

Episode 41 Final - Roger Williams

Interview with Bill McMurray

Intro: *There is no guarantee for success but there are ways to get closer to it when you do the right things, who you surround yourself with is just as important as what you do. Finding the right people, the right classes, the right activities, and taking the right tests are all decisions that shape your future. Find out more today on Destination YOUiversity with Dr. Cynthia Colon. Dr. Colon and her guests will give you the tips you need, whether you're a student, parent, or educator. Now, here is your host, Dr. Cynthia Colon.*

Dr. Colon: Melissa and Mr. Fisher showed up on time and he proceeded to do most of the talking. I turned my attention to the right where she sat quietly. Melissa, what is it that you like to do, want to do, see yourself excelling in over the next three years? She answered each question in the same tone not overly enthusiastic, but not disinterested either. As the oldest child, she would be the first to apply and traverse the muddy waters of highly selective institutions. Mr. and Mrs. Fisher had both attended college in California, but in the last few years, it was no secret that the landscape of college admissions had significantly changed. Melissa talked about enjoying Student Council, as a freshman she was involved in a variety of clubs and at the end of the year, she ran for class counsel and won. She would lead the sophomores as their class president and school began in just a few weeks.

"Okay, this is good information, Melissa and where do you dream of attending college?"

Before she could answer Mr. Fisher piped in, "We are looking at the Ivy's."

Without acknowledging Mr. Fisher I kept my focus to the right, "Is this true Melissa? Is that what you want?"

Mr. Fisher did not dare interrupt again as he finally recognize that I was her advocate. Melissa sat straight up and showed me her hazel eyes, "Brown and Yale are my favorites, but I love UCLA too." With a small grin she added, "Call me messy." I smile back and wink.

That is an excerpt from my tale number two in my book. I share it today because my guest, Bill McMurray, so eloquently shares his own tales of the role his parents and mentors played in his college process, and his recommendation now of how parents must allow their nearly college-age child to take control over their journey to college. Bill McMurray currently lives in Maine and is the Regional Director of Admission at Roger Williams University, which is located in Bristol, Rhode Island with a seaside view. Bill has worked at multiple institutions and is a well-seasoned Admission Officer. You want to hear this episode with the theme of expose, educate and exit finding the best college, welcome to Destination YOUiversity. Holy smokes, you guys, before we get started with Bill and the interview, I had with him which is amazing, I am giddy, and I

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mean giddy like a schoolgirl because I want to tell you about this week's double scoop star student.

He won a 100,000 scholarship to St. Mary's Moraga, that is \$100,000 over the course of four years. How, you ask? He turned in his application early and submitted the essays he produced over the summer and boom. Here's why I'm giddy, Brendan was a July camper and his mother enrolled him just days before camp, Brendan was reluctant because camp began at 8am on a Wednesday, after he would have just landed at LAX the night before, jet-lagged and all he toughed it out without knowing if the camp would be worth it. Like with almost every single student, days one and two were hit, miss. But with specific feedback, I told him to keep drafting, trust the process. And five months later, he sent me this email.

It reads, "Dear Dr. Colon, I just heard back from my first school, St. Mary's Moraga. They offered me \$100,000 for four years because of the essays you helped get out of me. I truly represented the Gail Spirit. Once again, thank you so much for all you do, and you were definitely right to trust the process."

I just get choked up thinking about it. Brendan, congratulations you are the double scoop star student of the week, Baskin Robbins gift card is coming your way. Well, hello everyone I'm Cynthia Colon, author of the book *Tips, Tales & Truths for Teens*. Welcome to Destination YOUiversity, where we explore extraordinary people who lived ordinary childhoods and found a pathway to college. If you are a student, parent of a student, teach students or a student of life this show is for you. Hello, and welcome a Bill McMurray, how are you?

Bill: I'm very fine, thank you for having me. Greetings from the East Coast.

Dr. Colon: For the listeners who are East Coast they are, you know in your same kind of weather, but I am sitting, I'm looking outside my window and the sun is shining and it's going to be a nice beautiful day here in California. But why don't you share with folks what you are looking out, in terms of outside your window this morning?

