

-My teacher was really nice. He was really apologetic for what he had done.

-I've been wanting to talk to my teachers and ask them, you know, what can I do with a sociology degree?

-I haven't been able to pay my rent for at least three months now.

-I'd totally be lying if I said I didn't care what anyone thought. But I try not to have that, like, affect my life. And, of course, I let it happen that time.

-No one's calling you Hitler.

LOUIS:

Like I even knew I wanted to go to college before-- like, even in middle school, when most kids don't know much about college. I knew I wanted to something like go to college, and then do something else besides just doing a boring job like anyone can get. I wanted a job that required a degree or something.

It's a goal of mine to be better than I am now, just keep improving. I eventually want to go to a big arts school. I feel if I succeed in college, it's going to help me just keep moving up.

My dad sacrifices living with us and only coming home on weekends. Obviously, you go to college and you get better jobs that pay more. And when I have a family, I want to be able to be a part of their life, like a week long, like all week. Not just a two-day thing.

JORDAN:

I know it sounds kind of nerdy to some people, but I think I'm looking forward to talking with people who are more on my level. And who are more interested in education and learning. The thing that I'm looking most forward to would be the increased maturity.

Started middle school at private, Christian school. The kids there didn't care about academics. After school, everyone would just go and get high.

One of my friends, he overdosed. He went into it catatonic state, and he was basically brain dead. And he died a couple days after he overdosed.

His friends, they went out and they drank for him. And they didn't learn from it. And it's unreal how some people don't put that together logically. Or some people don't want to put it together logically. But as far as college goes, I can only hope that being in a more mature atmosphere

will make them more mature people. And it may or may not.

VANESSA: I'm going to the mall. I need a job really bad. I really want to be a sales associate. Especially because, studying business, probably sales associate would probably give me really good experience for a later career.

I feel really exhausted. And kind of nervous at the same time. Because you don't know which jobs maybe hiring or which jobs may be looking for certain people. Or if they're just looking for a certain type of person with experience. Or if they're looking for ones to train for new experiences. I don't know. So I'm just kind of on the edge of hoping just somebody will give me a job.

[HEAVY METAL AND SCREAMING]

DALTON: I'm still getting used to being away from home. It's strange, not being able to go home to your parents or go back to your own beds. And it's a new place. And I don't really know my way around that well.

I can get to major locations. Like, I know how to get to the bank and Coldstone. The important places.

INTERVIEWER: (LAUGHS) Yeah.

GIRL: Hi! What can I help you with today?

EMMA: I went to high school for three years. And then I took my senior year with the college connection program. I didn't take any electives all three years. Just because I really liked that whole studying hard classes and stuff like that. I took all AP class. So my senior year was going to be five electives.

So that wasn't really for me. So I wanted to get ahead and go to college. And I got 13 transferable units. So now I'm coming here to my first real semester. But I already have 13 units under my belt.

And a lot of people think I'm crazy for it. But, you know, I love being busy with school work. I really like to stretch my brain. And I know that the further I can get in school, the better possible job I can get in the end.

So any job that I have up until I have my career job isn't really, you know, more important to

me than getting the schooling to get the better job. So I'm really keeping my doors open. And I'm saying that, right now, I want to be an interior designer. But if I find something else along the way, I'm more than willing to go on and try those paths.

DALTON:

So far my classes have been pretty good. I haven't had too much homework.

-It's a lot different than I thought. It's a lot slower than I thought.

In high school, you didn't have to do so much research.

-The homework, at first I'm like, oh, this is not too big of a deal. But now I'm having exams and quizzes a lot. And there's a lot of studying and extra homework that goes along with that.

-So in like, in college, they give you, OK, like, this is what you do. Kind of figure it out yourself. They don't really hold your hand in college like they do in high school.

-It's just starting to get to me, at the beginning, getting to me. I'm worrying about finding a job, and then homework. I'm like, once I do get a job, how am I going to do homework and everything else? So, yeah, I'm kind of anticipating the big hill.

-It's challenging. I didn't really expect college to be like that. But it's different.

