



美成教育 **U.S.A.**

MASON'S Education Nov. 2021 十一月號

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給大學新生的五個建議

FIVE NUGGETS OF ADVICE FOR COLLEGE FRESHMEN

BY ROBERT A.G. LEVINE

Here are five nuggets of advice for students who are heading off to college for the first time. These come from personal experience.

1. College is entirely different from the life you have always known. Don't kid yourself: high school has prepared you somewhat (but not that much) for the rigors of the college classroom, but it did NOT prepare you for the college environment. Perhaps the biggest struggle is time management. You haven't had this kind of unscheduled time before. In high school, you had a whole day of classes, then after-school activities, then study time. Now, your classes will take only a few hours per day; the balance of your education has shifted towards self-study. You first have to realize how much time college work actually takes. Actual study time often exceeds estimates by a factor of three. Then you must recognize that there is a limit to your best focus. If you think you can study effectively for an entire day, think again. Plan your time with the idea that you'll need more time than you think to complete your work, and that your focus usually wanes after only a few good hours.

2. Pick courses that you like. Follow not just your abilities and your career path, but also your joy. Don't always worry about whether your classes are "good" for your career; get a well-rounded education. Go broad, not just deep. Yes, some graduate schools (like medical school) require certain coursework, but most do not. If you don't like a class, it will be a struggle to do well. Your work will be a chore, you will procrastinate, and your grades will suffer. Besides, eventually you will learn what adults already know to be true: you will learn more during the first month on a job than from all of your schooling combined. Because much of the material you learn in college will become obsolete (or forgotten), consider your college education to be both a foundation and a springboard for your future.

3. Explore! You have never been to a place with SO many resources. Check them out. When someone you know wants to go see something or listen to someone, join them. You will be amazed at what you'll find. One of my biggest regrets is not exploring everything. If I had the opportunity to attend college again, I might never sleep.

4. Don't expect your diploma to land you a career. Get an internship or a "real" job in college. Build your resume, but focus on making connections. The best connections get you to places where your diploma and resume won't take you.

5. Look for the good in people and forgive the bad moments. Don't be surprised when one of your roommates gets on your nerves. Everyone has bad days. It's easy to see our down moments, but hard to remember that most people are good people. Try not to ostracize someone for temporary behavior. At some point, you too will have a bad moment. In high school, you spent many, many hours helping others through community service. In college, be sure to retain that same helpful attitude. Be supportive, not combative.

And here's an extra piece of advice:

6. Your relationships are going to change in college, but don't get so caught up in the excitement of new places and friends that you neglect the people who have always loved you. Remember your mother and father, your siblings, your extended family, even your pets. Reach out to them, plan to see them, keep in touch. They're going to miss you, too.