Bill: I'm looking out at a very grey overcast day in Portland, Maine, and it's about 38 degrees, so just a little bit above freezing.

Dr. Colon: That is amazing to me, I always like, it's just like I know that it's 38 degrees and it's November, which it just doesn't feel like, seem like it should be that chilly. But I've been to Maine just once and it's gorgeous, by the way. Maine is a beautiful state. Well, Bill we should, I should tell my listeners that we met several years ago, about 20 years ago.

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Bill: Almost 20 years ago.

Dr. Colon: And we were both at different institutions doing different things, you're currently at Roger Williams University, I know you're there. You know, a name for family and made this transition not too long ago. Share with our listeners a little bit about Roger Williams.

Bill: Well, thank you. Roger is a fairly young University; it was founded in the 1940s in Downtown Providence. And we are celebrating this year our, the 50th anniversary of our move to the campus in Bristol, Rhode Island, which is just north of Newport, right on the water. It's a fantastic institution really, for the way it blends the traditional liberal arts education with some very strong pre-professional programs and things like architecture, engineering, business, finance, and like criminal justice is probably our largest individual major. And yet, we still have a very robust core of liberal arts programs. We're very well known for marine biology. I think the things that I like most about the institution are really the combination of its location the seaside campus. Which is just gorgeous and user friendly, and safe, and pretty and all of that.

The size of the institution, we have 4000 undergraduates. So as I say to kids a lot, we're big but we're not huge. We're small but we're not tiny. We're sort of right in the middle where we're large enough to be diverse and interesting and vibrant, and yet small enough, where the professors, the faculty student ratio is 1 to 14 the average class size is only about 18. So students have a real opportunity to engage with their professors. Because we're an undergraduate institution, students have opportunities for research and internships that they might not have at larger places. And we're relatively accessible we're not a highly selective institution. So we're very open to B students if you're a solid B student and a good high school program, you're going to be an attractive candidate to us.

So we find we have a lot of appeal to students across the spectrum. academic programs across the spectrum of socio-economic status. You know, we have a robust merit and need-based financial aid program. So we're able to create an affordable package for many, many students. And it's just a, it's a terrific place to promote because of there's a little something for almost everyone at Roger William. And then for those kids who are truly focused on those professional fields like engineering and architecture, the programs are really robust and very well connected to industry, lots of opportunities for hands-on learning and internships and the ability to really understand what it means to be an engineer in addition to simply studying the course.

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Dr. Colon: Well Bill, let's talk a little bit about your own journey. This show is called Destination YOUiversity and so we do talk about it with our guests. What was your own journey because each of us has our own story, and how we landed in college and then you know, went on to do extraordinary things later? So, share with our listeners a bit about your own childhood and your path to college.

Bill: Well, it's interesting to think back. I grew up here in Maine, about a half an hour north of here in a small town. But I was lucky that my town was not so small and isolated that I didn't get a sense of a worldview. We had a naval base in town and we also had a small, very good small liberal arts college Bowdoin College was in the middle of the town I grew up in. So I had lots of opportunities to meet kids and meet people who weren't from the area because they weren't involved with the Navy, they came in went you know usually, we had kids around for three or four years, and then they would move. But we did get a sense that there were places other than Maine right from the very beginning. And then having the college there was a real resource both for you know, as a younger kid, I grew up with a single mother and so I had, I actually had a big brother who was a Bowdoin student when I was in middle school. And I used to spend time with him on the campus playing pool and I actually I think I went to one of his, he used to be part of the students for democratic society that the protest group in the 60s in the 70s. And he took me to one of his meetings, so I got a little bit of a political education as a 12-year-old, which was very cool I never forget that.

