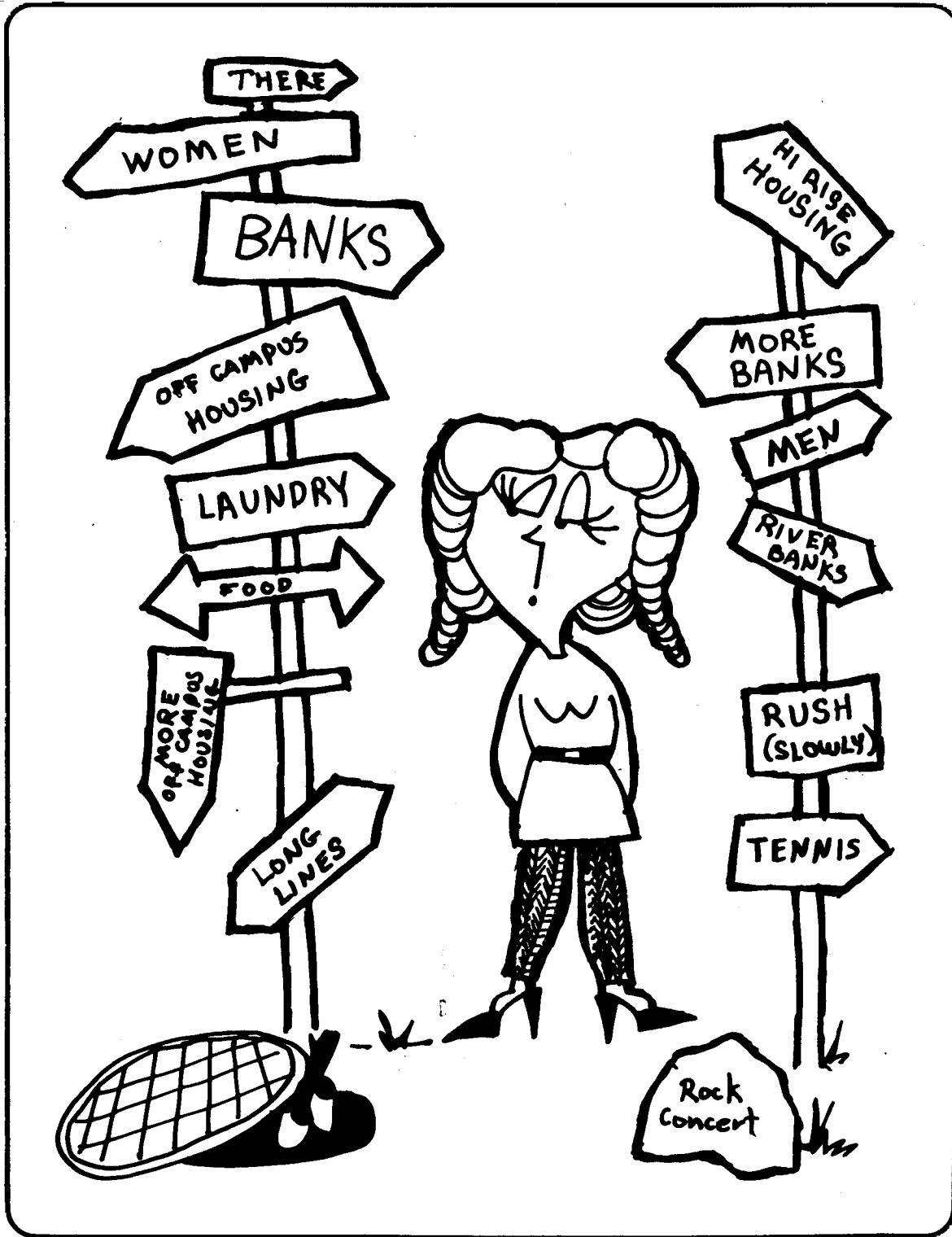


chapter 9 **NONACADEMIC MANAGEMENT:**
It's a Weird World Out There!



chapter 9

NONACADEMIC MANAGEMENT:

It's a Weird World Out There!

A large portion of your time and energy, even as one of the most serious of students, will go toward nonacademic pursuits.

