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Adulting 101:

Five career-hacks
college students
MUST know to make it
in the professional world.

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INTRODUCTION



**Grant Bynum,
MBA**

Hello soon-to-be graduate!

If you are reading this, you are probably close to making the jump from successful university student to young professional. You'll be entering a world with entirely new challenges, and guess what... you're likely not yet ready for all of them.

But don't worry! I've put together 5 career hacks that will get YOUR career up and running like a world class sprinter.

So, let's get going!



1

FIND MENTORS

Find Successful People in Your Field NOW!

While there are several keys to your success in your future career, perhaps the most important of them is finding SEVERAL mentors. A mentor is **someone in your field who has the career success you want.**

A good mentor is like an Olympic Gold Medal Winner. The key here being - they've already won. The fun part is **you get to decide what winning at work looks like.** Maybe it's a certain amount of income, a job title, or a great work-life balance.

If someone has achieved what you've defined is the goal - they have the winning strategy. They've encountered pitfalls and overcome challenges which means they can give you tips to avoid mistakes, getting you to where you want to be faster.

Sometimes a word of advice shaves YEARS off the process of paving your own way!

A good mentor is going to be someone that encourages you, and also boldly speaks into your life to keep you on track. Sometimes you won't agree with their advice. When that happens it's important to remember **why** you have them in your life.

You want to find a mentor so you can **obtain the information they have, that you don't.** Sure, you'll probably be friendly, but don't treat them like a friend. Respect your mentor. Respect their time and their advice.

People usually don't fully understand the power of mentorship until after they've benefited from it. Listen to see if your potential mentors talk about theirs. That's a great sign if they do!



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Suggestions for finding a mentor:

1. Ask for advice.

Successful people aren't going to give you unsolicited advice. That's called criticism, and successful people don't do that.

2. Make people feel good.

Complimenting something you admire about a person's career, or asking how they got to where they're at will go a long way. Questions show you're interested in what they know. And if you stay quiet and listen, you'll show them a level of respect that everyone craves.

3. Apply their advice.

If someone tells you something practical you can do - **do it!** Taking action on what someone told you is a high compliment, and will make them WANT to give you more advice. But only if you...



4. Provide feedback.

The most natural way to ask for more advice is to tell them how their past advice benefited you.

Following that formula will make someone WANT TO BE YOUR MENTOR because of how good you make them feel.

Now that you know how to do that - shoot for **several mentors**, not just one. Think of them as a group of advisors; your team to catapult you to great things! Besides the fact that multiple perspectives are always beneficial, sometimes one mentor may be buried in work when you need their advice.

That's ok if you have a bunch of mentors. It's a big problem if you only have one.





Your Plans will Change – but write them down anyway.