But just the idea that college was there, and it was always sort of in my brain that I would go I never really questioned the idea. I was a pretty good student in school. I was sort of your typical high school kid involved in sports and clubs and I was president of my class as a senior and kind of the International good guy at Brunswick High, but I really hadn't tapped what I would consider to be now my true intellectual curiosity. I was sort of a, you know, a good kid who just did everything that was expected but never really dug that deeply because I was never forced. School came kind of easily to me. The idea of college was a given but where I really never did what you would consider a college search. I was involved in track and as a junior, I got a letter from a coach at Bates College and which I thought was, you know, such a great personal outreach, and of course, now I know it was probably a form letter that went to about 50 people. But I thought oh, they want me, and I had meets at their field house. And now what a cool place.

My mother had gone to Bates for a couple of years, she didn't graduate but it was during the war and she had spent a couple of years there and then went to nursing school. But I thought well, this is a good place I'll apply there. And in the process of applying, a Bates Admissions Counsellor came to my high school, so I sat down with her and talked about my interest. But it really was the combination of just dumb luck and this one Admission Counsellor who led me to apply ED to Bates College. It was the only college application I filed, I was admitted by early December, I knew where I was

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going, and it was just such an easy thing for me. I had no sense of the stress that kids face today.

Dr. Colon: Let's take a timeout here because I don't want you to undersell what you just said. And so I say to my listeners, write these **'golden nuggets'** down. What you said Bill, I know that this was a different time and today you know, it's very competitive and people are frenzied about where to apply. But you mentioned you were in an area where there was a local college nearby, Bowdoin, one of the top schools in the country, you had a big brother, 'big brother', air quotes, that was there and you were exposed to that college pretty early on. As a 12-year-old, you said you went to that college, right? So parents out there you don't have to have a big brother, or you know, big sisters to get your kid to campus. But I treat campuses like national parks, they're free for you to visit, you can go anytime. And it is planting a seed in your child's brain early on. You also said that your mother had gone to college even though she didn't graduate. She had gone to college at Bates during the war, did a couple of years there. So it was never a question in your mind if you are going to college, but rather where you were going to college, so those pieces all matter. And then I love this you said you're on the track and field now you didn't say what sport, but I know it was discus, right?

Bill: Yes, that was my primary event, yes.

Dr. Colon: Okay, so for those listeners, if you're listening first of all, if you've never met me in person, I'm all of 5 foot on a good day. And Bill.

Bill: 5'2 in heels.

Dr. Colon: 5'2 in heels exactly. And Bill, describe yourself for our listeners.

Bill: Well, I'm about 6'1 and you know, in the neighborhood of 200 pounds, was a pretty athletic kid, not so much so anymore.

Dr. Colon: Okay, so you headed to Bates College and which is in Maine, so Bates College and then after college, what's your path? Talk about a college admission.

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Bill: Really interesting because when I was a kid in high school, I actually thought that it might be interesting to become a Guidance Counselor. I had a really good relationship with my High School Counselor, he had been my French teacher in Junior High, and he was also my neighbor. So I knew my Guidance Counselor very, very well before he ever became my counselor. But we had a great relationship I thought gee, Mr. Miller kind of has it nice. But then somehow that went away because I got involved in you know, high-level science classes and so forth. And so when I headed off to Bates I had it in my mind that I was going to do pre-med because I was pretty good in math and science and they had good science programs, and I thought, well.

So then freshman year comes around and I take my first college-level lab science class, and I did okay, but I just didn't have any feel for it whatsoever. I'll honestly say I never even knew what a resume was until the Monday after I graduated from college. We didn't spend any time doing internships, there was no at that pipeline I just, I was immersed in my major, which ultimately turned out to be a double major in English and psychology pretty far from biology as a freshman. And I sort of passed through economics on the way, so I was a completely undecided sort of chameleon of a college student. But I ended up for the last two years pretty much immersed in English and psychology as my dual concentration wasn't really sure, I never really thought much about what I would do with it.