For most students many new chores will arise, things that were simply taken for granted at home. This chapter has a few “horsesense” type pointers which may make some of the tasks of daily living easier to handle. It also has some bits of philosophy that you may wish to think about.

9.1 FRIENDS AND ROOMMATES

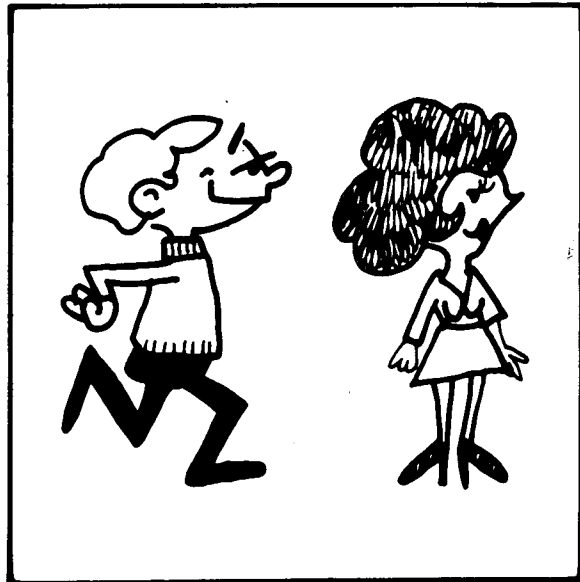
Everyone wants friends! All students worry somewhat about whether they'll be able to make friends.

Every student **DOES** make friends. For some it is great fun and leads to lasting and meaningful relationships. For others it can be a disaster. The problem is, how do you go about actively meeting new people without getting into detrimental or compromising situations?

Since your friends **WILL** strongly influence you, it's an *extremely* good idea to take the necessary time to choose *good* ones. The fact that you're reading **THIS** book already indicates your excellent taste in authors. Now apply that same remarkable insight in selecting your associates. While we can't guarantee that you will avoid getting involved with losers, there are a few simple rules that will help.

9.1a “Good Friends” Rules

1. Keep a clear distinction between **FRIENDS** and **ACQUAINTANCES**. Acquaintances **CAN** become friends, but that should happen only after you have had sufficient time to get to know them *very* well. This should include getting to know how their viewpoints *change* over a period of time.
2. Make acquaintances with people from **DIFFERENT** groups. If you meet John and then John introduces you to Jane, and then they introduce you to Bob, etc., you are only using



John's criteria for friends. That is extremely limiting and can rapidly tie up your available time with a very narrow group.

3. Meet new people in situations where they are **DOING** things that you consider valuable. Thinkers are more readily found in libraries than dropping 3-cushion shots in poolhalls. Serious students will be studying after class, rather than competing to see who can chug-a-lug a pitcher of beer the fastest. Athletes are found at the practice field instead of in front of the junk food vending machines.
4. Take the initiative both in meeting people and in *selecting* those with whom you will spend additional time. The person in class or at a gathering who does not walk up and introduce himself/herself to you is probably just as shy as you are. But be equally prepared to say "excuse me—good-by" as to say "howdy—pleased to meet you".
5. **PERIODICALLY (AND PRIVATELY) REVIEW JUST HOW YOUR FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES MEASURE UP TO YOUR STANDARDS.**

If they are contributing very positively in helping you reach *your* goals, that's great. If they cost you too much time, or use your money, or cause you to wonder (even slightly) about what you're getting into, it's time to move away from these **ACQUAINTANCES** and to develop new ones. **THIS IS NOT AN EASY ANALYSIS TO MAKE, BUT IT IS AN *EXTREMELY* IMPORTANT ONE.** Try very hard to stand back and view objectively where each relationship is leading you.



True friends **CONTRIBUTE** to your life rather than make demands on you. They also appreciate your worth as a person **WITHOUT TRYING TO CHANGE YOUR VALUES.** (But, true friends **WILL** warn you to "stop and think".) These criteria make quite reliable checks for helping to distinguish between a friend and an acquaintance. The real key toward developing **WORTHWHILE** relationships is to realize that you **CAN** expand your circle of friends and acquaintances *continuously* to include more and better people.

