



# 3 Steps to Make Your College Search Easy

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## 1. Forget what you've been told.

It is easy to get stressed out about choosing a college. Your high school counselor, your teachers, your parents, and your peers are all probably telling you this is a crucial decision for your future life. If you don't choose the right major, a prestigious college, and a competitive program you could harm your ability to get a good paying job, and you might never be able to achieve your dreams in life.

Not really true! Your success in life depends much more on your abilities, personality, experience, and work ethic than they do on the piece of paper you get after graduation. It is important to get a college degree because it tells prospective employers that you have what it takes to successfully complete a program. But, in all reality, they are much more concerned to see that you got a degree than they are in the name of the school, or even the major.

Don't stress out! Most of the time the extra expense, effort, and heartache put into getting into a "prestigious" university is wasted. Focus on being a good student and finishing what you start. That is an investment that will pay off for the rest of your life.

## 2. Find where you fit.

Many college freshmen, after having dedicated long hours, incredible effort, and considerable expense to begin their studies, find out that they don't really fit in well at the college or university they enrolled in. Every college invests great amounts of money in preparing their recruiting literature to make the prospective student think their campus is the only logical choice. The fact is, every student is different, and what works for some doesn't work for others.

Talk to current students at the colleges and universities you are considering. Ask questions and listen to their experiences. Make a visit to the campus and meet the people who live, study, and work there.

Rather than depending on college rankings, scores, reputations, etc. look to find a "family" where you fit.

## 3. Figure out how to pay for it.

Most counselors will tell you not to worry too much about finances. There are many scholarships available, and the federal government makes student loans easily accessible.

This approach works if you are willing to go into debt to get your college education, and the truth is, that is the NORMAL way most people get through college. Ask around, though, and you may find that many people regret getting into debt during college. Now that they are working to pay back those loans they often question whether the investment was wise.

You can find affordable alternatives that will produce results just as solid as those of the expensive schools. Do a Google search for "affordable colleges" and you might be surprised at how many choices there are. Don't overlook these alternatives.