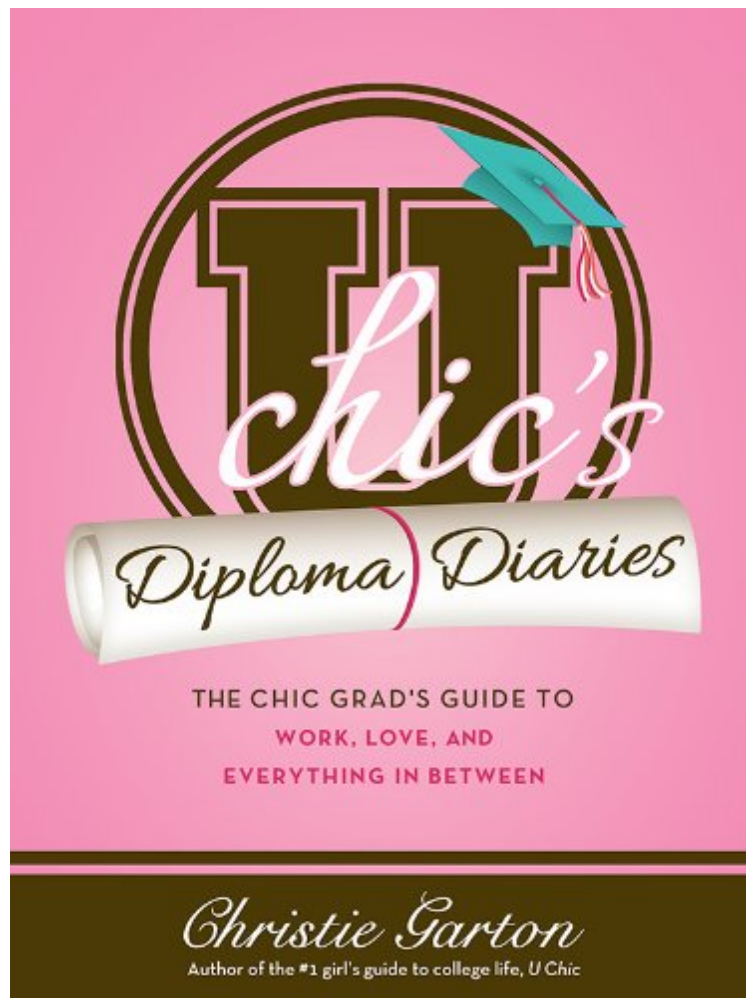


[FREE] U Chic's Diploma Diaries: The Chic Grad's Guide to Work, Love, and Everything in Between

## U Chic's Diploma Diaries: The Chic Grad's Guide to Work, Love, and Everything in Between

*Christie Garton*

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**Christie Garton : U Chic's Diploma Diaries: The Chic Grad's Guide to Work, Love, and Everything in Between** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised U Chic's Diploma Diaries: The Chic Grad's Guide to Work, Love, and Everything in Between:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Loved it!By Jenn KAs soon as I got this book, I couldn't put it down. Being that this book was marketed towards my age bracket, I found it extremely relatable. It provides different stories from different women on their experiences. All different women, from different colleges with their own stories to tell. Yet I found I could relate to at least one piece from every part.It was a very honest book, something I think every young woman should read. It's absolutely one I'll be recommending to quite a few friends of mine, who are going through the same transition.My favorite quote: "Understanding that life won't go according to plan leaves you with

two choices: let the fear of the unknown overwhelm you or embrace the uncertainty."-Jenn0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great advice for any 20- or 30-something!By Rachel PappThis is NOT your standard "you've graduated from college, now it's time to grow up" book. These are personal stories from women who have learned valuable life lessons, and want to share them with you. Even though I've been out of college for almost ten years, there are words of wisdom in this book that I will apply to my own life. I can relate to these women. And no matter how old we are, we can all still learn from one another.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very EntertainingBy Jeni RuthThis book was a great read for any girl trying to figure out what to do next. The stories are personal and entertaining, they will make you both laugh and cry. Most importantly though the stories teach you life lessons that will help you to figure out what to do next after finishing up your degree. I absolutely recommend this book for any post-grad young woman!

The College Grad's Guide to a Fabulous Life in the Real World!Life after college is an amazing adventure, and best of all, you get to decide how to do it! But the real world can be daunting too, from job stress to new dating rules to learning to live on a serious budget. To help you navigate this transition, the editors of the #1 college women's website, UChic.com, created this indispensable guide, packed with true stories, tips, and tricks for achieving a fabulous future, including:Living Arrangements: Being the new kid in town and making the most of where you end upFirst Job Success: Climbing th ladder, dealing with workplace gossip, and succeeding in salary negotiationsDating Essentials: Workplace hookups, long-distance love, and dating post-collegeHealthy and Happy: Beating the postgrad blues, staying safe, and tips on how to not burn outThe Social Scene: Finding new friends and developing your passionsMoney Matters: Managing student loans, credit card woes, and budgeting for your dreams"Christie had created the guide I wish I had when I graduated from college. She and the U Chic team will help readers thriveand have a lot of funduring the daunting postcollege transition."mdash;Kimberly Palmer, author of Generation Earn and personal finance columnist at U.S. News World Report

