

A Good Life

By Veronika

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Junior college students' support kit

by Veronika Eskova

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Becoming an adult

From my own junior college experiences, I understand how hard it is to make the right decisions after high school or during the last few years of high school. All my friends wanted to go to big cities to get what we thought was the best education possible. Of course, most opportunities and jobs are concentrated in the big cities that dictate our life style today. It has been like this since the industrial area which started at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Nothing we can do about it.

Each big city has a higher cost of living that could destroy your budget and leave you at a disadvantage for a long time before you're even able to understand and choose the lifestyle you are looking for. Young people are very shy and do not ask the right questions because they think that somebody important like their parents or friends will think they are stupid and not able to live by themselves. Very often young people try to prove to others that they can do anything and live anywhere they want which is very much a myth.

Be very aware of this bias considering how confusing it is to make such an important decision in your life like where to go to college. As a young adult, you have to take under consideration all knowns and unknowns that you could think of. Those factors are not necessarily positive or negative. You just have to face them as a decision maker before choosing a college. Create a list of pros and cons. Take as much time as you need. We are all moving at a different pace. This is part of living and being a human. Each of us is unique and capable. We just

have to believe in ourselves.

When you are creating your pros and cons list, be sure to cover the first three years of college. What would you like to study and why? Whom would you like to meet? How far away from home are you comfortable to commute to college? Are your parents older? Do they need you to run a business or a household part time? You have to take these factors under consideration while creating the list.

If you have sisters and brothers who are already in college you should talk with them about your college goals to get feedback for your pros and cons list. Nothing is changing after high school in regards to homework, you still have to do it yourself. Each time you face a major life changing decision you have to do your homework. Nobody else will do it for you, you have to do it yourself because it is your life and you are the decision maker.

By creating the pros and cons list before choosing a college, you will create an opportunity to make a better decision. Remember, you do not have to go to college right away after high school if you are not ready for it. You might want to find a part-time job or help around the house. It's up to you what to do. One thing is true, you have to communicate with your parents and friends about what you decide, but the decision is yours.

In case you are not comfortable to leave your hometown, consider staying and starting with a community college. It will dramatically

reduce stress to make the choice right after high school. It'll help you to stay calm and focused. It will help you with positive emotions and you will face less trouble while making a very important decision in your life which is stepping in to an adulthood. You can stay at home and go to the community college part-time that is totally appropriate and very rewarding since you can sleep in your own bed and have your own room to yourself for a few more years.

Learning schedule

Now, you have had your transition period and you are a full-time junior in college. How do you handle the pressure? If you have not done it before you have to start with a daily learning schedule. It sounds trivial at first but very rewarding in a few months after you see the positive results. At the beginning of each semester, you will be bombarded with an excessive amount of information and interactions with others. To stay focused and keep your healthy eating habits you have to create a daily learning schedule. By doing so you will reduce everyday pressure of a college campus dramatically. It's okay do not follow your schedule daily, but it is not okay to miss deadlines and exams.

At the beginning of each semester create the learning schedule, incorporate learning activities like exams, presentations, workshops and tutoring into your schedule. Look at the schedule every week or maybe a few times per week to ensure that you understand what has to be done everyday. Basically, you are looking at a printed paper calendar and writing notes on it; one calendar per year. Keep it safe and know where it is at all times. In case your calendar has pictures, I hope you prefer beautiful and soothing nature or art images that will help you to focus on learning and studying. You are paying for the college education. Be sure to utilize all recourses that are available to you on campus. Seek professional support from student advisers or the senior students to prevent breakdowns, stress and overwhelming emotions.

If you feel like you cannot start to create a learning schedule, you can

always rely on student advisers. In case you would like to approach a senior student who could be your tutor in the future be sure this person has seen you around. You have to be very comfortable and nice while communicating with new people. College-based peer-to-peer communication is good practice. Learn about other people and evolve as an intelligent and respectful human being. It's ok to have higher expectations while getting to know people; it's not ok to feel down and confused all the time. It means you are in the wrong crowd.

