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**Tips for
Crushing Your
Freshman Year
of College**

- Emilee Janitz -

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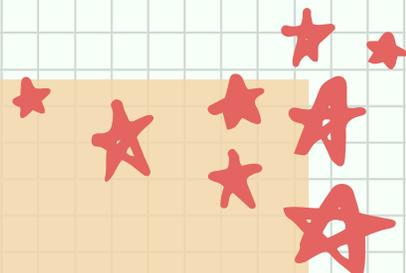
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This summer, my husband and his family celebrated the high school graduation of my two sister-in-laws. With both of them preparing to head off to college in the fall to start their freshman year, I find myself reflecting a lot on my own experiences as a high school graduate getting ready for life's next important phase.

I remember being excited to start the next chapter of my life but also very, very nervous. I found myself wondering if college would be exactly how it was depicted in movies and books, and whether or not I would be able to keep up with my peers in the classroom. In order to prepare myself, I sought out advice from older friends, parents, teachers, anyone who had ever been to college. After all, who would know better than those who had already been through the same experience?

Eight years later, I'm a proud college graduate with three separate degrees and all kind of college experiences under my belt, including transferring from a private school to a public university and staying on the college journey a bit longer to pursue a Master's. As cheesy as it may sound, I learned a lot during my time at school, both in and outside of the classroom. As I think back to try and give my sister-in-laws the best advice I have to offer, these are the tips that keep coming to mind:



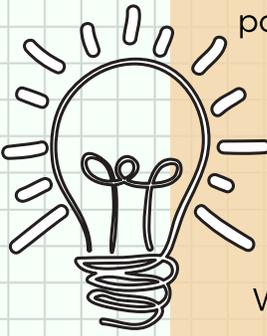


Show up

I know this sounds simple but it's so important! Go to class, even when you don't want to. As tempting as it is to blow off your 8 AM lecture, most schools have a strict attendance policy and simply choosing to show up can actually help your final grade. This lesson served me well during my college days and has continued to help me well into the workforce. Show up and be present in everything you do whether it's class, sports practice or a job interview. Putting your best foot forward will help you make the most of your time at school and will serve you the rest of your life.

Smile and be friendly!

This advice is key no matter what stage of life you're at! Kindness is infectious and while people may not remember the things you said and did, they will always remember the way you made them feel. Get off on the right foot with your roommate by offering to eat meals together in the dining hall, introduce yourself to your fellow dorm-mates and be a positive presence in the classroom.



Dress to impress

While you may be looking forward to making sweatpants and a t-shirt your everyday uniform, how you present yourself is ultimately part of your personal brand. Dressing a little nicer will help you stand out to professors who will double as job references and members of your professional network as you get closer to graduation.

Don't overpack

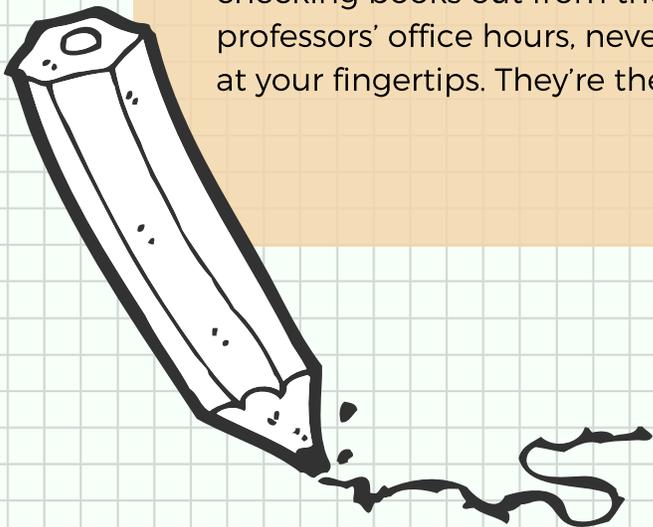
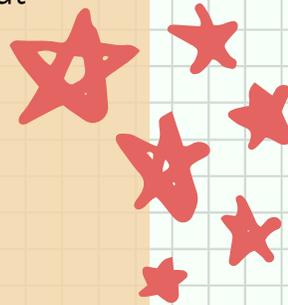
This is easier said than done but only pack the essentials. Chances are, your freshman dorm room won't be overly spacious and you might even be sharing the room as a triple if your college over-admitted applicants. Sticking to the basics will help you keep your space clutter-free and will save you and your parents a major headache when it's time to move out at the end of the spring semester!

Set up your LinkedIn profile

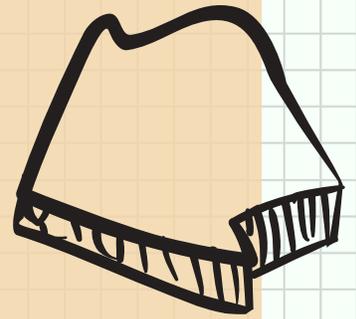
If you haven't already, set up your LinkedIn profile. LinkedIn is a social media platform designed to help professionals network, learn more about employers and find jobs. Setting up your profile early will make it easier to add experiences, relevant coursework and honors as they come along. Plus, the sooner you start making connections and growing your network, the better!

Take advantage of your resources

Whether it's spending extra time in the new state-of-the-art science lab, checking books out from the university library or attending your professors' office hours, never take for granted all of the resources that are at your fingertips. They're there to help you succeed!



Step outside your comfort zone



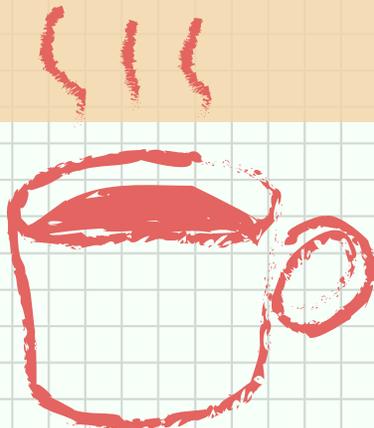
The best part of college is the wide collection of new opportunities and experiences that are being thrown your way. Use this time in your life to say, “yes” and try absolutely everything. Join a club that high-school-you wouldn’t have thought of joining, visit your school’s art gallery, audition for the musical or try intramural sports; the possibilities are endless!

Be your true self.

Never forget: You’re not in high school anymore! Whoever your peers thought you were in high school no longer applies. You can be whoever you want to be. In fact, you can be the best thing possible: your true self.

Take care of your health

The rumors are true: college can be stressful. Make sure you’re taking time to take care of yourself and do the things you enjoy. Practice stress-relieving methods like yoga, writing, listening to music or using anxiety-management apps to help you keep your stress levels at a minimum. If you ever find yourself feeling incapable of handling your stress on your own, seek help from your on-campus health center.



Have fun!

In between the lectures and late-night study sessions in the campus library, make sure you're taking time to have fun and enjoy these special years. Make friends, go to a party (or two, or three), explore your college town and remind yourself how lucky you are to have the opportunity to continue your education. Laugh often, make memories and cherish every moment.

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moment.