

# Chapter One

## GET READY TO START YOUR MONEY MISSION

Congratulations on your courage! You are embarking on a quest to find the money you need for college. You have catapulted ahead of most students by taking on this mission. You are a revolutionary!

Like most students, you know you need money for college. The traditional route—applying for financial aid with the FAFSA, searching the internet for additional scholarships, and playing the Waiting Game (more on that in a minute)—might seem like a good plan, but this process is no longer ideal. College loan debt is on the rise, and this system is inadequate for the rapidly rising costs of higher education.

You want a different result. You need a different plan. Our approach to scholarship searching will open doors to unbelievable outcomes.



Get ready, because you are about to step up your game—big time. You are going to rise above the crowd with this new approach. You and *you alone* will determine the limits of what you can achieve.

Ultimately, you will hold on to this mantra: **If it is to be, it is up to me.**

## A Commitment to Possibility

The Money Mission requires you to commit to:

- 🕒 *Get organized*
- 🕒 *Stay focused*
- 🕒 *Research myriad resources (beyond the obvious ones)*

To accomplish your mission, you will have to work hard. You know that “if it is to be, it is up to me.”

On the other hand, students without a Money Mission choose to wait. They wait to be told, wait to be given, wait to be shown scholarship opportunities by a school counselor or parent. They are playing what we call the Waiting Game.

**Only you** can decide whether to play the Waiting Game or commit to a Money Mission. Your future is at stake!

Consider the following: Your parents most likely possess the same knowledge and experience as you in this process. They might also be going through this process for the first time. And while your school counselors are there to assist you, they are also busy assisting *every other student*. They are busy professionals with many priorities other than you.

From here on out, any time someone—your counselor, parent, anyone—gives you a scholarship application, consider it a bonus. After all, this is your dream, your future, your life. You control all of it.



All of these statements are valid and very important. Higher education is more expensive than ever. Unemployment and other financial burdens make the cost of college a struggle for many families. In the United States, student loan debt is at crisis proportions. But there is more to consider. Your Money Mission is much bigger than filling financial gaps or earning status. You need scholarship money because **YOU NEED CHOICES**. These choices can open up a world of possibilities to you. For example:

- ⑤ *Scholarship money gives you the ability to go to your first choice school (if your grades and credentials will gain admission).*
- ⑤ *Scholarship money means choosing where—the city or town, the country or state—you want to study.*
- ⑤ *Scholarship money means you choose how to allocate any money you or your parents have saved, whether it's to pay for graduate school, the down payment on your first house, or seed money to launch your dream business. The possibilities are endless.*
- ⑤ *Scholarship money gives you freedom from working long hours while in school, giving you more time for the things that matter—studying, extracurricular activities, volunteer and internship opportunities, and time with friends.*



**Outside scholarships** come from individuals, organizations, companies, and foundations. These scholarships are not associated with a college or university or the government.

The bottom line is that **scholarship money allows you to make choices based on the pursuit of personal fulfillment** rather than mere survival.



I have always had to fend for myself. I couldn't count on my parents because of addiction and incarceration. Somehow

I've managed to pass my classes and keep my head up. I want to apply for scholarships and go to college. Truthfully though, I've always felt like I am waiting around for a handout when it comes to scholarships. Now I know I've got to make it my business to make my dreams come true. My Money Mission is to apply to every type of scholarship I can find.

—Selena C., 12th Grade Student



## Did You Know?

Student loan debt in the U.S. is on the rise. In 2015, almost 71 percent of bachelor's degree recipients graduated with student loans. Ten years earlier, that number was 64 percent. And 20 years earlier, less than half of all students left college with loans.

YEAR	%	AVERAGE DEBT AT GRADUATION
2015	71%	\$37,672
2005	64%	\$22,575
1995	<50%	\$12,255

Source: Mark Kantrowitz, Edvisors

As you work on your Money Mission, you must continually revisit *your* ideas about *your* future. Your priorities might evolve over time—and that’s normal—but right now, close your eyes and imagine yourself walking across the campus of your dreams. Picture how you want your life to play out. Does your vision include the opportunities that open to you through scholarships?

Use your Money Mission to expand your possibilities. *Embrace this mission as your own personal responsibility.*

You will likely have some help along the way—from this book, from your parents, from your friends, from your school—but your future is in your hands alone. In the end, it is ultimately up to you to create the life you really want.

This book will give you tools and strategies to help you find and systematically apply for outside scholarships. By working on your Money Mission, you will avoid the pitfalls of the old Waiting Game and head into the college and life of your dreams! **YOU OWN YOUR OUTCOME!**

## Stack the Money

Stack as many outside scholarships as possible.



 You've got this!

**Consider the choices you would make if scholarship money became available to you.**

What would your college experience look like?


How would scholarships impact your life after college?


How would scholarships affect your family?


*In Chapter 1, you turned a new leaf in life. You're off to a great start!*

- You have committed to your Money Mission.*
- You are not playing the Waiting Game.*
- You know that your choices will determine your options.*