

# THE ENRICHMENT PROJECT

Badge Program

larajla.com



## Advice for the Future

*Sound advice at one time was to go to school, get a good education, find and work for the same company until retirement. That was the industrial revolution way. As we move out of it and into the connection revolution, the advice we need to give our kids has changed.*

## ADVICE FOR THE FUTURE

### Steps

#### 1. College.

Coming out of college with a degree in hand sounds like a good situation. Yet, the amount of debt is steadily increasing to get that degree. Many of these graduates can't get jobs in their fields and end up with a low paying job just to pay off their debt. Ask yourself if college is always a viable option.

College should remain a choice if the career requires a degree – medical, legal and teaching are some of the fields where you need a degree if you want to pursue a career. Create a list of careers that require a degree to get started.

#### 2. Opt-out of college.

In the step above, you should have a list of careers that require a degree to get started. If the career you're looking into doesn't require a degree, how can you be sure if going to college is the right choice? Here are some questions to ponder.

- Will college prepare you for the real world?
- Will there be a job opportunity upon graduation?  
(Only 67% of 2012 and 2013 graduates got jobs in their chosen fields.)
- Will you be ready for a job? Will you have all the necessary knowledge AND skill?
- Can you afford to pay back student loans?  
(These cannot be expunged by bankruptcy.)
- Will your degree be obsolete before you graduate?
- Are you willing to become a "corporate clone"?
- Is the time you spend studying worth spending four to six years of your life for a bachelor's degree?

#### 3. Career testing.

If you're still not sure about college and / or career choices, participate in career testing. This will help you determine where your strengths and drive are. While you're in high school, you are doing the classes and activities offered instead of looking for opportunities to expand yourself. Youth groups such as Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts give you opportunities beyond the public education system, but you will still be limited by the ideas and expectations of the adults around you. Check to find if you have career testing available for you.

#### 4. Credit without the time.

Many colleges allow you to test out of classes if you have the knowledge and skills. You will be required to show your abilities, however. This might be via a portfolio, test or other way to measure your competency. Check out local colleges and see if they offer this.

*NOTE: When I started in college, I tested out of two semesters of Spanish. I paid for the classes as if I had taken them, but I did not invest the time or money for books to get the credit.*



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### 5. Track your education.

Be sure to track all of your educational endeavors. If you are actively looking for supplemental opportunities, you will not be able to remember them all. The information you want to track includes:

- Date – ending date if you take it over a period of time
- Type – craft, education, Girl Scouts, etc.
- Course / workshop name – may include the presenter’s name
- Time – duration of class
- Location – where you took it
- Basic notes – things you want to remember such as if you received certification

In addition, I also track on mine if I taught the course. Start your own tracking system for your supplemental education.

## ALTERNATIVES

### 6. Open education — educate yourself.

You can get open source classes and lectures for free. YouTube videos can show you how to do most anything. Podcasts focus on a single subject. If you have a drive to learn something new, learning online instead of spending the four years in college will get you further than sitting in a class and regurgitating facts. Take a topic you are interested in and see what you can learn online for free.

### 7. Trade or vocation schools.

If you’re interested in being an electrician, plumber or even brick layer, a trade school is a good choice. These career choices allow you to learn the skills needed. Some cost money while some require you to earn less as you learn on the job. Check out what trade schools and / or local unions you have that will train you.

### 8. Build a business.

You will learn more failing at a business than getting a college degree. Everyone doesn’t have the entrepreneur temperament. Only about 20% of Americans own their own businesses. Two-thirds of US millionaires are entrepreneurs. If you want to go for the money, this is the best way to do it. Examine entrepreneurship and try starting a small business.

### 9. Build a brand.

You can create your own personal brand with a hobby or passion. You can also build a brand for a product or service you provide. Even if you don’t build a business, branding yourself will help others recognize you as an expert. Check out how others have built brands.

### 10. Find a mentor.

With your mind on a hobby, practice or interest, find a mentor . . . someone who is also interested in the same thing but knows more than you. This might be a teacher, coach, doctor, family friend or any other person who has knowledge and skills you would like to acquire. Do not expect them to drop everything to train you. This is a relationship like any other. What can you give them in return for them helping you?

*NOTE: When working at a local print company, I frequently worked with a local graphic artist on his personal projects. As he realized I was taking the things he taught me and applied them on later jobs, he was happy to teach me more because in the end, it saved him time not having to stand over my shoulder and dictate every little thing. Today, it is because of him that I am a graphic designer as well.*



#### 11. **Kickstart a creative project.**

You can find out if your idea or project is possible by getting it funded by others. By putting it up on Kickstarter, IndieGoGo or another fund raising site, you can measure the interest in your project. If it can generate enough attention to get money before you do it, there is a greater possibility that it will succeed. Follow a couple campaigns and see how this is done.

#### 12. **Create your art.**

Build traction by creating your art and building an audience. You don't need to make a million dollars off your first album. If you can live on \$20,000 a year, determine the sales needed to hit that goal and go for it. By creating your art, you are also helping to build your brand. If you are interested in artistic pursuits, find at least two people doing similar things to what you would like to do. See what social media sites they use and how they spread their art with their audience.

