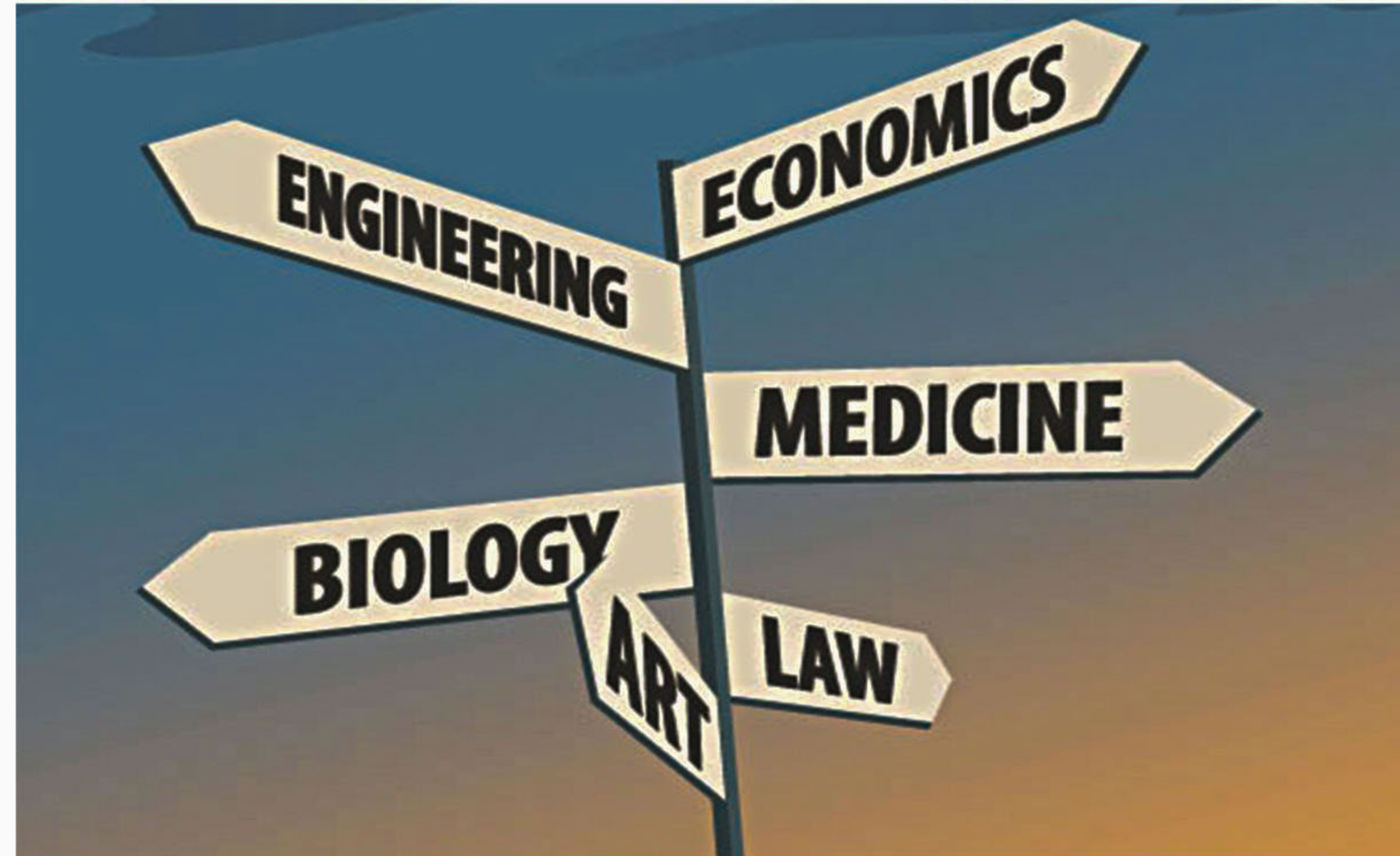


TALKING CAREERS WITH YOUR PARENTS



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When we were younger, our elders would often ask us what we wanted to be when we grew up. Most of us would give clichéd answers such as doctor or engineer as suggested by our parents, but as we grow up and put a lot of real thought into it, our career choices don't always match our parents' expectations. Near the end of high school, we are expected to have already planned our future. It isn't always easy to have a viable career option planned out in our heads while we are still figuring out our passions and potentials, and preparing for tonnes of exams, all at the same time.

