

advice

from your older sisters

One hundred pieces of practical, life-changing, and even some fun advice
for girls heading off to college from those who have gone before you.
(in no particular order of importance)

1. Don't feel discouraged if you get homesick. Even if you are dying to get to your new city and campus, homesickness will hit you. You aren't alone (at all!).
2. Go to ALL THE THINGS the first few weeks of school. This is when everyone is out and about searching for their thing and their place and their people. Many organizations have open houses and info sessions where everyone is new and fumbling their way around. You'll fit right in.
3. Keep first things first. Make a list of your priorities and review them often to make sure you are on track. Make sure you are setting yourself up for the path you want to be on.
4. Register for class early. Slacking off can lead you without that class you need or with that professor everyone says to avoid. Oh, and don't forget to always peek at RateMyProfessor.com before signing up.
5. Chase after your dreams, not a boyfriend. Don't be so quick to get involved early on. You will grow and change and experience so much your first year of college. Give yourself some space to find you before finding him.
6. You always have a choice. Get comfortable saying no. No to going out when you have a big test to study for, no to that drink, no to that guy that constantly disrespects you, no to sex, no to that invitation that gives you a bad feeling, no to that friend that leads you where you didn't want to go. There is so much to say YES to, but learn when it is better to say no.
7. Finding a solid tribe takes time. Don't put too much pressure on yourself, but also don't give up trying. Even if it doesn't happen right away (or even the first semester), they are out there! You will find them! Keep stepping out and trying new things.
8. Have fun! Don't get so focused on the future that you miss the present. Enjoy the moments. Yes, make sure you are caught up on your work, but have some fun. Experience college life. There are no other years like these.
9. Get a great planner and keep it updated. It will be a lifesaver to juggle all of your assignments, tests, projects, and activities.
10. Be aware of your surroundings. Don't be paranoid, but be aware and on guard. If the Spirit nudges you with a warning about a person or situation, pay attention! Whenever you are out, make sure you have a trusted friend in sight or a phone call away.
11. If social media drags you down in a pit of comparison and sadness, or if it is draining your time and emotional energy, dump it for a season. You'll be surprised how quickly you no longer miss it.
12. Remember who you are and Whose you are. You are not your friend group, your sorority, your major, your GPA, your social status, your appearance, your jean size, your attendance at parties, your achievements, your bank account, your last drink, your boyfriend, or your social media followers. You are not your mistakes, sins or failures...and you are not your activities, awards, or achievements. God alone gets to say who you are. Nothing can ever change that. You are a beloved, treasured, created for purpose child of God. Period.
13. Get sleep! This one is so important. You won't be able to effectively function on fumes.
14. Practice loving your neighbor by loving your roommate. Don't fall into the trap of gossip and grumbling. Instead, go out of your way to do nice things without expecting anything in return.
15. Be careful what you post and what you consume on social media. Pay attention to how much screen time you have.
16. Get to know your professors. Visit their office hours. You never know when you might need their recommendation and they can't write what they don't know. Plus, it may lead to internships or job opportunities.

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17. Don't give up! The early days can be harder than you thought. Stick with it. Remain positive. Give it a chance. And know this: the majority of people feel exactly like you do (whether they seem like it or not)
18. When you are feeling particularly homesick and lonely, make yourself get out. It's okay to have some alone downtime, but don't barricade yourself in your room and cling so tightly to your hometown that you can't make room for your new home.
19. Keep an open mind about new ideas and perspectives, but always remember God is truth. When in doubt, the Bible is the source of all truth.
20. Resources for just about anything you need are at your fingertips in college...you just have to search for them. Whether it be academic advising, personal counseling, leadership opportunities, coaching, etc. If you are feeling lost, confused, depressed, anxious, unsure what next steps to take, resources are abundant on college campuses.
21. Find ways to increase your communication skills, whether it be through an organization, a part-time job, or a class.
22. Don't be so quick to cling to the people you first meet (which is tempting to do when everything is so new at first). The people you meet your first week/month, will likely not be your close friends all four years of college...and that is okay.
23. Know your non-negotiables and boundaries. Just because you can do something doesn't mean you should. Know your weaknesses and triggers. College life will constantly push you toward the edge of your boundaries. Know in advance where your lines are and stick to them.
24. Other girls' callings don't fit you right. Don't look to the left or right in comparison. Look up for God to show you and guide you. Find and do YOUR thing.
25. Memorize Bible verses. You will be so surprised at how they pop in your head at just the right time.
26. Get to know the people in your dorm, but branch out as well. Find your people...the ones that share your interests and your values...and most of all, genuinely care for you and have your back.
27. Don't wait for community to find you. As hard as it is, put yourself out there. Everyone is nervous and craving community. Be the one to take the first step.
28. Look out for your friends. Be the friend you want. When your friend is making questionable choices, help guide her back on track. She will thank you for it later.
29. Know in advance what you want in a boyfriend and don't settle. Make a list of non-negotiables and stick to it.
30. There is so much more suffering in being in an unhealthy relationship than not being in a relationship at all. Too many girls are quick to settle when they feel lonely or desperate for a relationship. It's just not worth it.
31. Don't compromise your values and boundaries for love. No matter how cute or fabulous that guy seems, if he doesn't respect your boundaries, he won't respect you in other things that matter. It is only a matter of time. He just isn't worth it.
32. Don't lament singleness. It is a beautiful time to learn who you are, what you want, and what God wants for you.
33. Feed your body well. What you put in your body matters and can make you feel stronger or drag you down.
34. Have a plan. It may not be perfect or with much detail – you certainly don't have to have it all figured out (you won't!) - but have an idea of where you want to go. To drift is to do nothing. It is worth spending some time thinking about where you see yourself in 1, 2, 5, 10 years even.
35. Don't forget God. Spend time with Him. He is your greatest advisor, GPS, advocate, friend. Who better than the one who created you to guide you along your perfect path?
36. So many new things will be thrown at you at once that distraction will be a challenge. Remember your priorities and the main reason you are in college: to get an education.
37. Go to class and read the lessons (shocking, I know!). You are paying a lot of money for these classes. Make sure you get the most out of them.
38. Always be open to meeting new friends. You may have found a tribe you love, but you never know who God might bring into your life if your eyes are open to it.