But the idea of a Guidance Counselor was still hanging around in behind and as I was languishing away in my sales job, he was telling me about this new thing that he had gotten into. He had gotten a master's degree in counselling and was now an Assistant Dean of Admissions at the **(inaudible 16:49)** college and he was telling me about the nature of his work. And I just thought it sounded fascinating scouring the chronicle of higher Ed and other publications and cities, looking for job listings you know the old way there was not indeed, you know you had to go looking in on paper for jobs. And I fired off probably 20 or 30 resumes to school, private schools and colleges that had admissions openings. Because it was clear that you didn't really need a specific background you just needed to be able to communicate well and understand the enterprise.

Dr. Colon: JC Tuson at Vassar, when I started working at Vassar, he called it the shipping and the receiving end. The shipping end is the counselling side and the receiving end is the college admission side. So I know before we went live, we were talking about the number of institutions that you've worked at. My book is called *Tips, Tales and Truth* so I would ask my guests, what is your favorite tale in the course of working at Roger Williams or in the course of your career? So what's a student who stands out and for any reason at all, and so share with us who that is and why he or she stands out for you.

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Bill: Well, the one that came immediately to mind when you asked me is, I'm going to use her first name for real. Her name is Emma. I met her last year she was a senior in high school at a very good school in Manchester, New Hampshire. And I met this girl at a school visit and just immediately thought to myself, this kid is 17 going on 35. She was so mature, just full of life, full of questions. I thought this kid is brilliant you know, I expected to see a transcript full of A's and AP courses. And low and behold, I did when she applied. She continued to email me from time to time with questions. I ended up helping her connect with the head of the Marine Biology Program at Roger Williams and the tennis coach you know, things that she wanted to be part of her experience.

Behind all of this was a sense, you know, we work in an industry or a business if you will, where there is a definite pecking order and a sense of prestige associated with certain institution. And I think this is the kind of student that one would not expect to find seriously interested in Roger Williams because she could, quote-unquote have so many better options in a way in terms of more selective places to which she could get admitted. So, you know I was always a little skeptical about her interest in the back of my mind although, you know continue to operate on the premise that of course, she'd be interested in Roger Williams offer and she ended up enrolling. Even though I know she had choices that would be considered way farther up the food chain in some ways. So it just really stood out for me that kids really can make the right decision if they have the right information. She is now thriving in her first semester, she's just loving it, she's in the Honors Program, she's going to be on the tennis team next spring, she's you know, doing really well in all of her classes and she's happy as a **(inaudible 19:58)** and her mother is happy. And you know, I'm not sure that would be the case if she had listened to that other side of her brain which is telling her, Roger Williams, you know you could go to College X if you wanted to.

Dr. Colon: Right?

Bill: I just really admire her and her mother for making the decision based on the fit as opposed to, you know, what society might be pressuring her to think about her own choices. So that really stood out for me, as you know, both an example of a kid making a really mature choice, and just a truly enjoyable recruitment experience, because every time I got an email or a call from her, it was just like, well I know there's going to be an intelligent question behind this phone call. And I know that I'm able to help her get a little bit closer to what's going to mean the most for her. And it was just really a fun experience.

Dr. Colon: Well, what I love about what you said in this story in general and of course, there are many I think, diamonds in the rough everywhere across the country. I mean that you know, and certainly she's one of them. But she asked you questions along the

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way; every institution college has someone that's assigned to you. I always tell students, there's someone that's assigned to you, assigned to your region to your high school. And if you have a question reach out. And so what you did for her Bill is made the process very human, very personal. And every time she had a question you treated her as if, you know, she was just like any other application that you know, she was so welcome and wanted.

Bill: I really try to impress upon kids when I meet with them in their high schools or at college fairs to take advantage of people like me, we are, if we can't answer the question that you have, we can probably find someone who can on campus. And you know, we use the term internally at Roger Williams and other schools where I've worked with the Territory Manager for our geographic area. But I tell kids that you know, that's our internal term but my term with you is I'm your guardian angel through this process.

Dr. Colon: Correct.

