

Medicine for the Mind:

The Ultimate Prescription for a Trouble-Free College Transition

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Honors Thesis, 2003

Writers Statement - Jessica Anderson

This book was written as my Honors Thesis to graduate from Bemidji State University. The goal of the topic I chose (a guide to an easy college transition) was targeted to utilize not only my major, but also my minor and my knowledge gained through my occupancy on campus.

Since this book (Medicine for the Mind) focuses on helping students transition into college and answers questions frequently asked by young adults interested in college life, I plan to use this book in my classroom when I teach. I am going to be a Secondary English Education Teacher and know this will be a great asset to my classroom curriculum. It already has proven to be. I taught eleventh grade students this past spring and was able to see how the minds of these kids work to an even greater degree than I did while giving campus tours. I wanted this book to be beneficial in preparing students for college while keeping the writing lighthearted, conversational and fun. This conversational tone has proven to be the type of writing my kids enjoyed and so works well with the intended audience of juniors and seniors in high school.

The idea for the book came to me when I realized that my entire occupancy on campus, as well as the occupation I was pursuing (teaching), has been geared towards helping people. I was a Resident Assistant my junior year and learned so much about the Residential side of living on campus. I helped incoming freshmen deal with everything as serious as suicide attempts and alcohol problems to something as fun as planning floor events. I used my psychology minor frequently in this occupation and had a whirlwind, yet wonderful, year.

I also worked as a University Ambassador in the admissions office on the Bemidji State campus. I gave weekly tours to incoming freshmen, answered phones, and responded to mail we received in the office. Through this, I acquired a vast amount of knowledge about the admission process and learned the most frequently asked questions and fears felt by incoming freshmen. Having the opportunity to help these incoming students alleviate these concerns was extremely rewarding.

Because I loved the work that I did, and I love working with young adults, I felt it important to create a thesis that utilizes the skills and knowledge I have gained through my employment on campus. I then condensed it into the book you see here using information pertinent to a first year college student. Therefore, the primary target group for this book is for students who are college bound.

I have chosen to include the following chapters because they are the primary questions I have encountered from incoming freshmen. The chapters take you through the college-transition process, step-by-step, while allowing you to go at whatever pace you choose. You may choose to read the chapters all at once or individually as you encounter each of the questions covered. Whichever way you choose, they will be a big help in alleviating fears or concerns you have about the upcoming adventure you are about to begin. The last chapter is a personal account of my college experience and allows you to see I started out with fears and concerns and everything worked out wonderfully for me. I am sure your experience will be just as wonderful. College is definitely one of the most exciting experiences of your life. This book will help you weed through all the stress of preparation and uncertainty and allow you to go into the college experience as a confident student who is ready to succeed!

Medicine for the Mind
The Ultimate Prescription for a Trouble-Free College Transition

- Chapter 1 **How To Pick The “Right” College.**
 (What to look for, tours, what is right for you)
- Chapter 2 **Getting Admitted and Oriented**
 (How to request an application, send transcripts, and get organized)
- Chapter 3 **Move-In Day**
 (What to expect, what to bring, how to deal with difficult roommate, who to go to for help, how to make floor and environment work for you.)
- Chapter 4 **First Day of Classes**
 (How to be prepared, what to bring, when to buy books, meeting professors)
- Chapter 5 **How to Ward off Homesickness**
 (Tricks to make you feel like you are at home.)
- Chapter 6 **Get Involved!**
 (How to join campus clubs and organizations, start your own and utilize your city. There is something for everyone.)
- Chapter 7 **Academic Help**
 (How to utilize library, tutoring services)
- Chapter 8 **Earn some Cash!**
 (How to get, and stay ☺, employed.)
- Chapter 9 **Travel Abroad**
 (How to do it and why it’s worth the money.)
- Chapter 10 **Saying Goodbye**
 (My experiences and why it’s sad to leave.)

Chapter 1 "How to Pick the "Right" College"

First I would like to take the time to congratulate you. You have chosen to consider a potentially very exciting time in your life, going to college! But with all of the choices out there, how do you pick the one that best suits you?

The first step in finding a college that suits you is surfing the Internet and/or calling around to area schools. You should make sure the major you are interested in is offered at the school and any minors you are interested in are offered as well. Then you should look at the general area. Are you close enough to home? Far enough away from home? Does the area you are going to have an aesthetically appealing appearance; are there things to do? What resources, stores, movie halls, malls, coffee shops, musical endeavors, sports, and theatre does the school or community offer? Will the number of extra curricular sports offered enhance your decision? It really is up to you where you would like to reside.

