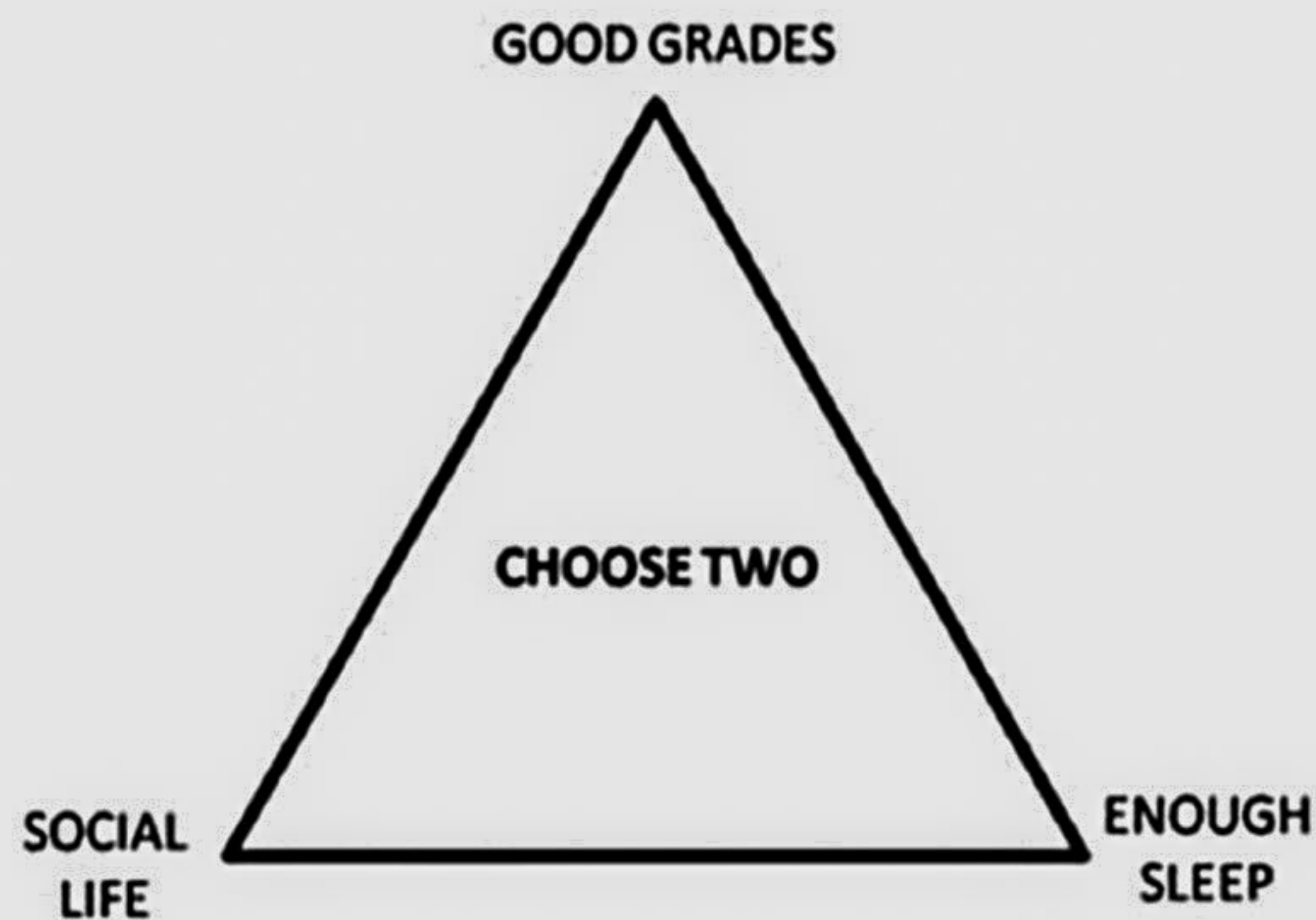




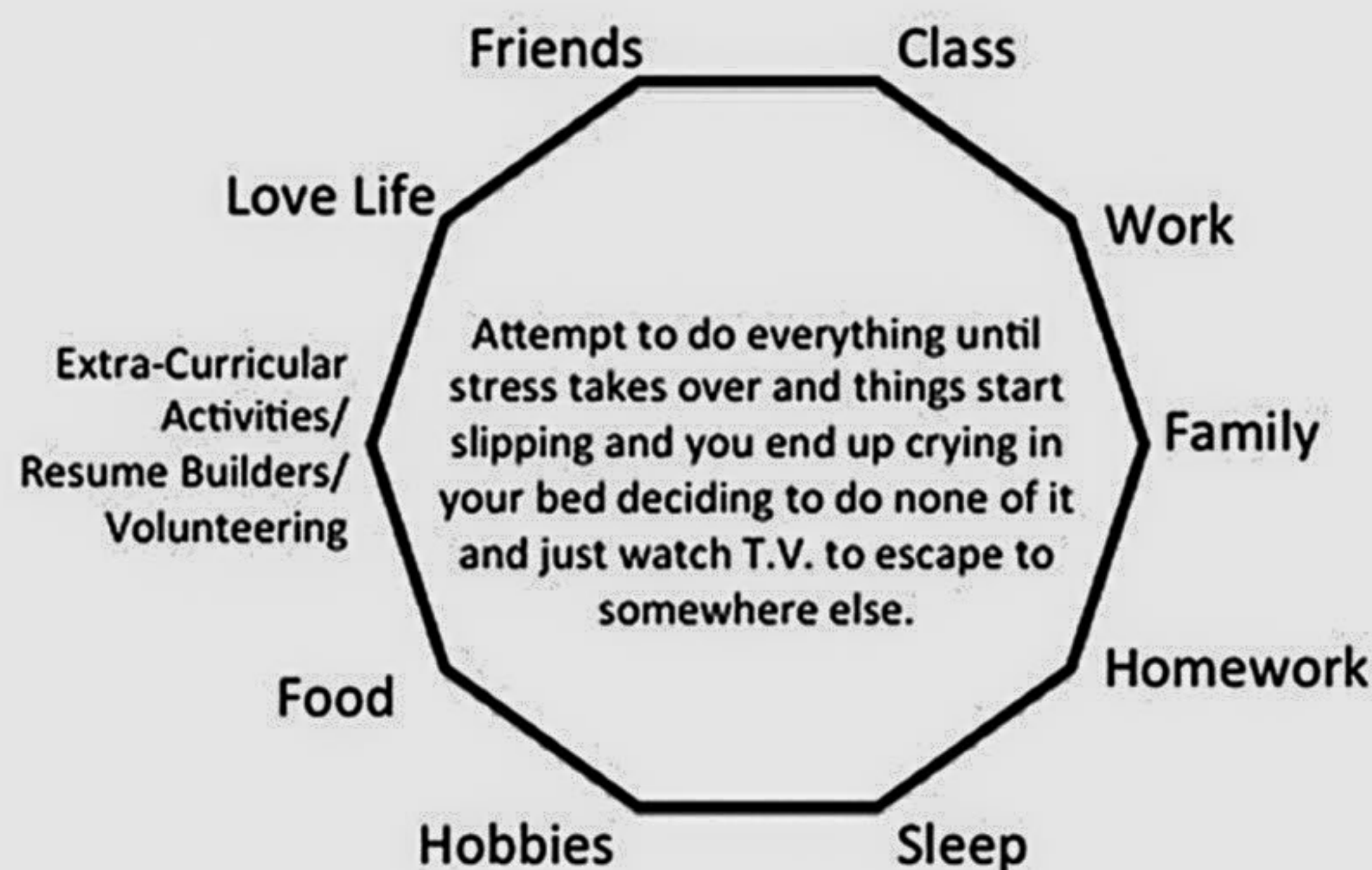
ECHOES BY
 ASRAR CHOWDHURY

FIRST YEAR BLUES

How People Think It Is:



How It Really Is:



The HSC and A Level batches of 2016 will enter universities in 2017. Some have started the journey. Others wait for classes to start. University life is a transition phase. The outcome of this journey determines one's fate in coming years. Many students notice something when it's too late to go back.

Undergraduate life happens during the time of youth-hood: 18 to 22/23 years, when a person is the most productive in learning and acquiring skills. One can remain youthful at heart all their lives, but youth-hood comes only once in a lifetime. If the train is missed, it's missed forever. The seed one sows during this time will influence what type of flower will blossom in spring or in winter.

At orientation, teachers mention a familiar average. This is the CGPA. The teachers also mention that the first year is the defining year. If you work hard, with a high CGPA, your future is bright. The problem is: in life you need a back-up plan. Uncertainties, when they strike, can strike with cruelty.

Let's look at three groups of students. The first finishes with a CGPA of 3.9+. The second finishes with a CGPA of 3.0. The third is somewhere in between.

STUDENT 1: This student worked hard from day one. She's organised and responsible. She never left today's work to be done tomorrow. She didn't miss a single exam. She would always write and re-write to find a refined version. She did well and finished with an almost perfect CGPA of 3.95. The university acknowledged her achievements with a prestigious scholarship.

University is over. At her own university, Student 1 was the best, but there are many universities in Bangladesh with more than

several students who come out with an almost perfect CGPA. Student 1 applies for a job. She does well in the written exam. However, more than one candidate qualifies. Only one job is on offer. Student 1 will now have to face a viva voce (oral evaluation) for the last leg of the coveted job. This will require a skill on how to talk and how to present. She may or may not get the job that she dreamed of.

