

GROWN & FLOWN

# Goodbye High School, Hello College



# Preface

MARY DELL HARRINGTON & LISA HEFFERNAN

[Grown & Flown](#)

As our teens get ready to head off to college this fall, we hope for a better start to the year. But this generation has already shown us their resilience and we know they will continue to do so. We hope their experiences in 2021 will make them even more confident in their ability to persevere in the face of change and uncertainty throughout their lives.

We want to share with you some of the best content from Grown and Flown on how to smooth this transition for your family. We will touch on the practical, the painful and the joyous moments in this transition. Please know that we are always here at [grownandflown@gmail.com](mailto:grownandflown@gmail.com) and that our community, [Grown and Flown Parents](#), is also here to support you.

And, BTW, to take a deeper dive on topics relevant to parenting all teens, we suggest our book to you: [Grown & Flown: How to Support Your Teen, Stay Close as a Family and Raise Independent Adults](#) (Flatiron, 2020.) Covering family life, mental health and happiness, love and sex, health and academics, our expert and parenting authors have written about what parents need to know to help their teens through high school, into college and beyond.



XO,  
Mary Dell and Lisa

# 17 Items to Take Care of Before Your Student Leaves for College

by GROWN AND FLOWN

With many colleges opening again this year in summer and fall parents are once again getting prepared for drop-off day. You may be thinking about what to buy for their dorm room or what to say to them as you leave, but we want to touch on a few practical matters to consider before you drive away. Not all of these are relevant to all families, and many are personal choices, but here are a few things to consider.

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## What to do before your freshman leaves home for college

1. **Documents to allow parents access to medical records.** Once our teens turn 18 their medical information is protected for their own privacy (see [HIPPA](#)). In some families this is fine. In other families parents and teens agree that parents may need access to some or all records. Read about the [documents you should consider signing here](#).
2. **A way to transfer money.** You may or may not need to give your student funds during the semester but when you do it may be an urgent situation. Make sure that before they leave for college you have a way to transfer money between accounts or through a service like Venmo.



3. **Continuing medical or psychological care.** Students with preexisting medical or psychological conditions who will need ongoing care will need to arrange that in advance of arriving on campus. Student health centers can be helpful in suggesting local resources and clarifying what services they make available. Contact them before the semester begins.
4. **Find local urgent care or emergency room.** If the student health center is not 24 hours and even if it is, you should find a local medical center that will accept your family's health insurance and will not result in an enormous out-of-pocket bill. Have your student store the Urgent care and Emergency Room phone numbers and addresses in their contacts.
5. **Insurance Cards.** Make sure they have their own health and dental insurance cards, with photos front and back, in their phone.
6. **Social Security Number.** Let them memorize this number – they will need it.
7. **Consider renter's insurance.** This is a good moment for your teen to learn about insurance and compare policies and costs.
8. **Eyes.** Get duplicates of your teen's eyeglass or contact prescriptions.
9. **First Aid.** [Create a small first aid kit](#) with relevant medications and first-aid treatments.
10. **Flying.** If flying consider getting them a [known traveler number](#) to expedite 4 years of airport journeys.
11. **Ride-sharing.** Ride sharing gift card for "emergency" rides when needed. Our teens will swear up and down that neither they nor their friends will drink and drive. But adolescent impulse control is far from perfect. Give them some ride sharing funds to keep them safe.
12. **Medical Information.** Make sure your students are familiar with their own medical history. Yes, they can call or text you at intake but this is information they will always need. Make sure they have all the details of any surgeries, allergies or illnesses they have had.
13. **Roommate's Contact Details.** Share contact information with your teen's roommate-to-be for use in an emergency situation.
14. **Travel Needs.** Make sure they have a [passport](#).

15. **Prescriptions.** Consider how they will get their prescriptions, new ones or those preexisting, filled locally. Explore if there is a local 24 hour pharmacy.
16. **Discuss sharing grades information.** [FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#), means that you will not automatically have access to your student's grades. For some families this works, for others parental access is important. Sign the appropriate documents that will enable you to see their grades.
17. **Budgeting.** Talk about budgeting. For freshmen living in the dorms this might be simple with just a tiny budget for extras like pizza and an occasional meal out. But for upperclassmen this is a great chance to break down living expenses and show them how to plan for their spending around rent, car, insurance, food, and entertainment so they get a realistic picture of their spending before the semester begins.

We hope that our students will be returning to school this fall, but whether it's this fall or the next, it's never too early to supply them with the items they need to begin their journey to independence.

# The 25 Things Every Teen Needs to Know Before Leaving Home

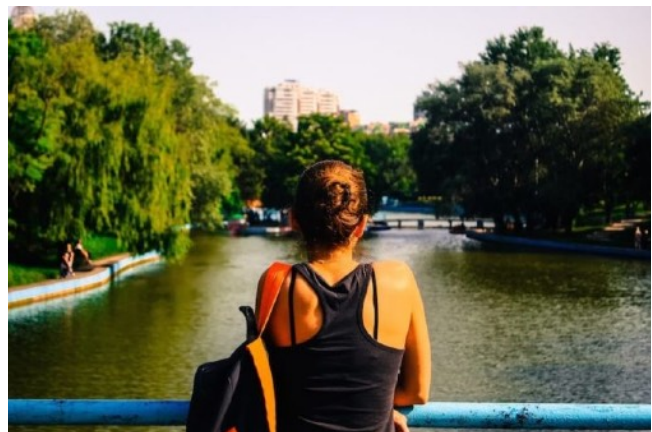
by BECKY BLADES

Let's dive with what you desperately want your son or daughter to know before they walk out the door and into their new college lives from author/illustrator, Becky Blades.

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Raising two girls, I have found everything imaginable in the laundry. Except, of course, a cell phone, because that would be attached to a hand or an ear.

During one particular laundry load, at the end of the summer before my firstborn daughter's high school senior year, it struck me that she would be leaving for college soon. I fretted. I had not prepared her. I had forgotten stuff — like how to check pockets before shoving things in the washer. Clearly, she wasn't ready.



I know now that this was my pre-[empty-nest](#) grief talking, but at the time, the thought of all the things she did not know was terrifying.

With only a few months left of having her home, I resolved to collect the things my 18-year-old needed to know, and to find teachable moments to deliver the messages.

Alas, I had waited too long: SATs, senior year, and friends on cell phones came first. But the list in my journal became an off-to-college goodbye letter, which then became a book, [Do Your Laundry or You'll Die Alone: Advice Your Mom Would Give if She Thought You Were Listening](#).

