



**WESTMONT COLLEGE  
THE COVE CAREER CENTER**

# GRADUATING IN THE AGE OF COVID 19

Student Guidebook

# INTRODUCTION



This is not the job market you were expecting. Yet every economic disruption has its beginning, middle, and end. And things will improve.

The good news is that there are plenty immediate and long-term actions you can take to increase your appeal. Network and connect with professionals online, manage your resources wisely, enhance your (virtual) competencies, focus on adaptability, and set action-oriented goals for yourself. Become adaptable, think outside of the box, and look at the 'bigger picture'.

This guide will introduce a variety of resources, ideas, and mindsets you should adopt and utilize to overcome these challenging times.

# WE WANT TO HELP...

Our team is ready to help current students and alumni as they navigate their professional lives. Here are just a few ways:

- Resume reviews
- Interview skills
- LinkedIn and networking
- Job search
- Assessments to find jobs that fit you

You can [schedule a time to chat via Handshake](#) anytime. We're here for you all year long.



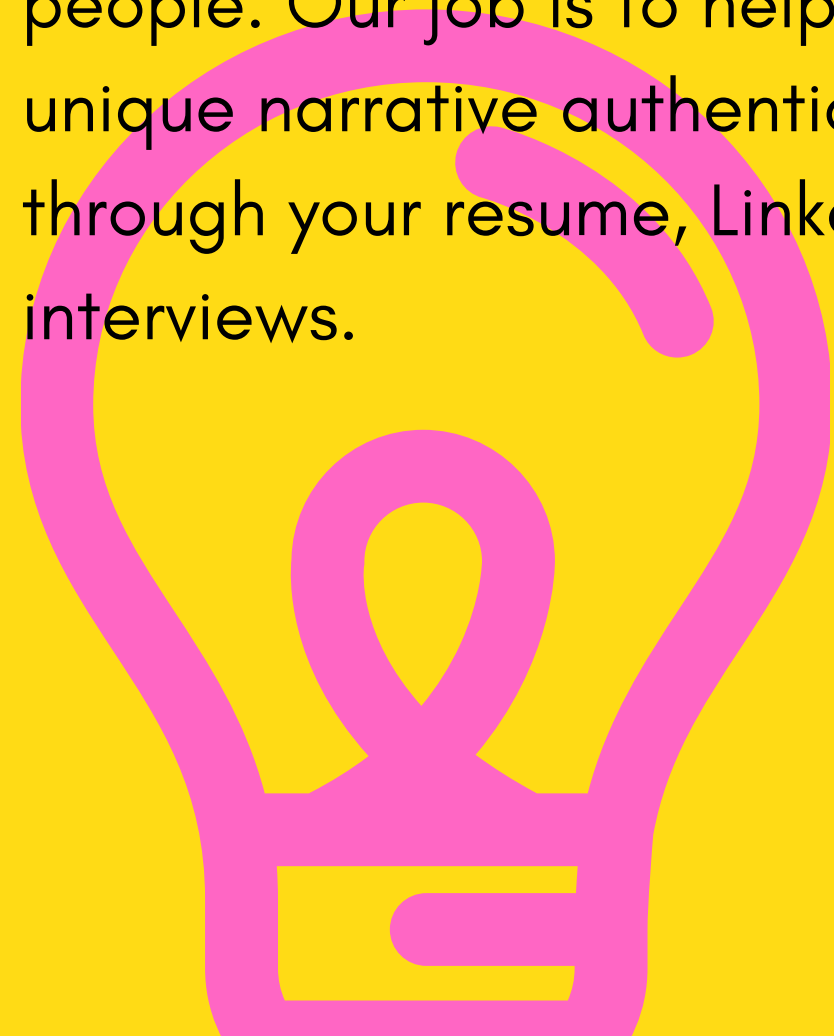
# WHAT'S IN THIS GUIDE?