You would be much more comfortable communicating with new people after somebody else introduces you to them. To meet new people, go to college meetings where people are meeting in groups; get information about the meetings and events through the advisory boards, coffeeshops, recreational classes. Sometimes you can find a part-time job on campus; it will help you to meet new people your age who have similar interests and goals. New people should have seen you around in case you would like to approach them, so they are not intimidated by you and you are not intimidated by them.

In case this is not an option for you to initiate a conversation, even if you've kind of seen the person on campus and you know what classes this person is taking, go back to the student advisers and ask them to introduce you. Do not be shy because this is their job to handle juniors on the college campus. Nothing wrong with bothering the student advisers every week if there is a need. You want to meet your "go-to" student adviser during the first semester to understand the college's culture better and to adapt to its lifestyle to have friends, tutoring and

scheduled appointments with the college professors.

Networking

Baby-boomers are retiring. There is a reason for an entire generation of people to be called baby-boomers. My guess is they made a lots of babies. As a young adult, you need to learn from someone older to live a good life. Get to know your relatives better or an older neighbor who could be a member of a church community where you live. Maybe he is your father or she is your mother and it's your time to go to college. Our lives are very superficial in today's world. Sometimes we cannot see what is available to us. Look around, what do you see? We have to use these very powerful human abilities which are being and living to have a good life. Whom do you see? Get to know people that you respect and admire.

Get to know retired professionals, folks with education and college degrees. The baby-boomers, they are very smart and well educated. They have a good life. They went to school. They fell in love. They created families. They had good jobs. They are happy people. They are great teachers for you to explain the good life. Find those people around you, connect or reconnect with them. Do not be shy about it. They won't be around for very long. Do not miss this amazing opportunity to create the good life for yourself.

Many folks are retiring. The professional retirees are available in each community these days. Reach out, do not feel intimidated in case you are shy by nature. Practice your communication skills by reaching out and asking questions. You can start with your school teacher, a family

doctor or a cook at your favorite family restaurant. If you know any churches that have a good reputation and welcome young people, go there and meet people. Some of the older people are less intimidating, when you meet them in groups. You can always ask them about networking. You can ask, if they had a mentor in their lives who helped them to grow up, a person that they admired as a young adult. Read local newspapers to figure out if you would like to volunteer for a project. Express yourself to your parents and friends to get support.

As a young adult, you should be able to identify with positive people to receive support. The people who make you feel comfortable and relaxed. They are everywhere. Good people do their best to help as much as they can. At the same time, keep your expectations low, we all are very different. Be patient while conversing with others, but do not listen to negative comments for a long time. Those comments could be very distracting and confusing. Thank those commentators and move on to something more uplifting. Be respectful and do not try to prove anything. Focus on your own goals and keep your opinions to yourself. In other words, stay out of trouble, be patient and respectful.

Talk with your parents or school advisers to get acquainted with a retired professional adult. Networking is a must in today's world. The baby-boomers could be easily available for a conversation or a cup of coffee. You just have to be properly introduced to them by another respectful adult. Stay where you live, do not travel to find a professional baby-boomer to talk with. They are every where these days. You just have to look for them and of course respect their privacy. Be reasonable in your

outreach. It means do not try too hard. It'll make people nervous. You could get rejected a few times which is nothing to do with you. Keep being and living. Things will start happening for you.

Who are your heroes?

Do you read books? For me, it's a pleasure to read a good book. I look at the book cover, I turn its pages, I hold it in my hands and read it. Try reading books that made from paper to see how it feels. My guess is you like reading. You're reading my book. Who are your heroes? Do you know any people you admire?

We need heroes. We need people to admire for their great achievements. We need to learn from them every day. Our heroes are well-known. They wrote the constitution, books; they create literature and shape cultures. They create music, arts and media. They built a better life for all of us; they are spiritual leaders, politicians, educators, engineers, businessmen, scientists, designers, farmers, cooks, factory workers, you name it. They create or have created something amazing and everybody knows about their creations. We know their names, when and where they live or lived. What happened to them. They are famous.

