

Growing up, what college is for.

If you will be graduating in May, please raise your hand.

If you feel kind of unprepared for the real world, keep the hand up.

If you realize you squandered your time and money for the last four years goofing off instead of growing up, use that hand to smack your own forehead.

Four years ago, many students came to campus with the idea of partying being more prominent than the idea of working towards a degree. Now with only four months to go, these same students are pressed to hunker down and somehow pull a viable degree out of eight semesters of binge drinking and hangovers. For better or for worse, they will be leaving the classroom and entering the workforce.

Well, maybe not for better.

Somewhere in the past decade or so college stopped being the gateway into adulthood that it used to be. Students get into the habit of showing up late, leaving early, putting little effort into homework and projects and then cramming in the last weeks and arguing with their professors for better grades. None of these practices translate well into the business the marketability of your major. If you planned on being an investment banker for AIG, you might want to rethink things. This doesn't mean you have to change majors per say but figure out more than one career for your degree. Picking up a double major or a strong minor might give you more options.

Once you find a good star on which to orient your ship, work. Come to class early and bring your laptop to further your learning abilities, not to check Facebook. Checking social Web sites can get you fired in the real world, so breaking that habit is strongly recommended.

Also, figure out how to work for someone, in this case the professor. Don't argue about assignments and grading because that doesn't fly well outside the classroom. Read the syllabus and stick to it. Employers value someone with personal flare almost as much as they value a person they can trust to follow instructions.

This doesn't mean you have to quash any unique qualities you have, just figure out how to meld them into profitable skills. It's part of growing up, which should be the reason for college enrollment in the first place.

For too many students, college is just an extension of high school. After the four years are up, they figure out that no one wants to pay high schoolers to be graphic designers, accountants, nurses, police officers or anything else.

By Danny Wenger, *Daily Egyptian*, January 13, 2009.