



My Advice To The Graduates

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Two weeks ago marked the fourth anniversary of my graduation from college. The realization that I've now spent as much time *out* of college as I spent in it inspired a strange combination of nostalgia and panic. The Germans would have a word for that, like "nogstalgiaapan," although I suppose we have our own ready substitutes in "high school reunion" and "birthday."

In any case, my nogstalgiaapan quickly dissipated after I inadvertently spent 20 minutes inside the Cubby Bear after a Cubs day game—the smoke, incoherent noise, and desperate drunken longing for human contact provided a nice reminder of things happily left long behind, including "Back That Ass Up."

This feeling of growth inspired me to write this piece, which I imagined was going to be a collection of the hard-won wisdom I've earned over the past four years: graduate school is fun, especially if you can get someone else to pay for it, Pad Thai is peanut-ly delicious—that sort of thing.

Thinking more about it, though, I realized that four years ago I was happily living on less than \$600 a month and playing video games five days a week. I decided that the graduates should be the ones giving me advice based on the lessons they'd picked up in college. Here are some of the biggest points:

1. **Procrastinate**—Ten words to live by: "Never do today what you can put off until tomorrow." The best thing about procrastination? Most of the stuff that you're *supposed* to do will just go away if you keep putting it off long enough. Take shaving—you put it off for a day, you look like a bum, but if you put it off for a week, suddenly you have a beard. You didn't do anything different; you just stuck to your guns, and the problem took care of itself. (Note: Diabetics and individuals on life-saving drug regimens shouldn't take this advice *too* closely to heart.)

Even if you do have to end up doing work, you can condense its unpleasantness by waiting until the absolute last minute to do it. Don't worry about being late—odds are, whoever you have to give the work to isn't looking forward to doing anything with it either.

2. **Don't budget**—One of the first tenets of financial planning is to plan ahead and spend within your means. You know where that gets you? It gets you sitting at home on Friday night, flipping through the channels on television, silently waiting for your next paycheck. Sure, you paid your rent. Maybe you'll even be able to buy a house 40 years down the road, provided nothing happens to your job or your health and you're willing to commute an hour and a half each day to work in order to live in an affordable area.

In any case, the most important things in life are our friends and

family, and nobody's ever made friends by paying their electric bill on time. Blow your cash as quickly as it comes in on clothes, music and bars, and if you get into any serious form of financial trouble, remember point number three.

3. **Mooch off of mom and dad**—For those lucky enough to have gotten cash from mom and dad to go to school, it doesn't have to stop when you graduate. Diminishing family sizes and the increasing wussification of America mean that parents are no longer willing to take even the slightest steps to ensure their children's self-sufficiency.

Fund your go-getter lifestyle by sucking as much cash out of them as possible, and if they start to blanch or cut you off, you can always move back home. In fact, if you have siblings, it might be a good idea to move home as soon as possible to ensure you can grab the best bedroom. What are your parents going to do, kick you out?

4. **Honor thy holidays**—Sick days and spring break are essential to the college lifestyle, and there's no reason for that to change once you graduate. Your workplace is trying to screw as much work out of you as possible—why not read up on the loopholes that give you a chance to give as good as you get?

Lots of places now offer unlimited sick time to keep you from spreading that bug you've picked up throughout the entire office. If you play your cards right, you could be looking at an extra dozen days off every year. Don't overdo it, though—if every Friday you start coming down with strep throat, Human Resources is going to start getting suspicious. Stick to calling off the occasional Tuesday or Thursday after a big night out at your *other* office, and you should be fine.

As for spring break, go on a trip every year around St. Patrick's Day. It keeps you young.

5. **Put sex first**—That's saying you have to be promiscuous, only that if it comes down to folding the laundry or getting freaky, think back to what your 19-year-old self would do. After all, the clothes can always be folded tomorrow...unless the dilemma comes up again, and then you know what to do.