Once you find those schools that fit both your academic and social needs, set up tours at each of the destinations. This can be a very important tool to aid in your search. Do you ever hear the phrase, "It just felt right?" Well, it was true for me, so it might work for you too. From the moment I stepped on Bemidji State's Campus I knew it was the right college for me. There was a beautiful lake, trees, and the campus was small enough where I felt at home but large enough where the sense of adventure was still there. One thing that is very important, if you schedule a tour and for some reason can't make it on that date, please, please call and let the admissions office know that you cancelled. This is so important because there are many things that make the tour run smoothly, and not knowing if you are coming will hold up the rest of the tour group.

This is also important because the admissions counselors need to call any professors or other college staff if they have set up an appointment for you. This is just respectful to both your prospective college and the professors and staff that work there. This also makes you look like a respectable person. If you do this, the admissions staff should be more than happy to set up another appointment for you that would work better with your schedule. Once you reach the schools you have made appointments with, it is really important to ask as many questions as you can think of while on the tour. Quiz your tour guides; make them answer your questions. That is what they are paid to do. Play "Stump the Tour Guide" while on tour and whoever gets the tour guide stumped gets free dinner. Playing corny games like this will not only be fun but they will also help you learn about the college you are touring. Remember, there is no stupid question... For example...

"Can I see the bathrooms?"

"Where do I do my laundry?"

"Can I have a toaster in my room?"

"Can I loft my bed?"

"How will I find out if I am accepted?"

These are NOT dumb questions. Any tour guide who makes you feel that they are has not been in the same situation as you. I was a tour guide for Bemidji State for two years and in that time I realized that different people have different questions. The tour guides' main goal (as well as the admissions counselors, faculty, etc.) should be to provide you with as much and as accurate information as they can. Utilize your resources while on campus. Meet with a professor in your anticipated subject area. They, more often than

not, will know much more about the program's requirements and if this area will be a fit for you.

Other important things to ask about are the scholarships the school offers, the jobs available on campus, study abroad opportunities, estimated time of graduation, what programs the school has to offer and what classes you would be taking to achieve your major. A course catalog is a good resource to ask for. Recently, they are becoming available on a CD Rom or on-line so they are much more accessible. The catalog will have a list of all of the courses you will need to take, a description of those courses and other information related to the campus. If you take your time and start your search in your junior and early senior years you will be a lot happier and a lot less stressed.

Chapter 2 "The Admission and Orientation Process"

Congratulations! You are getting closer to your grand college experience. If you are close enough to start applying to schools, get excited. A wonderful experience is closer than you think. You should have received applications to the schools you are interested in while on the tour. Some schools also have a website where they allow you to apply for admission on-line. If you wish to try this method, look up the school's Internet page and explore its website. If you need an application sent to you, call the admissions office of the school you wish to apply to and have them mail you one. One of the first steps is to fill out your admissions application and find out if the school has an application fee; most will. You may pay by either credit card or good old-fashioned check or cash. Preferably, you should not send cash in the mail. Make sure you send your application in a large envelope so the application does not get bent. Some schools will not consider this a problem. However, there are some places where presentation means just as much as academics. By making your application look as professional as you can, you will eliminate any potential rejections based on something as stupid as if the application is folded or not. Also, it is preferable to type or use a black ink pen to make the application easier to read and look more professional. If you are an entering freshman, straight out of high school, you should also have your ACT or SAT scores sent to the university or community school. I think this is a requirement at a majority of schools. The best way to see what you need to do on the application is read the directions closely. If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact the admissions office at the school at which you are applying.

Some other things you should keep in mind as far as the admission processes go: some schools require you to send in a final high school transcript. Check with the school you are applying at to see if this is necessary. Transfer students should be aware of this as well. If you are planning to transfer from a community college to a university, you will need to send your transcripts to the university to see which credits will transfer. (This is just something to keep in mind.)

You will want to fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form and send it in to the government as soon as you finish your tax return. This form is used for applying to the government for financial aid. They look at your income and your parents' income and they use this to determine how much funding you can get. Any accountant or school's financial aid office can help you with this. This form will be sent back to your anticipated school telling them what kind of financial aid you will receive and if you are eligible for a subsidized loan, unsubsidized loan, work study, or a grant. You will also receive a copy in the mail for your own records. It is important to do this as soon as possible. The sooner you apply, the more aid you may be eligible for.