If I had to do it all over again, I would start earlier. I would begin every summer schedule, not with camps and tutoring programs, but with laundry lessons and awkward life lectures. I would let my kids roll their eyes and bash me to their friends, but I would make absolutely sure they had a few things sorted out. Starting with the laundry:

## 25 Things I Wish My Daughters Knew BEFORE Leaving Home

### **1. Do your laundry or you'll die alone.**

Yes, we're starting here. Do your laundry regularly. Try every week. Do it before you run out of clean underwear and before you need your favorite jeans. Because when you want your favorite jeans, and only your favorite jeans will do, you will want them clean. You will not want to have the dilemma of choosing between dirty, stinky favorite jeans and jeans that make your butt look (choose one: wide, low, flat, etc.).

Either of these less-than-perfect options will undermine your self-confidence, and you will not have the courage to talk to that cute guy. And then you may never get another chance, and... then comes the dying alone part.

### **2. Look people in the eye.**

(You'll discover this is hard to do while looking at your phone.)

### **3. Offer your seat to anyone older or less healthy than you.**

And occasionally to someone who made an inappropriate shoe choice.

If I had to do it over again, I would stand firm on critical, basic etiquette:

### **4. Pocket your cell phone during meals.**

If you're eating alone, it's your call. But if you are dining with others, your cell is a slap in their face. Even looking at your phone is rude. Turn it off. Don't answer, if it rings. Put it away.

**5. Put your napkin in your lap.**

And don't blow your nose with it. And don't hide your phone there. No one is falling for it.

I would debunk the myths that the world is serving up:

**6. The Tooth Fairy may still come.**

Even though you think you have a lot of things figured out, don't give up on magic. If you lose a tooth late in life, for whatever reason, put it under your pillow.

**7. Multi-tasking doesn't always save you time.**

**8. Profanity doesn't make you sound more dramatic or serious.**

It just makes you sound #!%\*ing profane.

I would not be afraid to talk about the scary things:

**9. A friend who is mad at you for taking her car keys is better than a dead friend.**

**10. Birth control doesn't work 100 percent of the time.**

**11. Never put anything on the Internet that you would not want to discuss**

- in a job interview
- on a first date
- with your mother

On the way to teaching them what to fear, I would work every day to assure my daughters that it's all really OK:

**12. Everyone feels like a fake.**

Except the real fakes.



**13. Don't worry about mastering parallel parking.**

They are designing cars that will do it for you.

**14. It's OK to outgrow your dreams.**

The dream house of your childhood would not hold your wardrobe today. And the dream job of today may come to feel like a prison sentence tomorrow. What you hope and work for will change as you do, so don't hold too tight to resolutions you may have outgrown.

The true longings of your heart — to flourish, to love, to explore, to create — will always be part of you. Grip them loosely, and they will float along beside you, just far enough out of reach to keep you interested.

And yes, I would spend more time on sorting and settings and such. Because growing up is all about knowing the difference:

**15. Know who your friends are.**

**16. Know who your friends AREN'T.**

**17. Know the difference between collecting and hoarding.**

**18. Honor your fear.**

It may be trying to tell you something.

**19. Don't be paranoid.**

**20. If you're flirting with everyone, you're flirting with no one.**

And you're probably embarrassing yourself.

**21. Don't joke in the security line at the airport.**

**22. But try to find humor everywhere else.**

Because the things that go without saying... well, they really don't.

**23. Don't wad up your clothes.**

Some morning, today's dirty shirt or sweater will be your cleanest option, and you'll want to tell yourself that you can wear it and no one will be the wiser. You might get away with it, if it has not been smashed under a wet towel for two days.

**24. Lint is never in style.**

**25. Even sloppy people like neat roommates.**

Sad, but true. Pick up your stuff.

My youngest daughter has just begun her third year of college, and evidence shows I've done a pretty good job. I would like to turn back the clock for a lot of reasons. Certainly, I would not have waited so long to look through the laundry for parenting wisdom.

No matter how young or old our children are, the laundry is rich with memories and metaphors. Because like parenting itself, laundry is inescapable, repetitive, and never really finished.

## BECKY BLADES

Becky Blades is an author, artist, and mother of two nearly grown and flown daughters. She lives in Kansas City, Missouri, with her husband of 33 years and is the author of *Do Your Laundry or You'll Die Alone*.

# Top 12 Dorm Shopping Mistakes

by GROWN AND FLOWN

One of the topics parents of off-to-college teens come to us most often about is how to shop for all the things their son or daughter will need for freshman year. We are going to stop here with a few warnings. Buy less than you think you will need. Yep, less.

Every year we hear dozens of tales, and we have lived this, of parents bringing home a mountain of “must-have” dorm items that their student never touched. Never took out of the packaging. So this is your reminder: it is not 1990. Whatever your teen finds they need can almost certainly be ordered with FREE two-day shipping from national retailers. [We have gathered some of our best suggestions on Amazon](#) and here is where to begin.

With high school graduation behind us, *Grown and Flown* is focused in the day we will drop off our youngest kids at their freshmen dorms. Though we prefer to stick our heads in the sand and ignore the inevitable, it's time to get them ready for the tiny new living spaces that will be their homes away from home.



Five years ago, we were rookie moms and made our share of dorm shopping rookie mistakes. Frankly, we bought a lot of crap. This time, with

experience on our side, we hope to give you some thoughts on how to approach what might be your last back-to-school shopping trip....in life.

## Dorm Room Shopping: What NOT to Do

### 1. Dorm Room Shopping is NOT like a School Supply List

My daughter's college mailed a "What to Bring" list with seven categories and 82 separate items. My advice – do not treat this like the supply lists from your child's elementary school where, scavenger hunt-style, you dutifully checked off each item while wheeling a cart through Staples. Instead, concentrate on the most important items, first. Anything and everything else can be picked up on move-in day or ordered later online.

In fact, before you grab your credit card and keys, take a look at [Dorm Room Shopping: 50 Questions to Answer, First](#). We guarantee it will save you time, money and loads of aggravation.

### 2. Dorms are Minuscule

Keep this mantra in mind.....Less is more, less is more. Dorm rooms are tiny and spaces, shared. There is minimal room for the necessities and not much else for extras. Forget oversized.

### 3. Kids are Pigs

Ever seen a photo of a lived-in college room? Appalled? We were, too. The dorm room you help your kid set up will begin to deteriorate the moment you say your goodbyes. In the next nine months, your son or daughter will welcome friends into that room where every surface will be treated as a chair.

Some of the "[dorm room shopping essentials](#)" you eagerly purchase this summer will be stuffed in corners, unopened and collecting dust, until they're rediscovered in May.

Dorm rooms can be scary messy.



#### 4. Store Savings

Everything about college is expensive, and that definitely includes dorm shopping, so look for some great shopping deals. Many retailers hold college shopping nights and special promotions in exchange for your email address. Search online to see how to sign up and look for the details on free shipping, too.

#### 5. Underbed Space? You Have No Clue

This is the single biggest question mark about the dorm and one that your teen may not know the answer to until move-in day. Those bed risers you were convinced would be perfect? They don't work with bunk beds and are unnecessary with many elevated beds.

