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The choices you make today will determine where you are tomorrow.

1. Create your Individual Career/College Plan (ICCP).

Before you go on a trip, you need to know where you are going and how you will get there. You need to know how you will pay for it and what your end result will be with the budget you have in mind. It is necessary to get the big picture, plan it, prepare and be proactive about what you want.



Some things to consider when creating your ICCP:

a) Think about ***your long term and short term goals***. For example, a short term goal could be simply to finish your senior year making A's. Your long term goal might be to graduate from college with a Marketing degree. You need to think strategically about what you really want to do with your future. Most importantly, you need to think specifically. You might want to work with a coach to help you visualize what life might look like for your future.

b) Once you have the big picture and have a vision of the life you would like to create you will have to make ***conscious decisions and commitments***. Write down

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what you are willing to focus on to make your dream a reality.

c) Consider your **budget**. What will it cost to create this success? Where will you get the funding? Do not assume that mom or dad will foot the bill. High school and college activities can be very costly. In high school, you have senior pictures, class ring, cap and gown fees, college application fees, senior trip, cell phone, insurance, car payment, etc.

d) **Gather support and accountability**. Sometimes life throws challenges and curve balls at us. For example, there is a teacher who really ticks you off, your guidance counselor does not help you change out of that class you hate so much, your parents do not buy you the car you anticipated, you just experienced the sudden loss of a loved one, you lose your scholarship, etc. Any unexpected turn in life can cause distraction and detours. Having an accountability partner will help you stay focused.



e) **Consider new affirmations or attitudes** that you will fall back on when things are tough. If your support or accountability partner is not available, you will have to find it in yourself to keep going and surviving the “unfair” moments of life. You will need to pull out the attitude adjustment and the affirmations that will help you get a new perspective to keep moving forward.

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2. **Research.** Once you know your direction, whether it is to work after school or to continue on for more education, you need to research the requirements for your next stage. Planning appropriately may be your ticket to an awesome future!

Some things to consider when researching:

- a) Do you need to maintain a certain GPA?
- b) Are there pre-requisites to certain admission requirements?
- c) Do you need to have experience in a certain area before you move into that position?
- d) Are there aptitude tests you will need to pass?
- e) Do you need to complete any volunteer hours?
- f) How much will it cost you to live after high school/college? Where will you go? How long can you stay there without wearing out your welcome and taking advantage of someone? Take time to look into living expenses: rent, food, car, insurance, lights, water, phone, cable, trash, maintenance, clothes, etc.



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NOTE: Think long and hard about your options...remember these decisions will affect the types of struggles you will face in the future. Be wise. Consult a mentor or coach. Be open-minded to the thoughts of those who have gone before you.

3. **Review** your progress. Plan to sit down with a coach or guidance counselor at least 1-2 times per school year to help you stay on track. Assessing your path and how you are doing on that path is super important. This helps you keep focused on a clear direction for your future. Students in high school and college change their mind A LOT, and that is okay as long as you keep making adjustments along the way to keep you focused and going in the direction of your dreams.



Some things to review with a coach or guidance counselor:

- a) What GPA do you need to graduate, and what is your current GPA?

- b) What classes do you need to take (or retake) to boost your GPA?

- c) What classes do you need to complete for graduation?

- d) Are you signed up for the appropriate classes to fulfill

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this requirement? NOTE: If you are on a technical track or a college- bound track, are the classes you are taking going to fulfill the prerequisites for your next position?

e) How am I doing emotionally and mentally? Is my attitude in check? Am I taking responsibility for my direction? Am I taking ownership for my future?

4. **Collect Information.** As students, sometimes you are too busy and involved in life to stop and remember to save important data and papers. If you receive ANY recognitions, honors, or awards of any type you must save them. It is recommended that you start keeping a list of those important moments so that you can use them later for applications and letters for employers or college admissions.



5. **Letters of recommendation.** As you near your junior and senior year of high school, as well as throughout college, you want to begin thinking of who would write a great letter of recommendation for you. Both employers and colleges will ask for references and letters of recommendations. When you ask a teacher for a letter of recommendation, attach a copy of your list of accomplishments, awards, grades and school activities. This will help the educator perfect the letter while including some of your greatest

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moments. Be sure to plan ahead and give the instructor plenty of time to complete the letter of recommendation.

- 6. Stay organized.** While you are compiling information keep it somewhere safe and organized. Students are sometimes so distracted that it is very easy to misplace important papers. Those papers will serve as reminders when you are under the pressure of creating a glowing resume.

NOTE: It is also very important to keep organized with your notebooks, assignments, and general school work. This will help you practice for being organized in your career or college life. Senior year can be very busy, and by this time you are either so busy with school activities, a part-time job or friends, that all the paperwork may become overwhelming to manage. However, if you practice being organized and efficient early on, this will be second nature to you.

- 7. Fundraise or budget appropriately.** Start a savings account. Before you know it, life will be happening quickly. It is SO important that you take time to learn how to appreciate money, save money, balance your budget and use money wisely. Take time during your education years to get grounded in this concept. It seems unrelated to graduation; however, it is vital to your success. Life is full of choices and many times you will be presented with things to do, trips to plan, events to attend, cars to buy, etc. If you want to play with your



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friends later, you **MUST** plan to be responsible in your budgeting now.

8. **Tests.** What tests do you need to take to get into college? Most colleges accept the ACT or SAT or their own a college level placement test. If you are aiming for law school or your master's degree, you may need to take the GRE or the LSAT. The military requires the ASVAB. Know what you need and plan and prepare for the test. Talk to your counselors and find out what tests you need to pass for graduation and what tests you need for admission to college/military.

If you will go straight from high school to the career world, what skills and tests do you need to have on your resume to help you gain the best possible position in the work world? Sometimes you may need to take a typing test, a color test, a spelling test, or a written test just to enter an entry-level type position. Be smart. Be prepared. Be proactive.

9. **College Applications / Job Applications.** There is nothing more frustrating for you or your parents than to get out of school with no direction and no initiative. Do your homework and know where you are going and take action. Follow through and apply for college and/or a job. It may feel like a daunting task and seem overwhelming. If you do not know where to start, ask for help. Seek the support of a coach, a mentor or friend. It is not as overwhelming when you have a friend to help you through it.



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10. **Take a speech class.** You must have confidence in life. A communication class will teach you how to write, speak and prepare for public situations with ease and confidence. There WILL come a time in your college or work world where you will be required to interview, introduce yourself or give a last-minute talk about some minor, or perhaps major, topic. A speech class will give you some of the best skills and practical advice you will EVER receive for your future. It may feel scary, but JUST DO IT! You will not regret it!

If you take the time to work through each of these areas, you will be **guaranteed success!** Remember to stay open-minded, seek the support of a coach or friend and be sure to stay focused on your goals.

What's next? If you are feeling overwhelmed in the process, alone or simply need a cheerleader, then perhaps a coach might be a great fit for your journey. Visit www.GraduationCoach.com/coaching for more information on hiring a coach. You may call 561-623-9167 for a free introductory session today! Spaces are limited for our upcoming program for the new school year. **Act Now!**

