

Going to College or Apprenticeship: A Guide for 17 Year Old Leaving Home

Pat Walsh

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Reasonable, mature advice is offered to young people who are contemplating next steps in life.

Aimed at seventeen-year-olds in the United Kingdom, *Going to College or Apprenticeship* by Pat Walsh contains straightforward, no-nonsense advice.

This short book—only four chapters of a few pages each—addresses important topics: Self-esteem, Upskilling, Study, and Lifestyle. Focusing exclusively on the young person who is about to go off to college or an apprenticeship, Walsh offers unvarnished advice in language that is direct and at times blunt, but with the individual's best interests at heart:

Education is about far more than learning facts and a few skills. It is about becoming a rounded person with good judgment, many skills and a strong moral fibre.

Each chapter contains a few select words of wisdom designed to motivate young people without being judgmental. About self-esteem, for example, the author writes, "The concept that you must never fail is too severe. ... Success in life is a very broad concept and there are many avenues to it." In the chapter called "Upskilling," Walsh has a few salient pointers about managing money, choosing an appropriate place to live, eating nutritional meals, and socializing—with some prudent advice about alcohol. There are equally sensible tips about studying included as well.

Perhaps the most interesting chapter in the book, "Lifestyle," addresses the touchy subject of sex, which Walsh handles frankly and objectively. "You need to have a policy about your sexuality and your body," the author writes, making this interesting observation: "One of the consequences which is not pointed out is the obscuring of beautiful friendships which could develop when sex and the question of sex is not on the agenda." This is a perspective that seventeen-year-olds may not yet fully appreciate, but Walsh's efforts to expose them to mature consideration of relationships is commendable.

The book should be useful to its intended audience, though that audience is limited. It is written very specifically for young people who have been brought up under the British system of education, so it may have less value to those beyond the shores of the United Kingdom. While the brevity of the book will be a plus for youthful audiences, more detail might have been meaningful; some subjects seem to have been glossed over. The author stresses that "good grammar is essential in speech and writing," yet there are a few typographical and grammatical errors in the book. A listing of other sources of information would have been helpful, and biographical information of any kind about the author is notably absent.

Going to College or Apprenticeship provides a reasonable, good overview of some of the primary challenges young people undoubtedly face as they take important next steps to adulthood.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (November 30, 2016)

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