

Wisconsin Association of Family and Consumer Sciences “Advice for New Professionals”

Compiled by Tiffani Roltgen

On Attitude

Find the joy in what you do, or as the popular phrase states, when given lemons, make lemonade!

~Carol L. Anderson, CFCS, Consultant

If you are a teacher, you have to be optimistic.

~Carolyn Barnhart, Ed.D., CFCS, University of Wisconsin-Stout

Your attitude is your choice.

~Carolyn Barnhart, Ed.D., CFCS, University of Wisconsin-Stout

Don't curse the darkness—light a candle.

~Chinese Proverb (Submitted by Carolyn Barnhart, Ed.D., CFCS, University of Wisconsin-Stout)

Always look for one positive thing at the end of every day!

~Crystal Bell, High School Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher

I had a poster on my dorm room bulletin board at UW-Stout, "In the quest for life, cast a wide net." I still try to follow that philosophy professionally and personally. Read widely. Go places. Follow the news. Pursue interests that may not (at first) be related to your work. Take initiative for your own professional and personal development—that includes sometimes spending your own money for a course, training, book, or conference. Leave yourself open to options, so you are doing what you do by choice, not by default. Don't assume, "I'll never need to know that, will never pursue a Ph.D., will always be living here..." Love what you do.

~Mary Crave, UW-Extension Specialist, International Consultant

For teachers: Be passionate...about your students, about your work, and about where you work. Be involved with students outside of your classroom.

~June Luett, Retired Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher

At the end of the day, when there is still more to do, take a deep breath, and head to bed. You have done what you can, and tomorrow is another day.

~Cindy Quilling, Middle School Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher and FCCLA Advisor

On Change

We change, our profession changes, our families change, our communities change. It would be dull and stressful if we did not embrace change.

~Carolyn Barnhart, Ed.D., CFCS, University of Wisconsin-Stout

Embrace it.

~Barbara George, NASCO FCS Director

As a new professional, I was introduced to the 3-year or 3-cycle philosophy.

- *Year one - Learn, hear about how it's been done, ask who did what, find out what you need to know, and learn the culture.*
- *Year two - Try a few "new" things, test them out, hear how it used to be, ask what they think about the new way, find out what they would do differently, and test the culture.*
- *Year three - Make it your own...with confidence! Establish the new culture.*

Change takes time for everyone to warm up to and accept. 3 years/3 cycles...it's worked for me!

~Christine Kniep, CFCS, UW-Extension Family Living Educator

On Finances

Live within your means.

~Carolyn Barnhart, Ed.D., CFCS, University of Wisconsin-Stout

Remember that a three-month emergency savings fund is peace of mind.

~ Diane Klemme, CFCS, University of Wisconsin-Stout School of Education Interim Chair

Begin a savings program the day you begin work for it reaps great rewards at retirement time.

~June Luett, Retired Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher

Never take out funds from pensions of any kind no matter how much you think you need the money.

~Carol Subera, Retired Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher

On Gratitude

Take time to THANK colleagues, speakers and professionals from your community, or anyone who helps you fulfill your job responsibilities so they will be receptive if asked again. A jar of homemade jam was my signature "thank you."

~Sue Simon, Retired Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher

On Involvement in AAFCS/WAFCS

We are gregarious individuals. We need to be connected to each other and a cause greater than our own. By our very nature, we need associations. Beyond the need, it is fun to meet with others holding dear similar beliefs toward families and society. It is in this circle of collaboration that we create multiple circles of support.

~Carolyn Barnhart, Ed.D., CFCS, University of Wisconsin-Stout

Network via professional organizations for the people you meet are a source of wonderful information and inspiration!

~June Luett, Retired Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher

Join and maintain membership in professional organizations (especially AAFCS/WAFCS). Even if you can't always be active, it is important to stay informed and in touch and to remember there is strength in numbers.

~Carol Subera, Retired Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher

Take advantage of as many professional development opportunities as you possibly can. Some are expensive, and others will not count for credits, but all of them will help you grow. You will build a knowledge base and a professional network that make such a difference. Some of the people you meet will become mentors and personal friends. The field of family and consumer sciences is so broad and constantly changing; you need to keep up-to-date and know who you can contact when you have questions or need support.

~Susan M. Turgeson, CFCS, High School Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher and FCCLA Advisor

Get to know the other FCS teachers in your area and around the state. We are the most giving and helpful crew around. Many of us are one-person departments, but help is just an e-mail or phone call away. Become or keep your membership in WAFCS and WFCE (Wisconsin Family and Consumer Educators), as this is where you can build friendships.

