



DOES COLLEGE EQUAL SUCCESS?

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Maybe the dumbest thing you can do is to go to the place that's supposed to make you smart. That would be...college.

Now, perhaps I'm biased. I don't have a college degree—although I employ a lot of people who do, and from some of the most prestigious universities in the country. I made a conscious choice. I had clear career ambitions and I didn't see how a college degree was going to get me there. In retrospect, I'm confident I made the right decision.

I'm the co-founder and co-CEO of a company called The Daily Wire. We publish news and commentary from a conservative point of view. We have well over 100 employees and an audience which numbers in the millions every single day.

Now, I don't have a problem if *you* go to college. It's a free country. Do what you want. But the idea that somehow college is the great pathway to success and fulfillment—that I don't buy. The left takes a different view. They are obsessed with higher education. To them, it's a human right. And they want it to be free—which just means paid for by people like me—for anyone who's eighteen and can breathe.

That makes perfect sense from their point of view. One, the idea is a big winner among young people, a critical voting bloc. Who doesn't want something for nothing—especially something that costs more than a Ferrari?

And two, colleges exist to do one thing: create conformity of thought. And since college professors and administrators overwhelmingly lean left, it's a pretty good bet most of their students will as well.

But I'm being unfair, you say. After all, we live in a knowledge-based world. And America isn't making the grade. Don't you know we rank 13th in the world in reading, 18th in science literacy, and a pitiful 37th in math? To which I say, "so what?"

It wasn't Singapore that split the atom, or Estonia that mapped the human genome. America is #1 in Nobel Prizes awarded, #1 in scientific citations issued, #1 in popular entertainment, and #1 in technological advancement.

In short, America creates almost everything. Even what other countries manufacture was probably invented by an American. Which is why we're also the #1 economy in the world—by far.

And who made this possible? Well, here are the names of just a few of the individuals who pretty much invented the modern world: Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, Steve Jobs, Michael Dell, and Larry Ellison.

None of them has a college degree.

Many of the CEOs who run the companies they created do have college degrees. But the founders do not. What they do have are things colleges can't teach you: curiosity, ambition, and a willingness to fail. Those qualities almost guarantee success. A college diploma doesn't.

Want to build an airplane? Engineers educated in aerodynamics are handy to have on your team. Want to *invent* the airplane? Well, you're better off finding a couple of restless bicycle repairmen. That's what the Wright brothers were.

It's not that colleges aren't teaching; it's that too often they're teaching the wrong things. Or they're teaching right things the wrong way.

Tech-entrepreneur David Gelernter says, "The thing I don't look for in a developer is a degree in computer science..." Quite a statement from a man who teaches computer science at Yale. Tech billionaire and co-founder of PayPal, Peter Thiel, actually pays people *not* to go college. Thiel and Gelernter understand that colleges are factories, and like all factories, they want to produce a consistent product. That means producing people who all think alike.

But innovation and entrepreneurship require people who think differently. Innovators innovate. Colleges teach those innovations after the fact. If professors could have taught engineers how to build the airplane in 1903, professors would have built the airplane before 1903. They would have invented the personal computer, Microsoft, and social media, too.

And it's not only big tech where this applies; 56% of all small business owners in the United States don't have a four-year degree. That's right, the majority of small business owners—who employ more than half of American workers—either never went to, or never finished, college.

What all of this says to me is that, while college is useful for some people, it's by no means necessary for all. And it's hardly essential for economic success—not for the individual, and not for the nation. No one is being deprived of the opportunity to succeed simply because they can't afford a university's steep price tag.

In fact, if you go to college, there's a good chance you'll be taught how not to succeed. If I were you, I'd think long and hard before paying for that.

I'm Jeremy Boreing for Prager University.