

# It's Okay to (Sometimes)

RKO

By the time I'm writing this article, the O and A Level results have been out for a couple of weeks now and everyone has had their time to wallow in their misery by self-imposed exile from social media and talking to people in general. I, too, have done the same thing before, but this time I've put my foot down on the matter, and it's not because I've done particularly well this session either.

By now all your exiles have been lifted (because that doesn't work and you know it) and you're now spamming motivational memes everywhere. From misappropriated quotes about believing in oneself by Lincoln to the ones about Einstein and trees and fish or something, these things are about as motivational as SHOUT's horoscope. Then there is the passive-aggressive, the people who post links to long extended articles on how "Results don't matter, Degrees don't matter, Skills do." These people have the common sense to not post motivational images, but apparently lack the depth to see what they are doing. By posting articles such as this in public, they not only label themselves as people insecure about their shortcomings, but also in a way belittle their friends who actually worked hard for their degree and good results, indirectly announcing themselves superior to them, because 'skillz'. Also, Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg dropout comparisons. No. They dropped out of Harvard, they didn't flunk O Levels.

Now that I've thoroughly pissed off a lot of people, I'd like to say I've done a lot of these things the first time I did terribly in an exam (no memes though, God no). My intentions were nice enough, and I assume most of the others had nice intentions as well. I wanted to be motivated to do well in the next exam and wanted my fellow students to join me in my enlightened state of motivation. But after a while I realised that by doing this I wasn't really motivating myself into anything. I was just constantly denying my bad result the importance it deserved. I couldn't wish it away, so I was doing the next best thing by convincing myself it didn't matter all that much.

But it does.

The results aren't going away (unless repeats because yay loopholes), so the first thing you need to do is own up to it. This sounds like a really pessimistic view on things, but sugar-coating your problems or worse, still basking in past glories, will get you nowhere. It's okay to fail; it's not the end of the world but it's unacceptable to be a complete failure in life. Almost everyone gets a magical boost in motivation after a terrible result, and almost everyone uses it up in one ungodly week of studying that makes them hate education forever. So hold on to that motivation and always keep your failure at the back of your mind, and remember to always keep quiet about it. Nobody who has ever made a comeback did it by telling everyone he was going to make a comeback.



## Survival Guide for Freshmen ENGINEERING UNDERGRADS

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The number of engineering students in Bangladesh is ever so on the rise. Even twenty years back people opted to study engineering just because their parents wanted them to be engineers. But things have started to change. People now get into engineering more because of their growing passion for technology and a desire for making a change by implementing their scientific ideas.

Surviving four years of engineering education is a tough ask, however. The curricula of most of the major engineering disciplines – whether it's EEE, CSE, Mechanical or Civil – are designed to keep the students on their toes all the time. Especially for the first-year "newbies", it can become a very difficult and delicate experience. Maybe you were planning to make robots and airplanes right from the start but all you're doing is pressing your calculator buttons trying to solve a stupid math problem late into the night – every day, every week.

So the workload is tremendous – numerous theory classes every semester, endless pile of assignments to be done. Spending hours after hours in the lab doesn't help much either. Sometime what you're doing doesn't make any sense to you. Very little breaks, lack of quality social time, pathetic diets, little or no sleep, red eyes, messy hair, thick glasses, formulas or equations swirling inside the head making it spin round and round – WAIT, engineering isn't THAT BAD, it's supposed to be fun.

So here are some tips that are intended to make life easier for all those newbies out there who are frustrated, wondering why they chose engineering to begin with.

### Study Smart

First things first, don't get too serious, ever. It's not a battle. It's okay not doing well in some quizzes. Attend classes, but don't rely too heavily on class lectures. It's a free world. You can learn from anyone, anywhere. Use the internet effectively. If you don't understand a difficult topic, don't panic and cry over it. YouTube it for heaven's sake. So many good video tutorials are

available on basically any topic. MIT Open Courseware is a gem for any engineering student. NPTEL (<https://www.youtube.com/user/nptelhrd>) provides some excellent video tutorials. There are loads more of these websites. Dig. Be clever. Save time.

### Learn Softwares

One thing about softwares – they are very handy. You can't imagine how much time and effort they'll save you. Also, they add dimensions to your CVs and SOPs. MS Excel is essential for every engineer – saves you from the agony from doing repetitive calculations. Don't want to sit for hours with scales, art papers and pencils to produce a drawing? Learn AutoCAD. Constantly have to put up with massive calculations, complex formulas, intimidating graphs? One word – MATLAB.

### Join Communities

Engineering students have social responsibilities too. The concept of engineering students association is not yet much popular but there are some associations which are trying to encourage fresh ideas and engineering insights of young minds and channeling them to contribute to the technological advancement of the country. ESAB (Engineering Students Association of Bangladesh) is one such organisation.

### Think Beyond Studies

Don't just obsess over studies. Join clubs. Participate in debates, quizzes, technical and business competitions. Indulge in your passions. If you love photography, do it. If you can sing, don't give it up. Nurture your hobbies. Spend quality time with friends and family. Try to keep fit. Be vocal on social issues. Actively participate in social awareness programmes. Being a good, articulate and socially responsible human being is of utmost importance.