LOUIS:

In my human sexuality class, no one knows each other at all. It's, like, two or three people that are always asking questions. No one else asks them.

DALTON:

Whenever I'm in class, I'm always hesitant to speak up. Because I don't want to ask a stupid question. Maybe I don't understand something, but everybody else does. I don't want the person next to me to look over and be like, gosh. I can't believe you don't understand that. Come on, everybody understood that. Not you?

So I don't want to be that person that just sits there and feels stupid for that, for asking this question.

-I literally was moving my hand up to raise it, and then I was like, wait. I haven't said anything in this class. And just didn't want to be embarrassed. I justified it by, oh, I'll just email the teacher later. And, of course, I didn't remember. So my question didn't get answered. I don't know.

I would totally be lying if I said I didn't care what anyone thought. But I try not to have that

affect my life. And, of course, I let it happen that time.

JORDAN: I used to not talk that much at all. And just two days ago in a class of 150 students, the teacher was like, What is Parkinson's law? And everybody was looking through their books and scrambling. Because she was going to delay a test if somebody got the right answer.

And nobody else knew the answer. And I was just like, you know what, this would be a great time for me to show that I'm not just restricted to myself, you know? And I can break out of that.

So I raised my hand and I told her the definition. And everybody was giving me a pat on the back. So sometimes tackling yourself is a really good way to advance yourself.

[PIANO SCALES PLAYING]

PROFESSOR: And that would be what?

STUDENTS: [INAUDIBLE].

PROFESSOR: Sure. And how about this one?

DALTON: Normally my teachers are pretty much OK with me coming late. I mean, as long as I don't disrupt the class, come in quietly.

I did come into my oral musicianship class late last week carrying a Monster. I don't normally drink them frequently. One day, I came back to my room and my roommate opened up the fridge and goes, Dalton! Look what I have!

And there was like eight things of Monsters in there. And he goes just help yourself! Whatever! Don't even worry about it.

So I've been drinking those occasionally. I'm not addicted to caffeine by any means.

INTERVIEWER: Not yet.

-Not yet, at least.

-Your living environment can definitely affect what you eat.

JORDAN: I don't like eating vegetables because I'm an unhealthy person. I have terrible eating habits. I

know it's sort of stereotypical for kids to only eat burgers and fries and stuff like that. And that's exactly what I'm doing now. I'm sort of conforming to that stereotype.

You shouldn't be consciously saying, OK, you know, what am I going to eat? Just for the sake of staying healthy.

-That's just a crazy statement. Because it's just-- I don't know, it's just because food is one of the main factors of being healthy.

-You know, in the back of your mind, you have to keep in mind what's going to be good for you in the long run instead of what tastes good right now, you know?

-I think I eat whatever makes me feel happy at the moment. Because usually that's the one time of day I eat. So yeah, I always eat crappy, [BLEEP], greasy food that's not really good for me.

VANESSA: Financially I can only afford peanut butter and jelly so far. So I just have it in my room. And I have probably a loaf of bread somewhere around here. And I just make up a sandwich really fast if I'm late for class and I can't make a decent breakfast.

So I'll just pull out some bread and make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich before I leave.

JORDAN: I have every reason to eat more healthy. You know, eat a salad every once in a while. But maybe that's some part of me that's still immature. I'm not mature enough to take food seriously or nutrition seriously.

And I know it's sort of hypocritical to know that I would benefit from eating healthier and still eat these fries and this burger anyway.

DALTON: At home, if I was bored or if I was watching TV or something, I would usually snack on a bag of chips or crackers or something like that. Something generally pretty small.

But the fact that I was snacking so much was bad for my health. When I first came here I did have some snacks that I was eating every now and then. But they eventually ran out. And then rather than going to buy more, I just stopped snacking.

I've lost quite a bit of weight. It makes me feel really good about myself. I've actually lost eight inches on my waist. Which is really nice.

-Oh, I'm tired. And being tired, when you get hungry you don't want to make food. So when you're at your house, you find the easiest stuff, which is the crappiest, unhealthy stuff. And it's just like a vicious cycle, kind of. And, like, I don't know.

