laws are for his protection alone. Its people are his servants or friends, never his superiors, never those who oppose him. Its duties are what he prefers, and the time devoted to them depends upon his impulses and whims. If work should conflict with golf in the afternoon, with a party in the evening, with a big whingding weekend, then work must yield, of course.

This is a picture of the only world that the day-dreamer cares to live in, his haven of escape from cruel reality. How impatient he becomes when forced to face life here as it really is!

There are at least two bad effects from day-dreaming. The first is that it convinces the dreamer, who finds the actual world far different from his dream-world, far harder to satisfy, far more demanding. To his mind, actual people require too much. They are unjust. That is why he is the griper. That is why he is against law and those who represent law.

The second evil effect of day-dreaming is that it prevents one from preparing himself to meet the problems he must actually face. It does not allow the dreamer to equip himself with sound ideas, with lasting motives, with the determination to solve the knotty problems of living. Through his formative years it causes him to shy away from difficulties. Instead of taking the hurdles in stride, it urges him to run around them or to slink off the track. Instead of helping him to overcome greater difficulties, it causes him to remain weak and flabby, with the voice and the arms and the beard of a man, but with the will of a mere child.

It is hardly a dream-world that you are preparing to enter. Your dad, somewhat equipped (you must admit that much!) to speak with a modicum of authority on this subject at least, will tell you that it takes courage to face the sun, and the wind, and the storms of life. He'll tell you that the raw world you are to enter is not any more to your taste than this college world. Nor is it less restraining. He may even tell you that its people will make sterner demands upon your powers of body and soul than the demands asked of you here in this sheltered life.

If you are to help form the environment in which you find yourself after leaving Notre Dame, as every grad most certainly should, you must be a man of personal power -- not a dreamer who never wakes up. And personal power is made perfect through wide-awake thought, and self-discipline.

Let's face the fact: vacation is not the main dish of life -- but only a brief respite from the tough, daily menu. Now it's time to get our teeth into the preparation required for the coming exams. People on a year-round vacation are bored stiff with everyday life. We're grateful that life at Notre Dame is cut from more wholesome cloth. We had a great vacation. Now let's go to work!