Graduation: years of sweat, frustration, excitement, exploration and insight crossing the stage in a cap and gown. Every graduate has reason to be proud. You have set a goal for yourself and reached it. You have overcome obstacles of all kinds, and finished what you started. Congratulations! Now what?

Are you working yet? High school and college graduates are coming into the working world just as the economy improves. Companies who laid off workers last year are ready to rebuild, but not ready to commit big budgets to new employees. This makes new graduates a handsome bunch to hire. Frankly, you cost less than someone with more experience. You might even work for free. And you should, if you can gain learning and experience in return for an internship with a good manager.

Graduation is only the beginning of your education. People respect new graduates not for what you know, but for what you are willing to learn. You have mastered technologies and tools that were science fiction only a few years ago. Be eager to learn and willing to change, so you can adapt and keep working through tough economic times.

Accept diversity. You are going to work among four very different generations of employees, with profound potential for miscommunication. When a day at work becomes more like a dysfunctional family reunion, pay attention to the value each player brings to the table. Ask more questions, and be willing to listen to disparate views. Diversity brings bench strength; learn from it.

As you travel through your career, remember, build on your strengths and the money will follow. Do you ever get so involved in something that you lose track of time? When people work at something they love, something they enjoy and were designed to do well, they forget they are working at all. Work more of those times into every workday and success will be yours.

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