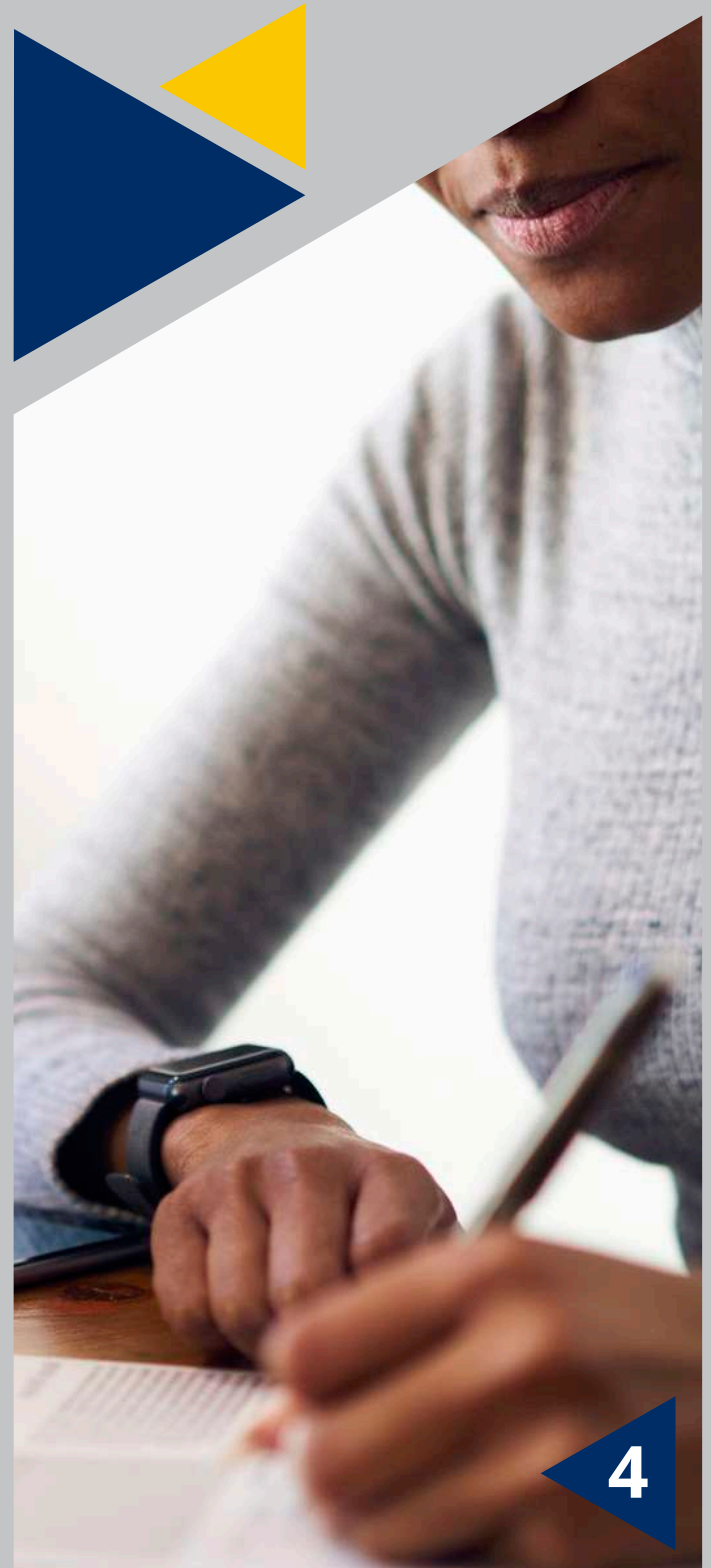
It is scientifically proven that people who **WRITE DOWN THEIR GOALS...** and put them in places that they can see them every day have are about 50% more likely to achieve them! Some studies cite the success percentage even higher.

Keeping hand written goals in front of you does 2 things:

- It sets your direction and helps you prioritize what you should and should not be working on!
- It trains your brain to move in that direction.

Where should you put your goals? Anywhere you'll see them. Put them on a custom cell phone case, or as your background image. The bathroom mirror works, so does the fridge. You can put a copy on the dashboard of your car, and also as your laptop's screen saver!

The location doesn't matter... visibility matters.



Tips when writing your goals:

1. Keep them SHORT! This is absolutely one of those times when less is more! If you've never done a goal sheet before, make it even a half page or less. That way you can put it easily in several places (an 8.5 x 11 page is going to be hard to put in several places).

2. Be SPECIFIC specific in your goal as well. A great formula from The Four Disciplines of Execution (which is a fantastic book on the subject of goal setting) is this:

From X, to Y, by When.

Bad example: "I'm going to make sacks of money this year!"

Good example: "I'm going to make an additional \$10,000 by December 31"

Let me stress this again... because it's SUPER important: Tie an end date to your goal. A goal without a target date is just a dream or a fantasy. It's not realistic.



3. DIVERSIFY your goals! Remember to include personal, travel and spiritual goals in addition to the work stuff. Afterall, all work and no play makes... nevermind. You won't get the reference ;)

As you do this, you are going to find that having written goals will get you through tough days. And they'll make you move faster on good days!

Remember to update your goals as you achieve them. You may find you need to make adjustments to them, or scrap them entirely. That's okay.

Speaking of okay, what happens if you don't achieve your goals or they're taking longer than you originally thought? Again - reassess your goals. Make sure they are realistic.

But also know that simply by writing them down, you'll probably achieve MUCH more than if you hadn't.

