

Are you doing four years or life?



by Kevin Scoleri

College! What many people say is the best four years of your life . . . or the best five years . . . or the best six! Some of you might even be on the same track as the legendary John Belushi, who starred in the college classic *Animal House*, and who "crammed" four years of college into ten! Whoa!

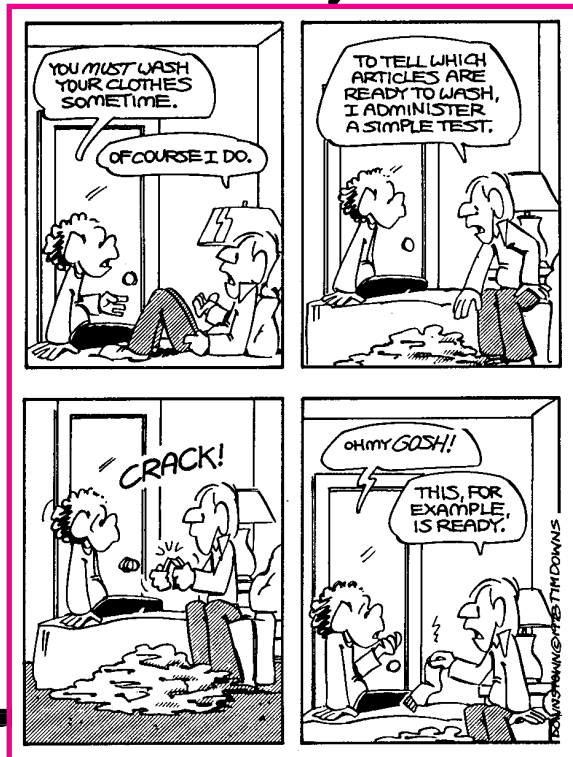
Whatever "plan" you're on, you'll want someday to look back on your college experience and say, "Wow! Those were the days!" You probably won't remember all the exams you took or all the papers you wrote (or how many times your computer crashed while attempting to write all those term papers, or the endless hours of viewing *Brady Bunch* or *Gilligan's Island* reruns, or watching *Melrose Place*, *Friends*, or *90210*). However, you probably will remember all the friends you made and the fun times you spent together.

How can you get the most out of college? How will you master this thing called "The College Experience?" Here are some **real life** suggestions for handling three of the most crucial areas of your college experience:

Your Roommate: Friend or Foe?

Ah, roommates! They can be the best of friends or the worst of enemies. Just ask anybody who has lived in a dormitory or shared an apartment. For evidence, tune in sometime to MTV's *Real World*, a "cinema verité" experiment in which a handful of twentysomethings are thrown together in an apartment so that their every move can be recorded on videotape. For almost four seasons, the show rolled merrily along. That is, until Puck—a San Francisco bike messenger who specializes in being filthy, crude, and obnoxious—came to live at the *Real World* house.

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So bad was Puck—who likes to shoot "snot rockets" and eat peanut butter out of a jar with his hands—that his *Real World* roommates voted to kick him out!

If Puck sounds like the roommate from hell, stand back. During the beginning of almost any semester or quarter on any particular campus, roommates can be an especially touchy subject. After even just a few days together in a small dorm room or apartment, some college students find out that their roommates are not altogether normal.

For Elaine, living with her college roommate was an adventure. As a sophomore at Florida State University, Elaine signed up to live in an off-campus private dormitory. Students filled out questionnaires about their lifestyles and habits, and the staff tried to match compatible roommates.

It didn't work.

"I had a college roommate who was a beauty queen who sang opera in the shower, and our suite-mates raised rabbits!" says Elaine.

Elaine, a graphic arts major, had been paired with a music therapy major. "We were a study in opposites," Elaine said. "She used to parade around the room, wearing her tiara, doing her vocal exercises. Or she would sing opera in the shower every morning at 5:30 a.m." She was a morning person. Elaine (who was not) frequently stayed up until 3 a.m., working on projects for graphic arts classes. After that experience, Elaine swore off roommates. "I never lived with anyone else," she said, "until I got married."

(Linda Shrieves, "Roommates From Hell," *The Orlando Sentinel*, Oct. 19, 1994, Sec. E, p.1,3)

Pomp and Circumstance

Four out of 10 freshmen will graduate in four years from the institution they entered; 3 in 10 will graduate from another institution; 2 in 10 will transfer to another school but not graduate; and 1 in 10 will drop out.