Resist the urge to plan for this space until you know the dimensions. If your teen has a dorm assignment, check out the "residence life" section on the college website to see if a floorpan, with measurements of that specific dorm, is available. Take note of how high the bed is elevated and plan the under-bed real estate accordingly.

#### 6. Be Careful with Meds

Stuffing a medicine kit for your college freshman can be dangerous. When at home and sick, our teenagers take the analgesic, decongestant, or antihistamine we dole out. We have decades of experience in understanding how over-the-counter medicines should be taken. Our kids may not and, if we send them off to college with all the meds and none of the wisdom, it is very easy for them to over medicate as they battle their first cold while trying to finish a paper and study for a test.

Prescription meds, band aids, a thermometer, cough drops, Neosporin, and one analgesic – yes. But leave out multiple meds that have the same active ingredients. [One pharmacist mom gave us her best advice for her freshman son.](#)

#### 7. Don't Buy Crap

Even the most careful kid will be hard pressed to keep their college possessions in good shape as they move in and out of dorm rooms and college apartments for the next four years. Fragile and dainty will become ripped up and broken. Whatever goes in your shopping cart must be judged for durability. Put it back on the shelf if it doesn't pass muster.

## 8. Flying or Driving?

There is a fork in the road here and you already know which path you will take with your freshman. If you are flying, it will be impossible to bring much more than your teen's clothes, electronics, x-long sheets/comforter and prescription meds.

Seek out the special shopping/shipping services from major retailers. If you are driving, you may still want to use these services for a more comfortable ride.

## 9. No Room for Luggage

As adults, we are accustomed to traveling with luggage but we also have closets wherever we land. College kids have minimal storage space, so consider the collapsible duffel bag that is hanging around in your basement as the perfect piece of luggage. When our son began to drive himself back and forth to school, he used garbage bags for luggage which meant he had a starter pack for the trash can when he arrived.



Trash bags as luggage for college students driving to school.

And, of course, the [blue IKEA Frakta bag](#) is our favorite method for transporting college gear.

IKEA blue bags are the #1 essential for college move in.

## 10. One Pillow is Not Enough

Your kid's dorm bed will function as bedroom/living room/study and the pillow they sleep on will not be enough to lean back onto. Bring a second bed pillow, a large square pillow in a sham, or a [backrest pillow](#) to cushion the hard wood or wall.



## 11. Power Struggle

Your kid will travel to college with a phone, maybe a tablet, a computer, possibly a printer or a lamp, and, if the dorm is not air-conditioned, a fan. Girls may also throw into their bags a blow dryer and/or hair straightener. All of this translates into a serious need for extra outlets. Many colleges do not allow extension cords so pack [a power strip with surge protection on a long cord](#).



## 12. Mini-Fridge

A mini-fridge is a real necessity and one piece of equipment that roommates may want to discuss before move-in day. There might be space for only one, so rent or buy, decide to share the cost, or someone can own it outright. [This one with the chalkboard front by Igloo](#), caught our eye. It comes in two sizes and will hold the drinks, snacks and cold slices of pizza that your teen will enjoy having on hand in their room.

The summer before my eldest went to college, I had a powerful nesting urge, much like I did 18 years before when I prepared for his nursery. I poured over every dorm room essential, checklist and must haves at every store with a dorm shopping display.

This time my approach is completely different. I will buy two sets of x-long sheets and my daughter will pick out a comforter in a color that she loves. We splurged on a comfy mattress topper to add to the rock hard pad that is supplied



by the school. She will pack her clothes, shoes and electronics.

Fortunately, she knows the dimensions of the under bed space in her dorm room so we will buy heavy plastic storage drawers that we can fill and tape shut for our drive. She will bring a poster she can stick on the wall (no nails in dorm rooms) with photos of friends, family and her dog. We know where the closest CVS is for stocking up on the generic supplies.

The stores all have college lists, but view them with a discriminating eye. Step stools? Paper towel holders? Lots of extra plastic boxes? Think twice.

## Dorm Room Items We Won't Be Wasting Money On

- Alarm clock – she uses her phone.
- Furniture – there is no space for a futon or any furniture that's oversized or purely decorative.
- Kitchen – no toasters or blenders, no dishes, cups or silverware that must be washed after use.
- TV – Netflix on laptop is enough.
- Pictures in frames – ditto, just flip open the laptop.
- Plants – guaranteed to die.
- Cleaning supplies – in our dreams, only, as many (most?) college kids don't seem to clean their dorm rooms. So no vacuum, no mop. The one exception may be [Clorox wipes](#).
- Desk Lamp – worth checking first if it is needed. Many rooms have adequate overhead light and computers are backlit.
- Composition books, binders, dividers – some of these have gone the way of the dinosaur. Let your teen start class and figure out their own study methods. Many kids prefer to take notes on their laptops and have far fewer paper needs than they did in high school. Don't rush to waste money on a bunch of dead trees.
- Desk chair – most colleges provide a chair and you will just end up driving it back home.



- Printer – might also be an enormous waste of money. Many schools have networked printers available to students and assignments are often turned in online. Desks do not have much room and the floor is a filthy place for an expensive piece of electronic equipment.

## Well worth considering for the Dorm Room:

- An over-the-door set of hooks is a great space saver for hats, jackets, or wet towels and this is one of our favorites: [Over the door organizer hooks](#).

- Fan – is a must have if the climate or lack of air conditioning suggests the need for it. Compact fans can do a big job in stuffy or steamy dorm rooms, no need to buy a big one. This [Vornado fan](#) could be a lifesaver at the beginning of the year.



- Hooks that stick to the wall are handy for jackets, towels or jewelry to keep things (wishful) off the floor. Definitely pick up a few packages of [Command Large Utility Hooks for the drive](#).

- Small rugs are worth considering but be wary as this may not get vacuumed all year. Small throw rugs that can go into the washing machine might work best.

- Shower caddy – first check what the bathroom situation is. If your child is using a large communal bathroom at the end of the hall, this will be a necessity. This [toiletry caddy](#) can be hung up in the shower and to dry, later.

- Mattress pad and bed bug protector, money well spent! Here is a comprehensive list of [retailers that sell dorm bedding](#).

