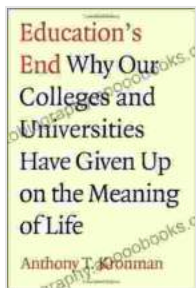


Why Our Colleges and Universities Have Given Up on the Meaning of Life

By William Deresiewicz

Our colleges and universities have given up on the meaning of life.

This is not a new development. It has been happening for decades. But it has reached a critical point in recent years.



Education's End: Why Our Colleges and Universities Have Given Up on the Meaning of Life by Anthony T. Kronman

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The evidence is all around us. Our students are graduating with more debt and less knowledge than ever before. They are less likely to be able to think critically, to solve problems, or to communicate effectively. They are more likely to be depressed, anxious, and addicted to drugs and alcohol.

And they are more likely to be lost. They don't know what they want to do with their lives. They don't know what they believe in. They don't know who they are.

This is not what college is supposed to be about. College is supposed to be a time of exploration and discovery. It is supposed to be a time to learn about the world and about yourself.

It is supposed to be a time to prepare for the future, but not just for a job. It is supposed to be a time to prepare for a life.

Our colleges and universities have failed our students. They have failed to provide them with the education they need to live meaningful and fulfilling lives.

There are many reasons for this failure. One reason is that our colleges and universities have become too focused on job training. They have abandoned the traditional liberal arts curriculum, which emphasizes the study of the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences.

Instead, they have replaced the liberal arts with a narrow range of vocational courses that are designed to prepare students for specific jobs.

This is a mistake. A liberal arts education is essential for producing well-rounded individuals who are capable of leading fulfilling and productive lives.

The liberal arts teach us how to think critically, to solve problems, and to communicate effectively. They teach us about the world and about ourselves. They help us to develop our moral and ethical values.

A liberal arts education is the foundation for a good life. It is the foundation for a life of meaning and purpose.

Another reason for the failure of our colleges and universities is that they have become too focused on rankings. They are more concerned with their place in the U.S. News & World Report rankings than with the quality of their education.

This focus on rankings has led to a number of negative consequences. It has led to grade inflation. It has led to a narrowing of the curriculum. It has led to a decline in teaching.

And it has led to a loss of focus on the meaning of life.

Our colleges and universities need to return to their traditional mission of educating students in the pursuit of knowledge and the cultivation of wisdom. They need to abandon their focus on job training and rankings.

They need to put the meaning of life back at the center of their curriculum.

Only then will they be able to fulfill their true mission of preparing students for a life of meaning and purpose.

Here are some specific things that our colleges and universities can do to put the meaning of life back at the center of their curriculum:

- **Require all students to take a course in philosophy.** Philosophy is the study of the fundamental questions of life, such as the meaning of life, the nature of reality, and the good life. A course in philosophy can help students to develop their critical thinking skills, to question their assumptions, and to form their own beliefs.

- **Offer more courses in the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences.** These courses can help students to understand the world around them and to develop their own interests and passions. They can also help students to develop their critical thinking skills, their problem-solving skills, and their communication skills.
- **Create opportunities for students to engage in experiential learning.** Experiential learning is a type of learning that takes place outside of the classroom, such as internships, service learning, and study abroad programs. Experiential learning can help students to apply their knowledge and skills to real-world problems. It can also help students to develop their leadership skills, their teamwork skills, and their problem-solving skills.
- **Encourage students to reflect on their values and beliefs.** Reflection is an important part of the learning process. It can help students to understand their own values and beliefs, and to make decisions that are consistent with those values and beliefs. Reflection can also help students to develop their critical thinking skills, their problem-solving skills, and their communication skills.

By taking these steps, our colleges and universities can put the meaning of life back at the center of their curriculum. They can help students to develop the knowledge, skills, and values they need to live meaningful and fulfilling lives.

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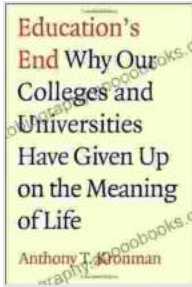
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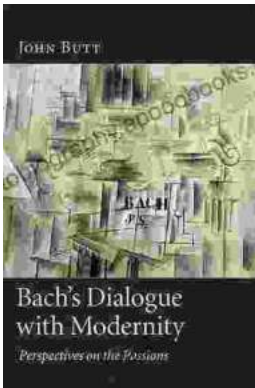
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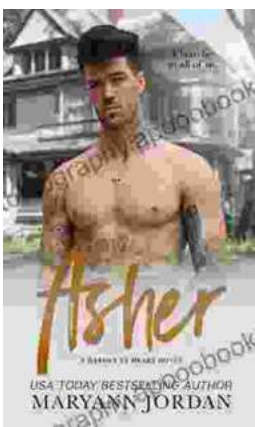


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