Bill: I'm here to help you manage this process you've never done this before. You don't know how, you know, you may have some ideas that people have told you, but this is your first time through it. And we just want to make the process as smooth as possible, whether you choose Roger Williams in the end or not. It is less important to me seriously than you are finding a place where you're going to do really, really well for yourself. I say that over and over and over, and it's just really nice when somebody actually takes you up on the offer.

Dr. Colon: Absolutely.

Bill: I think kids are so afraid that when they call or they reach out to an adult, that they're going to be judged in some way or that there's some Boogeyman at the other end. If they could see the delight on our faces when we actually get the questions from the student instead of from her mom, it's just it's really wonderful.

Dr. Colon: Listeners write this **'golden nugget'** take advantage of us is basically what Bill said. In other words, take advantage of the college Admissions Officer that is in that office that is assigned to you, because they are happy and delighted to help you. I love that, my book is broken up into three sections, tips tales and truth. The truth piece always comes from the voice of the college Admission Officer. What from this tale or what it from your career, do people listening need to know, what is the real truth? We

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want to demystify this process you know; people don't know they've never gone through this process even if you have ten children, each child it's new to that child. So what would you like to share with our listeners?

Bill: I think, **(inaudible 23:50)** I think so many families, whether they're first timers or they're going through it again with a younger child. They start the process with the mindset of obviously, I want to get into the best place, but they stop at that without saying best place for me. And the best place sort of automatically becomes, in their minds often the most selective one that will let me in, or the most well-known one that will let me in. And they lose sight of the dimension of fit. And the truth is that many students will go to those more selective more prestigious institutions and not feel well, and not do well, and not fit, not feel like they belong. And I think there are so many different institutions out there for every student and I think that the truth is that where you go, is so much less important than how well you do when you go somewhere.

I think Frank Burmese book, it's a brilliant chronicle of some of the reasons why that's a truth. But I think if students could begin and if families could begin this process, with the idea that I'm looking for the best place for me. And that includes so many more dimensions than just you know, how selective and how you know how much, how big is the endowment and how high it is upon somebody's rankings list. The right fit for me has to do with the financial fit, the geographic fit, the socio-economic and campus cultural fit, and all the things that are going to contribute to an individual student, feeling comfortable and feeling like he or she belongs and feeling safe and comfortable enough to then come out of the comfort zone in the college and try new things. If you're in an environment where you feel like a square peg in a round hole, where is the motivation to actually stretch yourself even further if you're uncomfortable to begin with, so.

Dr. Colon: Right.

Bill: If we could put that whole notion of prestige over here, and realize that it doesn't really matter, that what matters is being in a place where you can do your truly best and authentic best work.

Dr. Colon: I love what you said the best.

Bill: By taking the admissions piece out of it, you open up a whole new world.

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Dr. Colon: The best place and so listeners finish that sentence the best place for me, which is exactly why this show is called Destination you Y-O-University and because the destination is you yourself, if you can figure out and excavate who you are along the way in this journey on the way to college, then finding a college that fits you is it becomes pretty easy. Now.

Bill: I told you that I kind of backed into my own choice, but I was just very lucky that once I landed there, I felt like I could fit in and then you know that I could feel comfortable enough to explore. And I ended up being two or three different people along the way to the person I ended up being when I was 23 or 24. You know, I checked out identities along the way and you know, took pieces of them all to become who I became. But it wasn't as if I had to have it all I was glad that nobody told me that I had to have it all figured out from day one the way we often imply today,

Dr. Colon: Right, absolutely. Now okay, I have with the tips, the question about the tips, I have two sets of tips I want you to share. One is what tips would you give your younger self? And then the other tip is you know, the tip for this process so you can start wherever you like.

