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■ **Jonathan Yabut**
is a faculty partner
with *Leaderonomics*
and is the winner of
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He has a consultancy
firm based in Kuala
Lumpur. He also
engages in motiva-
tional talks about
youth and leadership
across South-east Asia,
and is also the author
of *From Grit to Great*,
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By **JONATHAN YABUT**
editor@leaderonomics.com

THE dilemma: You finished a course that doesn't match the passion you realised later in life. What now?

You finished a degree in Philosophy but realised in your last year that you want to become the next Mark Zuckerberg.

Your parents forced you to do medicine but your heart just doesn't beat (pun intended) for the sick.

You earned an accounting degree, but fashion is your passion.

So, should your university degree dictate your job? No, it shouldn't.

You can pursue a job based on your degree, but you're not required to, success-wise.

The good news for folks who don't want to practise the courses "they got trapped with" is that "changing your mind" after school is still possible.

Here are some insights you can reflect on:

1 YES, IT'S POSSIBLE TO 'CHANGE LANES' AFTER SCHOOL

One thing that usually surprises people about my career is that I'm a marketing guy with no formal degree in marketing. I finished Bachelor of Science in Economics, an intensely mathematical course suited for governance and policy-making. I wanted to become a lawyer when I was 15 and figured this course may complement as a pre-law course.

But my life changed four years later. I decided to ditch law and enter the corporate world.

I got recruited as a management trainee and was led to give marketing a try. Because I was always fascinated by the art of convincing people to buy a product, I said yes.

I made that one fearless leap that forever changed my life.

I realised that marketing wasn't just about having the creative genius.

More than the glamour of doing television commercials or YouTube videos, my job required a very crucial skill related to my course in university: forecasting.

Regardless of what the product or service is, marketers will always spend their careers working with spreadsheets to forecast inventories and sales.

And I'm not alone. I have friends who finished degrees in engineering but now work as sales executives for Apple, Samsung, and HTC. They didn't limit themselves to technical or science-related ranks.

After all, selling can be learnt over time while rudimentary knowledge about computers is not gained overnight.

In other countries, anthropologists or ethnographers aren't limited anymore to careers in museums, academia, or social work. Google, Intel and Microsoft now hire them to work on human interactions with technology.

All the folks in Silicon Valley who are now entrepreneurs and owners of start-up companies; they're most likely IT or engineering graduates too, not necessarily business graduates.