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39. Take time for gratitude. Start a gratitude list on your phone to jot down things daily you are grateful for. You'll always have it with you when you need that reminder during rough patches.
40. You don't have to be best friends with everyone. It's okay to have a wide range of acquaintances and you should be kind to everyone, but you don't have to be fully invested in everyone.
41. Walk! Whenever possible, walk to class or that event. It is a great way to sneak in exercise.
42. Don't apologize for being you and chasing your dreams. You aren't too much...or too little.
43. Don't be afraid to quit things. The vast array of opportunities can become overwhelming. While it is great to try things, you don't have to do everything all the time. You can't...you will burn out quickly. Yes, be woman of your word, but often you can, and should, say "no more."
44. Bounce back from mistakes. You are human. You will fail and make mistakes. God's mercies are new every day. Your mistakes don't define you. Ask, and receive, forgiveness and move on with a clean slate.
45. You are a world changer! God has gifted you with unique skills. You are created on purpose for purpose. Fan the flame of the gifts and callings God has placed on your life.
46. God is better than the rest and He is worth it. Get to know Him. Trust Him. Follow Him. He is bigger than any problem, fear, challenge you are facing. And He loves you more than anyone else in this world. He is good; He is for you.
47. Call your mom, your grandmother, your sibling, your dad...connect with those back home who love you and miss you.
48. A boyfriend may complement you, but they will never complete you. Never let a boyfriend or relationship become your everything. It never will.
49. Learn to budget. Avoid debt if at all possible. Learn to be thrifty and spend wisely.
50. There are so many opportunities to get involved. Take them! This is a unique time in your life where you can try and learn so many new things. College is some of the best years for personal development.
51. Go to sporting events...and not just the big ones. Take a break from studies to soak in the beautiful weather at that baseball game or cheer on the girl's soccer team.
52. Even if your college campus is close to home, fight the temptation to go home every weekend. Make your new city your new home. Spend time there exploring and engaging with your fellow students.
53. Start building your resume. Look for organizations that can help you grow in leadership and experience in fields you are considering.
54. Don't be afraid to try new things. This is a great season of exploration. Even the most unlikely roads can teach you, shape you, stretch you, and introduce you to new things you never realized you loved and were good at.
55. Find a mentor!
56. If you discover your sweet spot of passion, gifting, and need, take time to see where things could you if you fully invest in them.
57. Serve! No better way to use your gifts than serving others.
58. Set reminders on your phone for big things you don't want to forget.
59. People are human and will disappoint you. Be quick to not make assumptions, show grace, give the benefit of the doubt, and forgive easily...but know when to walk away from a toxic relationship.
60. Feed your soul well. Take time to be still with God. Get rest. Reflect on the path you are on. Check if your priorities are in order.
61. Get exercise. Go for a walk or run, go to the gym or yoga class on campus, grab a friend to run stadiums with you, download a free exercise app and workout in your dorm...whatever works for you, make sure you get some exercise for your body and your mental health.
62. Learn the difference between helpful and harmful self-care. Sometimes self-care looks a lot more like quiet time with God, then grabbing a healthy meal and heading to the library to finish that project...as opposed to hours and hours scrolling social media while bingeing on Netflix reruns.