6. **DON'T LIMIT YOURSELF.** Just as your college experience will broaden your horizons, your friends and acquaintances should do the same. As you grow, and mature, your circle of friends should also change, expand and improve.

9.1b Roommates

It's the best of all possible worlds if you are able to find a **ROOMMATE** who also fits into the **FRIEND** category. Whether you live in a dorm or off-campus, this may well be your first experience in living with someone other than a family member. This person (or persons) can affect your lifestyle more than anyone else. A give-and-take adjustment is inevitable. **ALL** parties should be willing,

to an equal degree, to make *minor* concessions. If MAJOR concessions are demanded, you probably have the wrong roommate(s) and you should be prepared to CHANGE. Under MAJOR concessions would come:

- lack of respect for your study schedule
- not allowing you to sleep when desired
- bringing in overnight guests
- taking or loaning your possessions without permission
- not paying parts of joint bills on time
- etc.

But such things as:

- not picking up clothes
- drinking the last soft-drink
- not making beds on time
- favorite foods differences
- time spent on the telephone
- etc.

are only MINOR items that should be conceded on an equal basis. When minor irritations and annoyances arise, CLEAR THEM UP IMMEDIATELY. A series of little, silly, minor issues can too easily become a major conflict. Above all, however, discuss any problems PRIVATELY with your roommate(s) ONLY.

If ROOMMATE CHANGES are needed, go to the campus-housing (or off-campus-housing) office. Be prepared to consult the student legal service if an off-campus lease is involved.

ROOMMATES with the *same* (or a closely related) major are frequently more successful both academically AND personally.

9.1c Mentors (Faculty Friends)

Being in college will give you a unique opportunity to make some really good friends who are outside your normal "peer" group. Many faculty work long hours at lower pay than they could make in other jobs because they truly love students. These rather special people consider it a *privilege* to work with students. Some colleges have special volunteer organizations of such faculty as "mentors"* who provide time to visit with students. They can help you broaden your intellectual horizons, consider alternative career goals, improve your study skills, or "just be there when you need someone".

For many students, college (at least at first) can be a lonely, frustrating experience. Having someone you respect and admire to talk with when you're lonely or scared, when you feel the need of friendly advice, or when you just want the thrill of having an intellectual discussion, can be a fine thing.

Check with your student services office for information on campus "mentors". If there is no formal program, make an appointment to visit with a faculty member *you* would like for a friend.

*MENTOR: "A wise and faithful counselor" (Webster) [See also Homer's *Odyssey*.]

9.2 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

There are only two very popular financial plans used by students:

1. follow a written budget, or
2. spend money if you have any and try to borrow when you run out.

The first plan removes worries from the students who use it. The second plan removes *students* from the “worries” of being in academic life.

In making your budget, first separate the large once-a-term expenses such as tuition, fees, textbooks, room/utility/phone/pet deposits, dorm and/or food-plan (if you live on campus). Then set up a monthly budget for all your *recurring* expenses. This monthly budget should include at least all items shown in Table 9.1.

