

## SO YOU THOUGHT COLLEGE PREPARES YOU FOR A JOB? WELL, THERE ARE SOME THINGS THEY DON'T TELL YOU



Childhood is full of innocence and when we were asked what we want to be when we grow up, the answers rarely goes beyond becoming firefighters, teachers or ice-cream vendors. The moment we reach college, many more career option open up and we decide we'd much rather be Software Developers, Database Administrators or Occupational Therapists, skills and careers are parents had probably never heard about, when it was their time to plan a career. But we'll be living in a fool's paradise if we believed that the college degree was the key to a guaranteed job of our choice. It is not that it does not help, but it is a fallacy that it fully prepares us for a job. It leaves us a little underprepared; the dish needs a little more cooking. Having been through the grind and experienced at first-hand what a college degree prepares you for and what it does not, this is what you probably did not know but should know about your college degree. First thing is that your college degree does not limit you to the job that you have studied for. If you have studied journalism, it also means that you have mastered the art of communication and you could look for jobs in marketing, business administration, and personal relations. With a little bit of internship in the related fields, this could also lead to jobs in teaching, publishing, proofreading, speechwriting or even becoming a paralegal. Attaching too much importance to the degree is wide of the mark. Many a time I found that my prospective employers were not interested in my degree or the elite college I went to. It really did not matter to them. What they were more interested in was the skills I had and could they be enhanced by on-work training and did I have the motivation to do the work. It is a sorry matter of fact that a majority of the students clear the programs but their grades are not very high. It does not matter. It does not lessen your ability to excel at the workplace. It is highly improbable an employer will ask for your transcript. Of course, high grades do provide a cosmetic change to your transcripts, but that they are vital, imperative and career-changing is an erroneous belief that you will do well to discard. More than your college degree the contacts you made in college, the already employed alumni, the considerate faculty all have wide networks and you could use their help to get you a job. Once you get the job, naturally the one for which you studied, you may find that it was not worth spending all the time in college. Well, it's okay to change your mind. Just check out other career options and take the plunge. You have your entire life in front of you, surely you won't let a college degree dictate the course of your life. Even in the best of time, don't forget these are dismal times for employment; employers are not very keen on taking on students fresh from college. They look for experience. So make yourself more hireable after graduation by taking on an internship or volunteering. Somehow or the other you must find ways to gain job experience. Remember, that four-plus years you've spent pouring over books are not totally wasted. It won't guarantee a job; it's not the only path to a professional career. If it is any consolation, remember that Bill Gates, Michael Dell, Steve Jobs, Larry Ellison and Richard Branson did not have college degrees. I found during my job searches that believing in myself, being articulate and showing that I had a deep desire to be successful, made my degree credentials barely discernible to the interviewer.