

First Jobs After College

For the Graduate:

- Congratulations! You are a college graduate!
- You started thinking about what your application to college would look like a few years before you graduated from high school. You need to start thinking about what your resume will look like a few years before you graduate from college.
- Take advantage of your college career development office. Get help with your resume and cover letters.
- Take advantage of alumni network connections, both during and after college.
- Take advantage of internships (paid and un-paid), work-study opportunities, research experience at school, internship and summer employment opportunities while in college.
- According to Meg Jay, your job connections are as likely to come from someone you don't yet know, as from someone you do know. Tell everyone *you* know, to tell everyone *they* know, that you are looking for a job. Follow up on *all* leads.
- It is good to keep moving forward while you are trying to figure out where you are going. Start somewhere. Temp agencies can be useful.
- Manage your expectations – make a list of what *you* expect from your first job – ideally? realistically? What do you want to be doing? What are you willing to do? How much are you going to be paid? There is usually something that can be learned from every work experience.
- College does not necessarily teach you the skills you need for life after college – if you stayed on campus, you have been given room, meals, and a social structure in which to meet people.
- In college, your tuition dollars help to pay teachers to teach you. In work situations, you are the one being paid. And unless you are in a graduate school, there are no more letter grades. The *expectation* is that you will do your job, and you will do it well. And there may or may not be “external” recognition for a job “well done.” This transition from school to the work place may be challenging.

- Returning to live with your family may be a reasonable option, depending on circumstances – it should not be viewed as a “failure.” How long is a “reasonable” amount of time to be home? How do you re-negotiate rules and expectations when you find yourselves under the same roof with your family again?

For Parents:

- Our kids are exposed to more, sooner, and constantly (24/7), and they may “grow up” faster than we did, but that does not mean that they are necessarily more “mature.”
- Technology has its advantages and disadvantages. An *obvious advantage* is that it is easier, and less expensive, for college students to stay in touch (with us). A *less obvious disadvantage* is that because it is easier for college students to stay in touch (with us), it may be more difficult for them to learn to think and act independently.
- College graduates may follow professional and personal paths that differ from parents’ expectations, hopes and dreams.
- College graduates can feel both excitement and dread at leaving behind the world they knew and called home.
- College is not a place that is occupied before entering the “real world.” The “real world” is the place you are living in: socially, academically, and personally.
- Life continues to be a series of separations, both physical and emotional. Learning to navigate these separations is an ongoing and important life skill, for everyone.