

## Life Planning After High School

Your time at high school is coming to a close. Your last couple of years raise up anxieties about what comes after. Some of your friends have plans, others are just doing whatever their parents tell them to. But you don't feel content with just going with the flow. You are looking to find some more meaning in your years right out of school than what doing what everyone else is doing can provide. Well then, this guide will help you assemble your thoughts and come up with a plan that satisfies your need to carve your own life path.

### Think about the relationships you have formed

One of life's most enduring aspects is the [building of relationships between people](#). All people from all walks of life are characterized by the relationships they form. These relationships extend to family, friends, co-workers, bosses, teachers, significant others, etc. You have to come to know yourself by [forming these relationships](#) and seeing which are precious and which turn sour. You've learned about what kinds of people are worth keeping friendships with, even when it's hard. Are you satisfied by the relationships you have built, or is there room to create relationships that push your boundaries? Is there a desire in you to get to know someone totally different from yourself, a desire to really see the world through someone else's eyes?

### Think about the breadth of experience you have had

Try this experiment with me. Pull out a world map or globe. Mark on it with pins or a marker all of the places you have been. Then write out a list of those places, how much time you spent there, and what things you did with that time. Like other young adults, most of these places probably correspond to time spent with relatives, family vacations to destinations determined by your parents, or school trips through clubs or other extra-curricular activities. Only a very few will be places and activities you chose for yourself. Odds are they weren't really too [far from home](#). Wouldn't you find greater experiences and more depth in life if you pushed these boundaries?

### Think about how those aspects of your life can be expanded

Now take what you've learned about yourself from the relationships you have formed and the experiences you have had so far in your life. It can seem kind of small compared to the immensity of the world. Fortunately, you are coming to an age of maturity and self-determination that opens up opportunities to explore and engage more deeply with the world around you. Your next step may be a university or a trade school. But there are other opportunities out there that can deepen your relationships and broaden your experience. Many high school graduates choose to take a [gap year](#). This year between high school and college allows young adults to explore more of the world and have meaningful experiences that develop responsibility, passion, teamwork, and courage through service. If you're looking for a chance to do more with your life than what everyone else is doing, consider the opportunities a gap year can provide.

Your life is on the cusp of major changes and advancements. Your growth is about to explode as you grow into a life defined by your own goals, not just those of your family or friends. Don't settle for what everyone else is doing. Carve out experiences for yourself that deepen your

personality with rich experiences. Learn about new cultures and languages. Consider what you have to give over what you have to get. Every cumulative year of your life is precious and will pass by with increasing speed. Before you know it, you'll be as old as when your parents were when you left high school. Make sure that the journey from where you are to where you will be is paved with the kind of milestones in life worth recalling. Explore the world to explore yourself.