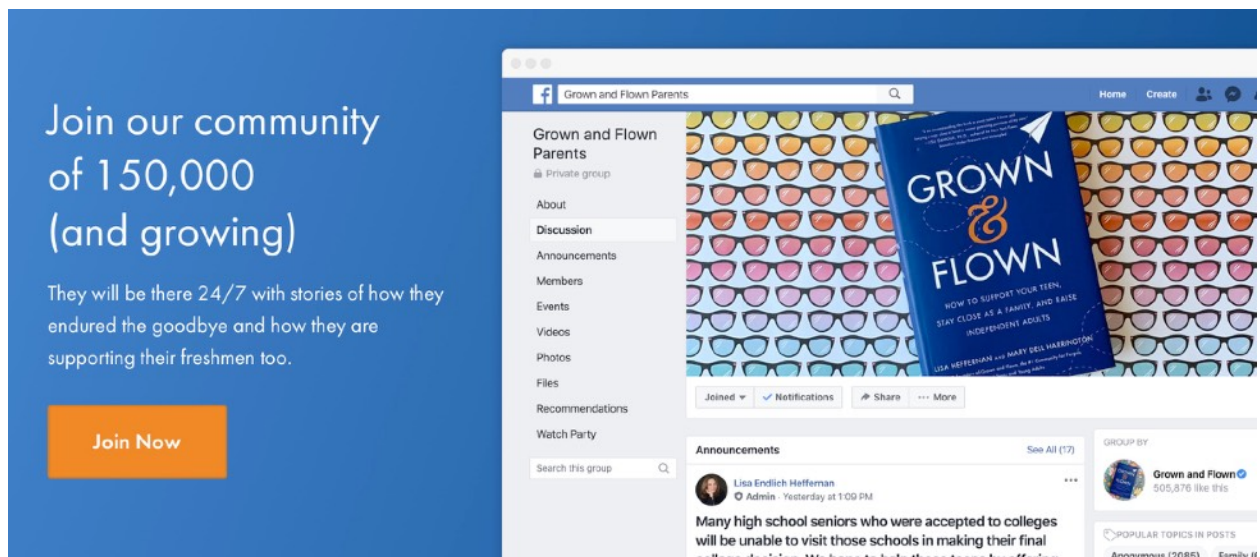
- Trash can? Some rooms come equipped, others do not, worth checking first.



- Is your child a coffee/tea drinker? We fell in love with this [K-Mini Coffee Maker](#) which could be a nice treat to have in their dorm room.
- Towels – consider monogramming or a distinctive color. Basic white are easy to mistake for anyone else’s towels in the laundry room.

One final thought about move-in day. It will be crowded, it will be hot, and there will be lousy parking. You child will come face to face with her new roommate for the first time and you will also shake hands with your counterparts. Help her make up her bed and pull the sheets snug.

Drive her to the nearest store for shampoo and her favorite body wash. Help her stock the mini fridge. Finally, [slip her a letter telling her how proud you are of her](#) and how this day is one you know she worked hard to achieve. Tell her you love her. Hug her tight and know that it is time for her to take it from here.



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Lisa Endlich Haffeman Admin · Yesterday at 1:00 PM

Many high school seniors who were accepted to colleges will be unable to visit those schools in making their final college decisions. We here to help these teens by offering

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POPULAR TOPICS IN POSTS

Anonymous (2086) Family (1)

# Top 10 Things Every Freshman Needs to Bring to Their Dorm

by GROWN AND FLOWN



College is one of the biggest investments our families make and there is no reason to make it more expensive by wasting money on things our teens don't really need. So here is our best shot at 10 true essentials for all freshmen. Start here and add only things that your son or daughter needs....

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The good news is your kid is GOING to college. The bad news is your kid is LEAVING for college. While there may be [a long list of things they WANT to buy](#), here is a list of the things they NEED to buy, the real dorm essentials. We have cut to the basics and listed only the things that they will truly need to bring to college to have on day one. Even here there is much to consider, see below.

This isn't 1990. Retailers offer free shipping so read the fine print to take advantage of every offer for savings.

## 10 Dorm Essentials to Put on Your List

First step is to read this post, [Dorm Room Shopping: 50 Questions to Answer First](#), which will guide you through all the Q&As you want to discuss with your teen BEFORE you shop, with any insight you can gather from their college's website tab on residence life.

Then start here, with the true basics.

## 1. Twin XL sheets

There is no place other than a college dorm where your teen will need Twin XL sheets and you will find dozens of retailers that sell this unique size. Shop online or [visit stores](#) with your son or daughter where you can both feel the fabric before buying.

## 2. IKEA Frakta Bag

These blue bags have achieved cult status in the Grown and Flown community and they are available at Amazon, as well as IKEA. They are lightweight, durable, and fold flat for easy storing. The bags are invaluable for moving into and out of dorms and can be used as under-bed storage for your teen, too.



## 3. Towels

You can bring towels from home or buy a new set for your teen. We think getting them in a unique color or [having them monogrammed](#) will help your son or daughter keep up with their own towels in the communal laundry room.

## 4. Surge protector with USB ports

This will protect expensive electronics from a power surge, provide more outlets than a typical dorm room, and are the preferred option to extension cords which are banned by many schools. This one has a six-foot cord and two USB ports for charging electronics.



## 5. Bed Pillow

This is another item that your teen can bring from home. However, this highly-rated pillow will not get flat or lumpy, is hypoallergenic, protects against dust mites, and is machine washable. Dorm rooms get dusty and become filthy during the school year so having a washable pillow with anti-allergen qualities is a big plus.



## 6. Mattress topper

College mattresses are rock hard and your teen will be over-the-moon happy if you get them a mattress topper. From egg crates to memory foam to expensive featherbeds, they all do the job of helping your teen will get a better night's sleep. We've read great things about this one, [Natural Laytex Mattress Topper](#), which is available in several thicknesses and sizes in addition to Twin XL.



## 7. Laundry hamper or bag

Your teen may not clean their dorm room but they will (eventually) wash their clothes so get a laundry bag or bag for them. First, think about how much they'll need to carry and how far they have to travel to do laundry. Are the machines on the same floor of their room or in another building? Here is a basic hamper that is very popular: [Pop-Up Collapsible Mesh Laundry Hamper](#).



## 8. Storage solutions

Dorm rooms are tiny and space is at a premium. Shop for under bed storage containers to stash clothes and other items but, before buying, [find out how much room there is to maximize this precious space](#). Look on the college website under the section that includes "Residence Life" to find out all you can about the specific dorm your teen will occupy. Some schools provide dimensions for the furniture and how high the bed may already lofted. Take a tape measure when you shop to maximize this precious space.

Buy **Command Hooks** for the wall to hang wet towels, necklaces, baseball caps, a lanyard with their keys, sweatshirt, almost anything.

**Over the door hooks** are also incredibly useful.

## 9. Shower caddy

For students with a bathroom right near their bedroom, this item can be left off the list. But anyone making a trek down the hall with shampoo, conditioner, soap, deodorant.. .needs to bring a shower caddy to college. This one is highly rated.



## 10. First aid kit

We suggest that parents find some sort of plastic container and put together a small medicine/first aid kit of what they know their kids will need. Freshmen get sick at 2am and it is nice to have cold or stomach remedies at hand. Make sure they know what the dosage is for any meds they bring to college. If you want to add to a starter kit of the basics, this one is compact but includes 299 (!) first aid basics.



