Seasonal Student Issues

There’s a seasonal ebb and flow when it comes to student issues. Here are a few things your student may be experiencing this month:

- Anxiety and tension due to realizations that the year is ending and final exams are about to occur
- Senior panic about jobs, finances, etc.
- First-year students are feeling somewhat confident because they see that they have made it through the first year (almost!)
- Good feelings are evident as summer is near
- Lots of cramming, studying and wrapping things up academically
- End of the year socialization
- Packing and checking out
- Saying goodbye to important people and putting closure on the year

Summer Adjustments
Making the transition work for everyone

Summer requires an adjustment for everyone involved, whether your student is moving home after being away at school or she’s just going to be around more when classes end. Consider talking about a few things upfront to make the transition smoother.

Expectations. Students often return home after experiencing a year of independence and self-responsibility. So, be sure to discuss everyone’s expectations for behavior, curfews and more right off the bat. Don’t talk at your student, though; instead, talk with her as you come to a mutual understanding about how the summer will go.

Finances. Does your student have a clear understanding regarding how much money he needs to save up this summer? Have you discussed things like spending money, work expectations and more? Having this proactive discussion in May is much better than reacting poorly in August.

Family Responsibilities. Incorporating your student back into the everyday flow of your family’s life may involve some growing pains. What chores will she pick up? What obligations are in place that she should plan for (i.e. the July family reunion, the June graduation party)? Discuss the details.

Shared Space. Living under the same roof for the summer can be a wonderful time of connection. Yet, it’ll take some work and, likely, some compromise. What does this mean when it comes to stuff, laundry, meals, noise and more? Talk about it now.

Having your student home for the summer can be a wonderful thing, as long as you work out some possible kinks before they grow into big problems. So, gather around the kitchen table to talk through this transition now and make it a pleasant summer for all.
Connecting with Your Student This Summer

Whether your student is staying with you this summer or living somewhere else, there are ways to stay connected…

Create a Workout Time. Get up in the mornings to take walks before work or meet after supper to walk the dog or take a bike ride.

Tap Into Skype or Facetime. It’s the next best thing to being there!

Have a Reunion. Meet halfway for a picnic if you’re living separately. Or invite old friends and family for a barbecue if you’re living close by to get everyone together for some summer celebrating.

Read the Same Book. Give your student a book that you’ve both talked about wanting to read, and then read it yourself, too. It’ll give you common ground to discuss the next time you’re together, on the phone or connecting online.

Be Tourists. Hit up the local caverns that you haven’t been to since your student’s childhood or explore back roads and flea markets. Make it an adventure to just get out and do something out of the norm!

Send Wacky Postcards. It takes 3 minutes to write out a postcard and pop it in the mail. So, arm your student with postcard stamps and get some for yourself — then pick up funny postcards along the way this summer and let your student know that you are thinking about her.

Take Up Tennis. This can be a good way to spend some time while also getting great exercise! Or consider golf, hiking or other companionable activities.

It doesn’t take much to stay connected, yet the benefits are invaluable!

Grad Gifts with Meaning

› A letter outlining why you are proud of her and what her graduation day means to you
› A nice collage frame that he can use to put photos of college friends in as a remembrance
› Arranging a trip for her to see an old friend or beloved family member
› A bike and helmet so he can be more sustainable transportation-wise while also getting good exercise
› Shopping together for one professional outfit that he can wear on interviews or at work
› A donation to a cause that he believes in, in his name
› A nice frame for her diploma
› Putting a certain amount of money into a college fund for a child in your student’s life, whether it’s a nephew, a daughter or a family friend, to symbolize the “circle of higher education”

Separating from Friends

Chances are that your student made some good friends this year. Part of this friendship-making process is mourning the separation when summer comes along. Being separated from college friends during the summer hiatus can be traumatic and troubling for students.

Bonds develop quickly and strongly during the year, as students experience everything together, from classes to meals to deep 2 a.m. conversations in the laundry room. So, when May rolls around and it’s time to say goodbye, it’s natural to expect that your student may have some trouble.