Source: The National Center for Education Statistics



Read On. . . ➤

Roommates: A Breed Apart!

Here's a quick quiz: Can you identify the following "breeds" of roommates? You may currently live with one or more of them. Hey! Maybe YOU are one of them!



- 1 The Coffee Addict.** This peppy, wide-eyed, nocturnal creature is often found walking around the dorm at 3 a.m., with his or her favorite coffee mug in hand. Favorite hang out: Any 24-hour coffee house located near campus will do.
- 2 The Greek.** This often exuberant person usually has the room plastered with Greek paraphernalia: party pics, pennants, and paddles, signifying their allegiance to "The House." Favorite hang-out: Wherever other Greeks are in large quantities, such as blow-out parties or campus sporting events.

Woodstock ... Say What?

Do you wish you'd had a chance to attend Woodstock?

Yes	57.9%
No	35.9%
What's Woodstock???	3.8%

Source: Esquire student survey, 1992

- 3 The Woodstock Wanna-Be.** The most easily recognizable breed of roommate due to their tie-dyed shirts, bell-bottoms, and headbands. Favorite pastime: Listening on their Model TCD-D3 Sony Walkman to classic rock from the '60s ... over and over and over!

- 4 The Barn Animal.** This type of roommate simply spreads dirty, soiled clothing and junk (especially old Dominos® pizza boxes!) all around the room, earning low marks for hygiene, even from the cockroaches. Favorite slogan: "A place for everything and everything in its place: the floor!"



Making It WORK

Have you ever noticed how anxious relationships can make us? We wish for strong, deep ones, yet often settle for surface encounters. This lack of intimacy can build massive frustration and isolation. Even the most successful people seem to be notoriously unsuccessful at building depth and commitment in relationships.

Let's face it: As a crucial part of our college experience, we want to achieve meaningful "connection" with people, both while we're in college and beyond. We want to make friends for a lifetime. How does it happen? Inevitably, it's the individual roommates themselves that must make it work. "In the end," says Judy Spain, former national adviser of the National Association of College Housing Administrators, "[Sharing a room] is not unlike a marriage. There must be some compromise—you give up some independence, and you learn to accept another person."

Acceptance. Compromise. Honesty. Sacrifice. Conflict resolution. These are just some of the necessary communication tools for success in any kind of relationship. Here's some excellent advice that a man named Paul gave to people from different backgrounds and walks of life who were living together in close community: "Tell your neighbor the truth. When you lie to others, you end up lying to yourself. Go ahead and be angry ... but don't use your anger as fuel for revenge. And don't stay angry. Don't go to bed angry. Watch the way you talk." These timeless principles for successful and skillful

living are from the Bible. Could it be that the Bible has something to say about how to build and maintain successful roommate relationships? It's worth checking out!

The Quest for Character: The Whole Truth and Nothing but the Truth???

Another area where you will likely face challenges in college is in the area of your character or integrity. For instance, how would you respond if . . .

Your best friend is a computer whiz and can design anything on the computer, even fake student I.D. cards that look exactly like the real thing. Since you're not 21 yet (bummer!), you can't go to many of the hottest clubs or nightspots

"It's Only Wrong If You Get Caught."

—Michael Moore, Rutgers University junior, author of "Cheating 101: The Benefits and Fundamentals of Earning the Easy 'A'"



near campus. Your friend asks, "Do you want me to make one for you? It's so easy. Think about all the great times you'll have. You don't want to miss out, do you?"

Oops! My Bad!

Have you done anything during your college years that, given today's standards, would prohibit you from running for public office in the future?

Yes	52.5%
No	45.5%

—Source: Esquire student survey

OR

Your roommate has a work-study job in the biology undergraduate office and helps out with the department's printing from time to time. They have easy access to the next mid-term and offer to obtain a copy for you

Just Verifying My Answers, That's All!

How often have you cheated on tests?

Never	32.5%
Once	11.6%
More than once but not often	47.9%
Often	7.7%

—Source: Esquire student survey

before the exam is given. "It's O.K.," your roommate says. "No one will ever know."

Your responses to these scenarios could be quite telling. Ask yourself, "Would I consider myself a person of integrity, high morals, and ethics? Am I trustworthy?"

Pass/Fail?

Would you sleep with your professor if it meant the difference between passing and failing?