STUDENT 2: This student failed to build a good CGPA. By his third year, he

found his CGPA is bordering 3.0, the cut-off point for most job applications. There's no way he can change his subject and start afresh. He worked hard in his final year, but finishes with a CGPA of 3.0. Like Student 1, Student 2 is also in a dilemma: he may or may not get a job.

STUDENT 3: This student worked hard, but didn't come out with an excellent CGPA. However, he was associated with debate clubs and contributed to various newspapers. He anchored departmental

programmes. He also knows how to play musical instruments and isn't a bad singer either. When the time came for him to enter the job market, he didn't realise then, but does now that his options for applying are more than just conventional outlets.

Whatever subject you study and wherever you study, there are two skills almost everybody needs in their future professional lives. The first skill is the skill of writing. The second skill is the skill of presenting oneself verbally. Think about your most desired career option and ask yourself what could happen if you didn't develop writing and verbal skills. You'll also need these even if you end up becoming self-employed. These are the general skills you need to develop while you're at university. You'll also need to develop skills in which you already know you are fairly good at. Employers will never know what you're good at, but you, yourself do. University life is the best time to develop these skills. Bangladesh has 100+ universities. A high CGPA on its own may not help. At the same time, a low CGPA doesn't mean, there's no light at the end of the tunnel. You need back-up skills to overcome uncertainties in life.

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The Freshman Year of College: Learning Who You Are and What You Really Care About

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? **What Do I stand for?** ?

Do I know who I am?

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discover
explore