Talk with him about it, work together to figure out ways he can stay connected with these friends from afar and applaud the fact that he has connected with others so well. This is a sign that he’s developing genuine friendships at school filled with give and take. It’s all part of the development process into adulthood.
As summer job season arrives, you can help your student prepare in advance for these common interview questions:

› **Tell me about yourself.** This might seem like a no-brainer, since the interviewer is sitting with your life story (resume) in front of her. But the vagueness of the question is purposeful, since it gives the prospective employer the chance to evaluate your unrehearsed reaction to what is important in your life. So, what are your goals and personal priorities?

› **Why do you think you would like to work for this company?** The answer to this question could/should be consistent with your answer to the previous one. In other words, the things that have motivated you and shaped you through life should be related to why you are knocking on this particular employer’s door.

› **What sort of skills do you have?** Be honest in your answer, since if you embellish your skills in the interview, the truth will become painfully evident once you start working. It will also make your adjustment to the company that much harder, since you will be dealing with greater expectations than you can deliver. Better off being honest and open, and if there are critical skills you’re lacking, show a genuine interest in learning them.

› **What is a mistake you’ve made, and how did you deal with it?** You don’t have to be too open with these kinds of questions, but it would be good for you to be able to share an example of how you learned a lesson “the hard way.”

› **Is there anything else that you’d like to share about yourself?** Here is a question that can help you hit a homerun during the interview, if you come prepared. Now is the time to elaborate on your skills, experiences and personal history that make you stand out from the rest of the crowd. For example, you can tell about your experiences with hall council or student government and how you were successful in helping other students bond. These types of skills are invaluable to an employer who needs to maintain peaceful relations between all people.

Whether your student is shopping for a summer job or a full-time gig after graduation, thinking about these questions ahead of time can help him feel better prepared.

**NETWORK Tips for Students**

Networking is a skill that students need to develop as they explore potential careers and lay the foundation for their job search. It’s about making connections.

- **Nurture relationships** – once you make a connection, keep it going
- **Establish connections** – find a mentor, attend events and become known
- **Talk with alums** – they’re often eager to help students succeed!
- **Write thank yous** – you’ll remain positively in people’s minds as a result
- **Offer assistance** – it’s not just about what you can “get” from people
- **Really be real** – be genuine, show your interest and be you!
- **Keep at it** – perseverance will definitely get you far

“There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.”

~ Colin Powell

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Making Summer Plans

The summer is going to fly by and, pretty soon, your student will be returning to college for another year. What are a few things you want to fit in during these summer months?

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

What does he/she want to fit into this summer?

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

Now talk about how your lists can intertwine so that no one is disappointed or feeling left out. Communication continues to be the key as you and your student forge an adult relationship. Best of luck!

What Learning Style Does Your Student Use?

People process and absorb information in very different ways. And, as your student digs into finals this spring, chances are that his learning style is what helped him get this far.

As an interesting point of conversation and to better understand your student’s academic life, consider talking with him about learning styles and how he feels that he learns best. Share your own learning style, too, as a way to help him get to know more about you. The different options include:

**Visual Learners.** Approximately 65 percent of the population learns visually, responding well to visual cues such as pictures, notes and diagrams.

**Auditory Learners.** Approximately 30 percent of the population tends to retain information after hearing it.

**Kinesthetic Learners.** Approximately 5 percent of the population picks things up through touch or imitation.

Of course, mixtures of learning styles can also be used. We all need different stimuli in order to learn, so why not talk about the how-tos of learning with your student—preferably after finals are over!

Summer Fun!

Create some simple rituals to spend quality time with your student this summer:

- Morning walks before work
- Going out for ice cream
- Watching younger siblings’ baseball games, plays or whatever!
- Reading the Sunday paper together
- Working on home/garden projects
- Making a quilt together
- Sitting on the front steps, talking about your day