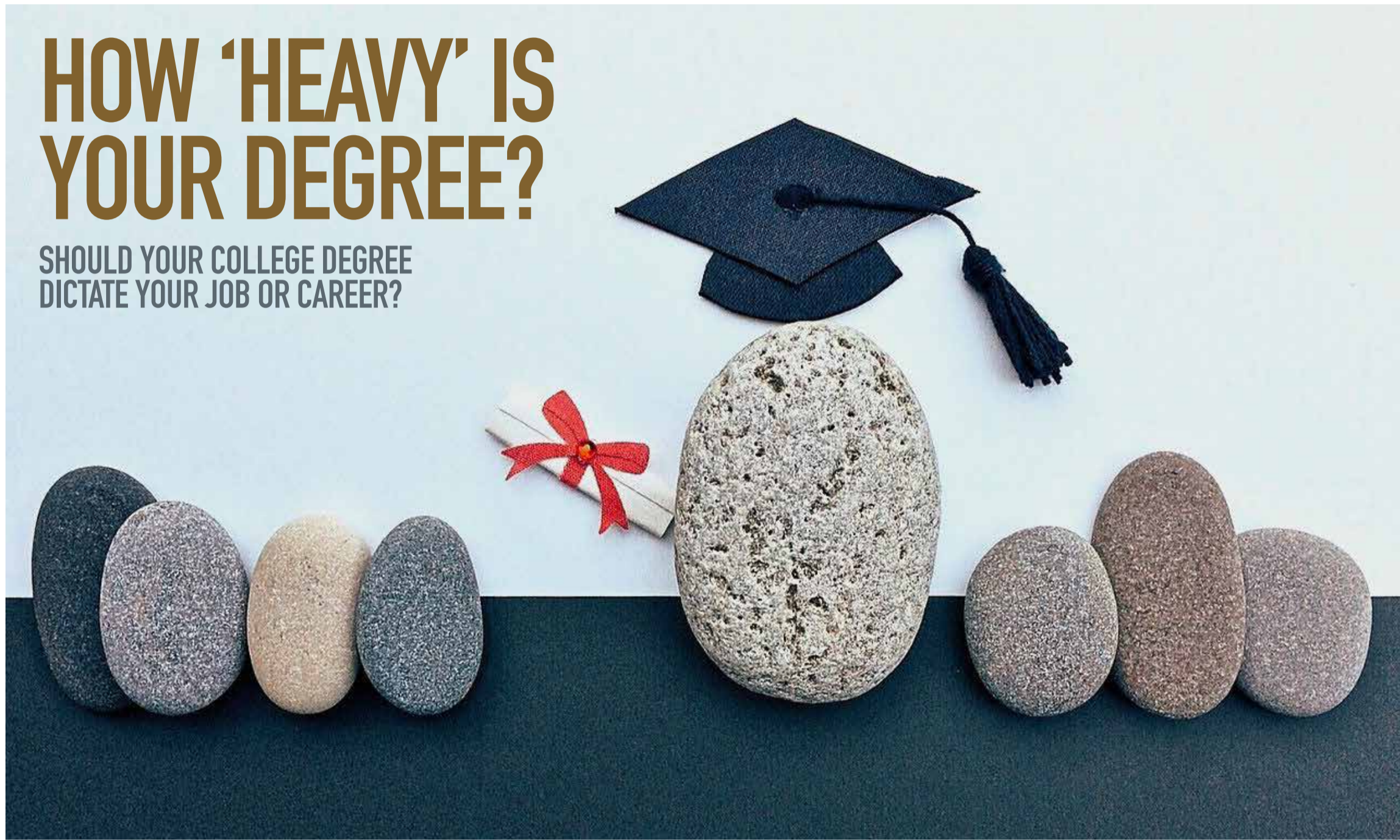
The key is to be fearless enough to dismiss the common misconception that human resources won't consider you for an interview just because your course is different.

2 YOU LEARN MOST WHILE DOING THE JOB, NOT JUST THROUGH TEXTBOOKS

In most cases, what you learn in university is simply the general discipline of "doing things efficiently".

For example, you learn a more advanced level of arithmetic, a more sophisticated vocabulary and writing ability, and a deeper understanding of culture, the world, and the ills of society.

Any university degree can give you this,



HOW 'HEAVY' IS YOUR DEGREE?

SHOULD YOUR COLLEGE DEGREE DICTATE YOUR JOB OR CAREER?

but these are just the basics.

The bigger picture is applying them to a specific role at work.

You may have heard of the popular 70-20-10 model of learning and development based on a research crafted by Morgan McCall and his colleagues.

In this study, they concluded that lessons learnt by successful managers come from the following sources:

- 70% from doing the job (doing the job routinely and repeating what works, and avoiding the things that don't)
- 20% from people (feedback and observation shared by bosses, colleagues, etc.)
- 10% from courses and reading

What does this mean? It means that even if you miss all the lessons in university (or in my case, never even took marketing lessons at all!), you still have the opportunity to catch up because the job alone will teach you.

This is why I think experience will always trump even paper qualifications from the most prestigious university. I made countless mistakes when I developed my earliest TV commercials and printed posters for my previous employer.

I made fewer mistakes later as I got better at it.

Learning by doing was my mantra. I embraced failure. I wanted to fail early and fast so I could avoid them in the more critical and more adult portions of my life. I have no regrets today.

I was always a curious learner. I loved asking questions from my mentors and bosses even if it got to the point of irritating them.

I requested to sit down in meetings of other marketing departments that had nothing to do with my project because listening alone taught me a lot of things.

I even went to events and concerts organised by the most unusual industries, like those that sell napkins or mosquito zappers.