- How to market yourself
- Resume tips
- Networking tips
- Who's hiring/How to adapt in COVID job market
- Remote work / Learning resources
- Interviewing tips
- Student loan Info / Budgeting Info
- Supplemental income Info
- A note about social media
- Graduate school info
- Tips for designing your life

# TIP #1 YOUR BRAND

## YOU NEED TO KNOW YOURSELF BEFORE YOU CAN MARKET YOURSELF

Everyone is drawn to specific things, talented in different areas, and able to connect with various people. Our job is to help you articulate your unique narrative authentically and confidently through your resume, LinkedIn profile, and in interviews.



### Here's how to articulate your skills, interests, characteristics, values, & strengths:

1. **Assessments** | Myers Briggs, Strong Interest Inventory, and others can all help you better understand yourself and how that applies to work environments, skill sets, and career options that are most conducive to who you are!
2. **Consider completing StrengthsFinder 2.0 assessment** | This strengths psychology tool helps you reflect on your innate, God-given abilities, strengths, and inclination. Schedule a time via Handshake to unpack your results.
3. **Technical and Transferable Skills** | All of your experiences (Study Abroad, as a Student-Athlete, Past Internships, volunteer work, jobs) have shaped you and your story. Brainstorm what you have gained from each of your experiences. What tasks give you life? What drains you? Learn how to articulate your skills in your resume, during an interview, and with professionals.
4. **Develop Your Brand** | Write a one- to two-sentence summation of your career goals and strengths. It might be "An experienced editor looking to transition to a full-time writing role." Also, consider creating an elevator pitch - when you meet people and are explaining what sort of work you are looking for, you should be able to articulate clearly and concisely your skillset and where you want to be.