Some of the famous people are just known by name. Some of them stay in our minds all the time. We know where they are from, where they went to school, where they grew up, whom they married, how they became famous. Learn about your heroes, repeat after them. Do what they did to be successful and happy. Smart people like you who are reading this book learn from other people. Learn from your heroes to have a better life.

If they are among us, you don't have to talk with them or ask for their

autographs. They have their own lives, families and friends. If they seek admirers they still prefer to keep them at a distance. Respect their privacy. Keep learning about them and become a better version of them because they are your heroes. We need them and they need us. Who are your heroes?

Associations, certificates, social clubs

In case you are interested to go to school during the summer months outside of the college campus and you have resources to do so, choose wisely. Choose associations, social clubs, certificate programs that are appealing to you because you are very excited and interested to learn about these learning opportunities.

Sometimes, as young adults, we are overwhelmed by the broad spectrum of choices and make decisions based on the other people's success stories just because those people are close to us. They are our parents, relatives or friends who are doing well in life. You are welcome to try what they did to understand yourself a little better. Yes, this is a great idea to repeat after successful people whom you know and respect.

In case you are interested to push an envelope a little bit, do something on your own, participate in a program or training that is very appealing to you only. You never know how it is going to turn out. One thing I can promise you for sure, you will understand better who you are and what you want from your life. It's ok to be disappointed or overly excited about your discoveries and experiences. Those are your own experiences and you are a master-maker of your own life.

Multitasking

Multitasking has a long history of corporate encouragement. A lot of potential employers are still considering multitasking as a benefit when they see it on a resume. They are interested to receive workers who are able to multitask. As a junior student, you will feel “multitasking” pressure in college that might come from an academia. This is a part of being in college and growing up.

Multitasking could be very beneficial if you are working on assembly line when you have to repeat a few tasks over and over again while working your shift. After a while you will complete these tasks with confidence, quality and understanding. A professional cook at a quality restaurant is a very good example of multitasking. It is not easy to complete multiple menu items at the same time.

Multitasking is less beneficial if you are an intellectual worker, a worker with a college degree who is required to think and to work independently. As an intellectual worker, be sure to understand your job requirements and standards. Ask for help if you are not sure how to complete tasks assigned to you. The help could come from a senior coworker or from the management.

When you do not know how to complete the required tasks effectively ask for help and be very specific about it. In the intellectual work environment, tasks are much more complex, demanding and creative - meaning tasks could be interpreted differently by different people. In

case you do not know yet, if you are good with multitasking you have to practice it. Find an exercise below to practice and evaluate your multitasking abilities.

Task Performance Exercise

Part A - Perform a set of tasks individually

Part B - Perform a set of tasks simultaneously

For example, perform and evaluate two or three every day tasks like cooking, reading and talking on a phone. Those are your tasks to focus on: cooking, reading and talking on a phone. At the end of this exercise evaluate your findings:

1. Perform and write down how long it takes to complete these tasks individually and simultaneously.
3. Write down how you feel about the results.

Ask the following questions while evaluating the results: Cooking - How was the food? Was it good or not? Talking on a phone - How was the conversation on the phone? Did I feel ok after the conversation or not ok? Reading - How was the reading? Did I remember what I read?

Complete the same set of tasks simultaneously and individually. Look at your calendar, be sure to divide this exercise by separating Part A and Part B. Choose one day for the individual task performance (Part A) and some other day for the individual task performance (Part B). After you

are done with both, compare your findings. If you're not sure after this exercise to be or not to be a "multitasking" worker, perform the same exercise again by using a different set of tasks. You have to know your strengths and weaknesses to live a good life. It means working hard, building your future and enjoying every day in the process.

When you are a junior student in college, authorities are so important. Authoritative vibes could come from professors, or other students, or even the media. Do not take somebody else's opinion for granted. If you are interested in multitasking you have to practice it on your own to see the results and understand if this is an applicable skill for you. College is a great time for new discoveries and it's safe to keep developing in a creative and dynamic learning environment.