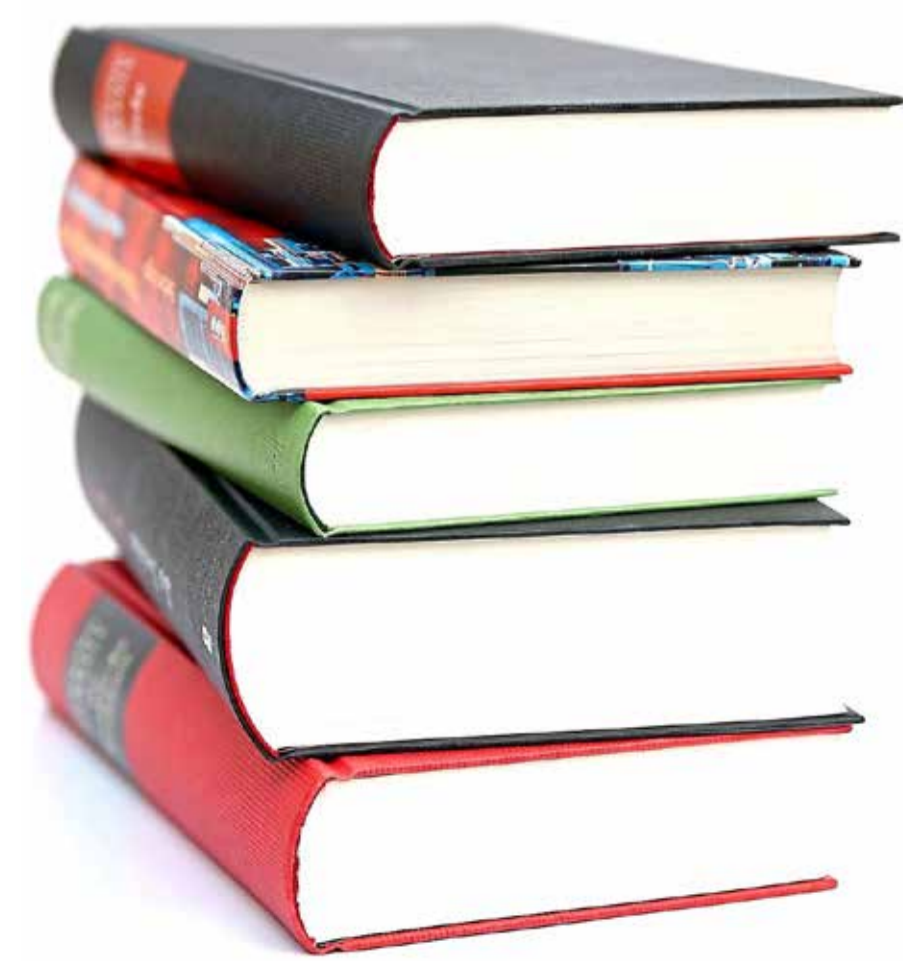
I watched for best practices that I could apply to my brand.

I was mature enough to ask people for feedback about my weaknesses even it

hurt my emotions.

Little by little, wound by wound, success by success, I made my way into becoming a marketer despite my lack of formal training.

Success was made sweeter when my first boss told me, "You're now one of them."



3 SOFT SKILLS MATTER AND YOU CAN'T LEARN THEM INSIDE THE CLASSROOM

What does it take to become successful in your chosen field of career?

Getting a degree specialising in that field can give you the easy advantage of course. But theory is useless if you can't apply them in the real world.

Your boss won't care if you graduated with straight As or if you were on the dean's list.

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Rather, he'll care if you can get along with your teammates, or if you can lead a project with teammates twice your age.

He'll be worried if you can't present a 10-slide PowerPoint deck with confidence.

He'll observe your energy and check how good you are in making decisions in times of ambiguity, and during those moments when he's not around.

These make up a person's soft skills:

your attitude, your personality, your motivation, and your emotional quotient (EQ) – all of which can never be taught in schools. T

They are critical when the going gets tough at work, especially during those moments when you just want to give up or because your boss is the evilest person in the world.

Employees who get to climb the ivory towers of the corporate world aren't necessarily the smartest ones in the room, but they do know how to hire people smarter than them and influence them effectively to get things done – all thanks to their soft skills.

Unfortunately, you can't buy soft skills at the nearest convenience stores.

They're part of your DNA, influenced by how your parents raised you or how your environment shaped you.

Soft skills can be developed, however, and be improved over time by exposing yourself to more mistakes and more role models – a beautiful proof that degrees are just a small part of the bigger picture.

TAKE THIS ADVICE WITH A PINCH OF SALT

Not everyone will fall into the same situation as I did. I am arguably a fortunate case of being in the right place, at the right time and with the right heart – but there will be many of us, and you can be a part of that statistics if you persevere. The only enemy of the ambitious is time.

