



Voices from Blogs on College Admission and Rejection

This spring, hundreds of thousands of high achieving students failed to get into their first choice school. For many it was the first time they faced rejection, leaving them shocked, angry and dejected.

“We regret...” What follows those few words –the mere fact of rejection is enough to devastate angst-ridden students and their “helicopter parents” who spent years crafting student careers and months putting together application packets with only one goal—to get into the “right” college. Getting in is a key concept here. “Acceptance by the college of their choice has become the quest for the holy grail. These are representative comments taken from blogs around the country on the topics of college admission and rejection:

- “You hear the phrase ‘Oh, it will look good on a college application’ so much in high school that people end up doing stuff just so it looks good for college. I wanted to be myself and thought that if I don’t get into the school, then I don’t get into the school. But it’s hard to remember that when you’re rejected.”
- A student’s brother at Dartmouth says he finds freshman year in college less pressured than junior year of high school.
- “The pressure comes from inside myself as much as it does from my parents. The whole game is who is beating whom. In the end, if I don’t get into Harvard and my friend does, I will be upset.”
- “After all the work in junior year, I want a college that will be challenging but less pressure. I want to enjoy the four years and find a place where I will be happy and comfortable.”
- “Rejection letters can open up even more possibilities for you. It’s all about mindset. It’s less about what college I attend and more about what I can take from my college experiences that really matters. As long as I continue to pursue what makes me happy, really happy, then the rest of the puzzle will find a way to fit in behind me.”
- “I am so lucky that the school that wasn’t my first choice ended up being the perfect choice for me.”

- A student with perfect scores on his SATs was devastated by rejections from Stanford and Princeton. Now a premed student at Notre Dame he says he has a new perspective on being “rejected” by his top college picks. “At the time it felt like it was the biggest deal in the world that I didn’t get into those schools, but I love it here. Looking back on it now, this is definitely the right place for me.”
- “The doubts and questions swaddled my mind. I was bummed for myself. But I was more worried about telling my friends, my mentors and most importantly my family that I didn’t measure up to their expectations. I avoided the conversation when I could and acted like it was no big deal when inevitability set in. But deep down, I was perturbed. To help ease my unsettlement, my mentors consoled me with just how difficult it was this year to get into college.
- “Everyone I had talked to, once they heard ‘perfect SAT,’ they said, ‘You can get in anywhere.’ That was the hardest part, having everyone tell me I would and then not getting in. It was a rough few days. The rejection letters and my parents both kept telling me it’s not a case of me not being good enough, but a case of too many qualified applicants. But it’s really hard not to feel like you got rejected.”
- “Our hearts contracted as we watched our eldest child sit down hard on the family room sofa as the reality sunk in. He. Did. Not. Get. In. His pain was so deep it threatened to overtake him—to overtake all of us. The kindness of the rejection letters did nothing to soften the blow. “Your application was among a record number of submissions this year! Never have we had to turn away so many qualified candidates.” He considered never again showing his face at school.”
- Students at some high schools figured out that sharing the pain is one of the best ways to soften the blow. The Boston Globe in April reported that “at one of the suburban HS where most seniors expect to go on to prestigious universities students transformed a bulletin board where they post their rejection letters from the best colleges in the US the likes of Yale, Dartmouth, Bowdoin, Duke and others. The result students say is therapeutic. Sharing makes rejection hurt less, a kind of misery loves company for overachievers.” One student told the Globe that just pounding the letters onto the bulletin board with a stapler made him feel better. Some who gather at the board to read other student rejection letters add penned comments of their own or end up talking about what is for many their first experience of not being good enough.”

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