

# Don't Follow Your Dreams: How to Be Miserable, Waste Time, and Live an Unsatisfying Life

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Magazines, websites, and college classes are full of advice about how to ace college and get your dream job, but you're probably sick of hearing it. Well, we have asked experts and students alike to give their best advice for unhappiness and failure. Here are the most important things they told us:

**1** Choose the major your friends and family think you should do, not what you love. They aren't the ones paying your student loans, studying for your tests, or doing your job for forty years, but they are the ones who are constantly telling you what they think of your career path. Matthew Chacko, an Andrews senior, understands better than most. Though he never felt passionate about it, he majored in Biology Pre-Med for four years – and decided the last semester of his senior year to add an English Literature major and become a professor instead. “I was never fully convinced myself that it [biology] was something that I wanted to do,” he explains. “I think it was a little bit of coercion on the part of myself and my parents into doing something that I thought was my duty to do, to go into medicine.... They just really thought that this would be the best option for me because it's something they know; they're both physicians.” Chacko found himself lacking enthusiasm, constantly changing his goals, and looking for the least-demanding options possible. Now he's finally pursuing something that he loves – but it will be years before he receives a diploma.

**2** Prioritize money over passion or fulfillment. Leilani Langdon, the Counseling and Testing Center's Career Counselor, says that many students start out in particular majors because they want money and prestige. “I see a lot of students,” she recalls, “who come in having declared majors that are idealized or glamourized... whether that's law, medicine, business... they recognize somewhere along their journey that this is not something that is going to fulfill them or bring purpose to them.” Jon Frank, founder and CFO of

Admissionado, an admissions consulting firm, is blunt: “Pursuing a goal that you don't have passion for is the definition of “setting yourself up to fail.”

**3** Declare a major just to have one... According to Kristine Knutson, Director of the Student Success Center, at least 50% of freshmen change their major at Andrews University their first year of college, so there's really no hurt in just declaring a major with no interest of pursuing it. Do you like House and Gray's Anatomy? Try being biology pre-med. Not only will you own some very expensive textbooks, but you'll also get to join the other students who suffer from what Knutson calls “major-of-the-week syndrome.”

**4** ...Or, wait too long to declare a major. This will have a two-fold impact. First of all, you'll end up with a lot of classes from different disciplines that you don't need, and you'll be behind on the requirements for your major. Secondly, you won't have a department to call home, so it'll be harder to gain references, make friends, and form an identity. Knutson explains, “When [students] are undeclared they don't have that connection. They're not seeing teachers at departmental assemblies or vespers or social events, and so they can be very lonely and at risk of leaving before they declare.”

**5** Treat university like a \$130,000 keg party. Few people outside of Hollywood can party with such luxury and reckless abandon as you can if you decided to spend your college career drinking, slacking off, and pursuing temporary entertainment. Sure, the Andrews Code of Student Conduct requires “abstaining from the

use of alcohol, tobacco and other mind-altering drugs,” and Andrews tuition can cost \$35,000 a semester, but they do say “go big or go home,” right? Besides, future student loan bills will provide a welcome distraction from hangovers.

**6** If that's not your style, you can spend all of your time studying, instead of working, volunteering, joining clubs, and meeting new people. This will show that you have a singularly developed skill set and don't get distracted by interpersonal relationships or well-rounded interests. Not only will you blend in with thousands of other applicants in the same degree program, but you'll also be much less interesting in conversation! As Admissionado's Jon Frank explains, “A 4.0 is good, but [schools and employers] accept people and not just profiles, so you have to have a lot more to offer than a perfect GPA.”

**7** Settle for easy and boring opportunities instead of difficult and challenging ones. If you spend your time in college on autopilot and then take a job that you barely tolerate, you won't have to push yourself. Instead of risking failure or applying excess energy, just coast by. Your dissatisfaction will prevent people from having high expectations of your work, and help you avoid unwanted social interaction. Kendra Alley, an HR rep at innovative event-planning company Red Frog Events, says, “It is obvious when someone is unhappy because their work will suffer and they won't be engaged with their co-workers.”

**8** Stop thinking for yourself. Accept the information others give you without evaluating it thoroughly. **e**