Example: You only made an extra \$8,000 by January 31st. ONLY! I'd consider that a success! :)

Here's a [fantastic article from Inc Magazine](#) that will walk you through the right and wrong way to write down your goals.



Be a lifetime learner. Universities don't have exclusive rights to education.

Knowledge is moving fast! It's an exciting time because so many new discoveries and better ways to do things are becoming available.

You've probably had a great experience learning from great professors on cutting edge techniques and theories. But, now that you are about to graduate... you need to find new ways to continue your education if you want to keep your competitive edge.

Here's an important truth to think about: A lot of what you learned at your university will be outdated within a few years. This is especially true of high level practical knowledge courses.

Industry standards in your new career will be updated, regulations changed or removed, etc. Your university has done their best to prepare you for success, but you can't tell yourself "I'm done" and expect to succeed in today's fast paced information economy world.

[This Harvard Business Review](#) article takes it further. Here are the highlights:

- Economic investments will make you WEALTHIER.
- Learning is positive for health and reduces your stress.
- Being open and curious has profound personal and professional benefits.
- Our capacity for learning leads to flourishing careers and motivation.



You've probably gone through some pretty rigorous classes. That's an intense brain work out. So you may not feel like looking at another book or PDF for the rest of your life. You may be saying "I'm done". That's pretty normal...but soon, you will miss the great benefits of that thirst for learning!

You need to have a plan for continuous learning! It's going to help you succeed, and help you make more money and be a better person.

Here are a few ideas to create your own continuing education program:

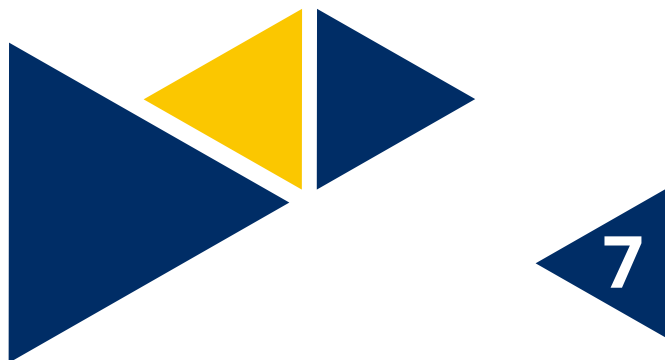
1. If only you had a **Mentor** you could ask... (if you've been skimming - scroll up to point 1).

2. **Company Training** – Your company is probably going to have some great training programs for you and your team. Take them up on anything that seems remotely relevant, not just the mandatory ones.



3. **Graduate Degrees at a 75% discount!** – Many companies will offer to pay a large portion of your expenses for pursuing that advanced degree you might be interested in. Usually you have to be with your new company for a certain length of time before you can request it. And you have to commit to remain with that company for a certain amount of time too. But if your company offers this, and you connect with the company, it's a no brainer! And, why not check back with your alma mater to see what they offer? They may have a great online program or local "weekend degree" that may fit your schedule perfectly.

4. **Read Non-Fiction Books** – Some of the brightest minds and innovators read many books a year to gain knowledge. Imitate them. Did you know 15 minutes is only about 1% of your day? If you spent that time reading, at the average speed of 200 words per minute you'd get through about 20 books in a year! Slow readers, you have no excuse. You can get some great book ideas by listening to business podcasts. And speaking of listening, check out Audible and listen to books during your commute.





4

HAVE A PLAN FOR MANAGING YOUR MONEY

It's called a budget.

You are about to reap the rewards for all your hard work in the form of a great salary! You've spent years living like a pauper getting through school... isn't it time to live it up a little? Well, maybe you should think about that.

Your income is about to go up with your new position. **How you handle your money today is going to set the course for how you handle money for the rest of your life.**

It's incredible how some people start with a modest income and end up being able to live a full successful life... while others have an INCREDIBLE income and find themselves out of money at 35!

So be smart. Get a plan for how you spend your money. You don't want to never splurge, because let's face it, work is work! You do need to have fun! Just make sure that fun lives within a set of rules. You're used to that, right?