It's a big bummer. Because I was on the swim team my senior year of high school. And so I saw the best my body could be. And then in college, I'm getting the worst, I think.

VANESSA:

Normally I go to the gym five days a week. But now I've probably been going to the gym two days a week. Because I've had so much homework lately because finals are coming up.

-It's weird now. Like, weird, but I think I had more energy then. And I guess after working out, you have energy. But it's the thought of going in there and starting up. It's just, I would have enough energy to just jump on a treadmill sometimes. Some of these days.

EMMA:

During my senior year in high school, I was doing the AP program. Which, with all the homework that I had to do with that, I was up every night until about 3 o'clock in the morning.

And it's kind of having to get back into the mentality of what I had to do back then. Because then I was getting about three hours of sleep every night.

-I am not getting enough sleep. I can say that as a fact.

-Um, I get from two to six every night, of hours of sleep.

-I was up until three last night. And I got up at eight this morning. And I had my last speech for Communication Studies. And it was one of those things after you've finished, and you're like, oh my god. I just did a really crappy job. I'm going to get a bad grade.

And someone says, you did good. And you're like, really? I didn't like I did good. Because I was just exhausted up there. And I was so tired today that I forgot to bring in the rubric for the speech to get graded on.

So I had to borrow someone else's, and I had to run and go get a copy. And I was late to class. And I was the first one presenting. And I was, like, all hot and bothered

-It effected me in the beginning when I first had to force my body to only get two to six hours of sleep. But now my body's kind of getting used to it.

-By the time I get home, there's some days where I haven't done anything besides school

work all day. And when I get home, I just want to watch a movie or hang out with a friend. And sometimes that doesn't come along until 2, 3 o'clock at night.

And I don't do anything personal, like personal time. Or I either have my personal time or just go to sleep and wake up with energy the next day. You know, sometimes I sacrifice the energy the next day just to do something I want to do.

-It does make it harder because I'm more stressed and more tired. And it kind of makes me a little bit less motivated than I would have been if I get more sleep.

I've been keeping myself fit and healthy. And I think that's helped me in the long run, like, surviving through this semester with lack of sleep and lack of food sometimes. And just lack of time to do any of those. So I think stay healthy really benefited me.

INTERVIEWER: At least the exercise part.

-Yes. Yeah, the exercise part, not the food choice part.

LOUIS: I go out on the weekends a lot. I'll be honest. Yeah, I've been drinking since the beginning of my senior year.

-When I first came to college, my sister told me be careful. The first six months away from home are the hardest. The first semester is going to be the hardest that you ever experience as far as outside influences with drugs and alcohol and just bad habits. so be really careful what you do.

-A lot of my friends get really, really drunk. And they disappear. I'm like, OK, what happened to them from point A to point B. You know, what went down?

-I've had a friend of a friend's who drove drunk. They all got in the car and drove drunk somewhere and crashed. And one of their friends died. So.

-But, it's really hard to just sit there and be really stern.

-I don't smoke cigarettes. I haven't smoke weed yet. And I plan never to do it. But you never know. Like, when you're drunk, you make stupid decisions.

-My friend handed me a cigarette and says, Dalton, try this. This will get you better than any cigar. Just give it a try. And I was instantly hooked. I was like, man. This is great. I feel good.

It's a good social activity. Even though I knew was bad for my health.

And so at this point in time, I was thinking to myself, I'm really screwing up my health here. You know, I'm already overweight. I don't need bad lungs on top of that.

But that really hasn't been reason enough for me to quit. I know that I should quit. I know that everybody should quit smoking. It's bad for you. But other than having a cigarette and then having to go upstairs, and getting to the top of three flights of stairs and--

(EXHALES)

Man. I can tell that I just smoked a cigarette. But other than that, the health impact hasn't affected me yet. And it hasn't gotten in the way of my life. So it hasn't really been factor enough for me to want to quit smoking.

All right, where's my baby? Here it is.

For my entire life, money management has been a huge problem in my life. I always go to the store, I want this. And I want this. And I want this. And now I'm out of money.