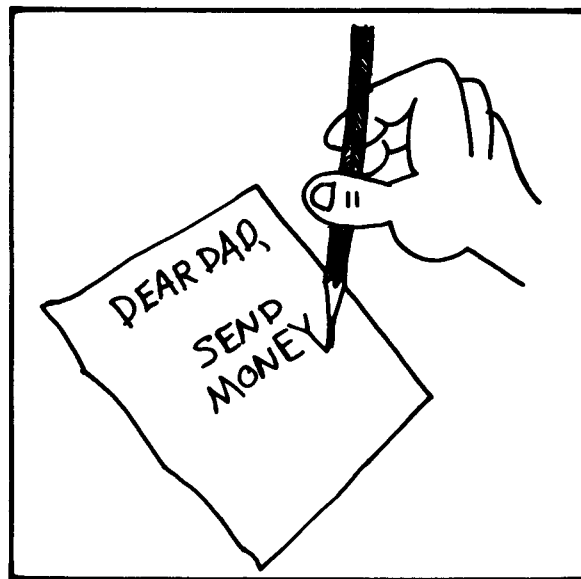


Table 9.1. Budget

FOOD	Even for those on a meal-plan there are times you'll want more (or something different). We also know that proper brain functioning depends on a good DAILY diet.
RENT	Unless you have paid for a dorm room.
UTILITIES	Electricity, water, gas, and even sewage are required payments for anyone living off campus.
TRANSPORTATION	Even if it's only bicycle or shoe repairs, or wax for your skis.
SUPPLIES	Extra books, notebooks, pencils, blue-books, copier cash, etc.
PHONE	At least the coins to get the operator if you need to call home to request (or offer to send) additional cash.
LAUNDRY and/or DRY CLEANING	Mom won't be doing these chores anymore.
PERSONAL SUPPLIES	Toothpaste, soap, deodorant, razors, shampoo, etc. are now drug-store items. They won't just "appear" in the bathroom.
REPAIR/REPLACEMENT	Calculators die; alarm clocks, lamps and glasses get broken; umbrellas get lost; and shoes and clothing <i>do</i> wear out.
RECREATION/ENTERTAINMENT	These costs can vary enormously, depending upon your resources, but you should have SOMETHING set aside to REWARD yourself when you've done your work well!
"OOPS" FUND	The first time, and the second time, etc., that you make up a budget, you WILL forget something, such as haircuts, parking tickets, postage stamps, dentist bills, light bulbs, etc. You will also guess incorrectly on some of the other items. Remember that laundry costs more now because sheets, towels, etc. also have to be washed—not just your underwear. The "OOPS" fund gives you a little cushion while you are learning while you are learning to budget wisely. DON'T use it for a party on the first day of the month!

Your CHECKING ACCOUNT may not be your first one, but it is DIFFERENT when you open one in a strange town. The banker in your home town may have allowed late deposits or payments, or slight overdrawals of your account, because he knew your family. That WON'T happen in a college town! You will *have* to keep an *accurate* and *up-to-the-minute* record of your balance. REMEMBER TO DEDUCT the monthly service charge and/or "cost per check" charge! The bank will deduct these charges BEFORE it will honor your checks. DON'T EVER write a check in hopes of rushing to the bank with a deposit before it clears. If you do BOUNCE A CHECK (or deposit a bad check) the BANK will charge you a penalty, IN ADDITION TO the \$5 to \$20 that the business establishment charges you. In addition, writing "hot checks" (even "innocently") is against the law. In many states, it is a felony. The authors know of a man who is serving a life sentence under the habitual criminal act, whose only *crimes* were writing 3 "hot checks" when intoxicated.

9.3 HOUSEKEEPING

Even small scale (one dorm room) housekeeping, but especially larger scale (apartment) housekeeping, is closely related to the operation of your budget. There must be a CLEAR DISTINCTION, understood and agreed upon by *everyone involved*, between what are JOINT expenses and what are INDIVIDUAL expenses. Just as important is the schedule for making payments, including those for equalizing the joint expenses. These equalizing payments should probably be made weekly (instead of monthly) so that neither party runs out of cash before the month is over. All receipts for joint expenses should be initialed by the purchaser and stored in a safe common place until it's time for an equalization payment. Be sure that each receipt indicates the item(s) and/or service(s) purchased.



Just as money must be carefully accounted for, so must everyone's duties. Again, there can be JOINT duties such as washing dishes, housecleaning, shopping and cooking. AND there will be INDIVIDUAL duties such as making beds, ironing, and sewing (yep, that too!). JOINT duties should usually rotate from week to week. This avoids the problem of having one roommate feel that he/she got stuck with the most miserable chores. When it is the other person's turn to do ANY chore, make a concerted effort to LET THEM DO IT THEIR OWN WAY without complaints and without your redoing the same chore. (This makes for harmony.)

For students who will do their own cooking, both the shopping and cooking jobs should belong to the same person on a given week.