Most schools will send out an "Accepted Student Packet" once you have been accepted. This usually contains information on residential life, scholarships, financial aid, and anything else you would have questions on regarding the school. If you have been accepted and have not received something like this within a few weeks, call your university and ask what their procedure is. Sometimes the packets don't get sent right away to the owners and you don't want to be left in the dust when it comes time to apply for a dorm room.

Make sure you are applying on time. Some schools have deadlines as to when they will accept applications. Keep this in mind. Otherwise you may be waiting another semester (or year) to go to that school you always dreamed of attending. Or you may have to go to a different school (one you didn't care to) because of the missed deadline. Make sure you check this out in early September or October if not the summer before your senior year. Then, get started! Some schools have a first come first serve basis on how they assign rooms. Get your application for Residential Life in as soon as you can to ensure your preferences will be looked at and considered. If you get it in too late, you may get stuck wherever the university can fit you.

Orientation should be something you sign up for. Most of the time it is used primarily to give you another tour and get you oriented with the campus. You also meet many new faces that will be attending school with you and you also register for your semester's classes. There should be an advisor there for you to work with. Make sure you sign up for classes that are in your liberal education program. These are courses that are designed to give you a little variety of each of the programs the campus has to offer. These core courses, which you must complete alongside your major courses, are actually very beneficial. Not only do they broaden your knowledge field over many different subjects, they also help you try out and get a taste of what you are good at. Many people I know pick a major they had never considered just because they really liked a class under that category of the liberal education program.

There are other alternatives to the liberal education program depending on the school you are attending. At Bemidji State there is an Honors Program for students looking for a little different route to take toward getting their degree. This program is

designed for motivated students that want to help create the classes they take and want to be challenged. I really enjoyed my time in the Honors Program at Bemidji State. It exposed me to a variety of subject matter that I would have never studied otherwise. It was challenging but overall, fun. So whatever path you choose to get your degree, GOOD LUCK!

Chapter 3 “What To Expect On Move In Day”

Ah, the wonderfully hectic, but amazingly fun, move-in day. Congrats again, you are at the start of your best adventure yet. The excitement of this day is hard to describe. I was feeling a mixture of emotions; everything from fear and anxiety to happiness and excitement were bubbling around inside me. How would I do without my mom? How would I meet people? Where would I do my laundry? How much would it cost? What would it be like in the mornings? Would I be able to get a shower? Should I shower at night? Who is that across the hall? Will I like my roommate? Endless questions were flooding through my head and I guarantee they will flood through yours as well. I would always tell my tour groups to embrace this day. It is a day full of surprises and sadness, happiness and frustrations. There are people you will meet that make you happy, your family will leave and make you sad, your mom might cry, your dad might cry, your brother might cry, you might cry, but remember, you will make it. This experience is opens of the most amazing opportunities in your life. There is no textbook way to approach this day. Hopefully the tips that follow will help you on your journey through.

There are many different ways that you can arrange your room in college. Actually, arrange may be stretching a little; we'll say decorate instead. The space is very small and two or three of you have to fit all of your stuff in a small, prison cell size room. But you can make the best of it. Most schools have bed lofts available for you to rent or use. This brings the bed about six feet off the ground so you have some room underneath it for a futon, fridge, chairs, etc. If you don't have an entertainment center, you can always take your closet doors off (if they are able to be removed) and slide them across your bed loft bars to create a shelf for your appliances. It is a really good idea to bring

some kind of shelves, such as bookshelves, if you have them. Also bring hooks, fun-tac, or anything that can fasten something to the walls without using nails. Bemidji State has a rule that no nails may be used to fasten things to the walls. This rule is in effect to maintain the appearance of the room. Nail holes are not really attractive once all of the decorations have been taken down. The school may also allow you the option of painting your room. This usually has to be pre-approved by some kind of council, so check with your RA (Resident Assistant) or Residence Hall front desk about this option.

I would suggest bringing along cleaning supplies as well. Sometimes a college will house different athletic camps during the summer and these students will have stayed in the dorm rooms. If this is the case, you may find remnants of their time there. It is better to be over-prepared rather than under-prepared. Washing down the walls and shelves in a dorm room can make a world of difference. It helps just knowing that it is clean. Try to do the cleaning before you move in anything large. My mom and I would usually go in and clean while my brothers and dad went to Wal-Mart to pick up the stuff I needed. After it was clean, we would start loading the stuff in. It is easier to take things in shifts. When you are packing, try to label your boxes "closet", "drawers", etc. to help your unpacking go quickly. If you start with the closet, everything else tends to go a lot faster. Your closet tends to hold the most and therefore makes the rest of your load seem more manageable to put away. When I moved in, my family was there to help. It 's nice to have them there to help carry your things up to your room, but then see if there is a commons area they can go to while you and a couple others continue putting things away. The room is small and too many people in that small a space can make the moving-in process frustrating. Buy the little necessities such as shampoo, soap, conditioner,

deodorant, etc. after you move in. This will free up a lot of space in your car and allow you to pack earlier so if it's really cold or really hot, things won't explode while they are stored.

