



THE FRESHMAN SURVIVAL GUIDE

TOP TEN SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

Condensed from *The Freshman Survival Guide* book. TheFreshmanSurvivalGuide.com

- 1. Be generous with your friendship but stingy with your trust.** The friends you have back home didn't get to be your friends overnight. Some of the people you meet in your first few weeks of school may turn out to be the best friends of your life but every freshman class has its gems and its criminals (I'm not kidding, some of them are actually criminals). Which ones are which will come clear over the next few months. Wait until you get to know them before you loan them your car or share your deepest secrets with them.
- 2. For the first few weeks...live like a monk.** Monks take vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience.
 - **Chastity:** College may be the place where you meet the love of your life but you probably won't know that in the first week of school, especially on Friday night after a couple of drinks. Take some time to get used to your new surroundings before adding a boyfriend/girlfriend to the mix or hooking up with someone who may turn out to be a jerk.
 - **Poverty:** Don't blow all your money your first weekend. Take it easy with the credit card if you have one and keep track of your balances. It's way too easy to get in over your head.
 - **Obedience: GO TO CLASS!** Seems obvious, it *IS* why you're at college but you wouldn't believe how many freshmen skip their way out of school. Do a little math and figure how much it costs for you to have your butt in that chair per hour. You'll be less willing to blow one off. Save your absences for the end of the semester when you've got mono and three papers due in the same week.
- 3. Help! I'm Drowning!** There are lots of other helpful people on campus ready to throw you a life preserver—health services, counseling, academic advisors, and your RA—to name just a few. If you find yourself behaving in ways that are contrary to your values or you feel like you're in the bottom of an emotional pit and can't get out—get to the counseling center! The transition to college life can be a rocky one. Don't be afraid to ask for help! Dr. Richard Kadison of Harvard University says, "The most painful thing I experience as a clinician is witnessing the amount of suffering that students endure before seeking help. They often suffer alone, which compounds the problem. Sharing stress invites others to share their own stresses, solidifies connections and provides opportunities for new perspectives and solutions."
- 4. Campus Ministry...who?** Campus Ministry is a **great** place to meet people with similar values, get connected with service opportunities. If it doesn't feel like your church or youth group back home right away give it a little time. Each place has its own culture and traditions but making a spiritual connection on campus and can be a real life line if you find yourself struggling later in the semester.
- 5. Be yourself!** Don't forget who you are just because you're in a new place. You're still you and it's gotten you this far! Your values, your likes and dislikes, the things you're good at haven't changed, hang onto those things, especially while you're getting used to this new environment. **Rev. Charles L. Currie, S.J.**, of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities explains that there is "an explosion of options" for students in their first few weeks on campus. He suggests, "*Once a week, step back and say to yourself 'What's going on? What choices have I made? Have they been good ones or bad ones?'*"
- 6. Too much of a dangerous thing...** beer + you = a very expensive waste of a semester. Underage drinking is a bad idea. **Don't** do it. It's also a really embarrassing way to flunk out or get yourself into stupid trouble of all sorts.
- 7. Too Plugged In.** Smart phones are awesome. So are laptops. Electronic distractions-gaming, chatting, surfing, Netflix, can be nice diversions; just don't let them suck up ALL of your time. Give yourself an "allowance" each day and don't go over it! DON'T stay up all night playing video games or watching entire seasons of 90's TV.
- 8. Your Mother was right.** Wash your hands...Say your prayers...Get some sleep...Eat real food and drink lots of water.
- 9. Get involved...** but not too involved. Every club and association will be vying for your time. Campus activities are a great way to **connect** with other students who share your interests but be choosy and be careful not to over commit yourself.
- 10. Don't be afraid, just be aware!** From mass shootings to campus crime there's certainly a lot to be concerned about. Follow the safety tips from Campus Security-lock your door, don't leave your laptop or cell phone unattended-and hang around with people who look out for each other.

There's a lot to think about and a lot to be cautious about, but this is also the opportunity of a lifetime. You will probably make some of the best friends of your life, you will probably fall in love, you will probably grow more and learn more and discover more about yourself than you ever thought possible.