

## Freaking out about the future? You're not alone

Written by Caitlin Perry, Columnist  
Tuesday, 26 February 2013 12:01

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Are you graduating soon? Have you been experiencing sheer panic over not knowing what you'll be doing after you have your diploma? Do you find yourself lying awake at night questioning every life decision you've made up until this point?

If so, you may have what's called the quarterlife crisis.

A quarterlife crisis is similar to a midlife crisis, except it comes when we're in our twenties and transitioning into adulthood. During this time, we find ourselves questioning what we're doing with our lives or if we've made the right choice in what we went to school for.

The term "quarterlife crisis" was created by authors Alexandra Robbins and Abby Wilner in their book of the same name. They write that "When recent graduates are tossed from a school setting, they have to figure out everything in the real world quickly; but at the same time, and more important, they have to remember to figure themselves out, too." Sound familiar?

It may only be February, but I know that many people, myself included, are already experiencing anxiety for the weeks to come. Should we be applying for jobs now? Which ones should we apply for, if we're even qualified to apply for any of them? Where should we live? All these questions and upcoming decisions are enough to make even the calmest person freak out.

As if all this uncertainty isn't enough stress, some people actually do have their futures figured out. Even though you're happy for them, it's human nature to also be jealous and angry that the same success isn't coming to you.

I can't tell you how many times I've had to exit out of Facebook or Twitter recently because I

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saw people excitedly explain how they got interviews for their dream jobs or received scholarships. It's not that I'm not happy for them — they've worked hard. But I have no idea where to apply for a job, and I was recently rejected from a scholarship, so I'm admittedly a little bitter.

It's easy to feel like a failure at this point in our lives. Maybe you're realizing that the major you picked isn't exactly what you want to do, or maybe your grades aren't as high as you'd like. Maybe your résumé isn't as impressive as you think it should be, or maybe you haven't had much experience in your future career field. I'm guilty of all of these.

The truth is, there will always be someone more qualified and more experienced than you. You probably won't be handed the job you want, at least not at first, and you'll go through many places before you settle down.

While this may sound depressing, it's no reason to throw in the towel. It's important to keep working hard and not give up your dreams.

This is easier said than done, right? I definitely need to follow my own advice here. It's hard to feel prepared and qualified for the future when you don't know what it entails, but that's all part of life. What's important is that we try our best and define success on our own terms, rather than comparing ourselves to others. Cliché, I know.

We're all making great accomplishments, no matter how small or insignificant they seem. There's no rush to settle down and have your perfect life as soon as you're out of college, so stressing about it is pointless.

Kid President was right. Maybe we all just need a pep talk. "Don't stop believing ... unless your dream is stupid. Get a better dream and keep going, keep going and keep going."

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