

*Are they real?
Who are these people?
Why no last names?*

Otis

You college boys go to school looking for answers and you come out more lost than when you came in. It's going to take you four or more years of your life to graduate. When you do finish you'll find a nice Mc' job like those dudes who sell perfume on campus. The only exception is that you'll be the one who is \$20,000 in debt. That doesn't smell pretty does it?

You can't tell me that college guarantees I'll make more money. A trade school or apprenticeship will not only bring me more income than you'll make after 10 years of clambering up the corporate ladder, but I'll be doing it while still enlightening myself through life experience. Besides, so many people have a degree now, that it doesn't add up to much today.

Competition in the job market means that piece of paper stacked up against everyone else's piece of paper cancel each other out. People just go to college to waste time like you did. Look at all those statistics that tell us a majority of graduates end up doing something outside of their degree within five years of graduating.

Imagine, spending all that time learning about something only to change horses in mid-stream and go into something else. My time is more valuable than that.

Today's world is filled with uncertainty, especially in the corporate world. Job security is slowly being diminished, even on the cor-

Is College Worth It?

porate level. A degree doesn't guarantee you a job, Arthur, but my union does.

All knowledge isn't strictly from universities. I have a degree from the University of Life, and it serves me well. Besides, colleges require many classes that I'll never use. I said in high school that I'd never use algebra, and except as a graduation requirement for college, I never will.

I mentioned earlier that money in my pocket is worth more to me than possible income from a graduate-level job that may or may not exist from one day to the next. Beyond that, I'll save a bundle in tuition; money that you'll still be paying back five years from now. If I take out a loan, it'll be for a jet ski. No student loans for me.

I did great at the gaming school. My work there focused on my work now, I made some great friends and had a great time. And it only took me one year from start to finish. In one year I started making real money. Sure, my job may be a little repetitive, but the upside is I don't have to think much. I leave my work at work without having to drag home projects and proposals. That means my life is my life, not subject to the after-hours whims of my boss. If you think I want to spend my off hours making her look good, you're a bigger schmoe than I thought, Arthur.

My advice to would-be college graduates and incoming freshmen is QUIT NOW. Go to trade school and get on with your life. Ask yourself, "Am I on my agenda, or my parents'?"

Arthur

You call me a "college boy," Otis, but don't forget that today's college boys are tomorrow's Good Ol' Boys. And like it or not, the world today and far into the future still runs by the "pat on the back system." Get a clue, Otis, and get back into college! Don't you think there are enough ignoramuses out there eking out livings as auto mechanics, blackjack dealers, or schlepping food for the better-educated in pricey restaurants? Not that those aren't valid career fields, but why not be at the top of those fields? In college you could learn to design cars as a mechanical engineer, or manage casino and food & beverage personnel through hotel administration. Education is the way to go, no doubt about it.

I know there are those who claim that college makes less sense for more people in the '90's, due to increased specialization in the workplace, and recommend trade or technical school for larger numbers of high school graduates. That philosophy may be true in a very general sense, but I still maintain that as individuals we all have choices over the quality of our lives, and with that, a certain measure of control over our destinies. If an individual has the right to choose, why choose to be a follower, instead of a leader? Sure, there are those not suited to leadership, but don't forget; the cream ris-

Under the Influence with Otis & Arthur

es. Choose to be cream. It's better to be the one signing the paychecks.

And Otis, along with positioning yourself in better job and income markets, you of all people should know that advancement goes to those with the degree. You've been passed over so many times you're almost a religious holiday. Companies the world over value the sheepskin, even if you don't, since it represents more than just an investment in education: it demonstrates a willingness to expose yourself to new ideas. It shows that you will follow through and finish something that requires planning and effort. (By the way, Otis, do you like the way I finished your half of this article?) Further, a diploma indicates that, at the very least, you've been introduced to the principles of critical thinking. Trade and technical school trainees are a dime a dozen, but critical thinkers with creative problem solving skills, even recent graduates, are worth their weight in gold.

