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Most of going to college is all in your head! Part of it, of course, is the result of studying, learning, developing good study habits and doing your best academically. But a major part of it is “all in your head” a much different way.

**Attitude**
Think about it: You control your attitude with your mind. No one else can do this for you! Only you can shape and mold your attitude into one that will lead you to the better life college provides.

**Cultivate a Positive Attitude**
Just as a farmer cultivates his crops to ensure each field produces a maximum amount, so can you cultivate a positive attitude that will help you achieve your maximum potential.

A positive attitude is one that looks for the positive and believes the best is possible. It’s an “I can do this” posture. When you cultivate a positive attitude towards school and later college, you set the stage for life-long success.

**Dealing with Naysayers**
People who don’t understand your desire to achieve a college education may end up being negative influences – intentional or not.

When faced with peers (and even adults) who scoff at your goals, remember, your attitude begins in your head. If someone tells you your goals are silly you can decide not to accept that judgment. Your goals may be silly for someone else – but absolutely perfect for you.

Many of the major accomplishments this country has made were achieved by normal, everyday, average people who believed in their goal and were willing to dare to be different.

- Rosa Parks stood up by sitting down.
- Two bicycle mechanics, the Wright brothers, invented the airplane.
- John F. Kennedy challenged the nation to literally reach for the moon.
- Martin Luther King, Jr. changed the course of US History.
- President Barack & First Lady Michelle Obama both demonstrate immeasurable leadership, despite humble beginnings.

In each case, many people—even civil authorities—insisted that the pioneers were wrong, incapable of success, or downright crazy.

Independence and individuality are prized in our society. Knowing this, feel free to be a pioneer in your own educational endeavors. Don’t bend to the crowd if the crowd does not respect your goal of a college education.
Last night's homework was crazy, took 'til midnight.

Are you talking about that grammar exercise? I had trouble, too.

If I can't handle this, how am I ever going to handle high school English and English Lit?

It's just a matter of learning how to study. Besides, you've moved up from remedial reading to the regular class. You're doing good.

Yeah, and your being on grade level is huge.

But I really wanted to be in bed.
Hey Maria? What are you reading?

This list the counselor gave me. I'm trying to figure out what classes to take next year. I want to make sure I'm on track for college.

Do middle school classes really matter?

Yeah, the guidance counselor said it's real important to take the right courses—especially in math and English.

WOW, I should go talk to her, too. I'm all for making sure I'm ready for college when the time comes.
Despite how far off it seems, college is fast approaching! There are concrete things you can do beginning today that will help ensure your success a few years down the road.

**Do your best to maintain A’s and B’s** in all of your coursework. Doing this ensures you master the subjects.

**Do your homework** regularly and in the same place and time each day. This helps develop good study habits.

**Study effectively.** Do you study, but it doesn’t seem to help you do better in your classes? You probably need to work on study skills.
- Ask your teachers how best to prepare for their classes.
- Try to limit distractions while studying, like the phone, TV, texting and loud music.

**Seek extra help,** like tutoring, to improve your grades in all your classes.

**Make Math a Priority.** Math is a major element in many fields and demonstrates your ability to work with both concrete and abstract concepts.

**Read for pleasure.** Figure out what you are interested in and make it a point to read about it. Even comic books are good for improving reading. Reading for pleasure:
- will increase your vocabulary
- helps you read faster
- teaches you about the world
- helps you write better

**Read to write better.** In Middle School the most important thing you can do to improve writing is to master grammar and read as often as possible. Good writing skills are something you will use in virtually any job.
College Life

SO, CHRISTINA, HOW'S YOUR SECOND YEAR OF COLLEGE SO FAR?

IT'S GREAT. I'M STUDYING INTERIOR DESIGN NOW.

KIND OF! I HAVE 4 CLASSES SOME DAYS, AND 3 ART CLASSES ON THE OTHERS. AND IN BETWEEN I JUST HANG OUT IN THE DORM WITH MY ROOMMATE.

