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Nobody Knows What They're Doing... and That's OK

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Recommended Citation

Engbers, Jeremy, "Nobody Knows What They're Doing... and That's OK" (2016). *Staff Work*. Paper 43.

http://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/staff_work/43

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Nobody Knows What They're Doing... and That's OK

Abstract

"Going into college undecided is not the worst thing in the world. In fact, I think it's really exciting. You have endless possibilities in front of you."

Posting about vocational uncertainty from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/nobody-knows-what-theyre-doing-and-thats-ok/>

Keywords

In All Things, college, students, vocation, occupations

Disciplines

Christianity

Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

Nobody Knows What They're Doing....and That's OK

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August 10,
2016

Jeremy Engbers

So you're moving on to college. Congratulations! You've done your time in high school, graduated, and are now ready to move on to bigger and better things. The celebration of graduating is now a faint sound in the distance. You've dusted the confetti off your clothes and written all of your thank you letters. Your parents have taken you shopping for school supplies and posters for your dorm room. You are almost ready to take on a new challenge in just a few short weeks. And yet, there is that ringing in the back of your head. The ringing that shows up every single time one of your grandparents or aunts or uncles asks you what you want to study in college. You've heard that question hundreds of times for the past two years...

...and you just don't know.

Working in the Admissions Office of a Christian college brings me into contact with hundreds of high school students throughout the course of the year. I spend weeks on the road going to college fairs, high schools, and home visits. All of these serve as a platform for me to grill students on where they want to go, what they're looking for in a school, and "what they want to be when they grow up." Lots of students have answers to all of my questions; they've had it lined up for years. Then there are the students who seem embarrassed that they don't have an answer for me, sheepishly answering that they aren't sure yet. Why is it this way?

It's like we've created this strange, unwritten deadline that if we don't have our lives figured out by the time we're 18 years old then we're somehow a lesser person than everyone else. I look back at myself at the age of 18 and wonder how I even tied my shoes, let alone tried to decide a career path. The truth is that nobody actually knows what they're doing. Some might stick with the major that they came in with, but they are the exception. A very large percentage of college students will change their majors at least once. Some even two or three times. I switched my major twice during college, jumping from Communications, to Education, and finally to Theology and Worship Arts. I thought I was set on doing radio broadcasting when I came to college, but I ended up in a much different place. Shows how much I knew...

For those of you planning to come into college undecided or are even unsure of the major you think you've decided on, keep reading. I've assembled four tips on what to do to try and narrow the search for your area of study. As someone who has recently finished college and wandered a lot through the desert of uncertainty, these are some of the things that helped me along the way.

1. **Become best friends with your advisor.** Your advisor's job is to help you. They have experience working with hundreds of students helping them figure out what classes to take and what major to pursue. Don't be that student that blows off their advisor because they think they're too cool or because they think they can figure it out by yourself. Working with your advisor is going to be one of the biggest steps to narrowing your major search.
2. **Take a variety of classes to open up your options.** If you are in between things that you would like to study in college, take classes in both! If you are going to a Liberal Arts college, you'll get to take a bunch of classes in all different areas of study. Something that you hear in those classes may spark something for you. The beautiful thing about college is that it's going to challenge you in ways that you haven't been challenged before. Being challenged is one of the best ways to figure out what you're passionate about.
3. **Know that a single major will not limit your career opportunities.** Don't worry about making the wrong decision on a major because you think that you're stuck with jobs only tied to that area of study. There are all kinds of people that are doing something different than they studied. I studied Theology. Now I work

Admissions at Dordt College, which is basically a sales job. Many people think that you're very, very limited with an English degree when in reality, you can do just about anything with an English degree. There are way more career options for each major than you think. Don't shy away from one that you think you'd like because you think it's limited.

4. **Keep your eyes and ears open.** When I was a senior in college, I chose to write my senior seminar paper on how God has been faithful in each step of my life. I wrote down specific conversations and situations that led me from Point A to Point B. Looking back, I can see how God was molding and guiding me with each person that He put in my life. The conversations that you're going to have in college are going to be deep. Whether it's with your parents, professors, or friends, God is going to use those little hints to lead you to fullness in Him. He is the giver of talents and passions. He will get you to where you need to be. You may take a complete 180 degree turn. Don't panic. You just need to keep your eyes and ears open and pray for wisdom and discernment in times of uncertainty.

Going into college undecided is not the worst thing in the world. In fact, I think it's really exciting. You have endless possibilities in front of you. If you only let God move you and trust that He will instill a passion within you, then you're going to do just fine. Take a deep breath, relax, because nobody actually knows what they're doing. And that's ok.