

**Degrees? Why and Why Not? II**

by [**Chris Twist**](https://qlifemagazine.com/lasvegas/qlife-lasvegas-july-2017/degrees-why-and-why-not-ii)

In the first article, we learned about two people who felt very different about their degrees. One of them, Michael Erle, was a little bit mad and felt like he was just doing it for his mom and dad. The other man, James Joseph Brown, was fine with not using his degree. It wasn't about work for him; it was about learning something that he always cared about more than just about everything else, being a writer.

Now, in the second article, we are learning about four more people who each have their own feelings and ideas about their degrees and what their lives are like right now. It has been very interesting to learn about how having a degree can be enough and how sometimes, it just isn't enough.

So, let's start learning about these four people and what they are doing with their lives now.

Joe Sacco

I chose to get a degree in Criminal Justice from UNLV because I was most interested in the subject matter - more so than any other degree programs. I never wanted to become a law enforcement agent (police officer), but I've always considered getting my law degree and becoming a public speaker, policy maker, and/or attorney. I may still do that.

I have used my diverse knowledge, which I gained in my undergraduate degree, in every single thing I do in life, both personally and professionally. I wouldn't be the person standing here today if I hadn't gone to college.

Helping people is helping people. Whether I'm helping a family in court, helping change an unfair law, or helping a first-time homebuyer navigate the business of real estate, each opportunity to help others is equally rewarding.

If I could enter a time machine and go back to the moment I chose to declare my degree, I would have chosen something more focused on science -- perhaps chemistry or biology. All these years later, I realize that a liberal arts degree is not strong enough to compete in our current economy. Science, technology, engineering, and math are fields that yield high salaries with less competition than some of the avenues I have pursued in my life so far.

From talking with Joe Sacco, I learned that just because you have a degree in one area doesn't mean that it won't help you in other areas.

Miranda Smith

**You have three degrees. What are these degrees?**

English: Creative Writing Emphasis, Broadcast Communications: Radio, Television, and Film Emphasis; and Women's Studies

**How long have you been a producer and performer?**

Over 10 years for Burlesque, and another 25 for in theatre.

My decision to change my work came after my father passed away in 2011. He was my best friend, and I just fell apart. I lost my mom two years later. Burlesque saved me. For those few hours, I wasn't alone, and I was living for my parents; not without them.

**What else would you like to do?**

I plan to return to counseling.

From Miranda Smith, I learned that working in social services could be used in something very, very different like being a Burlesque performer. She is able to help other performers who are having problems in their lives because she knows how to be a counselor. I can think of about 100 ways in which having the ability to counsel can help any work she does in the future.

Danielle Lombardo

**Why did you get a degree in acting?**

I had taken acting classes since I was eight years old. I went to a magnet middle school and a Performing Arts high school. There was no question in my mind that acting was my calling.

**Do you ever use your degree in acting as an RBT (Registered Behavior Technician)?**

My college theatre professor would have us repeat daily when approaching a scene or monolog: What do I want? What's in my way? What do I do to get what I want?

Behavior is all about communication. We constantly ask the question, "What does this individual want? How do we get them to ask for what they want, without maladaptive/aggressive behavior?" ABA addresses this question by trying to identify the function of the behavior and teach socially appropriate replacement behaviors. In theatre, we constantly use tactics, change our vocal tones and facial expressions, improvise, and try to identify what the character wants. It's the same when approaching individuals whose behavior I'm trying to change. I need to change my tactics and build rapport so I can identify what would motivate them to make decisions that will lead them to a more independent life.

In the end, Danielle Lombardo actually believes that she is helping more as a helper for students then she could ever help people as an actor. She is happy about what she has done with her life, because she is helping children all the time.

Danielle D'Anna

**You have a CSN degree for commercial photography, but you are the manager of a skincare store. Did you try to get work as a photographer, but it didn't happen? If so, why?**

It didn't happen due to the fact that as I began school for my degree, I had no idea that the objective of the career was to be a freelancer. Sure, you can work as an in-house photographer, but they typically do not make great money, and overall, I was just not happy with those two options only.

**Do you ever use your degree in photography as the manager of a skincare store?**

Absolutely not. There is no place for creativity whatsoever.

**What else would you like to do?**

I would like to study advertising theory and building demographics; marketing in general.

**Why did you first choose photography for your degree?**

I chose photography as it was the only thing that sang to me. It really felt like my calling, but honestly, converting to digital and doing a lot of work in Photoshop really crushed the feelings of authenticity it once had.

I have to say that I don't feel the same about Photoshop. I love Photoshop as using it can make a complete difference and can sometimes turn alright photos into marvelous photos. This is all that I am going to say about that. Still, Danielle D'Anna is fine with having a degree and not using it. She has worked in the skin area most of her life, so it isn't weird for her to do that.

Unlike the last article, in which one of the two was very unhappy about his degree, this article does not seem to have anyone who was foolish with his or her degrees. I guess that our feelings about our degrees are very different. Nevertheless, I believe that this article might help young people who want diverse degrees to think more about what it is that they really want. Do they really want money? Do they really want to be creative—as creative as they can be? Which city/town do they want to live in, and does that change anything for them? They should think about all these things before starting a degree that might or might not give them what they want. Younger readers of this article should think about this before they get into a degree that they might not be happy with later.