



a newsletter for parents & families



GEORGIA'S PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

University Housing

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Getting Back in the Habit

The coronavirus pandemic threw many students' routines and good habits into disarray. Studying from home, revised schedules and one too many Zoom meetings may have discombobulated them and thrown off their rhythms. So, they may be looking for assistance in re-cultivating good habits and routines to invest in themselves, their emotional health and their success.

Going about things willy-nilly, without any sort of routine, can be much more draining, not to mention the damage it can do to students' productivity. It's one of the reasons that people who retire are often much happier and healthier if they put regular tasks into their schedules instead of facing wide gaps of unstructured time.

"Good habits are hard to form but easy to live with. Bad habits are easy to form but hard to live with."

– Brian Tracy

So, how can you help students get back in the good habit of a positive routine that'll work for them? Consider sharing these steps from Inc....

Start Your Day with a Positive Mantra to Set the Tone. Ben Franklin used to ask himself, "What good shall I do today?" every morning!

Make Yourself Accountable. Find a partner or mentor.

Create a Daily To-Do List. This can help you plan your day and get the most out of it.

Mentally Prepare and Visualize Your Success. Close your eyes and imagine yourself excelling and being the best version of yourself.

Take Regular Breaks Throughout the Day. That way you won't lose focus or get bored, and will keep going in the right direction.

Break Your Day into Chunks of Time. This will help maximize your output in minimal time.

Source: Inc., 12/13/16

Start the Day in a Proactive Mode Rather Than a Reactive One

To start the day focused on your priorities, try not to check your email or social media accounts first thing. If you do, other people's priorities then take over, whether it's a friend in need, a work document that must be delivered or a family member clamoring for your attention.

It doesn't mean you'll ignore these people and requests! It just means that your day will get off to a better, more productive start if you focus on your own priorities first. As a result, you'll be in a better state of mind to help others, too.





Reconnect with Dormant Ties

Connections are key, especially during a time like this when we can't see everyone we'd like to in person. We're all needing to get creative! Author Adam Grant wrote in *The New York Times* that reconnecting with people we used to know but haven't been in touch with recently can result in unexpected benefits in our lives. These dormant ties are typically people we haven't talked with in at least three years. Grant said we can often get the most help from these long-lost connections who can offer fresh perspectives. "When we're looking for help," he said, "it's easier to ask someone we used to know than someone we hardly know."

Not only are these reconnections valuable when it comes to job searching and getting feedback on projects, but it can also be fun, too!

When you reconnect with these long-lost people, conversations have more novelty as you catch up. You're able to talk about more meaningful updates than with those whom you regularly connect.

It may seem hard initially, yet 90% of people in one study who had felt anxious about reconnecting all reported how fun and enjoyable

When searching for work, "Our natural instinct is to go to our strong ties – the people we know well and see regularly," said Adam Grant in *The New York Times*. "But classic evidence suggests we're more likely to get a job through our weak ties. It's not just because we have more acquaintances than friends and family. It's because our strong ties tend to give us redundant information: They know many of the same things and the same people as we do. Weak ties open up access to new people and new leads."



it turned out to be. This may be a prime time for students to reach out and get in touch with those people from their past. They'll likely enjoy

the connections and possibly receive valuable work and project assistance, too.

Source: *The New York Times*, 4/24/20

Seasonal Student Issues

Here are a few things your student may be experiencing this month...

- Missing friends at school and feeling like it'll be a long time until they see them again
- Adjusting to a new summer routine
- Working full-time instead of going to school full-time
- Anxiety about academics – feeling like they have a lot to make up if they did poorly last term
- Reestablishing relationships with siblings, parents and friends
- Budgeting their money and saving for fall
- Worrying about what the fall will look like



Increasing Adaptability

Adaptability is a trait that can serve students well, especially during uncertain times. TED Talk speaker Natalie Fratto defined adaptability as “how well a person reacts to the inevitability of change.”

“Adaptability has to be proactive, not reactive,” Fratto said. “We have to seek it out, exercise it and flex it like a muscle.” She suggested the following to become more adaptable...

