

September 26, 2016

An Epicurean Guide to College Life

Scarlet Yeung

With new adventures on the horizon, college introduces an exciting period into any person's life. Being introduced to new faces, places and experiences is often a stressful and frustrating transition, but it is important to always slow down a little, relax, and enjoy life as you live it. Keep yourself happy, live a pleasurable life and you'll get through it. Here's some tips to help you do just that!

1. Seek simple pleasures.

Feeling stressed? Worried about that writing class? Having an anxiety induced panic attack over that upcoming psych exam like I am right now? Don't worry. It'll all be okay. Take a deep breath and relax. Study hard and once all of that is over and done with, don't forget to treat yourself! And I don't mean overindulge in your favorite Ben & Jerry's ice cream flavor. I mean enjoy and find little pleasures that life has to offer. Go to a new cafe, explore new places, join new clubs, and do activities that you like. Or unwind and relax after a long days' worth of studying nonstop. Everything, including indulgence, is good in moderation.

"So we must exercise ourselves in the things which bring happiness, since, if we are happy, we have everything, and, if not, we do everything to possess it." (Letter to Menoeceus, Epicurus)

2. Make and keep meaningful friendships.

The switch to college can be a nerve-racking experience. You may not know anyone there, and maybe you want to keep up with your old friends. You certainly don't want to lose any sort of bond you have with your family, but there's so many new

people around you and you're trying to balance out your time with everyone on top of all your schoolwork. It's difficult to keep up with everyone, but it's entirely worth it. Friendship gives you love, care and support. You love and care for your friends and they love and care for you back, unconditionally. There is always going to be a challenge to overcome, not only in college but in life in general. Having a friend or someone who cares about you during these times might take the weight off your shoulders, as they won't let you go through them alone and will support you all the way.

Friendship is a key factor in helping you live a happy and successful life and in the end of the day, they will always be there for you as they make life beautiful and worth living.

"Of all the things that wisdom acquires to ensure happiness throughout the whole of life, by far the most important is friendship." (The Principle Doctrines, Epicurus)

So what can you do? Make sure the people you're leaving behind in college don't feel left behind. Assure them you still care deeply for them, try your best to do so, and never let them go. And as for new friends, don't be shy to speak up and say hi to someone new every once in a while. Not everyone is as scary as you think. If anything, they are probably in the same boat as you and are as nervous as you are.

3. Forget what others think.

"We must free ourselves from the prison of everyday affairs and politics" (The Vatican Sayings, Epicurus)

In college and in life, you will meet many people, some of them more judgmental than others. The important thing is to realize, however, that what they think doesn't really matter, and shouldn't matter to you. If you allow others thoughts and opinions of

you to rule your life, how will you ever truly be happy? You'll eventually realize what you did in the moment to please someone else may not have necessarily made you happy or be what you should've done. Why let someone else dictate what you want life to be?

Living a life of obscurity and free from public life, is the solution. By freeing yourself from everyday affairs, you will no longer live under constant scrutiny, depend on the judgment of others, and will finally be able to be yourself truly. You'll also spend less time involving yourself in other people's businesses. By doing this, you'll be able to focus more time on improving yourself and less time on Snapchat or Instagram.

You're in college to learn about what you love and make a better future for yourself. Don't let someone else change your idea of a happy life or change who you are.

4. Appreciate what you have.

"Don't spoil what you have by desiring what you don't have; but remember that what you now have was once among the things only hoped for." (The Vatican Sayings, Epicurus)

Fundamentally, appreciate the life you've been given. Far too often, people don't realize that the life they've been given is such a precious thing. Care for it and nurture it as you would anything or anyone you truly love and care for. Along with that, do not take for granted the things you receive throughout your years. Don't constantly go wishing for things that you don't have or you'll never be satisfied with the things that you do have.

"Nothing is enough to someone for whom enough is little." (The Vatican Sayings, Epicurus)

In college, you've generally downscaled to a smaller room and have less things at your disposal at any given time. Though, many people don't even have the simplest of things that you might have access to here. Make use of every little thing you brought with you and don't be frustrated with the idea and longing for better things or a better dorm, just learn to be efficient and happy with what you've got. You can make it through, don't worry, there's always ramen noodles when you can't afford five star meals every night!

5. Practice good virtues.

"Therefore wisdom is a more precious thing even than philosophy; from it spring all the other virtues, for it teaches that we cannot live pleasantly without living wisely, honorably, and justly; not live wisely, honorably, and justly without living pleasantly." (Letter to Menoeceus, Epicurus)

A good college experience, or an enjoyable life for that matter, cannot be made possible without living as virtuously as we can. A pleasant life and good character go hand in hand. Be wise about your actions and how they affect others. Wisdom is the greatest good of all because all other virtues stem from being wise.

There are so many opportunities in college to practice good virtues. You can do your part from volunteering on campus to off campus, to just helping out a friend. It may not seem to make that big of a difference at the time, but it is well worth it in the end.

Strive to be the best person you can be. It is not only good for you, but for the people around you as well. Creating a good and friendly environment starts with you,

and once other people see this, they'll eventually follow your steps. Do not be afraid to be the one to start this. Kindness is contagious.

6. Improve yourself every day.

College is a long and stressful journey that will require a lot of hard work and dedication. It's up to you to be the best person you can be, in both character and education. In order to have a successful and happy journey, it is crucial for you to be better than the person you were yesterday. By improving yourself, even in the smallest gesture or act, you will eventually realize how it all comes together in the grand scheme of things and how all those little things add up and shape who you are. By the time you graduate college, you'll be able to look back on those past four years and feel happy, content, and accomplished with everything that you've done and hopefully, be able to feel that way after your college career and in the start of your life in the world in whatever path you may take.

"While we are on the road, we must try to make what is before us better than what is past; when we come to the road's end, we feel a smooth contentment." (The Vatican Sayings, Epicurus)