The next thing you want to do once you get moved in is go and meet the rest of the people on your floor. Most likely you will have a floor meeting to start out the week. This will allow you to meet people while also allowing you a say in the floor's rules and regulations. However, some of the regulations are already set by the university. There are some floor rules that you can help decide. Don't be afraid to speak up. These people will live next to you for nine months and some type of agreement has to be implemented in order to maintain a good community atmosphere. If you are uneasy about speaking up in public, ask your RA to bring your concern up at a meeting. This way you can be heard without actually having to speak at the meeting. Keep your door open for the first couple of days so people wandering by can come in and introduce themselves. Feel free to do the same to others. Obviously use discretion with this but remember that there are many other people in your situation that are waiting for someone to introduce himself or herself. Be the first, and you will find yourself surrounded with friends. Don't be shy. Get to know the people you live next to and keep an open mind. Not everyone will have the same morals or beliefs as you. Try not to let this rule them out as someone to mingle with, unless of course what they are doing is illegal, in which case you would get in trouble by being with them. Otherwise, use the opportunity to broaden your horizons. Who knows, you may end up liking the eccentric music they listen to, or the crazy way they dress. Sometimes it seems the most interesting people to be friends with are those who look different from everyone else.

Scope out the bathrooms on your floor and if they look dingy, see if you can get a committee of people on your floor to donate one dollar towards making it look better. Buy better looking shower curtains, floor mats, take pictures out of magazines and hang them up, etc. It is always nice to have magazine articles hung up in the bathroom stalls. While I was an RA, the girls on my floor always appreciated something to read while they were in the bathroom. I think everyone does. ☺ The other thing you can do, is again, speak with your RA. They are supposed to be there to listen to your concerns and maintain the floor community. If you want to see change happen, talk to them. They have ties to higher-ranking residential life employees that may be able to get you what you need.

Once you are moved in, you may start to get hungry and will want to venture over to the campus dining hall for your first experience with "college food." For your first meal you will most likely need to have your student ID with you. If you haven't received it already, find out where you can go to pick it up so you have it at your disposal. This will enable you to get your meals and also will probably have some money credited to it that is similar to a debit card. This card will enable you to buy things without carrying around cash. This is really convenient! Choose a meal plan that is similar to the way you eat at home now. There should be some different options when you apply for your room. Pick the one that best suits you and make sure you enjoy the new experiences as much as you can. Although taxing and potentially frustrating, your move in experience will be one to remember. Congrats, you are moved in and on your way to an amazing college experience!

Chapter Four: "How To Combat Homesickness"

Now that you have moved in, no matter how excited you might be, you may be starting to feel homesick. This is natural. It is really tough to leave a comfort zone and try something new. College is a whole bunch of new. There are so many new experiences you are confronted with and it's hard to get over leaving home. My best advice is to get involved. Try to find something to do when you feel lonely or homesick. Call your parents, but try not to think about the first time you get to go home. Ask around; see what is going on in the community and around campus. Just try to stay as busy as possible. This will not give you time to think about how much you miss your family, high school friends, pets, your room; instead you will be on a journey to make more friends, meet new people and have fun. Don't feel bad about being homesick. It is a perfectly natural feeling. Just make sure you stick it out. Most of the time if you give it a couple of weeks, you will feel a lot better about the whole situation.

If you feel you need professional help, speak with your RA or even your academic advisor to find out what options are available for you. Don't feel ashamed. Bemidji State offers free counseling at our student health center. The school you choose may have a similar program. Seek out what is available. The most important thing is to not shut yourself off from the world. It will be hard and take a lot of courage but just get out there. The first and biggest step is just getting out of your room.

Chapter Five "First Day of Classes"

Well, the big day is here, your first day of classes. Don't fret, everything will be okay. There are a few things that you can do to make the transition from high school classes to college classes much easier.

