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Is College Worth the Cost? Absolutely

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As you will see throughout this chapter, the cost of obtaining a college education has been increasingly questioned at a time of economic uncertainty and unprecedented rise in student debt. Most arguments made in favor of higher education focus on the better employment opportunities and higher lifetime income of college graduates. But not all arguments in support of college take an economic perspective. Below, media marketing strategist Piyush Mangukiya briefly suggests one reason to attend college: It will improve our social and emotional lives.

College is more than classes, papers, and exams. It is also a meaningful social experience, where people develop friendships and long-term relationships. People who don't attend college miss out on several important experiences that, like income potential, have lifelong implications.

College offers young people the opportunity to live, work, and socialize within a contained society made up almost exclusively of people their age. They share experiences and develop close personal relationships. Almost 30% of Americans report meeting their future spouses in college. Not all of these marriages began with college relationships, but they did find a spark in a friendship developed on campus. Even though the cliché of the "high school sweethearts" is still well known, in fact, only 15% of Americans marry someone with whom they had a relationship in high school.

Finding a spouse is not the only social/emotional benefit of a college education. College-educated Americans, according to several studies:

- Are more self-confident in social situations
- Are more effective communicators
- Have more friends
- Suffer less frequently from anxiety
- Have higher self-esteem
- Are more likely to believe they have control over their own lives

POINTS TO CONSIDER

1. Do you think going to college can enhance a person's social life? Don't people who haven't attended college still retain friendships and family ties?