THAT'S SO COOL! YOU GET TO DRAW ALL DAY?

IS IT REALLY WEIRD LIVING WITH A STRANGER?

THAT'S BECAUSE THE ROOMS ARE SO SMALL!

NOT REALLY. THAT'S WHAT I LOVE ABOUT COLLEGE, YOU MEET ALL KINDS OF NEW PEOPLE, AND NOW MY ROOMMATE AND I ARE EXTREMELY CLOSE.
If you are not sure what career to pursue, you are not alone. In fact, most college freshmen aren’t positive of their career path. So don’t feel bad if you don’t know yours. After all, you’re just in Middle School.

Know what it takes.
If you know your career dream, it’s time to get serious about it. Investigate the path it takes to get there.

What sort of education is required? Do you need a two-year or four-year degree? Is it math-intensive?

Are there lots of science courses? What kind of classes should you take?

Know where to go.
• Be sure to talk to your counselor about your career goals.
• Visit www.RiseUpMS.com to find your career path. Click on “Career Movies.” Kick back and watch a video.
• While you’re on RiseUpMS.com, click on “Degree Finder.” Search for your dream career by college major. Don’t forget to save your search.
• Talk to your parents and tell them you want to go to college.

• Ask your counselor to make sure you are enrolling in the College Prep Curriculum.

• Get involved at school by joining a club or volunteering.

• Visit www.RiseUpMS.com to explore Mississippi colleges and universities.
GOSH, I'M GETTING A LITTLE NERVOUS ABOUT KEEPING UP WITH MRS. DUNCAN'S HOMEWORK. I'LL HAVE TO KNOCK OFF SOON TO STUDY.

BUT GRADES DON'T MATTER 'TIL YOU'RE IN HIGH SCHOOL.

WELL GRADES DO SHOW LEARNING... AND LEARNING REALLY DOES MATTER NOW.

AND I HEARD THAT YOU NEED TO TAKE ALGEBRA IN YOUR FRESHMAN YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL TO GET ALL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL MATH IN IN FOUR YEARS.
Don’t over estimate the cost of college. College may seem as if it costs a lot of money, but there are ways to make it affordable. Remember, it’s much less expensive if you decide to go to college in Mississippi.

And luckily, you can get help to pay for college. There is money available, so don’t put off college because you think you can’t afford it! But you must make a plan and you can start doing that now.

Here is a quick overview of the types of financial aid that may be available to help you pay for college:

• Scholarships and grants - money you are warded that doesn’t have to be paid back

• Loans - money you borrow that must be paid back after you graduate

• Work study – money you earn while working on campus

• Personal savings - money you and your family set aside for your college education

Financial aid comes from the federal government, the state government, and the college you attend. Private businesses, foundations and other organizations offer scholarships, too.

The bottom line is this: there is help available.

Some Good Websites to learn more about paying for college:
www.RiseUpMS.com
www.fafsa.gov

As a Middle School student, there are some things you can do now to ease the burden of paying for college later.

• Talk to your parents about a college savings plan. Or start saving on your own.
• Study hard and make good grades. Scholarships usually require a certain GPA.
• Take challenging courses in high school. Scholarships and some grants go to students who’ve taken tougher classes.
Choosing a College

So what are you up to tomorrow? Wanna catch a movie?

That would be awesome. I'm actually going to a college spirit day with my mom, though.

Man, so how are you gonna decide?

The one that gives the most scholarships!

Ooh! So close!

Really? What for?

To check colleges out early. So I know more about what kind of college I like and stuff.

Whichever has the right programs, best atmosphere, coolest campus. Whichever one feels right.

Hah! Definitely.
Hey, Jonathan!
You ok? You were kinda quiet back there.

Felicia, this talk about college is bumming me out.
My parents aren't really rich, so I don't think I'll be able to go anywhere.

Hey, mine aren't either!
I'm trying to find all the scholarships I can, and I'll probably take out some student loans to help with the rest.

So college is just to get a job to pay back loans?

