

A FEW PIECES OF ADVICE

YOU CAN SHARE WITH THE RECENT HIGH SCHOOL GRADS YOU KNOW

No doubt things are a lot different for recent high school graduates now than they were when I graduated high school or even when my kids graduated from high school. In a lot of ways, though, the experience is also probably similar. Many kids plan on going to college after high school these days. That's what I did after I finished high school, and it's what my kids did as well. (I know it's stupid expensive now, though.)

I remember not knowing what to expect as I started classes at Ohio State. You might be the parent of a recent high school grad, or at least know one who's in a similar position. Here are a few things I shared with my sons when they graduated high school and headed off to college.

Your school will be as small as you make it. I graduated from high school in a large class — around 750 seniors. As big as that was, though, I had single lectures in college with that many students all at once! And, of course, colleges generally have thousands, not hundreds, of students — and the classes are spread out, not all in one building. It can be overwhelming at first. During my last couple years at OSU, I led orientation for new students, and I would share with them what I'm sharing with you now: Your school may be enormous and overwhelming, but by finding the activities you love and friends/groups you value, you can find your place in all of it. Get involved!

Question everything with boldness. While your professors are educated and knowledgeable in their fields, don't be afraid to question some

things they regard as indisputable fact. As qualified as professors are to teach, they're still people, and people can make mistakes and have biases and agendas that they, whether knowingly or unknowingly, push on their classes. They aren't Moses preaching from on high, though some of them seem to think they are! Don't just read the things they tell you to read; especially read the things they tell you not to read. By reading widely and questioning everything, you can truly make your education your own. Don't let somebody else do your thinking for you.

Try to put yourself in other people's shoes. "Don't judge someone until you've walked a mile in their moccasins" was something I had taped on my bedroom mirror for years. That's advice we all can use at any point in our lives, but it's particularly valuable when you're first out navigating the world by yourself. Some people will act rotten because they have rotten things happening to them in their own lives. As hard as it might be, try to be empathetic to others, even when all you want to do is tell them off or punch them. Believe me, you'll encounter a LOT of different beliefs and viewpoints in college and in life.

Remember to call your parents every once in a while. If they have your best interests in mind, then they've raised you to be able to take care of yourself. They knew the day would come when you would leave home, but that doesn't mean they aren't going to miss you. Take some time to check in with them and let them know how you're doing in your classes — trust me, they would love to hear from you!



Find your close friends. You'll probably be able to count the number of close friends you'll have in college, or at any point in your life, on one hand. You're going to need them when your life stinks — and, believe me, it will sometimes — and you need people to talk to and process things with. At the same time, they're going to need you when their lives stink! In life, don't just gut it out on your own. Find people you can let into your struggles. Joys shared are doubled, griefs halved.

There are probably a dozen other things I could say to recent high school graduates about to start the rest of their lives. Some honorable mentions might be "Always look for the exits," "Don't waste time with drugs and alcohol (trust me, it's fun in the short run, but eventually you'll regret it)," "Admit your failures," and "Remember that life goes by fast." All in all, though, congratulations to this year's class of graduates. Go out and accomplish great things!

And why haven't you called your parents yet?

- Jim Monast

DIY OR BUY? Lawn Games for Family Summer Fun

The warm summer sun may be enough to beckon your family outdoors, but lawn games will guarantee hours of fun outside. If you're handy, there are plenty of great lawn games you can make yourself. If not, buy an off-the-shelf alternative and enjoy the easy setup.

GIANT JENGA: EASY DIY

All you need to build a giant Jenga tower are two-by-fours that are cut to length. If you're handy with a saw, you can do this at home. If not, ask to have the wood cut at your local lumberyard. Be sure to sand down the edges before stacking the boards to create a classic Jenga tower! For extra fun, pick a few paint colors and paint each board. Visit ABeautifulMess.com/make-this-giant-jenga to see a complete set of instructions.

Buy: Skip the project and buy GoSports Giant Wooden Toppling Tower online, which retails for about \$70 and stacks over 5 feet high.

CLASSIC HORSESHOES: INTERMEDIATE DIY

Tossing horseshoes is a great way to pass an afternoon. To play, you'll just need to set up two sand pits in your yard. Get a handful

of horseshoes, and you're ready to go! Many DIY plans are available online, including one from HousefulOfHandmade.com/ultimate-diy-horseshoe-pit.

Buy: Check out the kid-friendly rubber horseshoe set from Wayfair.com, which requires no installation, can be used indoors or alongside your outdoor game, and is safe for younger children.