So, if you are somebody reading this article with a university course you feel you have wrongfully chosen (and painfully forced to stick it out for three years or more), know that the possibilities remain abundant.

Imagine the amazing things that are yet to come five years from now!



A FUTURE WITHOUT JOBS? DON'T WORRY, YOU CAN STILL BUILD ONE!

By **CAROLINE CENIZA-LEVINE**
editor@leaderonomics.com

WHETHER you blame robots, artificial intelligence, or automation more broadly, the proactive professional needs to plan for a successful career in a future without jobs.

It is not enough to know how to navigate a company hierarchy because that company may completely restructure. It is not enough to understand how to find another job because it might make more sense to do freelance or launch a business.

It is not enough to develop deep expertise in any one industry because your industry might be disrupted beyond recognition (my two main industries, financial services and media, look nothing like they did when my career started 25 years ago!).

In a future without jobs, you have to be far more self-reliant and prepared to constantly drum up your own opportunities.

Here are three ways to build a successful career in a future without jobs:

1 BECOME A MONEY MANAGER

I don't mean to enter the wealth management business specifically, since you don't have to be in financial services to be in money management these days. Anyone who relies on their career to make a living needs to manage their earnings for the long haul.

People are living longer – if your peak career earnings occur in your 40s or 50s, you can have 30 or 40 more years after that where you still need to support yourself.

Traditional, defined benefit retirement plans are going away, so you're your own pension manager now.

You must be prepared to earn money, manage your everyday budget so you put some aside, invest it to build a large enough nest egg for when your earnings inevitably wane or cease entirely, and then draw it down in such a way that you don't run out of money.

Mind your salary requirements and refine those negotiation skills – you're not just building a career; you're building an annuity that needs to support you for decades. In a future without jobs, you are a money manager, in addition to whatever other roles you hold.

2 BUILD A BRAND, NOT A RESUME

Just like everyone will need to know money management, today's professional will need to know marketing and branding. You can't just hire a resume writer, even a good one, and think you'll be competitive.

You need an online presence – a LinkedIn profile at minimum and typically multiple social media platforms and ideally your own website.

You need to establish thought leadership by getting published, appearing in media, and/or speaking at conferences.

In addition to these tangible pieces of market-

ing collateral, you need to generate word-of-mouth by maintaining a helpful and influential network.

In a future with jobs, your ability to generate opportunities will depend heavily on your brand – who knows about you, who wants what you offer.

3 ACCEPT THAT THE LINE BETWEEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND EMPLOYMENT IS GONE

Branding, targeted networking, and managing the money are some of the activities that are now your purview because you are an entrepreneur, even if your pay stubs and tax status suggest you are an employee.

Many jobs are already "at-will" meaning that you can leave and your employer can also let you go without much difficulty. But with change happening much more frequently (in whole markets, in select industries, and down to the individual company level) job security is even more tenuous.

Today's professional is operating in a shorter-term capacity than the phrase "permanent, full-time employment" suggests.

You need to accept that your current job is a project that may or may not last. You need to keep your pipeline of opportunities full and your marketability high, such that you can land the next opportunity when you need it (whether consulting or employed on payroll).

In a future without jobs your career is a business, and you are its chief executive officer.

BRINGING IT TOGETHER

Self-motivation, self-sufficiency and self-discipline are critical to a successful career in a future without jobs. If you get complacent, your skills, expertise, network, and therefore pipeline of opportunities will atrophy.

There may not be another job to jump to, so get used to making your own. Not everyone may have chosen to be an entrepreneur and some may still think it's too risky.

But in many industries already upended, you have no choice but to embrace a more entrepreneurial version of your former career, and pending a future without jobs, entrepreneurship looks like the surer bet right now.

Critical thinking is one of the essential skills that contribute to an individual's career success, regardless of one's profession, especially in the future of work. The good news is anyone can train their minds to think critically. Check out the article on Leaderonomics.com: bit.ly/2ALmgWd

■ **Caroline Ceniza-Levine** is an author, speaker, executive coach, recruiter and comedian. She is the co-founder of *SixFiguresStart* which coaches executives and entrepreneurs on their professional and personal success. Liked this article? Share your thoughts with us at editor@leaderonomics.com. This article first appeared on *Forbes*.