The first thing you may want to do is go and find your classrooms before your first day of classes. You may also want to time how long it takes you from class to class so you have an idea of how much time to allow yourself to get ready and arrive. You might also want to scope out the rest of campus and see where the important resources are located. Specifically for this mission: the bookstore, the library, and the career service center (besides all the academic halls in which you will have class). This way, if you are ever short on time and need to run to one of these places in between classes you will know exactly where to go. Think of it as a little adventure. This is also a great way to meet people. Ask around your dorm and just say, "Hey, I was going to scope out the campus, wanna come?" You may also want to find the dining hall, the security office, and the recreation or fitness center if your school offers them. Check out the rest of the town to see if any other bookstores exist besides the on campus one. Sometimes there are other bookstores that offer your textbooks at a cheaper rate. Another great way to buy your textbooks is on-line. Never underestimate the power of used books. They are much less expensive and can save you a lot of money. Bookstores tend to overprice their books so if I were you, I would shop around for the best deals. Also, I would wait until after the first day of classes to make sure you need the books. Occasionally the professors will change their minds. You can buy the books before but just make sure you need them. Usually you can return an unopened book or a used book within a week and still receive

all your money back. Check for signs on campus or ask friends who are already attending the university if they have any books you can buy from them. Usually they are selling them more cheaply than the bookstore. There is usually an option to sell back books after you are finished using them but you don't get nearly as much money as you should. Often the payback value is at one-fourth the cost or lower of the original price you pay for the book. I would try to sell your books to other students on campus instead. This usually allows the student to buy the book cheaper than the bookstore is selling it for and it allows you to make more money than the bookstore would give you for it. It's pretty much a win-win situation.

The other thing you may want to do on your first day of classes is sit in the front ten rows and introduce yourself to your professor after class. As much as this appears to be sucking up, and it is, don't worry about it. Make it appear sincere. The professor will be happy you made an attempt; most professors (and teachers in general) really appreciate a student showing interest in the class. Ask them some generic question about the syllabus. (A syllabus is a summary of what you will do in the class.) This will allow you to make a connection, one that could come in handy if you are going to be gone, need a test postponement, etc. This also comes in handy if you need a letter of recommendation. This is probably going to be easier at a smaller university but in a large one it is important as well. It is nice to have people you can turn to if you are having difficulty with a class or just need some encouragement to get you through. Your individual class professors can provide you with this but the main one you should turn to is your academic advisor. Since one will be assigned to you, don't be afraid to use him or her as needed. There are so many things that they are useful for. They will help you plan

your schedule each semester, they can provide you with contacts for needed information, they can also be great sources for letters of recommendation. If you don't have an advisor that you like, you can always try to get that changed. Usually you will want one in your area of study and so choosing one of your professors may be a good option. Check with the professor you are wishing to switch to first, out of courtesy, (they may be full and have little time for advising new students), and then do the necessary procedures to make the change complete. (At Bemidji State it is as easy as strolling to the Records Office and telling them you would like to change your advisor. The friendly workers then help you with the rest.)

Don't worry about your first day. Most of the teachers understand if you arrive late today. Just do your best to get to the places you need to be and don't worry, you will be fine. Good Luck!

Chapter Six- "Get Involved"

So you've gotten into the swing of things and are getting a little bored with the monotonous class-after-class-then-hanging-around-the-dorms. Are you feeling a little adventurous; like you want to get out? Well, get involved!

The first step to getting involved would be to figure out exactly what you would like to get involved in. Go to the admissions office and see if they have a listing of all the available clubs and organizations on campus, find the contact numbers, and get hooked up. If there is no club-listing sheet, the best idea would be to look at the departments that you are interested in. (Often the different academic departments will host their own clubs and organizations. For example, go to the Psychology Department for a psych club.) For athletic involvement, try your local recreation center. There are often intramural sports offered at those facilities.

Another place you may want to try to find a group to join are the local churches or volunteer your time to a local shelter or the humane society. These organizations are always looking for an extra hand. Besides the positive things you are adding to your community, the volunteer work looks awesome on a resume. There are also probably fraternities and sororities on your campus that may volunteer at these facilities as a group. The opportunities are endless and if you give these places a chance, you might just find a worthwhile activity that will keep you engaged for the rest of your college years.

If you try and try and just can't find the extra curricular activity for you, start your own. Some of the best places to start these are the dorm rooms. I have heard of many different tournaments that have been formed, from Play Station Tournaments to Chess and Checker tournaments. There are many different options for you. So if the area

doesn't have what you want, make it happen. Of course you need to keep your tournaments legal, for your own sake, but nevertheless, if you are creative you will find ways to have fun.