~Arlene Welcher, High School Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher and HOSA Advisor

I taught at the junior high, high school, and university levels; served as a cooperative extension agent in Wisconsin and Ohio; and worked as a consumer educator, teaching money management classes for a consumer credit counseling service. But the greatest satisfaction I enjoyed in my professional career was from serving in leadership capacities in state affiliates of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS). That is also where I made lifelong friendships that I cherish to this day. So, if your day to day work isn't as rewarding as you expected or you want to enhance your professional fulfillment, look toward your membership in the Wisconsin Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (WAFCS). Join like-minded individuals and invest (leadership, volunteerism, contributions) in the association that is part of who you are, what you believe in, and what you do for a living.

~Jean Crownhart Zeithaml, CFCS, Retired

On Nutrition

I love Michael Pollan's "Food Rules." They are simple and easy to commit to memory. As a new professional, it's a great time to evaluate your eating habits. Small changes will not only improve your health and well being, but may prove to be more economical in the long run, both in terms of grocery money saved and healthcare costs avoided! Here are a collection of my favorite food rules, courtesy of Michael Pollan and my own experiences:

- *Eat food, mostly plants, but not too much.*
- *Don't eat anything with ingredients you can't pronounce or things your great-grandmother wouldn't recognize as food.*
- *You can have as many sweet treats as you'd like as long as you make them yourself from scratch.*
- *Chicken nuggets, hot dogs, and French fries are not food!*
- *Eat like a baby—no added sugar, salt, fat, or preservatives.*
- *Don't buy your food where you buy gasoline.*
- *Shop the perimeter of the grocery store, where food is the freshest and most nutritionally dense.*
- *Don't eat anything that won't eventually rot, with a few exceptions like dry beans and honey.*
- *Eat foods in their most natural forms—think fresh fruits and vegetables, seeds, and nuts.*
- *Eat locally, seasonally, and organically whenever possible.*
- *Pay now or pay later. Invest in a garden, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) share, and organic produce now, or pay the price of decreased quality of life and medical issues later.*
- *Sit down, and enjoy eating with others!*

~Tiffani Roltgen, Stay-at-Home Mom

Satiety is a goal. Mindfully choose food, and enjoy the aroma, taste, texture, temperature, and creative nature of the food. Satiety causes one to experience and appreciate food and not just gobble food to survive. When we truly enjoy food and savor the qualities of food, we will eat less food. Satiety is an interesting concept.

~Carolyn Barnhart, Ed.D., CFCS, University of Wisconsin-Stout

On Organization

If one is too organized, you may miss the true delight of finding a lost item. As I am cleaning my office in anticipation of retirement after thirty-six years of teaching and learning at UW-Stout, I found the items I organized and saved involving students and colleagues were easy to keep and full of memories. My file folders related to content, committees, and policies have been edited and changed many times and are easy to shred.

~Carolyn Barnhart, Ed.D., CFCS, University of Wisconsin-Stout

If you are a "piler," remember what is in your piles. Keep your tax records seven years, and store your financial materials in a safe place.

~ Diane Klemme, CFCS, University of Wisconsin-Stout School of Education Interim Chair

For teachers: SAVE and FILE successful speaker names and contact info, lists of good AV materials and their source, successful field trip info, fundraisers, etc. Time spent saving these in an organized way will save you TONS of time and frustration later on.

~Sue Simon, Retired Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher

Keep hard copies of employment records, recommendations, and anything relating to your job performance.

~Carol Subera, Retired Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher

On Personal Growth

We teach more by what we are than by what we teach.

~Will Durant (Submitted by Carolyn Barnhart, Ed.D., CFCS, University of Wisconsin-Stout)

Water & boats have always been a part of my life. As I have observed boats skimming over the water, they just seem to glide along with the greatest of ease. When you cut the power that thrusts the boat forward, they sink or settle into the water. So keep moving! The pace may change, but keep moving, and make a positive contribution to our fellow mankind and social well being.

~Priscilla Bondhus, Retired Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher

After five years of teaching, I knew I could not bring myself to start researching daycare options for our baby girl. The decision to stay home from a job I adore was a tough one, but I'm enjoying every moment of these early years and appreciating that I can be part of the physical, mental, social, and emotional development that's taking place on a daily basis. My advice to you is to be an inspiration to your students, clients, customers, friends, neighbors, and family by living the ideals you believe in and teach, whether it be about the importance of family, sleep, stress management, or nutrition. They will learn more from your actions than your words!

~Tiffani Roltgen, Stay-at-Home Mom

For teachers: Have students complete course evaluations as a part of their final exams. Read these over the summer, as they often offer very helpful suggestions for improving your course content or delivery.

~Sue Simon, Retired Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher

On Public Relations

Vacuums surround communication. It is wise to fill the vacuums with accurate information as opposed to have someone else fill the vacuum with assumptions. The topic of public relations needs two sub points. Internal public relations with your colleagues is a daily responsibility.

External public relations is a weekly goal but only after all internal colleagues are aware of the news.