# More on your brand



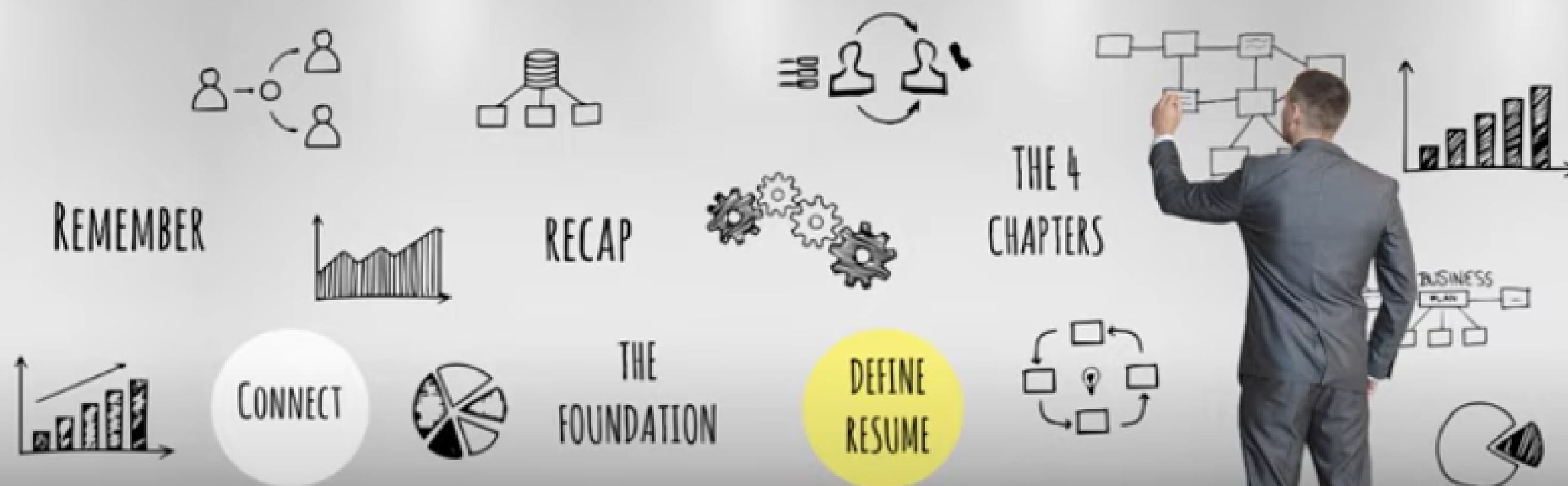
# TIP #2.0 RESUMES



**CHECK OUT OUR  
RESUME GUIDE & EXAMPLES**

1. Tailor your resume. That means you will have many versions of your resume. Each resume should be tailored to the job description that you are applying to. Doing research on the job, company, and industry will help with articulating who you are as you align with the job!
2. Don't forget contact info. Always be sure to include your email address and phone number. You can go the extra mile by adding your LinkedIn (just make sure it's up to date).
3. Use action verbs to start each bullet to describe your experiences and skills. Words like organized, coordinated, led, presented, collaborated, prepared, and monitored are good descriptors. *\* You'll find the best keyword action verbs in the job description, though!*
4. Make it clear, concise, and easy to follow = 1 page.

# THE RESUME





# TIP #2.1 COVER LETTERS



**CLICK FOR OUR  
COVER LETTER GUIDE**

Think of your cover letter as you sharing your brand - a golden opportunity to make an impactful first impression.

Tailor your cover letter to share the skills and experience that the job description mentions. This should be an expansion of your resume bullets.

- [Samples of the Best Cover Letters from Balance Careers](#)
- [8 cover letters you need to read now from the Muse](#)
- [The 9 best cover letter examples from hubspot](#)

# TIP #3 AUTHENTIC NETWORKING



"WHEN YOU NEED A FRIEND, IT'S  
TOO LATE TO MAKE A FRIEND"  
- MARK TWAIN

SO BUILD YOUR CONNECTIONS  
NOW...

LinkedIn: Since over half of job seekers (you!) get hired from a referral, and over 85% of recruiters use LinkedIn, you should be utilizing it! Even before #socialdistancing, networking has been key to professional success.

- [Here](#) are LinkedIn [profile tips](#) for new grads and a [profile checklist](#). Be sure to connect with your professors, staff (us!), your peers, and professionals within your area of interest.
- Connect with [Westmont College Alum](#) by seeing their major, location, past experiences, and more on LinkedIn.
- You can also search for jobs/internships, and through companies and professionals.

Take Advantage of Your Age: According to [Forbes](#), established professionals are more eager to help new college graduates find their way and land a job. So, THIS IS YOUR MOMENT in time to reach out to professionals, do your research on companies and industries, ask lots of questions, and learn as much as you can.

- Plus, who doesn't like to be asked about their story or for advice? Want some ideas of how to connect and network virtually? Check out [Owllab](#) and [Forbes](#).

Ask around. Share your interests with, and ask, family, friends, professors, alum, neighbors, past supervisors, church community, coaches...anyone and everyone if they know of any opportunities in relation.

- Remember, the majority of people get hired through a connection (LinkedIn)
- Be sure to show gratitude to these connections when they give you referrals to opportunities.

Volunteering: This is one of the most effective ways to build relationships with people. By working together to reach a common goal, and sacrificing your time in this way, you are building relationships and sharing your talents, values, character, and interests. How might you be able to volunteer or give-back during this time of #socialdistancing?

# TAKE ACTION

## WHO'S HIRING

Many companies are still hiring. Consider taking advantage of the 'gig' economy, short term contracts or freelance work. These resources will help you stay connected to who's hiring:

- Know Before You Go: Visit the "Who is Hiring During COVID-19" tab of lots of information on companies that are hiring.



## VIRTUAL CAREER FAIR RESOURCES

Click below for virtual career event resources:

- Handshake– employer hosted forums and info sessions.
- JobFairsIn – open virtual job fairs.
- LiveCareer – tips on how to succeed in virtual job fairs.
- The Balance Careers – answers to common questions about virtual job fairs.