I'm going to go to Guitar Center and buy myself an amp. I took out a loan. Because I had a housing payment that was due today. And I had \$0.90 for a \$1,200 payment.

I was eligible for a \$3,500 unsubsidized. Which was, after taxes or something like that, it was like \$1,762 per semester. So I that I got \$450 just for myself.

And I already bought Coldstone today. So I tapped into it a little bit.

-A lot of times I hear that people, you know, get these college loans. And it just kills them financially.

-Couple days ago, me and my roommates had a roommate meeting. And we decided as a group that I have to move out. Because I haven't been able to pay my rent for at least three months now.

It's an emergency loan. You can apply for it and they give it to you. Because it's an emergency loan. But you just have to fill out the paperwork. And then they give you a check for \$500.

But the thing is it's a short-term loan. So it's due within three months. And the reason why I didn't use it earlier was because I was afraid to use it. Because I haven't had a job. And so this

is what I was afraid of. My not being able to pay it back.

Because I don't have a job. And so I don't make income. I wouldn't have been able to come up with the \$500. So now I'm still trying to figure that out.

I have about approximately \$362. And so I need \$148 left to pay this loan. It's in, like a couple days.

INTERVIEWER: And then?

-And then, plus I have \$350 due for rent on the same day.

Since I was younger, I've had to put a lot of dreams on hold because of financial reasons. And I refuse to let financial reasons be the reason why I can't [INAUDIBLE].

So I'm going to do whatever I can possible. I don't care what I have to do. I'm going to get that \$500. Because that's the main thing that I need right now.

If the choice came I'd have to be homeless or go to school, I'd probably be homeless and go to school then have a home and then not be going to school.

If I don't pay the money by next semester, I won't be going to college. I'll have to end up moving back with my parents and getting into community college. And I actually refuse to do that. I'm not going to let myself fall into that position.

I don't know. I don't hate my parents right now. But I'm like, really? I don't know. I'm just kind of disappointed in them as parents. Because they should be supporting me.

-The day before school started, I thought about possibly changing my major to business or something like that. And I talked to my dad about that. You know, I don't know if music should really be-- I mean, music is a hobby. Will it be a good career path?

And he said, Dalton. Do what you love. And that's really what matters. People are always going to need recording engineers. I mean, music has to be recorded by someone. So there will always be some kind of job out there for you.

And even if you get the degree and it still stays a hobby, I mean, at least you can say that that's what you did. You followed your heart in college.

-Both my parents didn't go to college. And they said they're making enough money as a living.

And they think it's just a waste of time and money.

-Well, actually I'm the first generation to go to university. My brother went to community college. And some things he screwed up in his life. So he had to stop for awhile. I don't know if he's going to go back yet or not.

But I definitely have the support for college. They're all for me getting a degree, doing what I want in life.

-I guess it's because they don't agree with the whole college lifestyle. Because my dad comes from a very traditional Filipino family. Because he grew up in the Philippines.

His mom was really traditional, he's kind of very private. And so they don't agree with the whole new generation kind of partying and the whole lifestyle. I think it's funny how they assume that I would party just because I'm in this environment.

EMMA: My parents support me so much. My whole family are really, really close. So we know the ins and outs of what everybody's doing, where everyone is. All that sort of stuff.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

EMMA: Yeah, I'm really fortunate.

-It would feel so nice to prove them wrong when I do succeed and everything.

-I'm planning for final exams already. I know what dates they're on, what times they're at. So I know which days I really need to sit down and concentrate on which ones I'm planning for.

-Oh, I don't know. So I'm not really sure about how the final is going to be. I guess I should go to class more often to find out.

-I'm really stressed about finals and all that. Really hoping that everything works out with that.

-The semester is over. And it's time to check my grades. So here we go.

-I'm hoping all A's and B's.

-Um.

-Wow. OK.

-OK, so I got an A minus, a B, a no credit. Oh, OK. That was the speech thing. A B in human sexuality. And A in yoga. And a B in intermediate algebra. GPA 3.3.

-Looking at my grades right now. And I did about as well as I expected.