~Carolyn Barnhart, Ed.D., CFCS, University of Wisconsin-Stout

For teachers: Connect and publicize both your work and the work of your students. Get "in the face" of administrators and school board members. Become engaged with students in community projects. Everyone needs to see and read about the GOOD things family and consumer educators do—both students and professionals, which includes teachers.

~Ann Garrison, Educational Consultant

For teachers: This is a very important area that we haven't done the best job at. Create a parent/community group that believes in what you are doing. They will be your best promoters. When budgets get cut, this group will come to your rescue. Take advantage of every opportunity to promote what you do with students, parents, teachers, school board members, and other policy makers. Do not assume they know what you are accomplishing. Use the papers, radio, and television.

~Barbara George, NASCO FCS Director

It's not who you know but who knows you.

~Carol Subera, Retired Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher

On Pursuing Higher Education

A teacher is always learning. If you wish others to learn, you must model learning. It is the process of learning, not the content, a learner remembers.

~Carolyn Barnhart, Ed.D., CFCS, University of Wisconsin-Stout

It is never too late to go back to school. Do it!

~Barbara George, NASCO FCS Director

My dad always used to say—education is something no one can ever take away from you!

~ Diane Klemme, CFCS, University of Wisconsin-Stout School of Education Interim Chair

I was prodded to go on for my masters right away when I finished my undergrad (part time together with teaching), and, looking back, I think it was good advice. I was able to complete it with my kids just in diapers. If I'd have waited, I wouldn't have been able to put in the time until after my kids were grown! So, I'd repeat that advice for any new grads.

~Dottie Winger, CFCS, High School Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher

On Relationships

Respect everyone. Rise to acknowledge their importance. Smile to invite their friendship. Say thank you for each kind gesture. Create your own Board of Directors. Consult them when needed, and always keep them informed of your goals, dreams, and desires.

~Carolyn Barnhart, Ed.D., CFCS, University of Wisconsin-Stout

Receive each person as a gift. The bow, the wrapping, and the packaging hide the true treasure. Never give up on anyone. Find their skills, talents, and abilities. You may be the only one searching, and the discoveries are well worth the effort.

~Carolyn Barnhart, Ed.D., CFCS, University of Wisconsin-Stout

Wherever you work, it is important to get to know the maintenance department. They are very critical to the work you do. Build positive relationships with everyone you work with.

~Karen Dickrell, CFCS, UW-Extension Family Living Educator

Love what you do, and do your best, but take time to enjoy life and your family. They are gone all too soon.

~Barbara George, NASCO FCS Director

For teachers: Get to know your administrative assistants (the secretaries). If you are 'in' with both the administrative assistants and the maintenance staff, you will have a much easier time knowing things and getting things done.

~Kimberly Hart-Shatswell, High School Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher

For teachers: One important person to get to know in your building is the secretary or educational assistant who is responsible for budgets, substitutes, ordering of supplies, supply distribution, and schedules—all things that affect you in the classroom. Another important group is the custodial staff, including the head custodian. Treat them well, and they will take care of you and your classroom needs.

~Janet M. Powell, Retired Middle School Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher and Learning Coordinator

Be alert to the school or work politics. Observe and listen.

~Janet M. Powell, Retired Middle School Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher and Learning Coordinator

Go on a date with your significant other once a week. No exceptions.

~Cindy Quilling, Middle School Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher and FCCLA Advisor

For teachers: Cultivate relationships with your guidance counselors. Make sure they understand the content of your classes and what career paths might include culinary, parenting, childcare, clothing, housing, and other subject areas. Guidance counselors are in a unique position to suggest courses and encourage students to try something new. Make sure family and consumer sciences classes are at the top of their suggestion list!

~Tiffani Roltgen, Stay-at-Home Mom

Words of Caution

Never burn a bridge. Life is too short!

~Carolyn Barnhart, Ed.D., CFCS, University of Wisconsin-Stout

Learn to say "no" when you need to. Don't take on too much that first or second year. I took on too much and got "burned out."

~ Diane Klemme, CFCS, University of Wisconsin-Stout School of Education Interim Chair

Be careful what you send in your e-mails. Work e-mail belongs to your employer and is never confidential.

~Janet M. Powell, Retired Middle School Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher and Learning Coordinator

For teachers: Don't try to reinvent the wheel. Take the wheel, and make it roll faster! When you first begin teaching, there is so much to learn and do. Don't try to take on too much at one time. Put your own spin on some of the wonderful ideas your colleagues share with you and tackle a few projects at a time. You won't have the time or energy to recreate every learning activity or assessment for every class, but you can put all of your enthusiasm and passion into providing a great experience for your students. It's really more about how you teach than what you teach.

~Susan M. Turgeson, CFCS, High School Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher and FCCLA Advisor