# REMOTE WORK OPPORTUNITIES

MANY COMPANIES WILL LIKELY CONTINUE TO EMBRACE REMOTE WORK FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES:

- [HANDSHAKE](#) (SEARCH: REMOTE OR VIRTUAL)
- [WEWORKREMOTELY.COM](#)
- [FLEXJOBS.COM](#)
- [REMOTE.CO/REMOTE-JOBS](#)
- [JUSTREMOTE.CO](#)
- [VIRTUALVOCATIONS.COM](#)
- [REMOTEOK.IO](#)
- [PANGIAN.COM](#)
- [JOBSPRESSO.CO](#)
- [REMOTIVE.IO](#)
- [POWERTOFLY.COM](#) (WOMEN IN TECH)
- [ANGEL.CO](#)
- [SKIPTHEDRIVE.COM](#)

## BOOST YOUR SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

Many educational companies and universities are currently offering their content for free. Take advantage of this opportunity to enhance your skills and knowledge.

- [Coursera.org](#) – Offering 100 free courses until May 31st.
- [Harvard University](#)– Free online classes
- [EdX](#) – Free Online Courses
- [Open Culture](#) – more than 1,500 free online courses
- Yale’s most popular course ever, [The Science of WellBeing](#)
- [Dave Evans Ted Talk](#) on Designing your life



# TIP #4 INTERVIEWING

## BEFORE

Know the job. Include keywords and characteristics from the job posting description in your resume and cover letter. Know yourself. Complete assessments and the transferable skill exercise to discover more ways to articulate who you are professionally. Research the company, department, environment, and staff related to the job so you can tailor interview answers appropriately. Interview for Information with someone that currently or previously worked in that position or company (LinkedIn).

## PRACTICE

Tell me about yourself: (Hint: they don't want to know your life story or what you had for dinner last night) What to say and not say, and examples here. Mock Interviews: Schedule an appointment to have an interview for the position you're interested in and receive feedback. You can also record a video of yourself answering questions, watch yourself in a mirror, or have someone interview you. Common interview questions: Practice answering out loud before the interview to clarify your thoughts, get rid of awkward-sounding answers, and feel more confident and comfortable during the interview (50 Questions here).

## DURING

Dress appropriately and professionally as it relates to the company, even if it's a virtual interview. Bring a portfolio/folder with updated resumes and cover letters to pass out, and can bring a list of notes and/or questions to the interview. Demonstrate your ability to perform the job by formulating answers that are tailored to the job description and company. Always ask a question, like "Which three things are most important to success in this role?"

## AFTER

Thank you! You're not done yet, even though the interview is over. Send them a hand-written thank-you note. If you can't mail or drop-off a letter within the week, email will do. Reflect: Questions to ask yourself after the interview.

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENT LOANS

THE AVERAGE COLLEGE STUDENT IN THE U.S. GRADUATES WITH ABOUT \$30,000 IN STUDENT-LOAN DEBT. THIS CONSTITUTES A FORMIDABLE, OFTEN PROLONGED FINANCIAL BURDEN DURING “NORMAL” TIMES. REST ASSURED THAT THE IMPACT WILL BE COMPOUNDED DURING A RECESSION.

IT IS ABSOLUTELY IMPERATIVE THAT YOU FULLY COMPREHEND ALL ASPECTS OF YOUR STUDENT LOAN MANAGEMENT, REPAYMENT OPTIONS, IMPACT ON YOUR PERSONAL BUDGET, AND OF COURSE, RELEVANT AND CURRENT LEGISLATION.

CLICK ON THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES AND TO GET STARTED:

- [STUDENTLOANSHERPA.COM](https://studentloansherpa.com) - A GOOD PLACE TO START.
- [UNDERSTAND FEDERAL STUDENT AID](#)
- [UNDERSTAND INCOME-DRIVEN REPAYMENT \(IDR\) PLANS](#)
- [WHICH IDR WORKS FOR YOU?](#)
- [UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF A STUDENT-LOAN SERVICERS.](#)
- [UNDERSTAND LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAMS AND OPPORTUNITIES](#)

# PERSONAL BUDGETING RESOURCES

Graduating into a (possible) recession could result in reduced income over a prolonged time-period. Your ability to save, be frugal, and budget your money wisely is essential.