When you were in school, your currency was time. You didn't stay out till 2am every night. You certainly didn't go out the night before a final exam. Just apply those same time management habits to how you handle your money, and you're halfway there.

I want to challenge you to keep living SOMEWHAT frugally! That doesn't mean penny pinching, it means **rewarding yourself in moderation.**

Don't go and buy EVERYTHING you want now. Wait! Be patient... it will pay off big time for you!

Put together a written budget. Write down what you earn, and what your expenses are. Allocate everything left over to savings, and there you go - you've "balanced your budget". Remember to include expenses like retirement savings, paying off debt, giving to charities, funding your next vacation, etc.



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Here's a few examples of how to spend well!

1. New Car!

Have a 10 year old car that's barely working anymore? It might make more sense to get a much newer car. But instead of a brand new car, look for a used but certified car. It is usually a lot less money (and lower payments), but going certified gives you most of the benefits and warranty of a new car.

2. New Apartment

That shared room in the 50 year old house near campus is about to give way to having so many great options in your new city. It's definitely tempting to splurge on getting a nicer apartment with incredible lighting in a popular location with young professionals in your new city. But instead of getting the large floorplan that would fit all of the incredible new furniture you plan to get... why not get a smaller one bedroom with a lower price tag?

Or, use our [free roommate search](#) to find a roommate to share the costs! You can enjoy a better building and still have lower housing and utility costs than if you were paying for everything on your own.



3. GET OUT OF DEBT...and STAY OUT!

If you have accumulated any credit card debt or student loans, put together a written plan to pay this off **as quickly as possible**. Being DEBT-FREE is much more important than having that new Tesla. Only a very small percentage of Americans are debt free...but the ones that are have incredible choices and opportunities. Debt puts chains on you...it greatly limits what you can do because you have to think about how to pay it off.

Here's a fun fact! One day you may want to buy a home. You'll likely have a mortgage. The word mortgage is made up of the prefix mort, meaning death - and the suffix gage, meaning pledge. **Mortgages are literally - death pledges.**





4. FURNITURE

You may have great furniture already set up and simply need to schedule movers to bring it to your new city. But if the move costs are anywhere close to the value of the furniture, **it might make more sense to simply sell the furniture and start fresh in your new city.** But you don't have to buy everything brand new! There are so many easy ways to buy high quality furniture at a reduced price: Local Facebook Groups, Consignment Stores, Charity stores and more. If you don't want to think about purchasing furniture for a bit, consider a short term rental of furniture to start with your new place. It's easy to do and inexpensive.

5. MAX OUT YOUR RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

You've most likely heard this one before. Start putting away as MUCH as you can towards your retirement now! That money is going to be growing... slowly... but steadily... over the next 30-40 years to give you an incredible retirement so you won't have to keep working as long and as hard. Here's an important truth: You won't have the energy you have now for the rest of your life. As you hit your 40s, your energy levels will decrease. As you hit your 50s, your energy levels will go WAY down. You won't want to work as much in those years and after. It's hard to see that now...you feel invincible and just grabbing an energy drink can solve most problems. But it's inevitable and it's going to happen. Prepare for it now so you can enjoy your golden years when they come.

Start now. Stick to a budget and reward yourself when you do. I'd even suggest sharing your budget goals and results with a trusted friend in your new city to be accountable.

There's plenty of software, apps and websites to help you do that. [Here's a list of 9 really good ones to get you started.](#)





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CULTIVATE GREAT FRIENDSHIPS IN YOUR NEW CITY NOW!

Even if you're still in school!

Up to this point, it's been relatively easy to hang with your friends. You would close out the university Starbucks working on your study group's latest project. You'd see 100 of your closest friends at the game. Everyone was together most of the time because you all lived relatively close by.

Life is about to change, big time! One of the biggest things that stresses students out once they know they'll be moving to a new city is making new friends. They go from having tons of friends to knowing one or two, or sometimes ZERO people in their new city.

It's a big change that hits hard. It seems obvious, but for some reason most people don't see it coming. As a result, some people feel lonely or even depressed after they move. Even though they have a great new job.