The first important step would be to have a solid career aspiration that you will be able to convey clearly to your parents. Rather than saying "I want to build a career in science", be more specific; tell them whether it's medicine, microbiology, theoretical physics or such.

You also need to ensure that your career choices are based on what you truly want to do. Sometimes we tend to underestimate our own aptitude, hence it would be wise to listen to our parents' suggestions as well, but if it's something you are not interested in, don't push yourself. When your career aspirations clash

with that of your parents, there is a need for a heart-to-heart talk.

"Why don't you become a doctor or an engineer?" This is something that most of us have heard at least once. Unfortunately, not all of us want to be doctors or engineers; neither can the world function with only doctors and engineers. Even though they are our parents, they don't always know everything about us – what we are secretly good at, what we genuinely take interest in, how we view the world etc. In this case, it is up to you to explain to your parents that "success" doesn't only come from traditional careers like medicine and engineering. Gather more information about what you want to study after high school and elucidate how your field of study is related to your passion. With the help of internet, you can show your parents actual data on your career choice and share stories of successful people in that field. Your parents may be a little reluctant to be pleased with your choice, but once you can clearly emphasise your passion and how you can excel in that area, they should eventually be by your side.

"That subject has no future!"

When you choose a subject such as arts or music for

higher studies, your parents are not likely to grasp why you are getting into something that may not provide you with ample income in the future. After all, not all artists can be Picasso. If you are really passionate about your choice of subject, you should be able to explain your plan – how exactly you intend to make a living.

Of course, it is not as easy as it sounds. You will need to conduct a lot of research beforehand: look up the availability of jobs in that particular field, and talk to people. It will prove beneficial in the long run to have an alternative path planned; if you cannot find success in one, you can attempt another. Think about what other opportunities you have. Question yourself: Is it possible for me to pursue two careers at the same time? You may visit a career advisor if you want.

"I want you to follow in my footsteps." Sometimes, parents may want us to pursue the same careers they did. Since they had the same profession, they believe it will be easier for them to guide us in our path ahead. But this feeling isn't always mutual. If you have different ambitions and you are afraid that they will be displeased if you reveal it to them, you are letting your own talent go to waste. Be understanding

about their expectations. Explain to them that your interests and strengths are different from theirs. Tell them what it means to you to be able to pursue the career that you truly want. They will surely understand how important it is for you to hone your own skills.

"You cannot take a gap year."

After the endless late night study sessions with all the facts jamming your head, you might want to take a gap year after high school to take a short break from studies. However, before this, you need to know the pros and cons of taking a gap year. Not only will you fall a year behind your friends who got into university immediately after high school, but you will also find it tough to manage getting back into the study habit. On a brighter note, you might be able to get a temporary job and earn some money – gaining skills and maturity along the way. You will also meet new people from different backgrounds. If your parents are not approving of you taking a gap year, you will need to tell them what you exactly plan to do during the break. Don't waste it by procrastinating. Do something productive – involve yourself in social or environmental work, get a job, teach students, take up an internship aimed for high school students. If you are willing, you may take

up a short course online on something you are interested in, say marketing strategy or web development. You can even learn a new language.

"This is the best university! You must study here no matter what!"

Imagine the scenario: You get a chance in a humanities subject at the University of Dhaka, but you are passionate about physics, so you decide you will enroll at a private university to pursue a degree in the major of your choice. But your parents do not agree. Point of their argument: University of Dhaka is the best in the country. As I already mentioned, you need to clarify your ambitions to them. Try out some of the aforementioned techniques. After all, are all the private university students jobless?

When deciding on your major in university, what matters most is whether or not it is what you truly want to study and pursue a career in. It is you, after all, who's going to live your life according to the choices you make. Whatever subject you choose, make sure you are happy about it. Try to be the best at what you are doing. If you do not strive hard for your career, how are you going to prove to your parents that you made the right choice?

