***Saw this on facebook from a PhD:***

I'm going to say something a bit unheard of in modern times. My thoughts are anathema for most parents. But I'm done pretending.

Here goes ...

I don't care where my children go to college. I'm not saying I don't care in the but-deep-down-I'm-hoping-they-get-a-full-ride-to-Harvard way. And I'm not saying that I don't care because my kids are complete failures destined for a life of living in my basement watching Family Guy re-runs. Nope, it isn't any of that.

I *really* don't care where they go to college. Where they end up has no effect on me. I will be equally satisfied if they go to a prestigious university as I would if they decide community college is a better fit. They might even decide to travel the world and work for a few years before choosing a college and subsequent career. Fine with me.

I've been thinking about this for more than a decade. With general despair, I have watched parents--from the moment Junior emerges from the womb--dedicating themselves to the sole purpose of getting their child into the very best college. First, there was Baby Einstein and flash cards. Soccer is now beginning for 4-year-old children. Piano at 5. Karate and Mandarin at 6. Then there is travel baseball and private trainers at 10. By middle school children are so programed they have no down time. No time for family dinners. No time to decide for themselves what they enjoy doing. No exploring with friends in the woods behind the house for hours and discovering hidden passions and talents. No leadership that isn't force-fed through planned undertakings.

In a recent meeting at our local middle school, with the focus on college planning for seventh and eighth graders, an expert said children need to start volunteering now--not because it's good for the soul, but because it's good for the resume. Her message was that in order to get into a "good" college students have to show they have values and demonstrate a string of volunteering opportunities that support those values. Real values? I'm not sure.

This idea that students have to excel at the highest level (with experience dating back to early childhood) is supremely flawed. If everyone is a black belt, fluent in Mandarin and the captain of [fill in the black] sports team, how can one differentiate any of these children? I was an admissions director for a master's program for a short while. I can tell you after reading hundreds of essays that your child isn't special. He's doing exactly what all the other applicants are doing. *Exactly.*  
I've made a decision: I am not going to steal my son and daughter's childhoods so they may wind up at Yale instead of Westchester Community College. I am not going to force them to be who I say they should be by signing them up for every class and making them stick with it. Instead, I am going to sit back and watch them find their own path. I am going to expose them to life and do it as a family. I am going on month-long family vacations in foreign lands and I am not going to worry about how it will look to the football coach or the college counselor. I am going to discuss issues of the day over slow family dinners. And I am going to teach my children that they can be successful doing whatever they want if they follow their dreams and work hard. Going to the best college won't make that happen for them. Giving them the freedom to flourish in their own way in their own time will.

So I am going to resist every urge to push my children for the sake of college. I want them to learn. I just don't want them to learn for a misguided purpose.

My position isn't a popular one. Parents will be threatened by it. They will feel the need to fervently defend their children's passions. And I imagine some parents will pity me and worry for my poor kids' future. They can put their fears to rest. My children will be just fine. Their college application may not have all the clubs and sports and AP exams.

But they will be authentic. For me, that is enough.