Click on the following resources and to get started:

- [Understand Budgeting Basics](#) - The Balance
- [Create a Comprehensive Personal Budget](#) - Policy Genius
- [Financial Tips for Young Professionals](#) - MoneyGoody
- [Additional Financial Tips for Young Professionals](#) - Investopedia
- [Understand Compound Interest](#) - Investopedia





# THINK ABOUT SUPPLEMENTAL INCOME

Graduating into a recession may force you to be resourceful and creative with the ways you generate income if you hope to “catch up”.

Be patient, persistent, and open to every opportunity. You don't have to find a job in your major or desired industry right away. Every company has a variety of roles and there is something to be learned from every job you have.

Look to leverage your strengths and knowledge to develop side hustles, apply to paid micro-internships and gigs and do not be too proud to do basic jobs in order to supplement your income.

## Freelance Remote Work Job Boards

- [Upwork](#)
- [LinkedIn ProFinder](#)
- [Freelancer.com](#)
- [Freelancermap.com](#)

## LinkedIn Learning Courses

[The Value of Working Remotely](#)

[Leading Virtual Meetings](#)

[Digital Body Language](#)

[Virtual Networking for Job Interviews](#)

## Other Virtual Tools

[4 Tips on Writing Networking Emails \(source: Vault\)](#)

[4 Strategies on Nailing the Video Interview \(source:Vault\)](#)

## Professional blogs and Articles

[How To Boost Your Career While You Shelter In Place \(source: Vault\)](#)

[33 Companies Eager to Hire Among COVID 19 \(source:Glassdoor\)- as of 3/18/2020](#)

[How to Get a Gig Job \(source: Indeed\)](#)

[Job Interviewing Tips in The Age of Social Distances \(source: CareerBuilder\)](#)

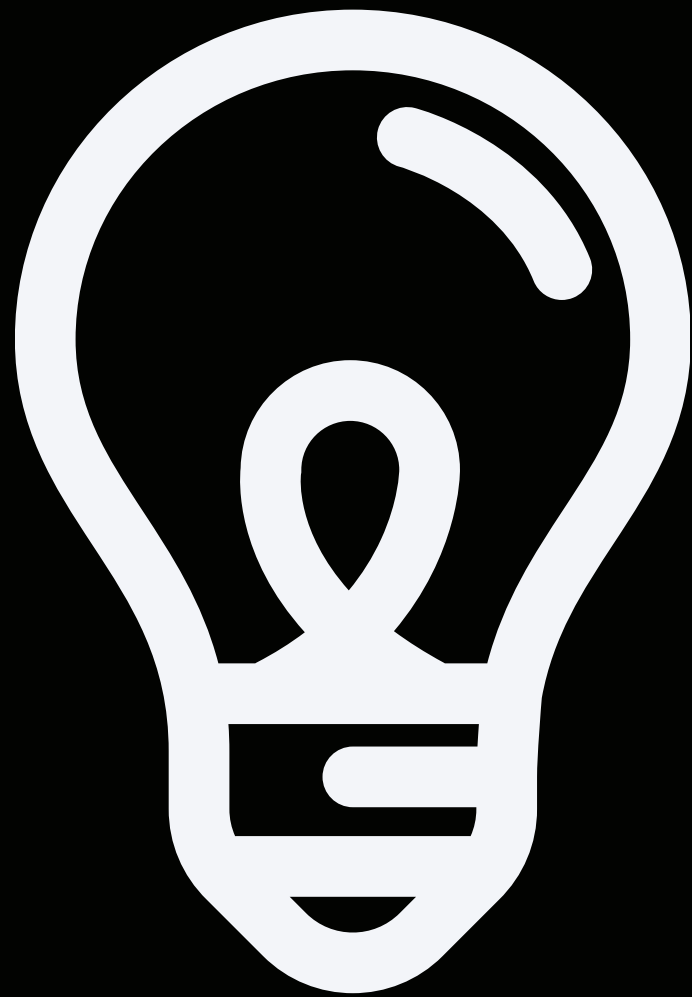
[6 Tips for Working Remotely \(source: LinkedIn Blog\)](#)

# Be Social Media Smart: Think before you post

According to Accredited schools online, “51 percent of hiring managers utilize Google to begin their research on candidates. 33 percent of employers reported finding content posted by candidates that made them more desirable for the role, while nearly one-quarter reported that social media posts “directly led” to candidates being hired.”

