

Living the Dream

The past year has been one of the most rewarding and memorable of my life. After years of planning and hard work, my dream of developing a clinical facility devoted not only to patients' care but also to clinical research, education, and innovation finally became a reality. At special times like this, I like to pause for reflection and express my gratitude to those who invested in me and inspired me to give my all toward making a difference in the world. I sincerely believe that personal accomplishments are the result of teamwork and the influence of others. This is certainly true in my case.

Definitions of success and what is important are arbitrary. They depend on a person's goals and values. For example, Charles Francis Adams, a 19th century diplomat, made the following entry in his diary: "Went fishing with my son today—a day wasted." His son, Brook Adams, wrote the following in his own diary on the same day: "Went fishing with my father—most wonderful day of my life."

Growing up, my father instilled in me the idea that true success is rooted in using your abilities to the fullest for

the good of others. Hard work, perseverance, and integrity in the midst of life's challenges were not only encouraged at home but were deemed mandatory. My parents knew the Golden Rule, and they lived it. Based on this upbringing, I have sought to abide by (albeit imperfectly at times) the following simple principles:

ing, I have sought to abide by (albeit imperfectly at times) the following simple principles:

- Be on time or early
- Be enthusiastic
- Listen
- Do what you say you will do
- Finish what you start
- Say "please" and "thank you"
- Do more than you say you will do
- Act with excellence
- Exude confidence, not arrogance

When I follow these precepts, I am

amazed at what I can accomplish.

I hope that my practice's recent move into a new clinical facility represents an opportunity to enhance my patients' eye care. Making a difference in the lives of those around me has always been my greatest motivation. By surrounding myself with talented individuals and maintaining a positive attitude, I feel certain that this small-town boy from South Dakota is living the American dream. ■



Steven D. Vold, MD

Steven D. Vold, MD
Chief Medical Editor