"UChic's guide really made me think about all the other graduating ladies-what if they didn't have the support or advice I had been given? What would I tell them? I would hand them a copy of UChic's Diploma Diaries " - Ms. Career GirlAbout the AuthorChristie Garton is the founder and CEO of UChic.com, the #1 online resource and networking community for high school and college-age women. With its "100% Behind You" commitment, the company gives a portion of its profits to the company's Open Door Foundation, which supports young women in their academic and career pursuits. She is a graduate of the University of Kansas and the University of Pennsylvania Law School.Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.Chapter 1 Real World Bound So you're getting set to graduate from college. Or maybe you already have. You're likely wondering what your future holds. Great question, right? That's entirely your call. As the saying goes, the sky is the limit. But hold on a sec! While it's inspiring to think that the future holds limitless possibilities with the right experience in your back pocket (like that hard-won diploma), it is frustrating that the specifics on how to accomplish those possibilities-what to focus on and what steps to take-aren't readily apparent. The reality is that while you have been on a long journey to get that college degree, it is far from over. Your journey into the real world brings a whole new set of challenges not seen during college, and with these challenges come incredible possibilities. The main difference between the college and the real-world journeys is the heightened focus on your sense of self. The postcollege transition is truly a time for self-discovery. In the real world, you no longer have a professor or academic advisor to tell you that you have to do one thing over another. Your parents, friends, and family will probably be available to help weigh in on difficult decisions, but you don't have to answer to them or listen to them, either. You are the only person you answer to now. While knowing that you are in charge can be empowering, it can be equally intimidating. I know how weird this change can feel. After a few years out of college, I attended law school and graduated, but along the way, I realized that practicing law wasn't for me. Fast-forward to the summer after law-school graduation, when I was supposed to be studying for the bar exam (that stressful exam that all law-school graduates have to pass to legally begin practicing law). Instead, I found myself rethinking my entire future. Sure, I'd been offered a job with a prestigious law firm in D.C., but did I really want to go that route? After all, I had started a business in law school, and it was beginning to take off. Maybe I should focus 100 percent of my time on building this company I had created. I was so confused about what I should do. I called my parents. I called my friends. I hashed it out with my boyfriend so many times. Should I even take the bar, if I wasn't planning to practice law forever? Everyone listened to the pros and cons, but no one had the answer. The decision was up to me-and that was a stressful realization! After several restless nights, I finally decided what I had to do. Gathering up all the courage I could muster, I just stopped studying for the bar. I swear, the clouds opened up that day and the sun came out. It really felt good to finally decide on something I knew was right. From weighing whether to go to grad school or take a job, to determining how quickly you can and want to pay off those dreadful student loans, you will be faced with difficult decisions that only you can make. But with every choice you make, you are becoming more and more the adult you are meant to be, and a great sense of pride comes with making your way through this admittedly stressful process. To give you a little helpful guidance, we have gathered a series of essays in this chapter from

postgrads who have recently made that same journey. From fruitless job searches to graduate-school applications to taking jobs that had absolutely nothing to do with what they had studied in college, these girls have seen it all. Some found instant success; others had to try a few different things before discovering the right path for themselves. What these young women all have in common is the resounding message that if you face those real-world challenges with a positive attitude, nothing can stop you from getting to where you are meant to be. And that makes the difficult real-world transition worth the effort in the end. \*\*\*

### "52 Cups of Coffee" Eased the Real-World Transition

Megan Gebhart Michigan State University graduate Graduation day is the first day of the rest of your life. The first step into the real world. Which means that if you don't get the perfect job-and have the perfect plan-you've set yourself up for irreversible failure. This was the terrifying belief that consumed me during my senior year. At the time, I assumed I would have a fancy job in a cubicle somewhere, scaling the corporate ladder one rung at a time, inching closer and closer to a promotion and an increasingly impressive job title and salary. Because that's what people expected me to do with my expensive college degree. And that's probably what I would be doing if I hadn't embarked on my crazy experiment in caffeine and conversation. I decided that every week for a year I would have coffee with a stranger and write about what I learned in the process. I named it "52 Cups of Coffee" and called it an experiment because I knew meeting fifty-two new people would change my life. I just didn't know how. I never expected that it would inspire me to give up the job search, sell most of my belongings, and spend an entire year traveling to more than sixteen countries, twenty-eight states, and seventy-five cities. Essentially twelve months of waking up excited about the uncertainty of where the day would take me. It all started during my sophomore year of college, when a stranger (to me, at least; he was actually a friend of a friend) asked me to coffee and I said yes without expecting much. I certainly didn't think that meeting would turn into a lifelong friendship. One day I was reflecting on that experience, and my curiosity got the best of me-if one small new connection like that could change my life, what would a year of new connections do? I figured there was only one way to find out. I set up my class schedule so I was free to meet people on Wednesdays and Fridays, developed the website ([52cups.tumblr.com](http://52cups.tumblr.com)), and wrote the introductory post to kick off the experiment. At the time, I never expected that over the course of a year, I would have coffee with such a diverse group of people, including a homeless man in my hometown, Apple cofounder Steve Wozniak, a six-year-old Native American, and the wife of the Romanian ambassador to the Netherlands. I didn't have an exact recipe for finding people. The process was a mix of serendipity and taking chances-much like real life.