Bill: I think, you know, as relatively successful as I was as a high school kid, I was still pretty compliant. I think I was reluctant even if I had an inkling of an interest in something that was a little out of the ordinary, I was reluctant to pursue it for fear of not being cool. Or in my school, in my school there was a significant part of the student culture where it really wasn't cool to be smart, sort of had to dumb yourself down to fit in and I did but I was with those kids. And I would tell my inner self if I could back then to not worry about that to just be you know, continue to do what's right for you. I'm encouraged by a lot of the essays I've seen from kids this year, who are applying to Roger Williams, who chronicle in their essay that moment when they realized they can actually be themselves and be okay. And if more kids could realize that, and if I could have realized that you know, chances are I might have ended up somewhere different. So I'm not saying I have any regrets but because I did the best with what I had at the time. But if I could go back and change things a little, I would tell my myself not to be so concerned about what other people think, and so and don't be so afraid of failing you know, try something else. You know who was, I think it was George Bernard Shaw, the playwright who said, the person who never makes a mistake will seldom make anything else. But it's a, I think, you know that would be my biggest advice to my 17, 18 year old self is don't worry so much and don't, certainly don't worry about being too smart, because you know, none of us is ever going to be too smart let's face it.

Dr. Colon: That's right.

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Bill: It's a work in progress at all times.

Dr. Colon: Yeah, the tip about college admissions. I love the tip that you have here.

Bill: Oh, absolutely. I've always been astounded by the number of kids I've met, who are going through the application process, they visited a number of places, but they still can't really articulate why they want to go to college in the first place. It's that and that might have been me 45 years ago, it might have been me. Why do you want to go? Well, because I always thought I would and because it's expected of me, those would have been my most honest answers. I think in the end, I might have been able to come up with an explanation about wanting to become more broadly educated, more aware of what's going on around me, you know, more able to communicate effectively with peers, and superiors and subordinates, all of those good things that come out of a college education. But I think each of us might have our own explanation, and I would challenge high school kids to think about why you want to go to college, what is it that you hope to get out of it personally, intellectually, terms of your family dynamic, whatever. And if you can start to explain your reasons for wanting to go to college, then that will help you as you explore different schools because you'll see how much College X, College Y, College Z might contribute to those goals you have for yourself, those things you want to get out of it.

If you're looking to develop strong friendships and you know, things that would normally be perhaps associated more often with smaller schools you know, maybe UCLA isn't the first place you want to visit. On the other hand, if you're looking for the smartest board and the opportunity to try a million different things, then maybe you don't want to look at Bates because it is somewhat smaller, and the opportunities are fabulous. They're not as wide and diverse as they are at larger places. So to begin thinking about why it is you want to go in some general terms, you know, perhaps you know, a lot of kids will say they want to prepare for a particular career, and that's a certainly valid thing as well. They want to prepare for a career, they want to make a living. Those are valid concerns as well. But I think too few kids actually think about why they just say, oh, I just want to go to college because I'm supposed to and I want to go to a good college because I'm supposed to, but they have no idea what a good college is, what an excellent college is going to do for them. And I say they should start asking those questions.

Dr. Colon: To build on that just because this, we're right now and obviously in the midst of admission season and there's that question that is often the supplemental question; why are you know X College? So share with us you know, who is thinking about a place like Roger Williams, what kind of kid seventh, eighth, ninth grade, right?

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What are they doing right now? What kinds of things are they exploring with that four or five years from now, that would be the kid that you think that's right, good for us?

Bill: First of all, they're continuing to sign up for courses in all of what I call the basic food groups. English, math, science, foreign language, social studies, and the arts. You know, the kid who has all six of those areas through all four years of high school is going to be pretty well prepared. Kids that we that are going to perhaps be interested in looking at Roger Williams are the kids who, yeah, they do well in their academic work, but they also might be doing art or dance or the heavy. The kids that really take to Roger Williams are the kids who are really engaged in high school, not just in their classes, but in clubs and groups and sports and theatre and choir. And you know, the kids that Roger Williams that apply to Roger Williams tend to have pretty long resumes.

Dr. Colon: Nice.