And think about this, Otis, if you can muster one more brain cell: college graduates not only comprise the bulk of management and administration positions and move up the corporate ladder more quickly than non-graduates; statistically they lead happier, more well-adjusted lives. The reason? No, not simply because they have more discretionary income, but because through advanced education they have the intellectual capacity to enjoy life more. Try getting exposure to the Arts at the Las Vegas Gaming

and Technical School, or instruction in the appreciation of fine literature going to the University of Oz. Today's students may grouse at having to take anthropology, but someday, (because they have the money to travel to Australia) they will also have the ability to get the most out of Aboriginal culture. But that's okay, Otis, you can watch it on National Geographic Explorer.

Of all the advantages to seeking a level of higher learning commensurate with higher goals, the opportunities for self-discovery offered by the college experience may outstrip the rest in both immediate and long-term benefits.

Universities offer the chance to stretch in new directions, to plumb the depths of abilities and talents otherwise dormant or unrealized.

Many people enter school intending to train in one field, only to find that their passions and talents lure them in totally unforeseen directions. These are success stories, as much as those who have known since they were five that they wanted to be a doctor, lawyer, or microbiologist, and finally follow through and become just that.

All things considered, though, Otis, I'm not really sure that you would make good college material. As much as I would enjoy having a worthy opponent for this series of articles, I always enjoy a battle of wits with an unarmed man

Rights of Passage

What's up with this retro thing? It seems like our generation doesn't get it. We keep looking to the 60's and 70's for our culture instead of discovering it for ourselves.

Don't get me wrong, the past is the key to the future of

any generation, or else you make the same mistakes. The problem is that we're taking in the parts that are face value, like music, language, and habits. The important topics of ideology and enlightenment seem to be lost among

Afros and bell bottoms. (I have to admit the Afros are cool, I wish I could do it.)

Take growing your hair long, that used to be a statement against the conformity of authority. Now it's done to look good for the opposite sex.

Remember how your father used to flashback at the dinner table? You hated it, the same nonsense over and over. The worst were the sports and war stories. The pictures were even more amusing, the clothes were almost sad. You swore you'd never make the same mistake, now look at you. Say hi to Mom and Dad.

Here we are facing the next millenium and we don't have a clue. Are we really slackers like many would have us believe? I don't think so. In fact, I think most of us work harder than our parents did when they were our age. It just seems like we have nothing to show for it. No uncontrollable circumstances were thrown upon us like past generations. We don't have to go to war or battle for human rights, at least not on their level. We're the first generation to have complete freedom for the individual identity. No major crisis binds us, nor does a triumph strengthen us. Years from now I don't think history classes will spend more

Living at Large

VINCE CALIGUIRE

than a few days on the nineties.

Our generation isn't the first to question its identity. The 1920's are a testament to this, and it eventually set the stage of history for years to come. Gertrude Stein called them a "Lost Generation," referring to Ernest Hemingway and his cronies. That was a time of self-discovery. History needs to take time once in a while to question its direction. That's what the 20's were about, perhaps that's our role as well.

Unfortunately, the years following that decade almost brought the world to its knees with simplified solutions regardless of human consequences. It's easy for us to judge the past and lay judgment; we weren't there. What if times were rough and we were forced into a questionable destiny? The Nazis' utilized this concept to mobilize its factions and create a need for power and a hatred for an entire race. It's when times seem most tranquil that mentality is susceptible to weakness.

I went through a right of passage Vegas style, as a dealer. When you first start as a dealer you have to work downtown. That's the only place that will hire you, unless you have juice to get on the strip.

Those of you who have been downtown realize what it's like. And I happened to work at the worst spot downtown, the Western. Degenerates constantly tried to cheat and bust your chops. Most people quit in a few days because it was so bad. Those who stayed became better dealers and learned how to deal with these situations. Staying set the foundation and work ethic that helps me to this day. Dealers respect you more if you were downtown, and consequently, the better dealers have been downtown at some point in their career.

The point of that little tirade is that the more difficult option can strengthen you. I learned more than just dealing from that experience: it built up my character and self-esteem. These qualities will help me throughout my years. Plus I learned a slew of dirty words to use in conversation.

Our generation may seem untested, but eventually history will be thrust upon us; our mark has yet to be made. Don't accept answers just for the sake of having them: that's as bad as not knowing the questions. We learn from failing, and that is a part of life. I may be young but this is a universal truth: better to regret something you have done than something you haven't.

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