

Congratulations! You have survived your childhood and teenage years. Now what? For starters, you are hopefully increasing your self-awareness by reflecting on what you have learned about yourself to this point and are beginning the process of figuring out what type of life you hope to have going forward. As you will soon discover, this is not an easy task nor a one size fits all journey. Each person has their own mental highlight reels of good and bad personal memories. The challenge is to learn from past mistakes and to build upon positive experiences. One needs to be honest with themselves and recognize what personal habits are hampering their ability to live a happy life. An obvious example would be substance abuse.

We now should be mature enough to realize how incredibly ill-advised over-indulging with either alcohol or drugs. This behavior is not in any way going to make your life better. Putting aside the stupidity of getting dependent on alcohol or narcotics in the first place, the focus needs to be on moving forward with positive actions. The first step is to figure out how you plan to support yourself. Even the basic needs of life cost money. That begs the question, "What will you do to make money?" In most cases the answer is to get a job.

What type of job should you seek? Our suggestion is to get a job consistent with your personal strengths. If you have an outgoing personality, try to find a job that best utilizes this trait that is an asset in dealing with personal interaction with the public. If you have a tendency to be more quiet and reserved, choose a job that would allow you to do more task-oriented work. If you are good with your hands and enjoy building or fixing things, then opt for jobs that utilize these skill sets. What matters most is that you get a job while at the same time realize you are not signing a life-long contract.

Our early jobs are just steppingstones to get us to what we eventually want to do for a living. Things like showing up on time, getting along with coworkers, being a dependable employee, and experiencing the rewards of doing good work are all the most important benefits of our early job experiences.

Getting your first paycheck should be a meaningful experience. Not only should it make you proud of yourself, but it should get you started on the road to becoming a functional adult. Regardless of what type of business your employer is in, ask yourself, "How can they afford to pay you your wages?" "How does my employer's business work?" "Is it something I am interested in?" "Would I like to own a similar business of my own?"

Another productive thing you should do is to take a look at your paycheck stub. While your check is a certain amount, explore the details of your paystub. Note the deductions. You are now officially a taxpayer. The government is now spending YOUR MONEY as they see fit. This would be a good time to read up on how taxes work. It will be your introduction to the political policies that run and/or ruin our country.



Start figuring out how much it would take to live completely on your own. Factor in shelter, food, utilities, cell phone, car expenses, insurance, etc. These are your basic living expenses. Then add in costs of doing things you enjoy. Welcome to adulthood.

Aside from financial considerations, your 20s is about the time you start noticing shifts in your social network. Friends you used to see daily at school are now getting their own jobs while maybe going in different directions due to their significant others. Instead of hanging out with classmates all the time, people you meet through work or neighbors become new members of your social network. As a word of caution, evaluate new acquaintances in your life. Make sure they are not bringing in any unwanted toxicity into your life. Life can be hard enough. Do not make it any harder by associating with the wrong kind of crowd.