The main reason, I'm providing you with the multitasking exercise is to let you know that it's totally ok if you discover that you cannot multitask effectively. Do one thing at a time and improve over time. Time and hard work will move you to a good life.

Traveling while in college

Taking summer off for travel is a great way to learn about yourself. To start with less advanced travels, for example, traveling to another state is a very good move. By going out-of-state to study or to visit relatives you expand your social circle and develop better communication skills.

Communication with new people who are older or your own age helps us to become a better student and opens up new doors and opportunities in the future. In case you have been traveling consistently out-of-state, because your parents or relatives have been welcoming you each summer, then, you are more advanced and comfortable to travel abroad with or without your parents. Travel could be a good way to utilize your summer months effectively, if you feel like you want to be more social and available to other people.

You will have an advantage to compare your own lifestyle with a lifestyle in other countries. Do you want to enjoy your summer off and learn about other peoples' ways of living? Consult with your family and friends about your plans. The best way to travel is by knowing where you are going and knowing the people who are from those locations. Think about where you want to go in advance, maybe six to twelve months in advance.

People should be enthusiastic about you coming to visit and willing to spend sometime with you while you are there. It means you have to make arrangements in advance. If you do not get that vibe that you are welcomed, do not go. Choose a different destination for your summer

travels. As you know, it takes years to build relationships with your own friends and family. It applies to the abroad friends as well. In other countries people want to get to know you before they can welcome you to their homes.

Let's say you found something amazing and you spent at least six months working on this project doing your research and talking with the people who live there. Be sure you understand why you want to go there. Knowing why you are going there is the key to a successful and memorable travel journey. Figure out your travel budget, start saving money, be sure to cover unpredictable expenses. You do not need a lot of money, you need a travel plan. Telling your friends and family about your plan must be a part of the plan, so they can support you in your travels.

Also, as a junior college student you have an opportunity to participate in the students' exchange programs. It would be even better experience to start your international travels by getting into the students' exchange programs to learn about different cultures and ways of living. People will be expecting you in the location where you're going to study for a semester or two.

After staying there for the whole semester you will make friends, learn about local ways of living and become a better communicator. Each time you communicate outside of your social circle you learn about other cultures. It's not necessarily better or worse, it's different. There are positive and negative aspects of living in any culture. It does not mean

you can do something about it. People are people, they live, they breath; they make babies and eat every day. You can accept their ways of living or not. It's your choice to like them or not. The travel experiences are yours, time and human interactions will make you a better communicator.

Why to study a second language?

A second language is important to study because if you do it the right way you will learn about yourself much more. What do I mean by that? My advice is to choose a language that you can personally relate to. Choose a language that somebody in your family speaks or used to speak before you were born. You will relate to that language on a personal and profound level. You will learn the second language to develop yourself and to make yourself a better person. You will learn about your family tree, your relatives and the countries where they were from. Then you will learn the second language with dedication, respect and human curiosity which is fun. You will learn about your ancestors lifestyle, dreams and hopes. You will learn how to advance your second language if it makes you happy and more confident. As people ask, do you want to live a good life? Learn about who you are and where you came from to make your life a better life every day.

Veronika's Autobiography

I was born in Russia into a middle-class family growing up in a small quiet city. My first college degree after high school was in Nursing and Physical Therapy. I liked my job and especially enjoyed working with people. Later in life, I moved to USA and continued my education. My second degree was in Business Administration and Marketing. I consider myself a lifelong learner being curious about the way we live in different countries. Higher education helped me to evolve as a human being and feel grounded and happy in my own life. My third degree was in Adult Corporate Training from the School of Education and Human Development. I truly believe that college education is a great foundation for a prosperous and healthy lifestyle.

In this book, I'm sharing my understanding about college education and communication in general. My book's name is *A Good Life by Veronika Eskova*. I wrote this book for the young adults to support them in their growing-up journey after high school. I hope they will find this *Junior Students' Support Kit* useful, resourceful and encouraging in their pursuit of higher education.