CORNHOLE: ADVANCED DIY

The humble beanbag may be the most versatile backyard game piece. It's used in the popular game commonly known as cornhole. To build your own cornhole set, you'll need a couple of sheets of 1/2-inch-thick plywood along with two-by-fours, some hardware, and a variety of tools including a drill, jigsaw, and sander. Visit DIYPete.com/cornhole-board-plans to get both written and video instructions.

Buy: Ready to play ASAP? Cornhole sets are available from many large retailers around summertime, or you can order a customized set featuring your favorite team, family name, or characters from your favorite movies by looking at Etsy.com.

Whether you buy or DIY, remember to have fun and always supervise your children while playing outdoors, especially when it comes to yard games!

Our Client, Shaun Berry, and His Little Angel, Heaven

From left to right are Heaven's big sister Lorali, Heaven's mom Theo, some guy in a red suit, Shaun Berry, and Heaven Berry.

"Heaven was born prematurely with truncus arteriosus (a heart condition where a valve doesn't grow) and tracheobronchomalacia (where some parts of her lungs didn't develop, causing floppiness in her airway). She has a trach tube and is on a ventilator until her growth catches up and her body adjusts to normal breathing. She also has a feeding tube (aka a nasogastric or "ng" tube) because she can't handle the meds. It's also to feed her and help her put on weight. She was also born with abnormal ribs and a curved spine with a couple vertebra that didn't grow all the way. She will be having surgery to insert a rod with two claws to fix her spine and ribs and open-heart surgery to replace a conduit they had to install for her heart to function properly with the meds.

"As she grows, when the conduit gets too small, it must be replaced as it's adjusted to her body, age, weight, and size. This will happen every few years till she stops growing.

"Other than those things, she is a normal 3-year-old girl who loves life and enjoys just waking up every day. I've never seen anyone so happy just to be alive in my life. She is very smart and ahead of her time. She's like Tinkerbell, always trying to learn something new. She's learning to talk through trachea (which is hard to learn) and gaining weight, up to almost 29 pounds! She also loves to tumble and be acrobatic and loves to play and drive her car she just got for her 3rd birthday. I learn and live every day through her and her joy just to be alive."

God blesses us in ways we'd never ask or expect. This little slice of Heaven is a blessing to her mom and dad ... and the rest of us as well. I'm honored to introduce her to you.



Our friend and client, Shaun Berry, was injured in an explosion at a steel foundry in Lima. He sustained burns from head to toe and later developed cellulitis in his foot and neuropathy in his lower extremities. His injuries prevented him from returning to that work.

Despite being fined by OSHA and cited for safety violations, Shaun's employer fought him at every turn for three years. During that time, Shaun and his wife, Theo, may have gotten discouraged on occasion, but they have always found joy in Heaven.

Heaven is their daughter, and she's a spitfire who accompanied her daddy to his hearings at the Industrial Commission. I asked Shaun to tell you a bit about his special young lady:

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IS ANIMAL THERAPY RIGHT FOR YOU?

YOUR GUIDE TO AAT

There are just some things only a dog can understand – same with a cat, or a horse, or a bird, for that matter. That's the idea behind animal-assisted therapy (AAT), a treatment designed to help those with mental and physical challenges. AAT may look like snuggling and playing with animals, but it's much more involved than you may think.

WHAT IS AAT?

AAT relies on an innate human need to connect with animals. The idea is that humans form bonds with living things, and this connection can have a calming effect on our minds. Physical therapy and massage therapy involve tangible actions on the part of the therapist, while AAT relies on the relationship between a human and an animal. This could help someone cope with grief, lessen a medical patient's pain related to chemotherapy or surgery, provide connection to residents in long-term care facilities, or even offer exercise for those with limited mobility.

AREN'T THOSE JUST EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS?

In recent years, emotional support animals have become increasingly popular both in the media and in their use. Emotional support animals offer their owners vital emotional assistance, but they differ greatly from trained therapy animals.



AAT requires the use of a trained animal under the direction of a handler, who will also coordinate with medical professionals to ensure the strategies that they deploy will target what a patient needs. Prior to practicing, trainers and their animals must each pass certification processes intended to help each party gain the skills needed to help patients. To qualify, animals also need to be clean and vaccinated, and the type of animal that is used during AAT also depends on a person's condition, the location of the therapy, and a patient's need.

IS AAT RIGHT FOR YOU?

AAT isn't for everyone, but it can be a vital component of your healing process. It's often seen as a supplemental form of therapy intended to bolster other therapies. The important thing to remember when considering AAT is to establish reasonable goals. Discuss the possibility of using AAT with your doctor or therapist and consider which animals may bring you the most comfort. Be realistic about what you want and need before attempting AAT.