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My advice for graduating seniors making the transition to college

The day I'm writing this essay is specifically my 195th day at college. Today was also a special day because it was my first time rock climbing. A friend of mine invited me to go with her friends, and at first I was nervous because I didn't know if they were experienced rock climbers, but I walked into the lounge where everyone was waiting, and I approached everyone with a smile, immediately struck by how welcoming everyone was. Also, it turns out that all of them, except one, have never rock climbed—even better! I felt less alone when I found out about this. Moreover, it took me 195 days to realize that rock climbing is amazing and more importantly, to find a friend group. The days that have led me to this moment have taught me that good things happen to those that wait, appreciating people will help you socialize, and that approaching new tasks with the mindset that you don't know anything but are willing to learn will save you from self-doubt.

In my first 195 days of college, I had acquaintances but no meaningful friendships. Until recently I met an old acquaintance, whom I am now good friends with. With this friend, I learned to enjoy life in a way that is unique to me and is safe mentally and physically. This person influenced me to climb random trees on sunny days and not care what others think, even going rock climbing. I love being healthy, whether it's eating good food, exercising, getting good sleep, and talking positively to myself and others. In college, it's important to not let go of traits that help keep you positive and safe. If you continue radiating positivity and a healthy lifestyle, you'll

eventually attract people who radiate it back; even though it might take a while, these quality friendships will remind you why you waited.

Something that stuck out to me was when someone told me, “I think appreciating people more makes it easier to socialize.” It’s estimated that 80% of our thoughts are negative, so this advice was life changing. I started appreciating people’s backgrounds, people's physical traits and character, and the things that people might be insecure about. It’s a great feeling knowing that you can appreciate someone for something that they don’t get praised enough for. An example is telling someone that you appreciate them for being thoughtful, which will then motivate them to continue being thoughtful. Consciously trying to be a positive person through your actions and words can lower the 80% of negative thoughts for someone else and make yourself feel better, making it easier to socialize.

Just as important, approaching new tasks with the mindset that you don’t know, but are willing to learn will help you with what you’re unfamiliar with. This instance applied to my first time rock climbing, but it also applies to academics. With rock-climbing, I was nervous because I was scared I was going to be terrible, but shifting my energy to learning instead of comparing myself to others allowed me to be a better rock climber at that time. Furthermore, one of the biggest hurdles I faced was overcoming imposter syndrome. There were moments when I doubted my abilities, especially in challenging academic settings. However, adopting a growth mindset helped me shift my focus from comparison to learning. For example, when I struggled with a complex concept in my chemistry class, I reminded myself that understanding takes time and effort. This mindset not only improved my academic performance but also boosted my confidence. In college, the earlier you approach difficult classes with a growth mindset, the better your experience will be in that class.

Conclusively, one has the ability to shape what their college experience is like. With this freedom, it's important to create a safe and healthy lifestyle so your future doesn't have to suffer. With the time it took for me to find uplifting friends, as well as find a hobby that's beneficial for my well-being, I've found that good things happen to those that wait, appreciating will benefit you and others, and that accepting that you don't know something but are willing to learn will help give you a better experience with difficult tasks.