

**Life After College:**  
**Built on Purpose & Meaning**

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***What do you intend to do after graduation from NYU Stern, and why?***

I'm the first person in my family to go to college, and not just in my instant family of five but in my extended family from my mother and father's side. The pressure of being the first born and a first-generation Latina has always felt heavy. Growing up, my father worked hard labor jobs over 60 hours a week to provide for us, while my mom cleaned homes. Money had always been a topic of hard conversations for us. I can still remember my uncle telling me that the future of my family depends on me at my high school graduation and farewell party.

When I applied to NYU during the Early Decision I phase in October of 2018, I was hoping they would offer me a scholarship. My college advisor ensured me they wouldn't since NYU isn't known to give much financial aid. He discouraged me from applying, saying it would be a waste of my time and efforts because even if I were to be accepted, I could never afford it. I didn't listen, and instead I poured out my heart on my application.

On December 13<sup>th</sup>, I received my college acceptance letter. There, at the end of the letter, were instructions on how to accept my offer of admission *and* my financial aid award package. I quickly clicked on the link and read the Stern Scholarship amount. I grabbed a calculator and compared numbers; the NYU Financial Aid, FAFSA and other scholarships I achieved covered my entire tuition. I cried after receiving this news, hopeful for not only my future but that of my family's.

It has been four years since that day, I'm about to graduate and much has changed. In my college application, I wrote of my dreams in owning a traditional marketing firm, while pursuing social justice endeavors. However, after exploring myself these past few years, my dreams have expanded. They now include landing a marketing position at an acclaimed and established company like Google, where work culture is valued. Once receiving an offer letter with my

salary, I plan on buying an investment property, that I can build a business from and generate passive income through short-term and vacation rental agreements, such as Airbnb. As I grow my investment returns, I would like to buy at least four more properties throughout the years. Most importantly though, and as time permits, I would like to focus on my self-development journey and advocate for mental health through writing books.

I'd like to say that college was simple and enjoyable, but the better description would be a journey of learning lessons after learning lessons. Most of these involved painful experiences. My freshmen year at NYU, back in 2019, I was struggling with my finances and identity. I landed in New York full of hope and confidence, but as the weeks passed by, I felt out of place. Everyone around me looked and carried themselves differently, and I was playing catch up. On a Tuesday morning in late October, I cried while trying to find something to wear. I called my mom and went on a rant, and she comforted me and told me to take the day off from school. She sent me \$50 and insisted I go shopping instead.

At the time, my parents were doing the best they could to their abilities. Looking back at it, I am disappointed in how ungrateful I must have appeared, having meltdowns over not being able to express myself through fashion—I'm not even a fashion student. I had become caught up in blending with the crowd and conforming to social norms, losing sight of my own person. For a while, I had forgotten that while I was studying in New York City, my parents were back in Dallas working long hours to care for my younger siblings. I wasn't only living my dream but theirs too. Unfortunately, I would continue to struggle in the semester, allowing my feelings to get the best of me to the point of hospitalization in December. I missed some finals, and as a result, failed my Calculus course.

This failure created a snowball effect, and I would feel incompetent because of it in the following years. I failed another course my sophomore year, after escaping an abusive relationship and dealing with the trauma. I went into debt my junior year, after my parents announced a divorce and I took out a loan to support my mother and sister financially. I panicked and almost deferred from school for a year after losing my job the Summer before my final year when our company abruptly shut down. Through my college years, it has felt as though I have had no emotional break from unexpected and quite challenging hardships. However, these obstacles have made my experience as a student at NYU more meaningful.

After reaching the lowest point of my life this year, I decided I could no longer allow my circumstances to define me. I realized the only way I could shift my direction was by aligning my thoughts and behavior with the vision I had created for myself. It has taken conscious and intentional work to achieve a more balanced lifestyle, living accordingly to all my values. As a person who finds meaning in connection, I strive to work in ways which positively affect those around me and give back to those who have supported me: my family, partner, and friends.

