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Journal 2: Time Management

 Settling into a regular routine after moving into college is a challenging task for many students. Moving away from home is a major disruption in any young person’s life, and figuring out how to “get back into the swing of things” can feel overwhelming. Now that I have had time to get used to my extremely new and different surroundings, I can confidently say that I have found a routine that works well for me, even if I do lose some sleep every now and again.

I knew my daily schedule in college was going to be very different from the one I had during high school, but I still did not know exactly what to expect. During high school, I grew accustomed to having seven 50-minute class periods each day. Most of my college classes last about the same amount of time as my high school classes did, but the greatest number of college classes I have on any given day is four. On top of that, my commute to and from high school was about one hour each way. Now, I only have a five minute walk from my dorm to my classes! Outside of high school, I had very little free time for a social life because I was bogged down with homework until I could no longer hold my eyes open. I lost so much time sitting through very unproductive classes as well as sitting behind the wheel of a car watching the trees pass by me. There were many times when I could have gotten triple the amount of learning and/or work done if I had just stayed at home. It is amazing how much more time I have to balance the different aspects of my life just by simply living on a college campus!

Over the past four weeks, I have had time to settle into a more normal routine and have discovered that prioritizing and setting goals have been the most effective ways for me to balance my academic life, social life, and sleep. For example, I prioritize work over play. Therefore, if Lancer Productions is having a bingo night I want to attend, I set the goal of finishing a certain amount of work before bingo begins. If I finish the work in time, I get to go to bingo! If not, I skip bingo to finish my work. The goals I set work as motivators for me to waste less time and get more work done. I also prioritize healthy amounts of sleep over both work and play. I need less sleep than the average person in order to feel rested and be able to function well during the day; however, with that being said, I still set cut-off times on my work and play. I know I will not be able to benefit at all from the next day if I stay up too late trying to finish one last little bit of reading. My cut-off times are another type of goal I set that act as a motivator for me to get more accomplished; I know I want to learn and get good grades, and I know that I will not learn enough or get good enough grades if I do not get my work done before it is time for me to go to sleep!

While my prioritizing, goal-setting system usually works well for me, I still have trouble adhering to it from time to time. My sleep is definitely what suffers most when I deviate from the plan. For instance, if my roommate and I see that out favorite movie is on TV or a friend and I are enjoying spending time together, it is easy for me to procrastinate my work so I do not have to stop socializing or having fun. In turn, I stay up later to get my work done. I know that I could do a better job of balancing all the different aspects of my life, but everyone can stand to make some room for improvement in their lives! I am pretty happy with the way things have been going for me so far, and I intend to do what it takes keep it that way.

I am proud of the way I have handled my transition into college life. While I know there is still a great deal of room for improvement, I feel more secure in my health, my social life, and my academic life than I ever thought I would. Furthermore, I look forward to seeing what improvements I will have made another four weeks from now!