

Joan's strength in her writing has consistently been her rich imagery. However, in this piece she really branches out into a cynical humor which surprised me. The piece turned out to be a very funny description of college life and the dreams to which some students boldly aspire.

~Erin Mueller, Tutor

### **It Doesn't Get Any Easier**

By Joan Theisen

What kind of person makes a conscious decision each day to rise at 8:00 a.m. and not see the confines of their bedroom until at least 12 a.m., maybe even 1 a.m. That person would be a college student who not only takes multiple full-time classes, but who works full time as well. What, might you ask, is the reasoning behind that decision? Well the logic is easy; it's the planning that could take some work. A college student makes this conscious decision so that they may one day have a well-paying, and by well-paying the college student is thinking in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, job; that they will be able to take off of work whenever they feel like it and/or being done by 5 p.m. every day. That is the ideal behind the 16-17 hour day: to make things better.

But that easy day may never come. Many college majors do not lead to jobs with wages of hundreds of thousands of dollars, at least not at the bachelor degree level. If the college student makes it out of their four years without debt, then there are the inevitable charges of life that come after ending a college career: the ending of parental health insurance, car insurance, and for some ending of that parental financial safety net.

Then, of course, there is the task of finding the almighty dollar; one must find employment first. This task is not always as easy as it seems. There are the resumes, background checks, and, above all, the interviews. No longer able to wear jeans and t-shirts, one must be presentable, and look as if they want to work, not to go to a "kegger" on a Friday night. If these tasks are completed, a job is acquired. What comes about next is the obstacle of, well, actually working. For the college student who has held a constant full-time job through out their university years, this task may be a little on the easier side, depending on their nature of work. For those who had the luxury of getting their credits paid for by an outside source, it may be a little more difficult.

For most, in addition to a new job, there are new relationships, possibly marriages, for some even children. Then comes the real time crunchers. Instead of class and work, there are new stressors to worry about including, but not limited to, housework; childcare, which could be a full time job in itself, homework of a new kind, among other multiple tasks. That 9-5 day isn't all it's cracked up to be, and may even be a 9-7 day on most nights; the freedom you once craved become nights of loneliness if you do not have the aforementioned significant other, children, or marriage. The best thing that can happen to you is a new option in frozen meals.

Is there a lesson behind the logic, the planning? Is there a real reason for the 17 hour day? The logic does not get any easier. To the college student the logic is to live for the moment, to work for, if never to obtain the dream job, or dream life, which can not be guaranteed or denied. Then

the truth hits: where are the Ferraris and Louis Vuitton luggage you longed for? Or the first class trip to Paris you were supposed to take every year? They become memories from the past. For many, whether they understand it or not, life is short. Whether it is lived in 17-or 8-hour-days. Whether you remember why you get up in the morning or not.

If there is a lesson at all, here are a few examples to remember it by: classes, added up for four years can equal \$32,000 or more depending on the school. Books can add up to \$5000.00 (or more) over four years. Studying abroad, to get the full college experience can range from \$8,000-\$13,000 depending on where you go. Coffee, every morning to make it through the day, and Mountain Dew to make it through the night can be at least \$400.00 a year. However, living each day to its fullest, learning life's greatest lessons is, of course, priceless.

And if you can't remember the lesson, because you are reading this after you return home at 12 and have three tests to study for before going to sleep, remember there's always tomorrow.

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