Being in these activities can also help you meet a wide variety of people. This may be the best perk yet. By submersing yourself in the things you love to do, you will probably find others doing the same thing who have many things in common with you. This may even help you meet some of the people who will turn in to your closest friends throughout college. They always say that your college friends are the ones you keep forever; make sure you pick ones you would want to keep around.

Chapter 7- "Academic Help"

After a couple of weeks of classes you may start to feel behind. Actually, it's almost a given you will feel behind. Keep in mind there are things you can do to try to prevent burnout. Luckily for college students like us, there are tutoring services available on most campuses.

First things first, identify your problem. If you are struggling with the reading or content of the class, you may need a tutor that specializes in that area only. For problems with writing essays or papers for your classes in general, a writing resource center or someone who specializes in English help will probably be best for you, even if the class you are struggling to write for is not in the English Department. The help may be offered in different forms, but it should be there. Often you can sign up to be a tutor in a subject you are excelling in.

If your problem is not necessarily the content or writing portions but more that you have no place to study, your best bet would be to seek out the library. This is such a nice alternative to the residence halls as it is sometimes hard to find quiet time to study while living there. The dorm is a never-ending stream of social life, especially if you keep your dorm room door open or people know you are home. They will not relent in their persistence to speak to you, no matter what you are doing. It is a sure bet you will procrastinate if you stick around there. Trust me, I am the Queen of procrastination. Usually the library will provide a well-lit, comfortable place to study your heart away. **BE WARNED-** the sudden exposure to quiet will probably put you to sleep. It is always handy to give yourself an extra hour of study time as I have found I have used it after a "short nap" in the library study cube.

Another option if you are short on study space is to try to seek out a corner of the dormitory that is vacant, at least for the most part. Sometimes a floor will have a lounge for students. This can sometimes remain quiet enough or vacant enough to study in. There are also lots of great places to study outside provided it is not the middle of a Minnesota winter and so cold that 50% of the students on campus have their cars parked on the lake. Finding a big fluffy tree or a warm sunny patch of grass is a great place to curl up and study (sleep) your time away.

And finally, if worse comes to worst and you still cannot improve or catch up in your course, contact the professor and see if he/she has any suggestions for you. Often the professor is more than willing to sit down with you (usually by appointment or during scheduled office hours) and discuss how you can improve in class. Sometimes they are the best to ask since they know what they expect from you.

Any of the above ways will help. Just make sure you try to stay as stress-free as possible and things should go well. You were smart enough to get into the college so don't worry about not being smart enough to pass a class. More times than not it is the little effort, not the little knowledge, that ends up failing a student. You will be fine. My best advice (though more than once I didn't follow it in college) is to study a little every day and don't save it for the last minute. This will prevent you from stressing out the day before a test and attempting to cram sixteen chapters of reading and lecture into a half hour of studying before class. The second method mentioned tends not to work very well. Either way, find a method that is best for you.

Chapter 8- "Earn Some Cash!"

A very important question to consider upon your arrival to campus: Should I get a job? Some of you may not have a choice; others may have the leisure of having made enough in the summer to not have to worry about it. Employment throughout your college years can be stressful, yet there are some things you can do to lessen this stress.

If you do decide to find a job, it is a great idea to find one on campus. This is such a wonderful opportunity because most often you will receive all your holidays off and the jobs on campus tend to be pretty flexible with your schedule. These jobs fill up rather quickly. They are often the most convenient (especially if you live on campus) and can be a great place to meet people. There are so many different opportunities to work on campus. Most often you can find jobs that are in the department of your choice, meaning you can find another connection to your professors, and the fact that you worked in your academic department will look wonderful on a resume. These jobs usually pay pretty well. If possible, my advice would be to try for this one first.

Although the benefits of an on-campus job can be high, there is also something to be said about an off-campus job. One huge thing to consider if you choose to work off-campus is do you own a dependable car? This is a large factor in determining if you have the transportation necessary to work off-campus. You wouldn't want to be harassing people to give you rides every day. Most likely, there are many job opportunities in your surrounding area. The jobs that are nice to have off-campus are the ones that include the tips you can earn as a waitress/waiter or a bartender. The cash at the end of the day gives this job a huge appeal. The tips are great. Plus, you often get free or discounted food on your breaks. This can beat a trip to the school cafeteria hands down.