### THE NEW GROWN & FLOWN BOOK

How to Support Your Teen, Stay Close as a Family, and Raise Independent Adults

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DR. LISA DAMOUR Author of the New York Times bestsellers, *Untangled* and *Under Pressure*



# 10 College Packing Hacks For Your Freshman

by SUZANNE PERRYMAN

Your teen has graduated, you've dorm shopped until you have no more room to devote to all their new gear in your house. Now comes the important steps of how to get all their new things from your family room into their new dorm room. We think that Suzanne Perryman is a packing genius.

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With a summer of planning, shopping and endless list making ahead- there is no reason why your soon to be college freshman can't tackle the work! I admit that as we prepped for college last summer I imagined it all to be a bonding experience. However, as freshman move in came closer last fall, our perspectives grew further apart.



Inwardly, I was emotional, tired and not super eager to pack. My daughter, however, was excited, anxious and counting the days. I was torn between wanting her to enjoy her last summer at home and wanting her to share the workload.

I decided action would be the best approach. So I got busy... and made THIS list. Here is how we did it, and how you can too. Here is your jumpstart how-to to get your soon to be college freshman moving!

## Packing Hacks for College Freshmen

### 1. Pull those new appliances out of their boxes!

After reading too many posts on the [Grown & Flown Parents Facebook Group](#) about dented mini-fridges, and fridge doors that would not close, Keurigs that wouldn't brew and fans that didn't work- we did a trial run. Turns out, the inside of the fridge was a great place to stash and pack the breakable Brita water filter pitcher and a few other awkward delicate items. The appliances were easy to repack, and in some cases, we were able to streamline the store packaging with a little less bulk.

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Tech tip: If you are packing a functioning printer from home, remove all ink cartridges and bag securely. Secure your printer tray with FrogTape masking tape ( found in the painting supply aisle) and find the correct size box so the printer will not shift inside. If you have a new printer in box, double check that your student can connect to laptop with USB cable ( not included with all printers) or Bluetooth. If necessary, test device connection at home first. Many colleges do not permit school wifi connection for student printers.

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### 2. Label away.

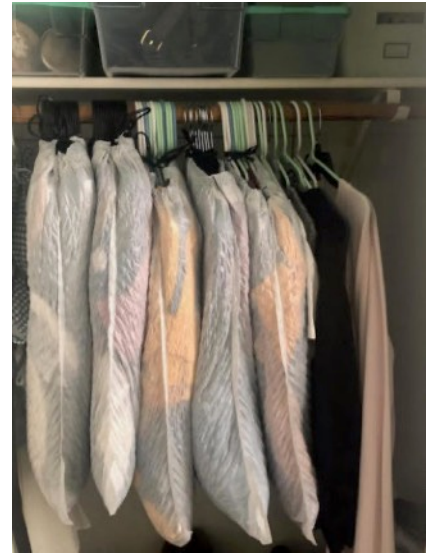
With a jumbo sharpie and FrogTape, my daughter was tasked with labeling all the various moving boxes, containers appliance boxes and bags with students name/ room/ dorm name and phone number. This tape stuck to everything and left no duct tape adhesive behind. Stack empty labeled moving containers together in one area. Create a " loading" zone area designated for all items that need to be packed excluding large pre-boxed items. The visual aid of a separate area will help you determine the best container for each item. Next, stack all books, notebooks together in one area in your loading zone.



### 3. Wash and pack all clothes and bedding.

Folded clothes can be left in laundry baskets in the packing area to use as packing filler with remaining to be packed in [blue Ikea bags](#) (the [#1 must have dorm item for move in day](#)).

Hanging clothes can be grouped in similar length, by small bundles and tied together with a trash bag /garment bag. ( The blue IKEA moving bags work great for this too, but we were saving ours for bulkier items.) I also used this opportunity to make sure my student knew how to correctly load and wash bedding using the supplies she was taking to college. ( No, not all the blankets can be washed together, sigh. )



### 4. Fill plastic storage bins and drawers with lightweight clothing and misc. items.

Tape drawers shut when each space is filled completely. Leave untaped until then.

### 5. Pack shoes together.

After making a quick stop at Total Wines ( empty boxes stored in front for the taking), I scored a couple heavyweight case boxes with built-in dividers. These make fantastic shoe holders. Box all shoes accordingly.



### 6. Gather all cleaning items/ bottles.

Check all tops to make sure they are locked. Lift divider out of liquor box and slip plastic trash bag underneath standing dividers up inside. Nestle bag with upright dividers back into the box. Fill with laundry, cleaning items. When dividers are full, pull plastic bag shut and tie within the box.

### 7. Cushion your cosmetics.

Cosmetics should be cushioned with cotton pads, and cotton balls inside all compacts. Pack into cosmetic bags or small bins with extra padding.

## 8. Round up all sports equipment and review.

Have your student check all equipment to avoid last minute replacements and necessary cleaning. Clean, stack/ wrap as needed.

## 9. Gather flat fragile decor and picture frames.

Slip into padded priority mail envelopes and tape. If unavailable, create your own by using brown paper grocery bags folded in half, with t-shirts and hand towels in between. Tape bundle to secure. Stack carefully in the loading zone.

## 10. Sort jewelry and pack like items together.

Small jewelry items can be nestled into the individual sections of a clean egg carton. Earrings can be poked through a paper plate, with earring backs attached behind. Wrap entire plate with press and seal food wrap.

Spread one sheet of press and seal wrap onto a table and lay necklaces on top. Cover with a second piece of press and seal wrap. NOTE: this must be peeled open by the corners so you open the entire sheet at one time, ( like turning the pages of a book) so that jewelry is easily removed.



Once all of the pre-packing work was done, instead of taking over I wanted to create a learning opportunity for my freshman. To brush up on my own skills for packing the car I consulted U-Haul moving expert and spokesperson, Sperry Hutchinson, who shared these excellent tips:

## Pro College Packing Tips

1. **Pack up items you don't use on a daily basis, first.** Books, school supplies, supplies for college. Pack correctly, by making sure you fully pack each box. A full box is a happy box, Hutchinson reminded. This prevents shifting inside the box, damage and protects the integrity of the box. Lining the bottom of boxes adds strength and reinforcement to your boxes, add cardboard or