### U Chic's Reality Check

College is a perfect time to start building professional relationships, and the sooner you start the better! Wondering how to start your own "52 Cups of Coffee" experience with a complete stranger? Identify someone who shares similar interests or has experience in your field of study. Ask! This step is the scariest, but with practice it gets much easier. Reach out via a phone call or email to explain who you are and why you are interested in meeting. Then ask if the person would be willing to meet for twenty minutes. The meeting will likely last longer than that, but asking for only twenty minutes shows that you respect their time. Do your research. Knowing more about the person or industry and having a few questions in mind will help you feel prepared for the meeting and ensure that you have plenty to talk about. Listen! This is the most important and often the most difficult part. You're there to learn, which won't happen if you talk the whole time. Follow up. Thank them for their time, and if the meeting went well, stay in touch-you never know where a new connection will lead you! I reached out to people I knew of through social media or other campus and community events and asked friends and mentors for recommendations of people who might be willing to have coffee with me. My original intent was to stick to people within my community, but over time, a powerful thing started to happen-the more people I met, the more confidence I found to reach out to people I didn't know at all. I started reaching out to notable individuals I found fascinating: a graphic artist in Chicago I admire, the inspirational female entrepreneur in Detroit I saw on the news, a world champion ultra-marathon runner competing in the same half marathon I was preparing to run in Washington, D.C. At the same time, I started receiving unsolicited emails and tweets from people interested in connecting or friends wanting to make introductions to their fascinating friends. I had coffee with Jonathan Zittrain, a Harvard Law School professor, because he reached out to me via Twitter and it just so happened that we were attending the same conference in Austin, Texas. I met Piotr Pasik, a graduate student at Michigan State, because a good friend emailed me and insisted that I include him in the project. I found that saying yes to unexpected opportunity (that I could pay for, thanks to my part-time job) led to tremendously interesting experiences. Case in point: When I met Piotr for coffee, I never would have predicted that six months later I would be a guest in Piotr's childhood home in a rural town in Poland and that his 86-year-old grandmother would become Cup 40 of the project. That was the magic of this endeavor-the constant uncertainty of what the next cup would bring. I didn't know who I would meet, what I would learn, or how I would change from each encounter. Hearing stories from all walks of life-teachers, entrepreneurs, artists, executives, parents, athletes-has had a lasting impact on me, and a positive one at that. Seeing the world from many perspectives taught me the most important lesson I could have learned before graduating: Success isn't about having a perfect plan. Moreover, life doesn't always go according to plan. Life throws you curveballs. Sometimes good ones-unexpectedly falling in love, discovering a passion, stumbling into an incredible career opportunity. And sometimes ones that test your strength-losing a loved one, losing your job, facing an unexpected illness or tragedy. I heard all of these stories and more, which led me to a realization. Understanding that

life won't go according to plan leaves you with two choices: let the fear of the unknown overwhelm you or embrace the uncertainty. At the start of my senior year, I was terrified of the uncertainty that graduation would bring, but by the end of 52 Cups, I found the uncertainty exhilarating. Why? Because over and over again, I heard stories of people navigating the uncertainty well, taking risks and finding great success and happiness despite the challenges and setbacks. Understanding that life won't go according to plan leaves you with two choices: let the fear of the unknown overwhelm you or embrace the uncertainty. For example, Torya Blanchard, in what she calls her Fight Club moment, decided she was going to quit her teaching job and cash in her 401(k) to start a (now-thriving) restaurant in Detroit. Stefan Olander was happy being a Nordic ski instructor when a friend convinced him to start working for a tiny athletic company called Nike. Fifteen years later, he is the vice president of Nike Digital Sport. Tom Izzo, Michigan State's head basketball coach, was so determined to become a head coach that he was willing to work as a graduate assistant for the MSU basketball team, living off a measly \$4,000 salary at age 30, because that's what he had to do in order to one day become the head coach. Every story taught me a lesson in how to react when life doesn't go according to plan and, more importantly, showed me that instead of worrying about having the perfect plan, I should focus my attention on making the most of the situation I find myself in today. Because if you can make the most of today, you'll create opportunities for tomorrow. If you can make the most of today, you'll create opportunities for tomorrow. While it was scary to tap into my savings account and plan a trip while all my friends applied for impressive jobs, I knew that I was making the right choice. The stories I heard gave me faith that if I trusted my instincts, they would lead me in the right direction. Thankfully, my assumption was right. When I stopped looking for the perfect job and focused on what I loved, the perfect job found me. After I had traveled for six months on my own, Michigan State's alumni association offered me a marketing job where I would travel to various cities to connect with young alumni—a great position for a traveler with a love for good conversation. And what happens once that job is over? I don't know. But that's okay. I know that if I can figure out what I love to do, find the courage to do it, and do it well, life will work out, and I'll have a lot of fun in the process.