Bill: (inaudible 33:35) And that's really something that is going to be essential to them wherever they go to school too because if all the research shows of college graduates show that the most meaningful parts of their education have to do with how involved they were. We get our share of truly top students you know, particularly in our Honors Program, but you know, our profile typically as a B, B plus student you know, with you know, we're test-optional. But generally somewhere in the vicinity of 1200. So they're really good kids, they're not necessarily the top AP scholars all the time. But what they have is an interest in broad education, but also experiential learning because with internships and project-based learning is pretty much baked into all of our programs even in the liberal arts. We, the tagline we use for marketing is 'we want to be the university the world needs now', which implies that they are broadly educated, they are civically responsible, and they have a skill set in terms of their fields, so even our philosophy majors are coming out with internships. And you know, but certainly in engineering and architecture and business and things that are worth in graphic design and criminal justice and all of these professional fields. These kids come out with two or three really significant work experiences in addition to their undergraduate program. So backing that up these are probably the eighth and ninth graders who were trying things, and who were involved in school, who were you know, class reps, and singing in the choir, and playing field hockey and all of these great things. But maybe not always the straight A students in all the AP courses.

Dr. Colon: Now, so the themes that I picked up from you today is that really, it's not always about the pretty, the perfect and the prestigious. It's about the fit, it's about you, and what is the best place for you or, as a student says for me. The other theme is about personalizing this journey, that there are so many ways and so many people like

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you that can and want to help families personalize this journey because it is a bit overwhelming, it's a bit crazy making at times and we want this to be a good experience for all parties involved. And the other thing

Bill: If I can just pick up on that for a second that if, for the student who call who has the courage who takes the initiative to make the phone call or to send the email him or herself to the Admission Counsellor there, the minute you hit send, or the minute you hang up after talking to that person, you're going to feel a sense of accomplishment. And that little bit of momentum that you get that perhaps we can help with in terms of fanning your flames of your interest along the way. That sense of momentum will give you a little more confidence if you're a student, then if you simply let your mom make all the calls and do all the head work for you, then you're just sort of thrust into it and without any context. And I would just really encourage the kids themselves to get involved and for the parents out there to let your kids drive the bus as much as possible.

Dr. Colon: Absolutely yes. So personalizing this process and then really, the last theme I heard you say towards the end here was about being involved and stay involved in the food groups. I love that I haven't heard that expression. So staying active with your academic profile, but also know that you know, straight A's is not the answer to every single college and everybody's going to land somewhere. And it's okay to fail, it's okay to try new things, it's okay to experiment, it's okay to be smart and all those things.

Bill: And it's never too late to repurpose your effort.

Dr. Colon: Oh God.

Bill: Never too late to start doing better.

Dr. Colon: I love that, never too late to start doing better. Write that down. Well, I want to thank you for your time. I know it's reading season and lots of other things going on. So thank you so much for your time. And I love when listeners get to hear about other schools, new schools that probably they haven't heard of, because there are so many gems around the country. Please visit Roger Williams. There you go.

Bill: It's been my pleasure, thank you for having me.

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Dr. Colon: Well, that was really a treat when you get to have a conversation with someone who's been in the business for as long as Bill has you really understand why people love the world of college admissions. What Bill brings to his students is that personalization and I just loved the way he talks about you know, just really helping students understand anything that they can and everything that they need to in this process, guiding them along the way, so that students make their decision, and it's truly the right decision for them. So I didn't want to leave you today without giving you the biggest tip of the day. Today's theme is 'expose, educate, and then exit.' So you have two main jobs as a parent. First, expose your child to as much as possible, whatever that means museums, career paths, athletic options, performance, and the arts. And second, to provide the best education possible, for almost every parent in America, this will mean supplementing what the school offers in terms of the four main food groups of and academic activities.

So I'm going to give you five parent tips on how to expose and educate and finally how to exit. Alright, so the first two are about exposing. Number one, instead of using smart devices for entertainment, use it as education. Use smart devices for research before going and after a visit somewhere. Decide which day of the week you're going to go somewhere as a family, this doesn't have to cost much but get in your car, get on the subway, take a lift, or go somewhere at least five miles away from where you live. Maybe you love food. So try a new taco place or Google the best farmers market. You might go to a library, a local performance, a museum, or a ballpark. The point is act as a tourist in your own city, county, or region.

