



University of Pittsburgh

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Dos and donts

I have so many things to say about the dos and donts of preparing for the real world post college life that it's hard to find somewhere to begin.

First and foremost, I wish that I had someone that gave me the opportunity to hear similar things that I have to say now. Take advantage of EVERY resource possible. Go to office hours and tutors because if you have questions, chances are so many other people do as well. Join clubs and make connections with your professors and peers (you'll need letters of recommendation for everything). Join research groups and volunteer your time when you can. This will help build your resumé and make you stand out to employers. Go to career fairs. I never went to a career fair and bombed my first interview like a stumbling, babbling fool and forgot everything I've ever done. Use that to your advantage as at least a practice and networking opportunity.

Second, don't be afraid to fail. It is okay to fail tests and exams and even classes. The most important part is understanding why you failed and taking the next steps to correct it. If there are parts of exams that you failed hard, ask your professor for clarification. When finals come around you'll be glad you did. Shoot for the stars, but remember it's okay to not get into the grad school you want or anywhere for that matter. There are so many other opportunities out there that could be better suited for you. Explore them all. LinkedIn, Indeed, and ZipRecruiter are great resources if you're looking to go into industry. Make your searches broad and apply to everything that sounds interesting even if you think you're under-qualified.

The last and what I think is the most important is to not take it too seriously. You have to work hard and put in the effort but not at the expense of your own health. Find something you enjoy. Take a day off to go out with friends. Go to football games and tailgates. School work and the scary stuff will be there still when you get back. As cliché as it is, life moves quickly so don't get caught up in the minuscule details that won't matter 3 years down the line. You're in the best years of your life and great things can surely follow.

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