#### 13. **Online portfolio.**

Creating an online portfolio highlights your abilities. You can showcase your knowledge and skills. In addition, doing the work to create an online portfolio will help you gain computer and design skills through trial and error. Look into creating your own online portfolio.

#### 14. **Skills.**

About 75% of employers look for skills more than a degree. A skill means you can \*do\* something. Below are a few skills employers look for. Determine which ones you have and how you can show that you have them.

- Business skills – visionary, honest, recognize opportunity
- Communication – written and verbal
- IT skills – computer literacy
- Leadership – confidence, problem-solving
- Negotiation – insistence and compromise

#### 15. **Network.**

It's who you know. This might be your mentor or your peer community. Most people find jobs through their network. Likeability is the number one reason people get hired. Work to cultivate your positive, helpful and friendly persona. Look at your current social media ventures and start to network within them.

#### 16. **Volunteer / service.**

Many graduates volunteer to gain experience that they didn't get in college. Start volunteering now. There are websites that provide you information on needed volunteers. Be sure to volunteer for the skills you have, want to improve or need to get. Look at how to match volunteer opportunities with your needs.

*NOTE: Like education, you need to track your volunteer / service efforts. This will be extremely helpful if you are looking for scholarships while applying to colleges. Include the date, activity (what you did), organization, where you did the service and hours. If applicable, get a signed letter or note from the person in charge or organization as additional proof.*

### PITFALLS

#### 17. **Goals / drive.**

You should have goals that you are trying to achieve on a daily basis. Saying you're going to write the great American novel instead of going to college and then playing video games every day undermines your goals. If you do not have the drive or well-structured goals, you may find yourself failing to move forward with your career. Look at your goals and see how you can make them smaller and more achievable.



### 18. **Practice.**

Many people say that it takes 10,000 hours to become an expert at anything. In as little as 20 hours, you can master the basics. The difference between a beginner and expert is a lot of practice. Be sure that you practice multiple times a week . . . perhaps even every day.

### 19. **Social media.**

Yes, connecting with people online is a fantastic way to build a peer community, support your personal branding and more. Just like anything else you do, doing it the wrong way can jeopardize your goals. Before posting anything, I always wait 24 hours. This gives me time to clear any negative emotions. I also get a new look at what I'm about to post and often will see grammatical errors or awkward turns of phrase. Always ask yourself . . . is this how I want to be perceived?

### 20. **Support.**

Some days, it's hard to push forward. Support systems are vital during those times when you're asking yourself "why" or allowing that voice in your head to convince you that you're "just not good enough." A peer community, mastermind group or even supportive family will help you get through the tough times we all suffer through. Find a group or individuals who you can connect with to help support you in your educational and career efforts.

## Sites to Explore

[www.huffingtonpost.com/michaelprice/7-reasons-why-you-shouldn\\_1\\_b\\_5501111.html?view=screen](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michaelprice/7-reasons-why-you-shouldn_1_b_5501111.html?view=screen)

[www.huffingtonpost.com/blake-boles/12-ways-to-educate-yourse\\_b\\_1657521.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/blake-boles/12-ways-to-educate-yourse_b_1657521.html)

[www.foxnews.com/opinion/2012/02/12/five-things-your-high-school-student-should-know-about-careers](http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2012/02/12/five-things-your-high-school-student-should-know-about-careers)

[www.openeducation.net](http://www.openeducation.net)

[www.oeconsortium.org/courses](http://www.oeconsortium.org/courses)

[www.skilledup.com](http://www.skilledup.com)

[www.careerealism.com/skills-employers-want](http://www.careerealism.com/skills-employers-want)

[www.glassdoor.com/blog/7-10-employees-skills-training-degrees-glassdoor-employment-confidence-survey-q2-2014](http://www.glassdoor.com/blog/7-10-employees-skills-training-degrees-glassdoor-employment-confidence-survey-q2-2014)

[www.thefiscaltimes.com/Articles/2013/09/29/How-Young-Millionaires-are-Different-Their-Parents](http://www.thefiscaltimes.com/Articles/2013/09/29/How-Young-Millionaires-are-Different-Their-Parents)

[www.nerdwallet.com/blog/finance/nerdwallet-finance/8-habits-selfmade-millionaires](http://www.nerdwallet.com/blog/finance/nerdwallet-finance/8-habits-selfmade-millionaires)

[www.educationrevolution.org/blog/how-the-10000-hour-rule-benefits-us](http://www.educationrevolution.org/blog/how-the-10000-hour-rule-benefits-us)

[www.sethgodin.com/sg/docs/stopstealingdreamsscreen.pdf](http://www.sethgodin.com/sg/docs/stopstealingdreamsscreen.pdf)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MgBikgcWnY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MgBikgcWnY)

***Check out [Iarajla's Enrichment Project](#) to start your own adventure.***