Tip number two, summer activities include the idea of possibly getting a job or an internship, volunteering at a local place, or applying for a pre-college summer program on a college campus. Work at your local restaurant, a library, or the Recreation Center. You can go become a Junior Lifeguard, softball coach, or go knock on doors and start a dog walking company, little dog walking business. You can Google pre-college programs for girls in STEM or forensic science or volleyball sports camps, writing programs or oceanography. It is never too early to think about how you will expose your child to something new, different, unique, or with a bit of added responsibility and the real need to do to grow up while doing so. Summer is a great time to supplement what you do during the school year.

Okay, two tips on education, tip number three, education is key to becoming a well-rounded human being. Do we agree? If yes, then here it is again. Your job is to provide the best education possible for your child. The good news is this you are the parent. The bad news is this you are the parent. And because of this, I can't just let you off the hook, you must stay aware of what is happening in their academic life. This means going to back to school nights, parent nights, check their classes online, occasionally email the teacher or the counsellor or go in and see them. The point is to stay informed. And when there is an issue or a challenge, ask your team. How can you help her? Ask him, what is he doing to resolve the issue?

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Tip number four, to educate also means to shepherd, to guide to coach your child to the next level. In this case, it's college. If you were coaching a pitcher, and never exposed him to a major league baseball game, how would he know what the best looks like? How does he dream of something more than pitching at the local park? If you choreographed the floor routine or a beam routine for a young budding gymnast, then you might take her to watch a UCLA gymnastics team meet or competition. Kids, teens, young adults they need to see what is possible in order to feel their internal drive, motivation and ultimately, their commitment to reach for the stars. Educate them on what the future looks like, where that might be, and why it's important.

Which brings me to my last tip, exit number five. By the time, your teen is a sophomore junior in high school, you have to trust that if you've given them the what, the where, and the why, I guarantee they will begin to figure out the how. Remember the opening story, Melissa and Mr. Fisher, within moments of our meeting, I knew that Mr. Fisher's dream was the Ivy League schools. But it wasn't until I verified and confirmed with Melissa what her dream is or was, then once I understood her dream, she began to perk up. Your team wants a say in their future, they want ownership, so give it to them by exiting stage, right. Don't get me wrong, you need to stay connected. But I mean, now instead of daily coaching, you are more like the sideline cheerleader. Refrain from answering questions for him calling or emailing the teacher before asking her what the situation is and letting her lead the solution. review questions with your teen. And you might ask, that they might ask at a college visit or over the phone and let them ask the questions. Let them take responsibility for their future. Let me be your coach so that you can be their cheerleader, I promise you got this.

Okay, so in closing, here is the real truth; finding the best college is not about the pretty, the perfect or prestigious. I love what Bill McMurray shared today. The truth is you've got to finish that sentence, it's about the college. The, it's a, let me say that again. It's about the best college for me. If that's not a **'golden nugget'**, I don't know what is. I love that he said that. This show is called Destination YOUiversity because the truth is at the end of the day, the destination is you. Okay, my friends, that's all I have for you today. Thank you for joining me. If this episode has in any way fueled your confidence or helped to build your dreams.

Please share this episode with three people in the next 30 minutes and you can join the conversation in our Facebook group Destination YOUiversity, it's open to all parents no matter the grade level of your child. If you found me then that means you're a parent, a mentor, an educator and or an advocate for college bound teens. Come on over and join the conversation and get my insider scoop. Be sure to join next week with my guests Ross Mankuta of the Milken School in Los Angeles. Okay, I'm Dr. Cynthia Colon remember to please share this episode with three people in the next 30 minutes. I will see you next Wednesday at noon Pacific for another episode, and until then, wherever you are, may you have a happy and sunny day. Bye for now.

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Outro: Thank you so much for listening this week to Destination YOUiversity, be sure to join Dr. Cynthia Colon again next Wednesday at 12 noon Pacific Time, 3 pm Eastern Time on The Voice America Variety Channels and get one step closer to your success.