

Parents, Help Your Children Make The Right Career Choices

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Career guidance is a major issue for most families today considering the limited employment opportunities available in the job market. Due to limited employment opportunities and lack of career guidance people have ended up in careers that they do not enjoy. Considering that we spend most of our time at work it is in our best interest to choose careers to which we are well suited.

There are a number of factors that affect a person's choice of a career. I hear a lot of people when giving career advice even for high school students saying "follow your dreams". This works in a few careers but does not work in many careers. Here is why. Instead in choosing a career people must be guided by their natural ability (aptitude/cognitive ability), interests, values and personality. As an example its wrong advise to say to someone who is dreaming of being an Actuary "follow your dreams" when the person has extremely low numerical ability. Successful careers are built when people follow their natural abilities instead of dreams. Individual dreams must be supported by natural ability in the areas chosen and then your interest and values. We all know that not all dreams are good dreams. So why would you say to someone follow your dreams? There are a lot of people who have chosen careers based on what they see and admire in other people out there who are not necessarily their parents. We have seen children admiring people who drive very nice cars and they also want to be like them. If parents do not take a keen interest in their children's career they will default to the careers of the people in their community or country who are admired by the children.

The starting point is for every parent to have their children assessed early to enable proper career advice. The assessments normally provide a cognitive/general mental aptitude ability profile, personality profile and career interests. This, together with trends in job market, should form the basis for any guidance. Parents must be prepared to accept the outcome of such assessment even if they are against their own expectations. In cases where the child is discovered to have low cognitive ability, say for example, a top career such as engineering and science related professions, they can always look at alternatives provided they are good in areas such as verbal reasoning and critical thinking. There are also cases where the child has extremely low cognitive ability. Parents should note that cognitive ability influences performance across all careers regardless of how "low" the profession is. In cases where your child is discovered to have very low cognitive ability, you may opt for careers that may require psycho motor skills or general good social skills. It is a waste of time to push your child into a career where they have very little interest or lack cognitive ability for it.

By Memory Nguwi Continue reading at next page > EXCLUSIVE ARTICLE 2019 | ISSUE 01 04 Other people are driven into careers by money. While this is a good idea for some, it can be misleading. What each career pays 10 years from now is not known and it is affected by supply and demand. A lot of people are in careers they hate because they went into those careers hoping to earn a lot of money only to be disappointed with their current earnings. When choosing a career do not constrain yourself by aiming to work in a specific country. You must choose careers where your skills can give you value in

any part of the world. Based on this alone you must always take into consideration demographic, technological and socio-political issues that shape how work will be done in the future. With the rate at which careers are being affected by technological developments, there are possibilities that most children are going into careers that may not even exist 10 years from now. The best way is to advise children to build on their critical thinking skills that will allow them to switch careers based on what society needs to solve problems of that time. I feel sorry for most parents who blindly take their children into careers that are clear dead-end careers even in the current situation.

Some children and parents are so desperate for degrees to such an extent that they will take anything on offer. Seek career guidance based on evidence early to enable you to make informed decisions about which careers they must follow. At form 3 you should be able to test people for career guidance. The other value comes before people choose A-Level subjects. In practice though we see most parents bring their children for career testing and guidance too late. Another important point to note for parents is that general mental ability (cognitive/aptitude) rarely changes with age. Once you discover that your child is not gifted in the areas you hoped they would go take action and capitalize on the areas they are strong in for example music, sports etc. Contact me on the details below for more information on career guidance tests for your children.

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