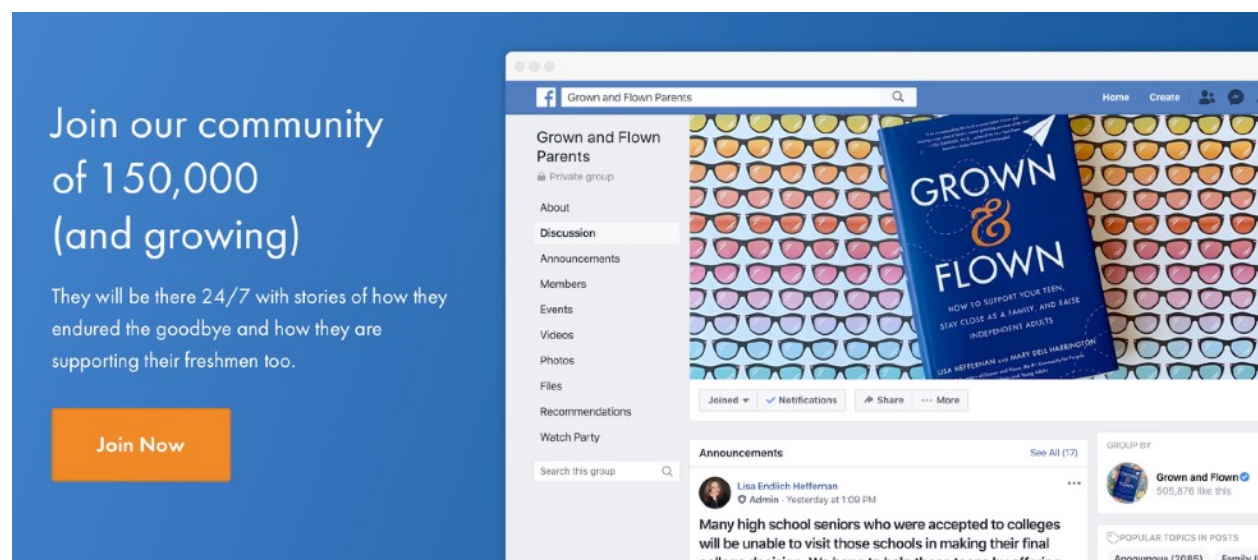
packing paper. ( We used school folders, notebooks, and spiral books too). Books can also make a great base in your other boxes. A large box of books, however, will be too heavy to lift.

**2. Load your vehicle the same way you did with your boxes.** Load the heavier items first, pad and protect unboxed items to prevent damage (using furniture pads, shrink wrap or blankets) and use straps to prevent items from shifting around. Loading the fridge and futon first creates a stable load. Hutchinson encourages creativity with placing your items in the vehicle is the key to filling a vehicle so items don't shift, and instead remain stable and safe.

**3. And my final advice.. keep busy and make it a family affair.** Give everyone a job to do. Early move-in day, I had to close my daughter's bedroom door, not wanting to see her room left sparse with all her favorite things packed. After a quick breakfast, we moved with a sense of excitement, and as we pulled out of the driveway, I put my sunglasses on. Not only to hide my teary eyes but to also to ready myself for the open road and the exciting, new adventure ahead.

## SUZANNE PERRYMAN

Suzanne Perryman is a prolific writer who has contributed to various online anthologies, and print publications. Her own site, *Special Needs Mom*, is where she celebrates the simple and inspiring things in life, one story at a time.

The image shows a screenshot of a Facebook group page for "Grown and Flown Parents". On the left, there is a blue overlay with white text that reads: "Join our community of 150,000 (and growing)" followed by "They will be there 24/7 with stories of how they endured the goodbye and how they are supporting their freshmen too." and a prominent orange "Join Now" button. The Facebook page itself has a header with the group name and navigation options. The main content area features a post with a blue book cover titled "GROWN & FLOWN" by Lisa Endlich Heffeman and Mary Bell Harkenton. The book cover includes the subtitle "HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR TEEN, STAY CLOSE AS A FAMILY, AND RAISE INDEPENDENT ADULTS". Below the book image, there are navigation options like "Joined", "Notifications", "Share", and "More". The page also shows an "Announcements" section with a post from the group admin, Lisa Endlich Heffeman, dated "Yesterday at 1:00 PM". The post text reads: "Many high school seniors who were accepted to colleges will be unable to visit those schools in making their final college decision. We hope to help those teens by offering...". On the right side of the page, there is a "GROUP BY" section showing the group name and a count of "505,876 like this", and a "POPULAR TOPICS IN POSTS" section with items like "Anonymous (2085)" and "Family (1)".

# It's Here: College Move-In Day

by GROWN & FLOWN

College drop off day is a BIG day in the life of any teen and their parents. But before you let your emotions take over, take a look at our best advice to you about how to manage the logistics of the day. We can guarantee you that it will be hot, crowded, chaotic, and parking will be a nightmare. But once you read this, you will be on your way with our best advice to guide you.

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It's here. The day you have anticipated, dreamed about and maybe even dreaded for 18 years has arrived. While college move-in day is a proud moment for any parent, that does not mean it isn't a day filled with stress and more than a little sadness. While we have written about why we will miss our kids, [how to manage dorm shopping](#) and how to be successful in college, here we are just going to look at the logistics of getting our kids out of our homes and into their new apartment or dorm.



## Our very best tips as you plan for college move-in day:

### 1. How are you getting to campus?

- Are you close enough to drive to your teen's new college? Can you fit everything into your car or will you want to ship some of the bedding or bulkier items?
- Do you plan to fly and have you looked into how expensive it is for each checked bag?

- If you still have dorm shopping to do, take a close look at what stores like [Bed, Bath & Beyond](#), [Target](#) or [The Container Store](#) will do to ship for free. On move-in day you will have an even better idea of what is needed for your teen's room and you can go to the local store where your items will be set aside for you. No hauling. No paying for shipping (the service is free.) No buying and returning. No going to the store only to find out they have run out of what you need.

## 2. Do some early reconnaissance

- Find out where your student picks up her swipe card/key/ID card. Don't unload her belongings only to discover that you cannot get into the building and key pick up is across campus.
- Will there be student helpers with move-in? At many schools older students are waiting to lend a hand.
- Is there an elevator in the building or will you be walking up flights of stairs?
- Where is the closest parking and is there a time limit on how long you can keep your car there?
- Check the college website to see if there is any parent programming on move-in weekend and what time it begins.
- Check online what the rental costs are at the university for items like mini refrigerators and microwaves if you are deciding between buying and renting.
- Would a [small pushcart](#) help this move-in (and move-out)? Your freshman will move more frequently during the next four years than you can ever imagine and this is unlikely to be the last one she needs your help with.
- Make sure you and your teen have read the list of forbidden dorm items and what can and cannot be hung on dorm room walls.
- Don't take all of the luggage home. They will be returning at fall break or Thanksgiving. Leave a small bag for travel.

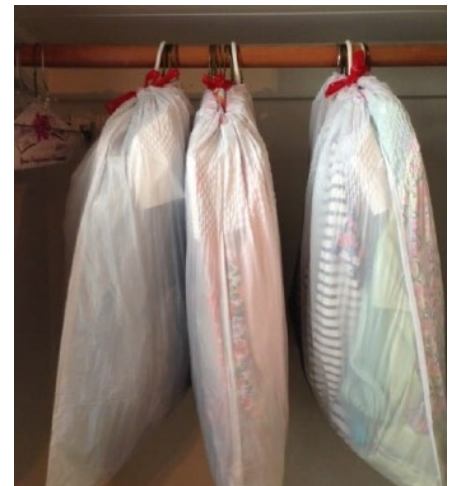
## 3. College move-in day will be a long day, take care of yourself

- Move-in day in many parts of the country can be sweltering, so come prepared with some cold drinks and snacks.
- The parents who show up with coffees, bagels or doughnuts cannot help but win over a few fans.

