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****Common App Update:** The new essay prompts have been sent to college admissions consultants like us. We are now working with rising seniors on these essays so that they are completed before summer break. Take advantage of this free time and sign up for essay services!

Helpful Links

For info about SAT I, II, and AP Tests go to:

www.collegeboard.com

For info about ACT test go to:

www.act.org

For info about test optional schools go to:

www.fairtest.org/university/optional

For info about financial aid go to:

www.FAFSA.ed.gov

www.fastweb.com

www.finaid.org

For college search info go to:

www.collegenavigator.gov

www.collegeprowler.com

To take a virtual tour of college campuses go to:

www.youniversitytv.com

To learn about Colleges That Change Lives go to:

www.ctcl.org

We Are All Just Trying to Figure it Out

We are all just trying to figure it out. Even before COVID 19 hit, all of us were just trying to navigate life to the best of our ability. There are no manuals for how to live your best life. Perhaps this is why so many people look to celebrities, professional athletes, and other accomplished people as role models and sources of inspiration. But let me tell you something, even the most successful people are doing the same thing we mortals are doing on a daily basis figuring it out.

The longer we live, the better able we are to determine what works and what does not. With more experience, routines are established, behavioral trends are noted, and we start to get into a rhythm. Some days are easier than others. Think about it: parents, think back to those newborn days. The sleepless nights were endless, and it took some time, but you eventually figured out your babies' cues, cries, and suddenly sleep was plentiful for all and your new little family was able to enjoy some regularity. And then the routine shifted at about three months when the sleep schedule changed and the interest in feedings decreased because Baby was now more aware of his/her surroundings, and sitting in a confined seated position was less appealing than being able to observe and take in the world around him/her. (Remember those foiled attempts to get a spoonful of cereal neatly into your baby's mouth?!)

Kids have the same experience. At every age, they are navigating the challenges of that stage of development, learning the objectives they need to master and determining the best course of action to do so. In kindergarten they must learn how to sit still for longer stretches of time; share with others; master letter-sound pairings; tame fine motor skills needed to write, etc. All the while, they tweak and adjust their steps until they figure out how to reach these goals.

So why bother to have a conversation about a topic that is so seemingly obvious? Because it is so easy to forget. Too often we get caught up in keeping up with our peers. Parents compare themselves and their choices with those of their children's parents. Did they choose the right pediatrician, pre-school, day camp, overnight camp, learning specialist, etc? Are the lunches they make as tantalizing and nutritious as those their child's friends are bringing to school, or should they just allow their child to buy lunch every day? Should they force their child to attend in-person classes in the face of a major pandemic, or should they risk their child's social ostracization, erring on the side of health and safety?

Further fueling these fires of insecurity is the rampant prevalence of social media. With the regular posts of picture perfection, it's easy to fall into the misguided trap of believing

Keeping on Track:

Seniors: If you are still making a decision, be aware that some colleges have postponed their decision deadlines to June 1st. Please check with your colleges to confirm when your decisions are due. Please also pay attention to all communication that comes from your colleges and prospective colleges regarding Accepted Students Days and other events.

Juniors: Start taking the SAT or the ACT and practice ahead of time. Think about the teachers you want to write your letters of recommendation. The teachers you consider need to be from your major subjects: math, English, history, science, and foreign language. Other recommenders can write supplemental letters of support (ie if you plan to major in biology and you worked in a lab with a professor at a university (s)he can write a letter on your behalf, speaking to your work ethic and what you accomplished during this time. Consider starting your college admissions essay so you can have that out of the way before summer begins (Summer will be here before you know it!)

ACT: Here is the link for the latest ACT information:

<https://www.act.org/content/act/en/covid-19.html>

SAT: Here is the link for the latest SAT information:

<https://pages.collegeboard.org/sat-covid-19-updates>

Sophomores: if you have the opportunity to do so safely, start visiting campuses to get a feel for what you are looking for in a campus.

In lieu of real-time campus visits, use websites like www.campustours.com and www.youvisit.com to get an idea of what the colleges are like.

****We are helping students with their college admissions essays now! Schedule your appointment today.**

everyone else has it “together”. But isn’t that part of the magic of social media, presenting our best selves to the rest of the world? It can feel like everyone is perfect and the viewer does not measure up to this version of perfection.

By acknowledging the reality that all of us are figuring out how to live life to the best of our abilities, we even out the playing field. While accepting this idea is a great first step, the question that begs to be answered is how do we increase our chances of figuring “it” out?

- 1) Be true to yourself-learn who you are and what is important to you. What do you value in life? What is your moral compass?
- 2) Find people who share these values and surround yourself with them. Identify people who exude genuine positivity.
- 3) Ensure you are sticking to the four basic foundations discussed earlier: rest, food, hydration, and socializing.
- 4) Tap into your resources-solicit help and guidance from those who have experienced the stage of life you are in now-peers, teachers, parents, etc.
- 5) Check in with yourself regularly-are you happy? If not, what adjustments can you make? Are you feeling fulfilled with what you are currently doing? If not, what can you add to the mix of your daily schedule?
- 6) Limit your time on social media as this tool can undermine your best efforts.
- 7) Establish goals for yourself-categorize them into long and short-term goals. Take steps to ensure you can realistically meet them. Make sure you are following through on your plan of action.

There are no manuals for how to be a great parent, student, professional, friend, etc. Stick to your lane and what’s important to you and your family. Just remember, we are **all** just trying to figure it out.

Pay it Forward: Do you know someone who is struggling with the shift to virtual classroom learning?? Send them this newsletter or forward us their contact information. We want to help!

Contact Us

<http://www.Academic-Ally.com>

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