

10 Lessons College Won't Teach You -- But Entrepreneurship Will

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College is a step toward adulthood for many, but the transition from bachelor's degree to entrepreneur can feel a bit jarring. Keeping your chin up, a stiff upper-lip and other empty clichés everyone says to you can't really prepare you for one really important truth: There isn't a curriculum for adulthood. Knowing this, here are a few changes to expect when you take your first steps away from college and into starting your own business.

1. Attendance is *always* mandatory. In college, you may have ditched class or ducked out early and still managed to pass. This isn't going to fly in the startup world. Rain or shine, young treps need to show up and do so in a punctual fashion. Not only will it keep you in the loop of the day-to-day activities but will also set a good example for employees.

2. Scheduling isn't set in stone. Your Friday morning biology lab is finally over. What a relief. While you may be thanking your lucky stars you don't have to roll out of bed after a crazy night to go and dissect a frog, don't get too excited. Adult life and entrepreneurship means you're beholden to a schedule of necessity rather than attendance sheets. As a young trep, you are the harbinger of your own success, meaning you sometimes will need to ask yourself to come in on a Saturday.

3. Free time isn't free. Just as there is no such thing as a free lunch, there is no such thing as "free time" in the world of startups. During college you may have had huge breaks between class or long holidays but startup reality is quite different. While most of your

friends are working at finding a nine-to-five job and attending happy hour, you are slaving away at your business plan or putting out fires at your company. And that's just the reality of being an entrepreneur - - sacrificing free time in exchange for freedom.

4. Multitasking is important, but focus is the key. At college, you are forced to balance four to six completely different topics each semester. And once you are a full-time entrepreneur, you will also be tackling a multitude of issues and wearing many hats. But instead of divvying up your time equally, you will need to prioritize. Stay focused on one overarching goal.

5. Accounting 101 isn't going to cut it. While the information you gained from your college accounting class may be pertinent to running a business, if you can't read a profit-and-loss statement or analyze a balance sheet you may be in trouble. But it isn't the whole story. Chances are you're venturing out into the business world without an understanding of how money and taxes work. Buy a book, take a class or do some online research to figure out how to maximize your profits, invest your income and keep revenues rolling in.

6. Friends aren't just drinking buddies anymore. The heydays of getting rowdy with friends at penny beer nights may be behind you, but the relationships aren't. As an entrepreneur, you're going to have rough patches. Look back at all of your connections from college. Which of them had your back when you weren't out at the bar? Those are the people you want to keep on your radar and reach out to when you need support or advice.

7. Politics and business relationships don't mix. Attending protests, rallying behind controversial people and speaking your mind about political matters you're passionate about may have suited you in college. After graduation, your views may have stayed the same but you have to be a little more cautious about your actions. The business world is full of different perspectives, and it's best to keep yours viewpoints neutral when talking to colleagues, employees and customers.

8. You are on your own. The days of holding your hand through class problems are over. While college provided you a syllabus, there is no roadmap to success after graduation. You have to pave your own way. Your decision to become an entrepreneur already means that you're a searcher, so take chances where others wouldn't.

9. No one cares about grades. Getting an A+ in history may have allotted you bragging rights but in the real world, the closest thing you'll see to a grading rubric is the criteria sheet used by hiring managers to gauge employees. And if you are like a lot of entrepreneurs, you will avoid this approach. Running a startup has less to do with scoring an A+ on your business plan and more to do with successful execution.

10. It's OK to pivot. College is often perceived as a place to discover what you really want to do with your life and once you're on a track, it can be difficult to change course. In reality, many graduates end up doing something completely different than what they majored in. Realize that the real world is a place where the only thing constant is change -- and embrace it.