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63. Listen to your body and take care of yourself. It may be different for you than others. Slow down when you need to, put a brake on junk food when you need to, get fresh air when you need to, find someone trusted to talk to when you need to.
64. Don't be too hard on yourself. Give yourself grace. You are doing good work, sister!
65. Be the person you are looking for is looking for. If you want a guy who respects you, is committed to his studies and future, is trusted sounding board and cheerleader for your dreams and goals...he just may not be at the frat party every single night and skipping class because he is hungover.
66. If you feel depressed and anxious beyond what you can handle, GET HELP! You would be so surprised how many people are right there with you. There is no shame in seeking professional help.
67. Keep your space clean. Even if it means channeling your inner-mom and making yourself a chore list. Tidy up your space, keep things relatively organized, do your laundry, wash your sheets. Be a neat and respectful roommate.
68. Don't jump into a relationship with the first cute guy you meet. There's a lot more fish in the college pond! Be picky.
69. Make a vision board for your dorm room with things that matter to you and your goals.
70. Seek out friends who lift you up, cheer you on, and hold you accountable. Friends that pull you closer to God, not farther away. Friends who help make you a better and stronger version of yourself.
71. Don't trade technology friends for real-life friends. Don't trade technology time for real-life engagement.
72. Consider starting a group prayer text with friends from home at different colleges to pray for and encourage one another...not to replace real-life accountability groups, but to expand your circle.
73. Find encouraging social media sites to follow...and be an encourager on social media. If you find a quote that inspires you in your quiet time, share it with others.
74. Be cautious about information you receive and share. You will be meet lots of new people (girls and guys) who may or may not end up being your people. Take time to get to know someone before you spill your guts or trust everything they tell you.
75. Don't take a drink from someone you don't know. Ever. Don't try that "punch" and take someone's word for what is in it. It just isn't worth the risk. The pressures to drink are huge in college. You can say no. You can control what you consume. Don't be that drunk girl embarrassing herself on the table or the one puking in the corner. It won't look good on you. Trust me on this one.
76. Never take a pill that isn't yours. Even if it is from someone you know. It's too risky.
77. Never walk alone at night (whether leaving a party or just feeling like you need to go for a run or get fresh air). No matter how safe you feel, wait for a friend. Call for a ride.
78. Don't be afraid to say no when it comes to safety. You don't have to take that thing, do that thing, or go that place. You are in control of you. When the Spirit tells you to put on the brakes, listen!
79. Think! Be aware of acting on impulse. Think things through (even if for only a minute)...remember your goals, priorities, values, and non-negotiables.
80. Buy an adorable wristlet to stash your phone, money, your id, and a tube of lipstick.
81. Get a coffee maker. Coffee is life giving...but expensive. Have a few cheap cups at home instead of all at the local coffee shop.
82. Get some flip-flops and a robe for after the shower. Trust me, you will want your feet covered for the bathroom and dorm floors!
83. Get a few good water bottles and stay hydrated.
84. Download a few daily devotionals you might like. There are so many out there that take less than 5 minutes to read. Decide to give God your first and best minutes of each day. Game changer!
85. Download Venmo to exchange money with roommates and friends.
86. Download some of the local food apps (Panera, Starbucks, Chick Fil A, Moe's, etc.)...who knows, your parents or a sweet friend may load some funds on there from time to time.

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87. Vitamins. Sometimes eating healthy doesn't get the priority it needs. With vitamins you can still fuel your body well.
88. Grab a few extra phone chargers. Seriously, they disappear. And your mom will freak if she doesn't get that check-in text from you.
89. Buy a beautiful journal. Document these years...the good, the bad, the ugly. Write out daily gratitude and prayer requests. It will be such a gift to look back on.
90. Subscribe to a few great podcasts, make a few Spotify playlists, and get some earbuds. Sometimes what you will need is a good word or song to shake you out of that funk and motivate you to keep going.
91. Buy some foldable sandals or roll-up flats...throw them in your purse or bag and when those heels are killing you, make the swap (especially if you are going through sorority rush!).
92. Make sure you have a reliable system to back up your files. Nothing is worse than losing days of work in an instant and not having them backed up. And on that note, make sure you have good anti-virus software.
93. Take lots of pictures! Your college years will be gone in a blink. Capture the moments.
94. When looking at electives, don't always look for the easiest class with the easiest professor. Explore subjects you enjoy...even if they have nothing to do with your major. Who knows where it will lead or who you might meet that shares your interests.
95. Consider studying abroad or taking an internship in a city you love. These things are often so hard to do after graduation.
96. You will often pick up the habits, mannerisms, and even the values of the people you hang out with the most. Choose wisely.
97. Don't despair over failures or disappointments...they are part of your story. God can use them. Learn from them and then get back up and keep going.
98. It goes by so fast! Soak it in. Don't take it for granted as you walk along the beautifully manicured lawn and look up at the historic buildings.
99. There are great and beautiful days ahead. Don't get too bogged down in the mire of life that you can't see what lies ahead. Never lose your hope for a better tomorrow.
100. Always remember: you are worthy, you are enough, and you are loved.