At Tufts, students line up outside the library on Sunday mornings to make sure they get the choice seats. At the University of Connecticut, a dormitory director notes that currently there are no choice seats available. Students are now a four-year phenomenon. At Brown, a senior started the dormitory’s line political discussion of the term, only to be asked by freshmen to keep quiet.

These single-minded students will probably get good grades out of their four years, but may not get a good education. The Association of American Colleges (AAC) is studying the meaning of the bachelor’s degree, but it is a study that seems too long overdue. The pressure from a stagnating economy, students have apparently realized that such a degree is nothing more than a necessity for a graduate degree as more than a means to an end.

I entered MIT with the expectation of going on to graduate school or becoming a nuclear engineer. My original goal was quite different in a sea of ideas whose existence I never contemplated. Newspaper, teaching, and classes challenged me to think about what I would do with my technical education after I left MIT for the real world.

A tentative conclusion began to emerge from the confusion, but it was clarified by people who I might individually be capable of significantly improving the world. What a silly notion: very few individuals make lasting contributions to mankind, and I was surely not in their class. Still confused and somewhat ashamed of my egotism, I supposed the idea.

I continued to read and listen and search, and I became angry. No one seemed to be able to deal with the world’s many pressing problems. My efforts were worthwhile: somewhat, at least, until sure that all the tools of my success were in working order. I come to believe that I was morally obligated to try.

One day I read a speech Senator Robert Kennedy had given to a group of South African students. He told them:

Few have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all, those events will be written the history of this generation.

Of course—while my singular endeavors might not have any great effect by themselves, my efforts would join with those of others to achieve the changes the world so sorely needed. My radical idea was bound to be successful. The me generation was a misnomer, for a group of people concerned about the world’s problems, was, to a part of the system that many are willing to submerge or eliminate, a strange notion: very few in the world who care, I wonder. Why? I wish.

Gerard Weatherby

A plane crash that hit home

I didn’t find the paper on the kitchen table or where I was supposed to start to the front steps of the building. It took a while to find it, after my roommate left. I walked to MIT with the thought that I might individually be capable of significantly improving the world. What a silly notion: very few individuals make lasting contributions to mankind, and I was surely not in their class. Still confused and somewhat ashamed of my egotism, I supposed the idea.

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