

# Detour from the fast lane

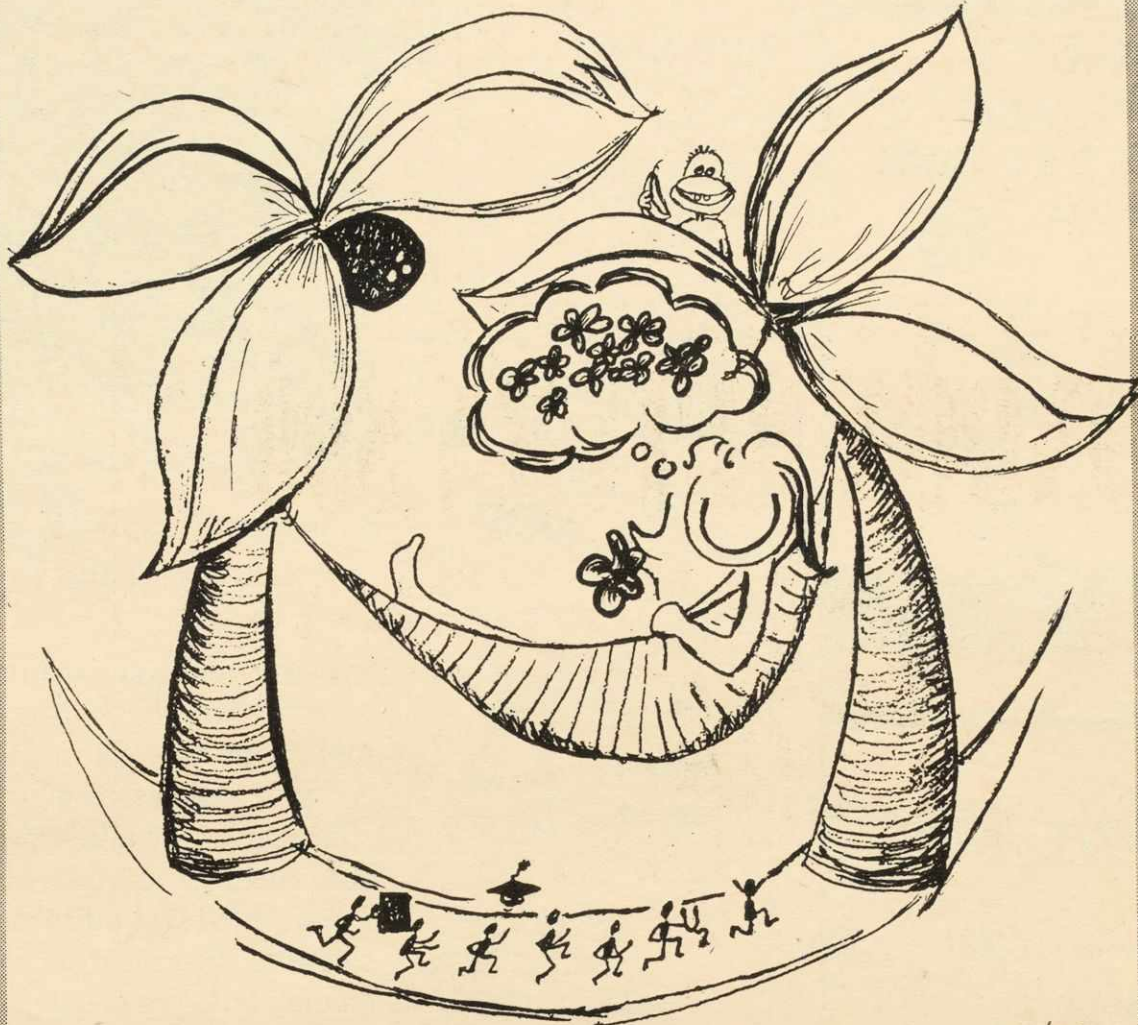
by Miriam Korn

Throughout my life, I have been constantly asked, "What are you going to do with your life? What do you want to be when you grow up?" Over the years, my answer has varied from a ballerina to a scientist, an astronaut, a fashion designer, a lawyer (specializing in unprecedented cases involving biotechnology). I really thought I had it figured out with that one. An architect — as well as countless other entries in my collection of career solutions-of-the-month.

With my impending graduation, however, the question ends rather too abruptly: "So, what are you going to do *now*?"

Medical school: the epitome of prestigious and noble destinies. Of course, it's tempting, but . . . it's difficult to picture myself there when I have seen so many people with their eyes glazed over with visions of stethoscopes, lamenting the horrific consequences of a less-than-spectacular mark, spending months of studying and too much money preparing for the Medical College Admission Test (the infamous MCAT) and taking pointless, guaranteed-A electives to gain admission to medicine. Is that what learning to save people's lives is all about?

The scary part is that these people *get in*. I was once talking to a person who followed all of the above guidelines, and is now at the University of Toronto school of medicine. I spent the entire conversation explaining the futility of his search for the "easiest kind of doctor I could be." He never did understand why his proposal of becoming a psychiatrist was not the perfect solution.



and the path was paved with one's good deeds. Now the quest is for success (I won't get into the argument of its "real" meaning). We are afraid that any twists or breaks in the road will not eventually lead back to our original goal.

We are afraid of any twists or breaks in the road to success.

Is there any reason to launch oneself into a career prematurely? I agree with Mike of potential Wall Street fame: "I think 20 is far too young to set my life in stone."

"Start a career, while you're still young," they say. "Have some fun, while I am still young," I exclaim. I realize that I am still just a dreamy-eyed kid eager to revel in all the wonders and experiences the world has waiting for me. I am sure every experience I gain will help me make the right decisions about my future.

Who knows? I may even end up in medical school — that is, as long as the selection committee never sees this article about how screwed up I was.

I was shocked when a professor recounted the story of one of his ex-undergraduates. When during his entrance interview he was asked the standard question, "Why do you want to be a doctor?", the applicant replied, "I hear the money's pretty good." To this the interviewer commented (here's the shocking part), "That's good. It's nice to hear some honesty for a change, when everyone is saying they want to save the world."

It's comforting to know that I am by no means alone. A friend, my age, currently in law school, recently confessed, "I'm too young for this place. I think I'll go wander around Australia next year."

Even promising young business entrepreneurs feel the crunch, as Michael Finkel, a fourth-year student at the Wharton School of Business, expressed in his New York Times editorial. He is tired of being told, "Go to

Wall Street", and is bewildered by his classmates who don't tie and tote briefcases to class every day, practising for their illustrious careers ahead.

Today's society sees life as a road with a definite destination, and the faster we get there, the better. The end used to be heaven,

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