-It's not as high as high school GPAs, but I guess it's great. Because I know I did my best this semester. So that's what I got.

-Um, I got all A's. And it looks like I made the Dean's Honor List. So I guess that's a good thing. I guess I'm pretty happy about it. The only thing is it was only four classes.

-I kind of expected my grades to be how they were. Because I kind of slacked off a little bit after midterms. Because I was just, like, so overwhelmed. And I was just kind of ready to be done with the semester.

Every semester of my life in school, I've always gotten a 3.0 or higher. And this semester I got a 2.6. So I was kind of disappointment. It was kind of expected though. The workload just kind of overwhelmed me.

-I did good in everything except for German. I don't know how that's even possible. I thought I was going really good in German. Everything else looks pretty good though. D plus, B minus, B minus, A, B, C.

So I passed all those classes. But first semester German, I don't understand how that was just-- I was doing really good in that class. I'm just going see if I can figure out why it's like that. And what exactly went on. I didn't realize what was happening there. It really sucks.

-Alrighty. I've got them up. A couple of them not exactly what I expected. I got three B's, and I got one C plus, which I am very surprised about. So I'm going to write a letter to my professor and see how on earth that happened.

And I'm also surprised about one of the B plus's in my interior design class. Because that's not what I expected. So I'm just going to follow up and see what those are all about. And see why I got that grade.

-I went back to the teacher. And I challenged him on it. Because, you know, there's no way that if I got all A's and one B that I should have got a B in the class.

-German was actually one of the classes that I was really like, all right! I'm going to do good!

And I was feeling really good about it. And so when I saw it was a D plus, I was really shocked.

-And so we went through his grade sheet. And he saw that the one B that I did get, he wrote down a D instead. Because he messed it up. And so if he fixed it right then and there.

And I showed him the paper that I had that I got a B on. And so he changed it. So now I have an A the class.

-When I looked at my German grade, I contacted my German teacher via email. And I just asked her, I was like, did I really get a D plus? You know, I did really well on the finals and the midterms. And I was feeling pretty confident about it.

And she responded with, you know, you just can't not do your homework when it comes around. And that's where you really suffered is just not doing the homework.

And I feel like there was a mistake in there, though. I didn't question her about it. Because I wasn't sure what she had said. Maybe it was a mistake and I could have gotten a higher grade. But I didn't question her about it.

-You know, it's really good to challenge your teachers if you're confused about something. Or if you get a grade that's unexpected. Because that really would have hurt my GPA if I hadn't done that.

And so now I have the GPA that I deserved and the GPA that I did get. Otherwise, it would be just a really bad reflection of my semester, what I did.

-The experience has really taught me that studying is really, really important. I approached college thinking, oh, it's going to be just like high school. I breezed through high school.

I thought high school at the time was really hard. And looking back on it now, high school was so easy. And I would go back there in an instant.

-The first thing I've learned is not to panic. Because that makes it so much worse.

-I realized this semester that when I'm so tired and so stressed out, when I'm hungry I just slide my card. And I don't even know how much that just cost.

And if you do that twice a day, it adds up every week. So definitely watch your money.

-Like, my situation with having to not pay rent for a couple months, I never thought that could happen to me.

JORDAN:

I've tried to start eating healthier. I'm not completely off of junk food and things like that. But I've lost 10, 15 pounds. And I feel a lot better, generally. And I feel more energetic.

-Just the experience, the four years, four plus years I'm going to be here, definitely it's worth just all the life experience. I definitely started to think, like, about my actions or how they're going to affect me. I've been doing that a little bit more.

There are sometimes I would slip up, and I would regret it later. But I'm starting to get pretty good at that little voice in my head. And listening to it. Do not give up. And there's so much distractions that seem great at the time. But not really worth it.

Like, look at the big picture. It's not really worth it. So yeah, just keep with it. Do what you want to do. And love life.

-Thinking about all the decisions I've made have benefited me in some way. Even if it did do something bad for me. So I don't know.

I don't think I regret anything. And I don't think I probably would do anything different. I think everything kind of worked out and fell into place.