	Men	Women
Yes	61.7%	15.8%
No	38.1%	84.2%

—Source: Esquire student survey

If I were a prospective employer, would I want to hire a person like myself?"

Ralph Wexler, vice president of the nonprofit Joseph and Edna Josephson Institute of Ethics, sums up the situation succinctly when he states:

"Clearly the youth of today didn't invent cheating, stealing, or lying, but they are perfecting it. . . . In today's society, less than 2 percent of the high school and the college kids get caught. We're creating a society where cheaters do prosper, and we can't tell them honestly, that honesty is the best policy."

Psst!
What did you get for number. . .

In the 1940s, about 20 percent of college students questioned anonymously admitted to cheating in high school. Today about 75 percent admit to cheating.

—Source: Stephen Davis, professor, Emporia (KS) State University

As you go through college, you will need to establish the basis for your moral and ethical decisions. Upon what will your personal standards be based? Will they be based on expediency ("I just do what is quick, easy, and convenient"), emotions ("I just felt right"), experience ("I've always done it like this, I've never been caught, and I've never hurt anyone or myself along the way"), or culture ("C'mon! This is America in the '90s! Nobody believes or behaves that way any more.")? The bad news is that these "let-your-conscience-be-your-guide" mindsets make it incredibly easy to rationalize or justify any behavior or action.

Q: Do You Believe In Absolute Truth?

A: Among 18-25 Year-Olds, 72% Say No.

—SOURCE: WHAT AMERICANS BELIEVE, GEORGE BARNA, BOOK

So, what's the answer? It's not a matter of establishing an ethical system and adhering to it. Nor is it a matter of simply following some rule book or "how-to" morals manual. Morality is something that is better caught than taught. It's learned as it is observed in the life of another. It's best learned in relationship with one who is an impeccable model of morals and ethics. We suggest Jesus Christ. No, not the Christian religious system . . . the man Jesus Christ.

The essence of Christianity is not rules but relationship. What a relationship with Christ provides is an objective reference point for right and wrong. Lacking an objective reference point beyond ourselves, we can become prisoners in our own subjectivity, designing ethical systems which we think we can keep.

What a relationship with Christ does is reveal our need to trust in something other than ourselves. Rather than trusting in our own efforts to "be good" or "try harder," we begin to trust in the one who provides us with truth. A relationship with Christ is the integrating factor that makes it possible not only to understand truth, but to be able to apply it to your life and relationships, to issues of morality and ethics.

The person who has begun a relationship with Jesus Christ has not only become acquainted with truth; he or she has the truth living inside. It is through this relationship that you are provided with relevant direction and answers to tough choices that you face. He has the power and ability to help shape and mold you into a person of character, making a relationship with Jesus Christ definitely worth pursuing and developing.

If You Don't Know Where You're Going, Any Road Will Take You There!

What's your major? Undecided? Welcome aboard and join thousands of other students just like yourself! Now, it's not bad being undecided. By all means, pick and choose what you'd like to learn more about, what you enjoy, or what you're gifted in. But, by the time you've accumulated 119 credits, the old "Undecided" tag just doesn't go over too well with Mom and Dad (especially if they are the primary funding source for your educational experience!).

Sometime during your junior year, you will begin to field the most fear-provoking question ever asked of you: "What are you going to do when you graduate?" With very little practice, you will begin to articulate the obvious yet timeless response: "I want to get a job where I can work with people." Good for you! Well-thought-out answer! What a goal!

Think briefly about your current goals. Can you clearly articulate them? Will achieving your goals bring a true sense of satisfaction and fulfillment? It's possible to successfully achieve all of your goals and still not have meaning in life. There's a major difference between succeeding at school and truly succeeding in life.

Also, it's crucial to look beyond your goals for your time in college (which you'll only have for 4-6 years) and examine your purpose in life (which you'll have for a lifetime). When you look, what do you see? You may find that you are going through life wondering what it's all about or wondering what will provide you with lasting fulfillment during college and beyond. (Believe it or not, there is life after college!).

Most students pursue goals for success rather than pursuing purpose. For one reason, it's much easier. Most of us have been urged to fulfill goals since we were children—learn to tap dance, make an "A" in algebra, make the team, make the cheer-leading squad. Many of us have achieved quite a lot.



But while most students have and achieve goals, hardly anyone has purpose. You see, goals are objectives we achieve. But purpose answers the questions: "Why am I here?" and "Where am I going?" Without purpose, how can anyone know if he or she has meaningful goals or meaningless goals, mediocre goals or the best goals? Jobs and values do not produce purpose; rather, purpose helps form our careers and values.




