



Mentor Me!

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Sample Correspondences

From: Robert, San Bernardino, Middle School Student

Question: I want to build robots when I get older but I hate math and science. Can I still be a robot engineer if I don't like math or science?

To: Kobie Boykins, Mechanical Engineer, NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory

Answer: Hi Robert. The advice that I would give any student that is looking at engineering and likes to play with things, is don't worry, everybody gets bogged down with math and science. I've met people at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory that have failed math and science all the way through high school, they failed it even in college. The point is that in engineering, math and science is the language that we use to communicate, but that doesn't mean that you have to be an all-star in math and science to be an engineer. You just have to be able to do it. You have to be able to mull through it. I can't spell too well. But I get through it because we have to be able to spell in order to communicate through writing. The same reason that you dislike math and science, I dislike spelling. But if you push yourself just to get through it, you can still get to your end-goal, which is building robots, and that's the most important thing. When I wake up, I get to go to work and play, I don't see it as a job, and that's the reason why I do what I do. If you are passionate about engineering and building robots, then that's the most important thing. Just do the math and science and get through it. Just do it!

From: Patricia, New York City, High School Student

Question: I'm not sure if I should go to a culinary school after high school, or go right to a job at a restaurant. One day, I want to be an executive chef like you. Do you have advice for me?

To: Scott Ubert, Executive Chef, One CPS

Answer: Hi Patricia. If I were to look at someone and say go to school, or not go to school, I would say go to school. The people that I work with that have not gone to school, even though they are good and they'll be successful, they are at a disadvantage. I can tell that some things go over their heads when I talk about certain culinary terms and techniques. What you learn in school in the culinary field is the "why", the chemistry of cooking. It's not a chemistry class, but you look at things like butter, and you break a butter sauce down. You learn why things happen, you learn how to fix it, and you learn how to prevent it. You have to mess things up before you really know how to do it. That is more than just being a "cook". You have to know how to take something to the end

and break it, if it is a butter sauce for example, and bring it back together to really understand it and be a great chef. That's the edge that I got coming out of culinary school and I would recommend culinary school to most anyone wanting to be an executive chef.

From: Monique, St. Louis, College Student

Question: Hi. I'm graduating from college this spring with a degree in marketing and would like to work for an ad agency. I have no real portfolio to speak of and am intimidated about the prospects of landing a job at an ad agency. What should I focus on to get that job?

To: Chris Mihock, Advertising Creative Director, Best Buy Co, Inc.

Answer: Hi Monique. It is hard to break into advertising. It's one of those businesses that the toughest thing is to first get your foot in the door, and once you're in, and you're good, you're in! My advice is to look very closely at one of the advertising portfolio schools that are around the country. Miami Ad School is one example that has branches all over the country and the world. These schools lead people through the process. They can help you pull together a portfolio, learn from real professionals, and get you ready to talk to agencies that are doing the kind of work that you want to do.