It's okay to share parts of your life online, but avoid sharing things that doesn't paint you or your friends in a good light. Even if you're legally allowed to drink, posting many pictures of you in clubs or drinking doesn't give a good impression. To avoid getting others in trouble, also remember not to tag them in your photos if they're doing questionable things, or just don't post them at all. This is the social media generation, and videos are fast becoming more popular than photos. Here, the same applies – don't post a video if you're doing something illegal, offensive, questionable, or simply immature.

Not sure what constitutes a questionable post? According to The Conversation, these are the potential hazards: references to illegal drugs and sexual posts, incriminating or embarrassing photos or videos, profanity, defamatory or racist comments, politically charged attacks, spelling and grammar issues, as well as complaining or bad-mouthing.





# GRAD SCHOOL

## FACTORS TO CONSIDER:

1. **Career prospects**– Does my career require a graduate degree?
2. **Cost to attend**– according to Credible, on average grad school debt among recent grads looks something like this...
  - M.B.A. debt: \$66,300
  - M.A. debt: \$72,800
  - Ph.D. debt: \$108,400
  - Law School debt: \$145,500
  - Med School debt: \$246,000
3. **Career Earnings**– according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median weekly earnings by degree type are as follows:
  - Professional degree: \$1,836 (annual: \$95,472)
  - Doctoral degree: \$1,743 (annual: \$90,636)
  - Master's degree: \$1,401 (annual: \$72,852)
  - Bachelor's degree: \$1,173 (annual: \$60,996)

4. **Time**– You need to think about how long this degree will take. On average these are the numbers..

- Masters degree: Two years
- Ph.D: Five to Seven years
- M.B.A. Two years
- Law degree: Three years
- Medical degree: Four years (plus residency)

## 4 REASONS YOU SHOULD NOT GO TO GRAD SCHOOL...

- You can't find a job
- You need to hit the reset button on life
- You hate your job
- You're not sure what you want to do

## FIND THE RIGHT GRAD SCHOOL



## FINAL THOUGHTS FROM DAVE EVANS

# HOW TO DESIGN YOUR LIFE...

### Ask yourself these questions:

- Who do I want to be? What do I want my life to look like?
  - How do I find a job that I like or maybe even love?
  - How do I build a career that will make me a good living?
  - How do I balance my career with my family?
  - How can I make a difference in the world?
- 
- **Get Curious** about things that interest you and get you excited.
  - **Ask Questions**- find people that are doing what you want to be doing and interview them- ask for their advice.
  - **Take Risks**. Be open and ok with taking risks, failing, and learning from every experience. Don't be afraid of change.
  - **Be Flexible**. Create lots of different kinds of goals/ dream careers and be open to every opportunity and the lessons to be learned.

### [Dave Evans Design Your Life Video Clip](#)



# FINAL THOUGHTS...

You were handmade to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Somewhere along the way you'll figure out where you fit into His grand scheme for His creation – and it'll be easier than you may think.

Whether you call it "a clear sense of direction", "that thing that really delights you", "the unspoken whisper", or just plain "calling", you were created to take the first step.

So stop fixating about the long arc of your life, and pursue the tasks and opportunities that are right in front of you. Do that each and every day, and then watch the God of the universe unfold his plans day after day in your life. Be attentive, hold your plans loosely, and let God run wild in your life.

Go.

[Schedule a time to chat via Handshake anytime.](#)

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