"Where are we going?"
"I don't know, just driving."
"But this road doesn't go anywhere."
"That doesn't matter."
"What does?"
"Just that we're on it, dude."

—Bret Easton Ellis, *Less Than Zero* (book)

There's a major difference between succeeding at school and truly succeeding at life.

Way To Go!

Which would impress your parents most after four years of college?

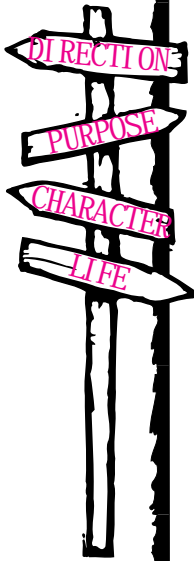
	A diploma:	34.9%
	A job:	57.1%
	A spouse:	4.0%

—Source: Esquire student survey

Without Purpose, How Can Anyone Know If He Or She Has Meaningful Goals Or Meaningless Goals, Mediocre Goals Or The Best Goals?

© 2004 by Mike Meyers, "Great Goals" for the 21st Century, in Newsweek

there's more



Interestingly enough, the Bible talks a lot about purpose. It says "God causes all things to work together for good for those who love God, and to those who are called according to His purpose." Jesus Christ spoke frequently about his purpose. In fact, a relationship with him allows us to experience real purpose in our life. He can come to live within us and provide us with purpose for living. You may measure success by what you do, but Jesus measures success by who you are.

Jesus comes into our lives if we ask him, but not as a religious icon. He is the one who created and cares uniquely for you and me, and he understands what will fulfill us. Not only does he impart true and lasting purpose, but he gives us power for living life and "connects" us to true satisfaction.

Consider Christ. In him, you'll find real purpose and **real life**. There's no one else like him!

It's A Wrap!!!

These are just three crucial areas of everyone's college experience—relationships with roommates, the quest for character, and having purpose in life. Interestingly, the Bible has something to say about each of these areas as well as many more important issues of

life. It provides us with God's blueprint for successful living.

It's been said that college will do a great job of preparing you to make a living, but the point isn't to make a living, but to make a life. Remember

the beginning and end of the Oscar-winning movie, *Forrest Gump*, and the elusive feather in the wind? Real meaning and success in life are a lot like that elusive feather—the more you grasp for it, the further away it floats. For many students, their pursuit for real meaning, purpose and success in life is like grasping after that elusive feather. In their efforts to be successful (either

socially, academically, or relationally), they build the resumé, join the right organizations, get to know the right people. And while they experience a type of success and may even make a good living when they graduate, a deep sense of inner meaning and purpose . . . the prerequisites to making a life . . . still elude them.



Making a life is a matter of choices. Those choices are yours to make. And the choices you make will determine if you experience randomness, superficiality, and compromise or purpose, depth and significance.

You may find yourself presently at a crossroads . . . not sure which way to choose. Jesus Christ said to a group of his friends standing at a similar fork in the road, "I am the way, the truth and the life . . ." If you want to try his "road" or "way" and to know what kind of choices he offers, go directly to the source. Jesus Christ lived, died, and came to life again so that you could be set free to experience all that life was created to be . . . he loves you and wants to make himself and his purposes known to you. He wants you to experience **real life** every day. You can make contact with him personally by simply saying something like . . . "Jesus Christ, I still have a lot of questions about you . . . and I'm not sure I completely believe, but if you are the source of **real life** . . . the one who created me and died to free me, here I am saying I want to know you if you're knowable. I want to experience relationships, character and life the way you created it. Please make yourself known to me. Thanks!"



Wherever you are as you read this today, you are probably looking for success. Can success be found apart from Christ? Sure! But if you are looking for that gut-level sense of meaning, joy and significance that

circumstances cannot take from you, then look to the provider of purpose himself. Investigate what he has to say. You can do more than merely cope with college life; you can major in **real life!** ----->

Our goal in Campus Crusade is to serve as a spiritual resource. Your call is welcome. We will gladly get together with you personally or talk on the phone about any questions you might have. Just call the following number, and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

1-800-236-9238



Don't settle for ANYTHING less.

It's been said that college will do a great job of preparing you to make a living, but how well are you doing at making a life?

