



Going To College

by Ronald Tasker

From a very young age, I wanted to change the world. Having cerebral palsy, I have accepted my challenges. I also have come to realize how anything is possible, and how with hard work I can accomplish my goal with ease. My parents have always said that a quality college education is the first step to success in the future. I always knew I was smart enough to get into college, but I always wondered about things like how do I select a college, or once I get there how will my needs be met? Well, let's take a look at some things you may need to consider before you go on the journey of college.

One of the first and most important things one will have to figure out is if the services a college offers meets his or her needs. Depending on the disability, one person may require fewer services than another. To understand a college's services and programs well, you might want to visit a college and see it with your own eyes. Also, a school needs to know as much about your disability as possible, so make sure you bring all the paperwork necessary to the school's Disability Service Center. Additionally, as you may know, there are multiple types of disabilities, all with many differences and similarities. Due to these differences, services may vary. A person with a physical disability will have to consider things such as what the school looks like, school size, and student accommodations. For those with intellectual disabilities or learning impairments, they might have to focus their search on tutoring programs and extra help with work. One thing that can be important to the success of students with disabilities in general is assistive



technology. Whether the school provides it or you have to purchase on your own, it's certainly something to think about. From my perspective, I have difficulty typing with all of my fingers, and given that I will have to complete a considerable amount of rather long essays in college, tools such as voice recognition from Microsoft Word 2010 could help me substantially. You must be sure to research all programs until you find the right one. You'll be glad you did.

Since there are so many great schools with so many different focuses it can be difficult to find the right college for you. There are many programs to help you. One of the more simple things that you can do to start is talk to your guidance counselor about what you might want to do as a career, where you want to go for college, and affordability of higher education. Your counselor will help guide you in the right direction. In the meantime, meet with teachers and IEP coordinators about steps you can take to reach your goal of college. One of the other things you can do to be proactive in your search is to look for scholarships. College is not a cheap thing, so every little bit of financial support helps. There are tons of scholarships for people with disabilities, so go look around to see what's out there for you.

I hope you found my advice helpful. College is an exciting chapter in a person's life and in many cases, it is vital to a person's success in adulthood. Remember to consider these helpful hints when going to college.



Helpful links to assist you in your search:

<http://disability.about.com/od/ChoosingCaregiversAndSchools/tp/BestColleges-And-Universities-For-Disabled-Students.htm>

This page includes info about some of the best colleges for people with disabilities.

<http://www.bestcollegesonline.com/blog/2011/09/21/20-incredible-collegesfor-special-needs-students/>

Another good college searching resource.

<http://www.enablemart.com/>

Start here in your search for assistive technology