Let's face it... we all need people! We need to relate to a group of people that we give and take from. For some of us, that doesn't have to be many people. Yes, I'm speaking to the "introverts" out there, like me! But you need to have SOME friends or else you just isolate. Friends help you grow and discover new directions and ideas. (And Mentors can be included in that friend group too. If you don't have one see point 1 above).



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Here's some ways you can start forming new friendships before you even move!

1. Join Your Local Alumni Chapter

The #1 easiest way to make new friends is to join the local alumni chapter of your university in your new city. Everyone you meet there will have shared in your university's experiences and traditions. You will have instant conversation topics and things to build on. And, local chapters give you ways to be involved with the group that will also help your future career. You may also be able to find some or ALL of your mentors easily in your local alumni chapter. If you haven't yet done it, inquire for your local chapter right away to get connected even before you graduate. They probably have events you can attend before you graduate.

In our system, we include an [easy way to link up to your local alumni chapter](#).

2. Meet Friends moving to your same city In Our Free Portal!

If you use our free service you will have access to meet other students moving to your new city from your university. You can link up with other students that are moving around the same time or shortly before/after you.

[Create your free account](#) to get access to like-minded alumni who are headed to your new city too.

3. Pick a Neighborhood that matches your style!

You don't want to be isolated in your new city! You need to be in an area that makes it easy for you to make connections to others that share your interests. And you need to be in an area where you don't have to worry about safety issues!

I strongly suggest you get information on the neighborhoods in the city you're moving to. Most larger cities have designated "unofficial" neighborhoods that cater to young professionals making it easier to meet other recent grads. It's probably a good idea that when getting acclimated to a new area you live in or very near those areas! Some apartments also are superb about giving you easy ways to meet others in your building with monthly parties and other events.

If you want to DRASTICALLY SHORTEN the time spent researching neighborhoods, schedule a FREE 10-15 minute [New City Orientation call](#). I know the neighborhoods in more cities than I can count. I'll help you find the perfect areas for you.

Oh and by the way - once you have this call, I'll add a personal filter to your account so any deals on apartments in those "perfect for you" neighborhoods show up on the top of your list.





4. Join clubs that reflect your interest

All about business? Great, then join the local Chamber of Commerce's young professionals group. Were you a stud in your intramurals softball team? There's plenty of young professionals leagues in or close to your new city. Or, if you are like me and have little athletic skills, why not join a local KICKBALL team? It takes no skill, and is a fun way to meet other grads.

5. Religious & Cultural Groups

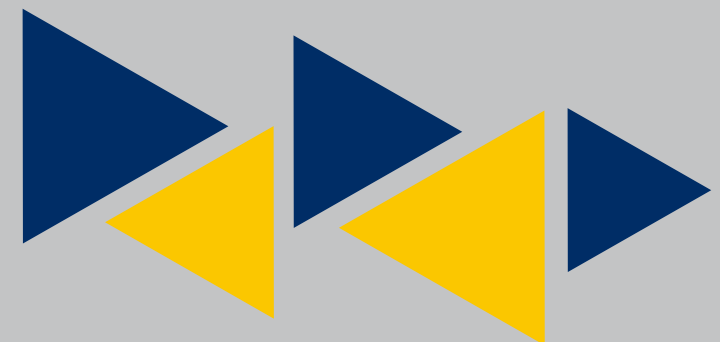
In medium or larger cities you'll often find some great religious & cultural groups. You can form great friendships in local churches with well established, highly attended programs.

Your local alumni chapter will have the 411 on these kinds of program. But you can also type in any interest you have, followed by the word "group" or "club", followed by the phrase "in your new city".

6. VOLUNTEER

Join a non-profit to meet other like minded people in your new city. Find one that's close to your heart and join! It's just like university where you had many clubs you could have joined... the list is endless!

Here's a great article with [21 ways to find new friends in a new city](#).



About the Author:

Grant Bynum is the founder of HomeBase Services.

HomeBase guides graduating students & interns into their new career city STRESS FREE, by helping them find a place to LIVE, and... find their TRIBE. [Get started with the 100% Free Service now.](#) Account set up takes less than 3 minutes .

FIND YOUR APARTMENT, FIND YOUR TRIBE.



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