My plans after graduation are built and shaped by what the above challenges and many more have uncovered. I have found that without purpose, there is little meaning to hard work. My goal is not to become the next Jeff Bezos—although that would be cool—nor is it to be on a billboard—although I would love that. My goal is to provide for my family, give back to my community, change a person's life, and live intentionally.

Living with intention involves developing an understanding of different views, welcoming new ideas and foreign concepts, respecting others and my environment, and speaking, thinking, and behaving in ways that inspire and motivate an unleashing of my full potential and higher self. To reach my higher self, I observe my thoughts, accept all that I feel

and am easy on myself. I accept the process of my emotions while preventing them from dictating my actions. I live a balanced life, focusing my energy on what is worthwhile and letting go of all which does not serve me.

When I first walked the Stern halls, I could see myself working at Goldman Sachs, making 6 figures a year, and waking up in a floor to ceiling window condo at some building near Central Park but nothing more. There was light on the other side of the tunnel, but not much else. Today, there are people in need of help and guidance on the other side of this tunnel.

Although I may not have a job lined up at a big company yet, like many of my peers do, I trust in my abilities to find the right position at an organization that values education and community. I will work in a place that encourages self-growth and strives for excellence in several areas that have a direct and positive impact on their stakeholders, including their investors, employees, customers, suppliers, communities, and environment. With my personal time, I will find ways to generate passive income to secure the future of my family and increase my flexibility to give time to others.

In 2017, I adopted an 8-year-old child from Taiwan, whose name is Sorrawit Ar-yi through Compassion. Compassion is a charitable organization with a holistic approach to releasing children from poverty. Adopting him meant I would provide financially to ensure food security, medical assistance, education, and other necessities for him. He would write to me every month in Mandarin, expressing himself through art by drawing, and it would be translated by a professional for me. I'd write back as much as I could. I was part of this organization for as long as possible, before encountering my own financial hardships and having to end my involvement.

In my self-development journey, my passion for helping others grew. While I am no longer involved with Compassion, I will dedicate my time in becoming directly involved to helping children and families after graduation. Despite that this is my last year at NYU, I decided I wanted to minor in Child & Adolescent Mental Health Studies, and there was enough room in my curriculum to complete this in the upcoming Spring semester. Now, I am registered and on track to graduate with a major in Marketing and a minor in CAMS, and I am excited to apply what I learn in the classroom to the real world.

After investing in properties, establishing strong sources of passive income, and completing at least two years of work experience at the position I attain after college, I plan on dedicating a minimum of 6 consecutive months to international community work. By then, I would have also completed my first book, which is currently in progress and titled *Cliché*, based on the infamous aphorism of “fake it until you make it” and further rewritten into “fake it until you become it.”

As my manifesto reflects, what I will be doing after college involves simultaneous practices of being clear in my vision, aligning my behavior, overcoming obstacles and being mindful and intentional. I have found a peaceful balance between my values, my education, and my work, and am inspired to continue this lifelong journey of constant lessons and growth. The rest of my life will be established on what I find meaningful, but it is important to understand that purpose and meaning is different for everyone.

Some students will find purpose in their vocation, while others in their responsibilities to their family and friends. Some will find purpose in living a healthy lifestyle, while others in their music. I will applaud and be happy for those of my peers who will be working at Goldman Sachs, making 6 figures a year, and waking up in a floor to ceiling window condo near Central

Park. To many, this is an unattainable and far-fetched dream; this is what the American Dream looks like, requires hard work and is an achievement to be very proud of. However, this is not where I find meaning and purpose.

What I intend to do after graduation from NYU Stern is to prepare myself to live according to my purpose; and my purpose is instilled on making a direct impact on the life of others through guiding them in their self-development path, helping those in need of basic survival necessities, and caring for my loved ones. To fulfill this purpose, I will find an organization with a work environment that has similar values. I will invest in my several fields of interest that generate consistent returns. I will work hard to achieve the time and financial freedom I will need to dedicate myself to others in the future. Most of all, I will live being true to the person I am.