No matter which job you choose, or the location you choose it in, make sure you don't take on more than you can handle. If you are in great need of money, see if you can take out loans or lessen your credit load: If you are able to work fewer hours, do so. Just make sure you take care of yourself so you avoid the scary phase of burnout.

Chapter 9- "Study Abroad"

Study Abroad- the best definition I can think of to tell you would be "something you should do, no if's, and's or but's. This may potentially be the best experience of your college years. It's taking a semester of classes in another country. Often your school will have an abundance of places you can travel to and have the credits transfer for credits in your university's curriculum. If your school is lacking in this department, ask the international programs director if you can go through another school. This is also a possibility. Whatever you do, if you get the chance, don't let this opportunity pass you by!

The three months I traveled abroad were some of the best times in my life, especially coming from a small, rural town. There was so much I hadn't yet had the opportunity to experience and this trip gave me the ability to do just that. Experiencing different cultures and the ways of life in these countries was the main reason I had so much fun. I have never been faced with much diversity, much less the feeling of being a minority. This trip put me in a few uncomfortable situations but I was able to work my way through them and felt much better about myself because I did. I can't imagine my trip without my first, and one of my best, college friends. We spent the entire trip exploring and taking the opportunity to travel and engulf ourselves in the mysteries of another world. My best advice is to go regardless of money issues. I always tell my tour groups, "You should spend your money now, because you can't spend it when you're dead." Honestly, I would have gone fifty thousand dollars in debt for the experience that I got while being in Oxford, England. I also traveled with twenty-five other Bemidji

State University students to France, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, The Czech Republic, and Germany. To say the least, it was amazing.

As far as credit transferring goes, your international office should be able to provide you with information on which category the classes you take abroad will satisfy. Otherwise you have the option to petition the classes to count for, or take the place of, a required class for your major. Talking to the chair or the head of the department you are specializing in would be the best bet to figure this one out. I guarantee though, if you go abroad with an open mind and an adventurous heart, the trip may turn out to be the best experience of your life.

Chapter 10- "My College Experience And Why I Am Sad To See It Go."

I remember the first day I spent at Bemidji State University. There was no grass visible, a string of cars lined the shore (they were parked on the lake), and the ground was a mushy, mucky sludge of mud. The temperature was a whopping thirty degrees Fahrenheit. My tour that day, needless to say, did not give me an adequate vision for the amazing experience that was to come.

Regardless of the above conditions, I did decide to attend Bemidji State University the next fall. As soon as I made this decision, I instantly felt a huge sigh of relief. It was so nice to have made my decision. This way I could enjoy the last part of my senior year in high school with few worries. I gave full attention to enjoying my high school life and what was left of the experience. However, I was also eagerly awaiting my college experience. Graduating with a class with 27 people was a little too small for me and I was ready to meet new people and enjoy the change in scenery. Don't get me wrong, I appreciate the experiences I had in high school. Although they didn't all contain smiles, there were plenty of good times too. They all taught me a little about myself and helped me prepare for what was to come.

After my senior year was over and I started saving for college, the realization that I was leaving home finally hit me. I couldn't believe this time had come and my new adventure would soon begin.

It was beautiful and sunny the day we drove up to Bemidji State for the orientation experience. I was really nervous and didn't know what to expect. I obviously didn't realize this day would start the beginning of a lifelong friendship nor did I realize this day would provide me with my most embarrassing moment in my college life.

When we first got to Hagg Sauer Hall, I was close by my mother's side. I was the oldest child, and so the first to go to college. I was also the only girl. She was pretty excited and nervous as well. This experience was as new to her as it was to me. When we found out that we would be separated for the day, we were both a little sad. I am really close to my family and their support had been a huge shoulder for me to lean on when I need help. So the initial realization that my mom wouldn't be able to share this experience with me was crushing. I was already nervous; I didn't need to be separated from the one familiar face on campus. The first thing I thought was, "Oh God, I am going to have to talk to other people I don't know." This hadn't been a scary thing in the past, but suddenly, the idea frightened me. An unfamiliar place, unfamiliar faces, I felt like I was in Hell. But... I was excited; this experience was like no other I had encountered. I was going to college! Whew!