- Wear clothing that is both comfortable and can get dirty. Forget the cute white jeans! Dorms can be filthy even on move-in day.
- [Family weekend](#) is a better time to bring the extended family. Dorm rooms are small, hot and strewn with packing debris. There is no place for family members to sit and your child barely knows their school. They will have far more to show and tell grandparents and siblings by October.
- Bring a [doorstop](#) – it will make move-in much easier and your kid will use it as a way to keep the door open to meet their hall mates in the first weeks of school.

#### 4. [Packing should be the reverse of unpacking](#)

When you get to campus your teen’s dorm will be crowded. Their hall will be filled with empty cardboard boxes and their room will be covered with their roommate’s belongings. The more you organize your packing ahead of time, the easier it will be to unpack upon arrival.



- Pack hanging items on their hangers in tall garbage bags (as shown below). That way putting them in the closet is as simple as tearing away the bags. No wrinkles, no packing hangers and no suitcases required.
- Pack bedding all in one place (the [IKEA Frakta blue bags](#) are perfect for this) so that it can easily be accessed all at once. It is best to wash it before you leave home.
- Get rid of as much packing material as possible at home. The dorm will be piled high with cardboard boxes and plastic wrapping and the trashcans overflowing.
- Pack the underbed storage containers with the items your student will keep in them during the year. Bulky sweaters and extra sheets and towels are often good items. Use one storage drawer as a “medicine cabinet” with extra toiletries and over-the-counter remedies. Tape the drawers shut before you leave for move-in.

#### 5. Getting the room ready

- Make your child’s bed. It is a timeworn parental prerogative and completes the circle from when you first made their crib.

- Tell them why it makes sense to put underwear in the top drawer and sweaters in the bottom but then step back and repeat to yourself, “This is not my room. I am not going to live here. This is not my room. I am not going to live here,” as many times as necessary.
- [Clorox wipes](#) are not a bad idea. On many campuses dorm rooms are used over the summer and may not have been well cleaned. Leave the wipes behind for your teen as they may be the only type of cleaner your teen will use during the year.
- Take away anything they don’t think they will use. Bring heavy winter things to family weekend that usually takes place in the fall or let them return with them after fall break.

## 6. Bidding farewell

- [Slip a letter or short note with words of love and good luck](#) into something that you are not going to unpack.
- Have a hard stop, the hour that you are going to walk away and leave them to begin their new life. Like taking off a Band-Aid, saying goodbye may need to be done quickly.
- Think about college move-in day before it happens, it will take you by surprise. All the tears you may have shed in the previous weeks won’t save you from today. Know in advance how you want to say goodbye.
- Plan for your final alone time before you reach campus, even if it is a quick family meal at a roadside diner or breakfast at the hotel. Once your child finds their room, meets their roommate, is introduced to their RA and their classmates on their hall...their new life has begun.
- Try to remember, through the quivering lip and the boulder in your throat that even if it doesn’t feel that way, this is one of our finest parenting moments.

# The 10 Things You Need to Say to Your Freshman At College Move-In Day

by MELISSA FENTON

We have so much we want to tell you about this day, but the best advice we can give you is to harken back to the first time you left home for college, work or the military. Is the memory seared in your mind these many decades later? If so, you know what a powerful and important date this can be. It is a day worth thinking about. What do you want to say, what do you want your child to remember, what are the most important memories to create? The answers to these questions are different for every family but we want to leave you with Melissa Fenton's thoughts.

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## ***It's here!***

The day you dreamed about, dreaded a little, and dutifully did everything you could for the last 18 years to guarantee would happen, is now actually *happening*. You [bought the twin XL sheets](#), the shower caddies, the throw rugs (and about a hundred other accessories that you're certain will probably go unused) but guilt, joy, and excitement added them to your cart anyway.

Now there's just one thing left to say.

Well, there are A LOT of things left to say, but





between loading and unloading bins and bins of stuff, setting up their room (and hyperventilating and crying hot, wet tears in the bathroom while nobody is looking) you're gonna totally forget all the things you wanted to say. Here, let me help....

## 10 Things to Say at College Move-In Day

### 1. I'm proud!

It's probably the most obvious thing you'll say all day, but say it anyway. And say it more than once. And say it a week later when they're still excited. And a week after that when they call to share all the cool things they're doing. And then a few months later when they're having a miserable week and think they can't do this? Tell them how proud you are again. And again. And again.

### 2. Bad days are not a bad life.

Between keg parties and football games there are going to be plenty of really, really bad days. There will be bombed tests, roommate blow outs, and hundreds of other crisis filled moments, but they are all part of life and growing up. Learn resilience from them, not defeat. It's just a bad day, not a bad life.

### 3. Your instincts are very powerful.

If it feels wrong, it probably is wrong, so don't do it. Your initial gut reaction to what is happening around you and to you is usually the one you want to trust and listen to. You have instincts for a reason, use them.

### 4. Go to your professor's office hours.

Yes there may be 500 students in your class, but that doesn't mean your professor doesn't have the time or desire to meet you. Go introduce yourself and sit a chat for a few minutes at the beginning of the semester, then go again a few weeks later. And later when you really need help, that professor will recognize you and you'll be greeted with fondness and appreciation, not annoyance.

## 5. Tired, poorly fueled bodies cannot learn well, or at all.

You will have no curfew (and nobody making sure you're eating dinner and going to bed at normal hours), and while you're going to be relishing these facts and enjoying their benefits, it's also a recipe for a health and wellness disaster. [Sleep. Eat well.](#) Repeat.

## 6. Nothing good ever happens after 2 a.m.

My father told me this, and now it's my duty to pass it on to you. No good, smart, sound decision was ever made in the wee hours of the morning. *Ever.* Treat those hours as potentially disastrous, and just get yourself and your friends home before chaos and regret ensue.

## 7. Drinking too much is a major turn off.

Proving that you can [down 6 shots of tequila](#) is not only one of the most ignorant and reckless things you can do, it also shows your peers that you value your sober self about as much as last night's stale pizza. As a matter of fact, being stupid drunk only makes you two things, stupid and drunk.

## 8. [I'm not tracking you](#), so call or text me back in a reasonable amount of time. Two days later is not reasonable.

I'm more than happy to cut the apron strings and grant you the freedom you deserve. However, with that freedom comes the responsibility to actually *stay in touch with me*. Grown ups call and text back in a respectable and reasonable amount of time. It's time to be a grown up.

## 9. Join a lot of clubs. Play intramural sports. Go to college sponsored lectures, movies, performances, and social functions. Keep trying to find your people.