- Play at the intersections – seek opportunities to bridge existing gaps within any organization you are part of
- Occasionally take a devil’s advocate role – help others see things from the other side by becoming a respectful dissenter
- Keep a failure resume – learn from those times when you made a mistake, changed your mind or were just plain wrong

You can view her TED Talk to learn more at: <https://bit.ly/2zc1vGP>.

Embrace Agility and Adaptability

This current situation is requiring unprecedented nimbleness and agility. Embrace this adaptability to gain both the short-term and long-term benefits.

Adaptable People...

- See opportunity where others see failure
- Experiment
- Are resourceful
- Think ahead
- Don’t whine
- Engage in positive self-talk
- Don’t blame others
- Are curious
- Adapt
- Stay current
- Put things in context
- Open their minds
- Absorb, understand and move on



Source: *Forbes*, 9/3/15

Explore How You Want to Rebuild

During this pandemic, “With your life reduced to its foundation, you have an opportunity to see what you’re built on,” wrote Dr. Seth J. Gillihan for WebMD. “Maybe you’re noticing things about life as you knew it that you’d like to change, because the former status quo wasn’t entirely satisfying.”

This is an opportunity for students to examine what their “normal” used to be and how they truly want to spend their days once they’re able to rebuild after disruption. Some questions to consider discussing with them regarding their desired “new normal” include...

- What things in your own life has this crisis brought into sharper focus?
- Might some of your former ways be worth changing?
- What habits from this time of pandemic do you want to bring with you once the world returns to a regular pace?

This examination about whether they truly want to return to their old “normal” can be informative during the summer months, when they’re rebuilding and regrouping. You can help during this process by providing a listening ear and sharing your insights. When we learn from adversity, we grow!

Source: WebMD Blog, 4/22/20



Cultivating Connections

We can't go through life alone. Growing positive friendships and relationships with others gives us strength, motivation and calm, especially in uncertain times. This development of positive connections is a good thing to remind students of as they regroup this summer.

Growth in Relationships

To pursue relationships that fuel personal growth, writer James McConchie recommended the following in *Greater Good Magazine*...

1. **Spend Time with the Right People.** Aim to spend time with people who challenge you and assess how your strengths can complement theirs.
2. **Create Goals with Others.** When pressures are high, those with greater levels of social support tend to experience less stress and be more motivated.
3. **Ask for Feedback.** Use your relationship as a source of feedback on self-improvement, as well as doing your own self-reflection.
4. **Use Your Broader Network.** Get exposed to new ideas, activities and opportunities through your social network, and be freed up to focus on your strengths when you find someone to help with something you're not good at.
5. **Be Grateful.** Practice gratitude for your relationships by reaching out. It can increase your confidence, your motivation and just feel good.
6. **Invest in Others.** Contribute to the growth of others. It tends to be mutually beneficial, meaningful and you might just learn something in the process!



Being a Good Friend

In order to be a good friend, it's important to...

- Make sure there's give and take so there's no imbalance in effort and affection
- Be there for each other in good times and in bad
- Revel in each other's happiness and good fortune without jealousy
- Be on the same page about expectations of time spent
- Listen well
- Laugh together
- Expend energy on one another
- Figure how to organize your life to make friends a priority
- Have multiple points of connection
- Take initiative

- Have some common rituals and traditions
- Figure ways to stay connected, even when you're not in the same space
- Use technology to your advantage
- Create quality time, even if you can't have a large quantity of it
- Be realistic about one another's other responsibilities
- Create your own good lives so you can share them with one another

Sources: Kitestring.org Project; *O, The Oprah Magazine*, Sept. 2019; *The Atlantic*, 8/29/17; *Greater Good Magazine*, 7/30/19

8 Ways to Cultivate Connections

1. Be your best possible self
2. Show interest, enthusiasm and positivity about others' good news
3. Tune in to what someone is saying through empathy, active listening and understanding
4. Appreciate a loved one more by imagining your life without them
5. Spend quality time together
6. Have great conversations
7. Replace toxic conflict behaviors with constructive ones
8. Cultivate gratitude, empathy, altruism, compassion and forgiveness

Source: "Social Connection," *Greater Good Magazine*