

Should you quiet quit college?

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One of the biggest social media discussions this summer was about people quiet quitting their jobs in search of better mental health.

What started as a TikTok trend quickly got the attention of outlets such as The New York Times, Forbes and The Washington Post, with writers both championing and lambasting the concept.

In all that discourse, however, not much attention was given to how the concept extends to students who struggle with balancing school, life and often a job as well.

Despite what it sounds like, quiet quitting isn't about quitting your job, but rather about setting limitations on how much you work in order to create a better work-life balance.

Quiet quitting can entail not working overtime, not checking emails at home and not forcing yourself to do more than expected.

In the context of college, quiet quitting is quite different, as

students are expected to do most work outside of the classroom, which is why school-life balance can get so blurred.

Quiet quitting college would entail the likes of not staying up excessively late to study, not passing up on other events/opportunities to do schoolwork and doing solely what is necessary for assignments.

On paper, quiet quitting can sound like nothing more than a reason to be lazy, but I believe it is best interpreted as a means to not allow yourself to be defined by your work to the point where it takes over your life.

It's not about rejecting over-achieving, but about not doing so to the point where you are making sacrifices in other, more important, areas of your life.

According to a 2020 survey done by the American Psychological Association, this generation's young adults are the most stressed-out demographic, and schooling is only one of many stress factors (on top of learning to be independent, the omnipresence of social issues

Opinion

and constantly being reminded that you are on the precipice of the rest of your life), so it's crucial to remember what is and isn't in your control.

In class, there will always be a looming pressure to focus on assignments, but it's important to remember that opportunities like clubs and internships can be more beneficial for meeting your career goals than spending too much time on completion-based assignments.

This isn't exactly a groundbreaking take, but one I think is worth repeating and is reinforced by the concept of quiet quitting.

Unfortunately, there's not a black-and-white answer regarding just how little you should be doing or how much you should care, as it's all about knowing your personal boundaries and operating where you are comfortable.

Like most wellbeing issues, it's

about finding balance, as operating in extremes is seldom productive.

I originally intended this to be a more general "advice for freshmen from a senior" piece, but the more I thought about it I realized that this is the only advice I wish to give.

As someone who spent their first three years of college ripping themselves apart over every menial assignment to keep a 4.0, I would tell my freshman self to care a little less.

When I started freshman year, I went in meticulously planning my life around every assignment, and as a result, hardly ever left the campus for the first two years.

Yes, it all looks good on a résumé, but that's hardly worth semesters of passing up on all the connections and opportunities that are available on a college campus.

At the time of writing, my senior year starts in less than a week and I haven't even checked if any of my classes require textbooks, and frankly, I couldn't care less.

Learning to let myself, for lack of a better term, half-ass some as-

signments allowed me to take on new opportunities that were fun and probably more beneficial to my future.

I know this isn't a problem everyone has, and this isn't a solution that will resonate with everyone who does, but I've met enough like-minded people in my time here to know it's worth saying in case someone does need to hear it.

At the risk of being trite, college is very much a marathon, and one that only gets harder to run if you refuse to pace yourself.

In my experience, trying to devote yourself entirely to every gen-ed class and never taking time to try new things and meet new people is equivalent to refusing to drink water along the way; you're destined to burn out.

Even if quiet quitting isn't something that directly applies to you, my advice to freshmen stays the same: the best way to both enjoy and make the most of your time here is to take time to make sure you remember to take care of yourself.



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Finally, with vaccine rates going up and masks becoming less common, we can have this "real college experience" people talk about.

Ah, yes, the college experience: naps between classes, a disposable amount of potential friends and just a short walk to pretty much anywhere you need to go.

This might be the case for some students who live on or near campus, but as the commute to school increases, college starts to look a little different for commuters.

Instead, commuters can expect waking up hours before their first class, blows to their social lives and fighting for a parking spot.

Although commuters can save thousands while opting out of residential housing, it can be hard for students to stay motivated and have a positive attitude toward their education.

Don't worry, you're not alone. According to postsecondary researcher Laura J. Horn, 85% of college students are considered commuting students.

Despite the statistics, the commuter life is a lonely one, so it's essential to be prepared.

To help ease the burden, follow these tips to survive the commute.

Make your mornings

Some students' commutes to school can be upwards of 30, 60 or more minutes, making time spent on campus much more precious.

Unfortunately, this usually requires an earlier morning than fellow residential students.

But getting to school doesn't have to be the most dreaded part of your day.

To combat the resentment toward the commute, mix up your mornings with something you look forward to, whether it's a filling breakfast, a yoga routine or your favorite podcast. For me, it's coffee and a perfectly curated playlist.

Stack your classes

Not only do commuters need to account for travel time, they should also look into scheduling options that allow them to stack classes within as few days as possible.

There are few things that feel as wasteful as driving an hour round trip for only a single, hour-long class.

Stacking classes not only saves time and gas, but it allows for a more flexible schedule outside of school. This is perfect for commuters with responsibilities at work, home or a job site.

Manage time on campus

Consequently, long days on campus can be exhausting, but are also the most critical for time management.

While it may be tempting to hide away in your car for the awkward time between classes, this is the perfect opportunity to take advantage of campus resources while doing school work.

Save yourself the drive to the li-

brary, office hours or computer lab and your future self will thank you.

Join the fun

On top of meticulously planning your day, getting involved in the social scene on campus may look different for commuting students.

Making friends with people when it seems like they've known each other for years (aka, since move-in day) is intimidating.

I swear, it's possible; it just requires little extra effort.

Instead of having the luxury of befriending your roommate or the sophomore down the hall, commuters should expect to make most of their connections through extra-curricular activities.

This is the perfect time to explore your interests by joining a club or organization, especially those pertaining to your major.

Going to the first meeting doesn't have to be a huge commitment, but it may be beneficial to your academic, professional and even social experience.

Getting involved in campus organizations can open the door to brushing up on organizational skills, networking and even internship or job opportunities. Possible friends are just an added bonus.

Although the commuter life isn't the easiest to navigate, taking advantage of your time and putting yourself out there can transform your time at your university.

So, make the drive worth it and get the most out of your college experience.

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