Your people are no longer just the ones you're stuck with in geometry class. Your people are now to be found among the thousands of potential friends walking beside you on campus, eating across from you in the dining hall, or sitting next to you in a lecture hall. They are out there, but you have to make the first move, for lack of a better phrase!

## 10. Your people are going to change.

The best friend you're probably going to make your freshman year, may not even be talking to you in three years, and that's OK. You're going to grow, change, and mature in ways you cannot

comprehend now, and that's the whole purpose of college. So if friends come in and out of your life in waves (and tsunamis), let it happen. Let them be there for you when you need them, but know that as you change, so will your friend circle.

And finally, just call your mom, OK?

Call to say hello, call to tell me you need new underwear, call to tell me you want to come home, and call to tell me you never want to come home, but just call. Because we moms? All we want is to hear your voice. So when you want to text us, please don't.

**CALL, CALL, CALL!!** (We promise to send candy if you do!)

## MELISSA FENTON

Melissa Fenton is a mom of four, freelance writer and adjunct librarian at Pasco-Hernando State College. Find her blogging wisdom on her site, *4 Boys Mother*, and at numerous other online sites.

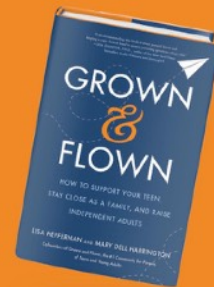
### THE NEW GROWN & FLOWN BOOK

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# 8 Things to Remember on the Return to Your Empty Nest

by GROWN AND FLOWN

The goodbye. The hug. The tears that begin to flow the moment you let your teen go and take a peek back as they walk away from you into their freshman dorm. Chances are they have a lump in their throat, too. It is time to put on the sunglasses and, with tissues at hand, and begin your trip back home. We are not going to sugar coat it - this is painful, but we want to leave you with these reminders.

---

We know this day is coming. We hope for it, work hard for it and yet...when it arrives, we can find ourselves wishing it away. [For 18 years we prepare to take our kids to college.](#) We cultivate their independence, encourage their achievements and sit alongside them through the roller coaster ride of college admissions.



[But after the boxes are unpacked and twin bed neatly made,](#) there is nothing more to do than say goodbye. Nothing more to do than take a deep breath, walk away, and return home to an empty nest.

## Driving Home to Your Empty Nest

The ride or flight home can feel like forever and that empty, cold feeling — part tears and part fears — can for a seem all consuming. I get this. I did this. I sobbed my way home after dropping each of my kids. But at some point, each time, I reminded myself that there is a different way to look at this.

Sure a few tears escaped (okay, more than a few) and the feeling of loss was, briefly, all consuming, but there are things we need to remind ourselves of that can make this day one of triumph instead of sadness.

So as the drive home drags on and you begin to dread the (nearly) empty nest, here are a few thoughts to hold onto.

### **1. Your kid is already a huge success.**

Any teen who has made her way into a freshman class already knows something about hard work, deferred gratification and the value of education. Sure there will be ups and downs in the coming weeks and years, but sit back for a minute and feel great that your kid has learned three of the building blocks of a successful adulthood. Your kid has chosen to invest in themselves with their education (even if we are paying the \$\$, they are putting in the hard work) and by starting off on this very independent journey, has shown great maturity.

### **2. While you are suffused with pride for your teen, spend a moment feeling a tiny bit proud of yourself.**

You raised a college student. You raised someone who has successfully taken the first steps toward adulthood. This was, God knows, the most difficult thing any of us have ever done. Whatever else goes right or wrong in our lives we have this moment.

### **3. Keep patting your back because you also raised a good person.**

Your teen is going out into the world as a kind, caring person. When you look across at their face, [the one with only the merest traces of their child self](#), you are looking at a person who will make the world a better a place. So reflect for just a moment on the wonderful fact that your life and so many others have been made better by the amazing person you brought into the world.

#### **4. Remind yourself that you took him to college.**

They are not going to war, or jail or a place so far away that we cannot reach them. Despite whatever fears parents might have about college, the simple fact is that campus life is safer than the real world. This is what we have always wanted for them and now they have it.

#### **5. This is 2020!!**

We do not have to communicate by courier pigeon, telegram or even old-fashioned mail. There is every chance your kid will text, Snapchat or Facebook message you before you even get home. You will probably Skype, Facetime or share Instagram posts before the week is over. And on that note, we can stalk our kids electronically (not saying we should, just saying we can) and so the next time we see their happy faces may be hours from now, rather than Thanksgiving.

#### **6. This is one of the most exciting moments in our kids' lives.**

This is a moment that may set them off in a new direction. They may be just about to meet lifelong friends or even spouses. They will learn things they never imagined. Sure it means they are away from us and that the daily connection that binds us together is slightly weakened. But we are parents, and long ago we learned that a few tears is a fair price to pay for bettering our children's lives.

#### **7. The adventure will not be theirs alone.**

We learned about dinosaurs and Pokemon from our kids. They brought current music, sports, the latest apps and tech into our lives. As their world expands, ours will as well.

#### **8. Finally, as we like to say at Grown and Flown, "parenting never ends."**

It certainly doesn't end after college drop off. Our kids will face lots of real challenges, and yes, even risks, as they navigate their college years. We may have stopped giving directives, but we should not stop giving advice. There is a mountain of research to show that kids manage the risks of alcohol and drugs better when they have attentive, interested parents. Yes, this is a tightrope we walk. We need to let them know we care, that we have expectations and concerns and, at the same time, honor their independence. It is not an easy dance, but whoever said parenthood was easy.

So as you make your way back home to younger siblings or an empty nest, know this: you have raised a wonderful person who is headed for great things. This may be a moment of some sadness but temper that feeling with enormous pride in your teen and yourself.

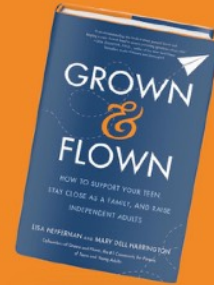
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## Thank you.

We want to thank you for requesting our e-book and we would love to know what you think. As moms with five kids in our two families, we have walked in your shoes when our kids were seniors and when we said our tearful goodbyes to them on move-in day. This is a season in life as transformative as when you were brand new parents.

Also, thanks to those of you who have purchased our book, [Grown & Flown: How to Support Your Teen, Stay Close as a Family and Raise Independent Adults](#) (Flatiron, 2020.) We appreciate your support very much and hope that you might consider gifting a copy to a friend or family member who is just starting out in the teen years. We have a guide to the pages to bookmark and would be happy to send it to you to download. Email us at [grownandflown@gmail.com](mailto:grownandflown@gmail.com)

Take care and please join our community of 180,000 (and growing), the [Grown and Flown Parents Facebook Group](#). They will be there 24/7 with stories of how they endured the goodbye and how they are supporting their freshmen too.



XOXO,  
Mary Dell and Lisa