No, college is about opportunity. An education is something that enriches your whole life - not just your job!
Parents, know how to help your child go to college. Ideally, you should start planning and preparing in middle school. RiseUpMS.com can help.

Get it at www.riseupms.com. There’s a new website in town and it’s got everything you need to know about going to college in Mississippi.

RiseUpMS.com was designed to help students in 7th through 12th grades prepare for, apply to and pay for college. (ParentGuide2College.com is the sister site to Rise Up. It offers similar “going to college” information specifically for parents or guardians.)

Rise Up is managed by the College Knowledge Project, a college access initiative of the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning.

10 REASONS TO CHECK IT OUT

1. The career planning section will help you figure out those big questions, like “What do you want to do when you grow up?” Knowing the answers to these questions as early as possible will help you spend less money in college, since you’ll only take classes you need.

2. The college profiles also give you a good overall picture of every college in Mississippi—where they're located, how much they cost, what degrees they offer, what athletic programs they’ve got, etc.

3. College planning checklists by grade level help you know what you need to be doing and when, beginning in middle school.

4. You’ll see lots of reasons to go to college and learn about college student life.

5. There’s info on all those tests you’re supposed to take, like the ACT.

6. The scholarship finder tool will give you access to over 6,000 scholarships!

7. The site will walk you through the process of applying for admission and financial aid.

8. The college search tool will help you look for colleges in Mississippi based on certain criteria.

9. The compare colleges tool will let you compare up to three Mississippi colleges at a time. You can see which one costs less or offers the program you want.

10. It was designed, in part, by students and tested by students, so it is pretty cool!

HELP FOR PARENTS

Parents, know how to help your child go to college. Ideally, you should start planning and preparing in middle school. RiseUpMS.com can help.

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SO, GUESS WHAT? I WAS TALKING TO MY MOM THE OTHER NIGHT AND SHE SAID SHE THINKS I'M DEFINITELY COLLEGE MATERIAL WITH MY GRADES AND ALL.

OOF! THE ONLY THING IS I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT TO DO NOW.

JONATHAN! THAT'S GREAT!!

WELL, MARIA TALKED TO THE GUIDANCE COUNSELOR THE OTHER DAY. SHE SAID THERE ARE A LOT OF THINGS WE CAN DO TO GET READY FOR COLLEGE.

TOMORROW? LET'S GO NOW!

AWESOME. I'LL GO BY TALK TO HER TOMORROW.
Eight Best Reasons Why You Should Definitely Go to College

1. Meet New People
You’ll meet new people who are fun, ambitious, interesting and your age. That’s a good combination.

2. Leave the Nest
Do you want to live with mom and dad forever? College lets you spread your wings and establish your independence.

3. Live It Up
Being educated beyond high school adds years to your life. And you thought studying would kill you!

4. Feel Good
People who have a college degree stay healthier.

5. Love Your Job
With a degree you are more likely to enjoy your job and are less likely to be unemployed.

6. Love Yourself
Yes, a little piece of paper can make you feel better about yourself. Self-confidence rocks!

7. Be a Leader
College is the fastest, most reliable way to be your own boss. Or someone else’s.

8. Be a Better Citizen
College graduates volunteer more, give blood more, vote more and recycle more. And hey, everyone likes people like that!

This College Knowledge booklet is the product of a collaboration between Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning and Parents & Kids Magazine and was made possible by the College Access Challenge Grant funded by the US Department of Education, Mississippi Institutions of High Learning, USA Funds, and Parents & Kids Magazine.

Designed by Scott Anderson and Illustrated by Kyle Hilton.

For more information about the Mississippi College Knowledge Project, please contact Program Director, Marsha Watson at 601-432-6177.

For more free copies of this magazine please fax a request to 601-366-0966 or e-mail CollegeInfo@parents-kids.com. Be sure to include: 1) your name, 2) your school, 3) your complete mailing address, 4) the title of the booklet you wish to order, and 5) the number of copies you need.