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Involve your parents in your college decision

Five reasons to make the college search a team effort with the people who changed your diapers

Veena Patwardhan
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step BY step >>

1|2|3|4|5|6|7|8|9|10|11|12|13|14|15|16|17|18|19|20|21|22|

It's here at last, that time of your life when you embark on the search for the best college for you.

"No problem," you say. "I've discussed this loads of times with my pals." You may have a great group of friends, but you're forgetting two people whose guidance could be vital for making the right choice: your parents.

You can't make a major decision that could affect the rest of your life alone. It's got to be a team effort with your parents. Here are some reasons why.

1. Two or three heads are better than one

There are thousands of colleges and universities to choose from. Narrowing down this huge list to a handful of colleges could be an intimidating task.

Kimberley Townsend, who graduated from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Md., last year, says, "High school seniors are inexperienced in the decision-making arena. The application process made me so nervous, I procrastinated on every step of the way." That's where parents can come in handy.

Colin Alphonso, a senior at Collin County Community College in Allen, Texas, says, "Your parents' guidance is necessary to sift through all the concerns you have, and to compare the pros and cons of various colleges."

According to Jeremy Boyce, an admissions counselor at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, parents can "open up the student's eyes to other opportunities and the institutions that best support their child's goals."

2. Including them will make the process smoother

It's during the college application process that most parents stop looking at their teens as kids. So why not return the favor and stop viewing them as the authorities controlling your life?

The right attitude could shut out stressful arguments and open doors to meaningful discussions with your parents. Christopher Tremblay, director of admissions at Gannon University in Erie, Penn., says, "Both parties should express honesty about each school, whereas teens should respect their parents' opinions, especially since they offer wisdom and years of experience."

So discuss your priorities, desires and expectations with your parents and try to understand why they feel strongly about theirs.

Speaking about her own experience, Shira Hussain, senior admissions counselor at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, Minn., says, "My mother initially wanted me to attend another university. But she was impressed with all the work I had done to prepare her and myself for my college choice, and hence became confident about my decision."

3. No one knows and understands you better

Who understands your natural abilities and your basic nature better than anyone else? Yup, your parents. Remember, college is not only a destination for higher education, it's also a place where you should be able to develop your personality. It's where your talents should be drawn out and appreciated. Therefore, your parents



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you come clean with each other, it'll be a smooth road ahead all the way to the college of your choice.

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