We departed from Hagg Sauer in groups of ten or so (all other incoming freshmen) and walked on our tour to view the campus (which looked much better than it had previously). The winter storm had not done it justice. The trees were now green and tall, the wind was blowing waves across the lake and instead of car bumpers lining the shore, there were ducks swimming in wavy patterns across the water. The day was full of life, just like my spirit. There were so many thoughts running through my head, I couldn't believe my excitement. I was terrified but had managed to speak to a few of the people in my group. "This isn't so bad." I thought, "Everyone seems like they're nervous." Suddenly I realized a new girl has joined our group. She had been placed in the wrong group earlier in the day and so was moved to ours, where she was originally supposed to be. Her name was Shauna and she was very friendly. After speaking to her

for only a few moments I knew she was a special person. She exuded kindness and excitement and we found that we had a lot in common. We became instant friends and her presence made the orientation experience that much better. I was even more excited to attend the university because I had met such a wonderful person. I figured that if I could form a relationship in the short while we had contact, I would be able to form many more good relationships in the fall.

Since we clicked so well, we decided that we would be partners for the canoeing activity sponsored by Bemidji State University's Outdoor Program Center. There was an option to take a pontoon ride but after five to ten minutes of Shauna convincing me that she was an "expert canoer" I gave in and opted for the canoe ride. She taught little kids how to canoe at safety camp. Who wouldn't feel safe? Well, we found a third person and since I was the least experienced, I sat in the middle of the canoe without a paddle or a seat. I was smack on the bottom, butt to the wood. Well, needless to say, after the ten-minute instruction on how NOT to tip your canoe, the third person in our canoe, I think her name was Jennifer, pushed us off the shore with her paddle and immediately the canoe tipped over on its side. Shauna (being in the back) and I (in the middle) were immediately soaked. Jennifer fared well falling in the shallowest part of the lake and only getting her legs and sandals wet as she caught herself with her arm. After realizing that five hundred other students had seen what had happened and their stares and laughter were obviously directed towards us, we looked at each other and couldn't help but smile. The smile turned into a wave and our canoeing adventure turned out to be a great way to get noticed. We still laugh about it when thinking back. It was definitely a bonding experience. It's amazing how much fun you can have and the relationships you can

create off of one crazy tip into a lake. This was one of my best memories at Bemidji State and it was only the beginning. There were so countless fun times that followed.

The first day, move in, I was absolutely terrified. My family and boyfriend came along to help move me in. It was a pretty emotional experience. I remember seeing my dorm room for the first time and thinking, "This is what I have to live in! Gross!" But once the posters were on the wall and my pictures of family and friends adorned the shelves, I felt at home. After a trip to Target for the last minute supplies, I said a tear-jerking goodbye to my family and then a couple of hours later to my boyfriend. I have never in my life felt so alone while being surrounded by so many people.

Since I instantly was left in a place where I didn't know anyone (nor did I know where I was going or even where I could go), I looked deep inside for some courage and ventured in to some rooms to say hello to my new floor mates. It was terrifying, yet at the same time, exhilarating. I realized after just a few short moments that people in the exact same situation surrounded me; and so, I embraced the situation and met a ton of new friends. There were so many different people surrounding me and I couldn't believe that I finally got to pick who I hung out with instead of just being stuck with the same people since kindergarten. Not that that was a bad thing, the new atmosphere just allowed me to find more people with similar interests. The phrase, "The friends you make in college will be your friends for life" is true. I have never met people so caring and fun as my friends in college. Without them, this experience wouldn't be the same. They are the people I share my fears, hopes, failures, parties, pictures, memories and happiness with. All of my fondest memories in college have something to do with my friends.

The academic side of college has been good as well. It was a great experience to be exposed to a new type of learning, one with fewer restrictions and more responsibility. If this doesn't make sense now, it will. There is no one forcing you to go to class, yet if I didn't go, I found that I did much worse when a test rolled around. Your professors are smart cookies yet some of them will not be able to get through to you. You learn how to adapt in college. You learn how to gain knowledge from many different kinds of people, and you learn how much fun it can be to be academically challenged. As possibly idiotic as that sounds, you will feel like you have accomplished something great when you receive that degree. Especially when you realize that you earned a college degree; and you were your primary motivation to finish it. Yes, your parents may have paid your way, or scholarships may have aided your experience, but ultimately, you did this alone and should feel an immense amount of pride. You learned how to think and adapt and these skills will allow you to positively contribute to your society.

Through the good times and bad, my college experience has been one of the best of my life. The things that I did here will affect me forever. They say that you "find yourself" while in college but I disagree. I have learned through everything I have been through that I am never going to "find myself." I am only going to continually better myself to create the type of person I want to be. If I were already found, what would be the fun in living "life"? The mysteries, experiences, trials, and memories will last a lifetime and they are truly what make your college experience amazing.

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