W hen **I grow up**
W hen I was in kindergarten, my class was asked, “W hat do you want to be when
you grow up?” Colorful crayons danced across sheets of paper to illustrate our dream
occupations and cherished jobs. Our drawings were hung in the school hallway for our
parents to see at Back to School Night. I remember looking down the line and seeing
pictures of pretty ballerinas dancing, brave firefighters putting out a blaze, and
fearless astronauts leaping across the moon — admirable careers th at were seen as
typical dreams of five-year-old kids.
My picture showed a stick figure w ith brown disheveled hair holding a carton of
orange juice over a large rectangle th a t was supposed to be a counter. U nderneath was
my barely legible handw riting: “W hen I grow up, I w ant to work at the M arket Basket
because it would be fun to swipe orange juice across the scanner and talk to custom ers.”
To this day my parents won’t let me forget th a t out of everything I could have aspired
to be, my five-year-old self wished to work at the local grocery store.
W hen we are young, questions of what we w ant to be when we grow up are
common. Yet we are not expected to respond w ith an answer th at is likely to come
true. However, when we become teenagers, we are asked the very same question twice
as often. The difference is, now we are supposed to answer w ith confidence.
Teenagers are expected to know exactly what they want to be and how they are
going to achieve th at goal. Not all of us can be so sure at this age. Even though I am
in high school, I cannot answer convincingly. But I don’t consider th a t a bad thing.
How am I supposed to know what I will want to spend my tim e doing at the age of
th irty or forty?
W hen I think about the future, I definitely don’t see myself working at the counter
of the M arket Basket, but in reality, if th a t was what would make me happy, I would
do it. So, the next tim e someone asks me what I want to be when I grow up, I will
simply say, “I want to be happy.” And it is hope th a t drives us in this direction.
“Hope is not a grain of sand,” the Gambian poet, Lenrie Peters, echoes, but no
m atter how tiny it is, it would still be sufficient to keep the youth alive and sane in
most extrem e circum stances. It is hope th a t spurs the youth on, to be up and doing.
It is hope th a t keeps the youth going no m atter how hard it is. Nelson Mandela as
a youth hoped against all hope for the liberation of his people and he actually lived
to see his hope being fulfilled. Robinson Crusoe, cast away on an uninhabited island,
hoped against all hope for survival and this propelled him to sta rt from scratch and
build a compound and large farm single-handedly.
Far away in “A nother Country: the Land of L iterature,” Sister Eileen Sweeney
sums up through her w ritings th at Hope is the anchor th at keeps “the ship” called
“youth” steadfastly held together no m atter the high and storm y sea of passion, pain,
distress or tribulation th at batter against it.
Happiness is a destination for everyone. We may want to walk different paths in
life, narrow or wide, crooked or straight, but we all want to be happy wherever we
end up. Choose your path, but don’t worry too much about choosing wisely. Make
a m istake or two and try new things. But always remember, if you’re not happy,
you’re not at the end of your journey yet.

1 In what way did the children in the kindergarten answer the question about their
dream occupation?
1) They described th eir parents’ actual occupation.
2) They took pictures of parents at the Back to School Night.
3) They drew people of th eir dream careers in action.
4) They made up a list of the most common and wide-spread professions.

2/W hy did the author w ant to work in the local grocery store?
1) It seemed to be an enjoyable occupation.
2) It was quite a realistic career goal.
3) Her parents spoke a lot about it.
4) She liked to make orange juice.

3/According to the author, when you grow up the questions about career choice become
1) less convincing.
2) less common.
3) more frequent.
4) more stressful.

4/“*T hat*” in “But I don’t consider th a t a bad thing” (paragraph 4) refers to
1) knowing in your teens exactly what you want to be.
2) working at the counter of the M arket Basket grocery store.
3) being unsure of your fu tu re career when in high school.
4) having a definite idea of how to achieve one’s career goal.

5/W hat would the author most probably like to do in the future?
1) W rite poems about difficulties of youth.
2) W ork as an independent farm er.
3) W ork for a local superm arket chain.
4) Do a job th at brings her satisfaction.

6/Examples with Nelson Mandela and Robinson Crusoe are mentioned by the author to
1) illustrate wise and successful career choices.
2) prove how im portant it is not to lose hope.
3) inspire teenagers to believe in th eir own effort.
4) show what to do in extreme circumstances.

7/W hat conclusion does the author make?
1) Make a wise choice when thinking of your fu ture profession.
2) Look for an activity th a t makes you happy.
3) Do not forget about the happiness of other people.
4) Be careful not to make a m istake when trying new things.