Science Is Boring (And Other Myths)

You have to be a genius (or a nerd) to become a scientist…..

In general, people who become scientists aren't any more or less brilliant than people who become lawyers, nurses, company managers, journalists or any other professional. Scientists are just regular people who are curious about the world and how it works.

You have to be a math whiz or a science genius to work on computers for a living. …..

It certainly helps to have a solid background in math or science if you want to work on computers. However, you need not be a genius. Computer work involves a lot of skills other than math and science, and people with all sorts of abilities are in demand. Some computer scientists are visual artists and writers.

Scientists are weird!

Persistent negative stereotypes and an absence of good role models reinforce the false idea that science is only for clever people, or boring people, or weird people, or old, white-haired male people. Scientists are just regular people. Look around you today!!

You can't make much money being a scientist. …..

All right, so you won't find many scientists' names on the list of the richest people in the world. But scientists can make a pretty good living. They generally earn between $25,000 and $100,000+. That's a wide range, but salaries depend on many factors: where you work, what type of research or products you work on, your education level and how long you've been in the field. But most people don't become scientists because they want to get rich; they do it for the joy of research and their interest in these topics.

You have to spend YEARS in school before you become a scientist. I'll be OLD by the time I actually get done with all the degrees and studying!

If you go for a Ph.D., the highest level degree you can get, then you may spend four years in undergraduate studies and five or more years in graduate school. But the further along you get in school, the less you sit in a classroom taking notes from lectures. You're working on interesting research projects in the lab or out in the field, making discoveries and writing them up for journals. And you're hardly "old" by the time you get your degree. In many scientific fields, you get paid to go! But you don't have to get a Ph.D. to be a scientist. Some people stop after six or just four years of study and get rewarding jobs where they put their scientific skills to work.

I am a "people person," but computer workers and/or scientists have no human interaction. They stare at their computer screens or work in a laboratory alone all day and never get to talk to anyone. It's boring……

All scientists must collaborate closely with both colleagues and clients to get the job done. It is very unlikely that you will ever work on a project by your self!

Part of your job might involve working in a lab or at a computer, but you could also journey to the wilds of the Amazon and Costa Rica seeking out new species. You could float in zero G as you study crystal growth aboard the Space Station. You could watch fish swim past your window as you dive to ocean depths in a submarine. You could climb up the sides of volcanoes. Where you work and what you do as a scientist only depends on what your interests are and how hard you work to pursue them.

I like to work on creative, fun projects. There is nothing creative about science, math or computers……..

Scientists are constantly inventing new, innovative ways of dealing with issues and opportunities. Sometimes scientists' work is like detective work—the scientist is presented with a problem, or "mystery," and she must use clues to solve and fix problems.

Take a look at any of the video and computer games that are on the market. Each year they contain more sophisticated graphics, animation, story lines, music, and other surprises. It takes a team of creative and dedicated IT professionals to deliver such products to the marketplace.

I want to work in a field where I can "help people"…..

Scientists help people. For example, a recent article discussed the career of chemist who was responsible for the cholesterol-lowering drug, Lipitor. Last year, it was responsible for $7.5 Billion dollars in sales worldwide and saved countless lives. That's helping people! Similarly scientists are responsible for technological advances, convictions of criminals, detection and stemming of disease outbreaks.

I won't have time to have a family…..

This is an area of concern for all working women. Similar problems exist for women in business and other professional fields. However, most women are able to balance a career and a rewarding personal life.

Can I get a good science background at a liberal arts college?

Students from CSB are in all of the careers mentioned above! In fact, many employers find that students from liberal arts backgrounds are able to excel in many jobs because of their strong communication, writing and critical thinking skills.

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