Otherwise it could cost you one trip to the store for a dozen eggs; a second trip for the butter to fry them in; and a third trip for salt. (You finally eat the darn things rather than make a fourth trip for pepper.) Even then, maybe you just have two fried eggs for breakfast without toast ("We're out of bread.") or sausage (also missing from the refrigerator)—and you drink plain water to wash them down. All shopping, except for extreme perishables, should be done on a once-a-week basis to save both time and money. (Bread lasts longer than a week in the freezer of your refrigerator.) To avoid forgetting necessary items, you should keep a shopping list next to the telephone. When you use the

next-to-the-last light bulb or empty the last of the salt into the salt-shaker, you should *immediately* add these items to the shopping list.

For pet hates (“I **REFUSE** to eat Brussel sprouts!”) each member of the household should have an equal size rejection list. Be careful, however, not to arrive at such a long list that you exclude some important food group from your diet. Proper **DAILY** nutrition is essential for optimum brain function—and that’s why you’re in college in the first place.

Housekeeping is more important than it might seem at first glance. *Sharing* chores and responsibilities, “*talking out*” problems before they become crises, and *being thoughtful* of others are all *invaluable* learning experiences—for a future marriage and, indeed, for the kinds of group interactions you will experience for the rest of your life. You can look on chores with a snarl or with a smile. (If you glance in a mirror, you’ll discover that you look better smiling.) If you want to “whistle while you work”, turn every chore into an “efficiency game”. Play the game by thinking as you work of how you could do that job a little better or a little faster. Before you know it, doing the dishes, mopping the floor, or making the bed becomes more like fun—and the practice of thinking about improvements and efficiency becomes a habit useful in your studies and in your ultimate career.

9.4 ERRANDS

How can you do all your studying AND:

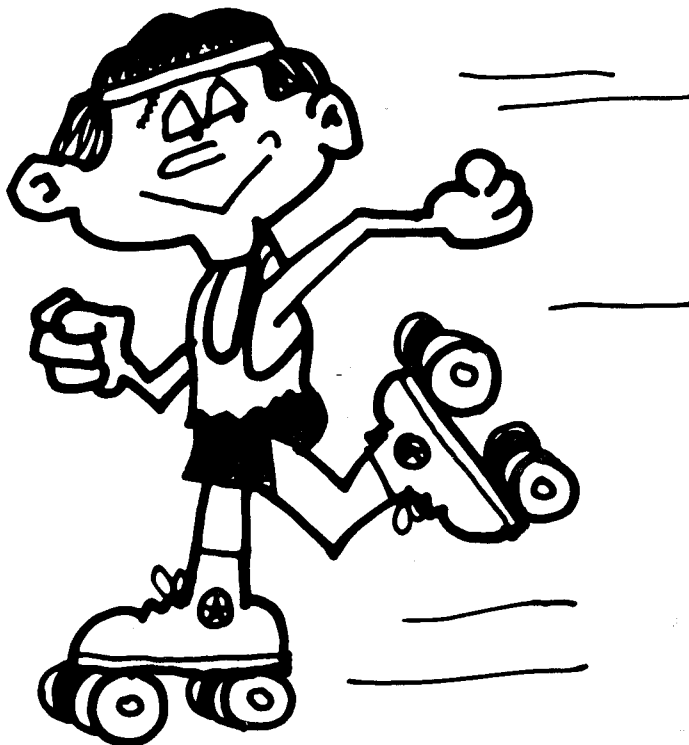
run to the post office?
pay all your bills?
deposit a check at the bank?
pick up your dry cleaning?
get tickets for the big game?
get a haircut?
go to the drugstore?
report that your phone is out of order?
go to the health center for your sore throat?
check on getting a grade changed?
etc., etc., etc.?

In fact, you **COULD** spend almost all day just running errands. The *trick* is to condense as many **NECESSARY** errands as possible into *one single trip*. Avoid the peak crowd times of noon and 5:00 pm. Whenever possible, split the errands with your roommate. (One of you can pick up the mail for both while the other picks up both persons’ dry cleaning.) Unfortunately, haircuts and health center care can’t be done by another. But in these cases, where long waits are almost inevitable, many of your study chores can also be accomplished. Make it a rule to always carry a book, or flashcards, or a set of notes, so that any wait-time (including bus or subway travel) becomes **STUDY** time instead of **WASTED** time.



9.5 TRANSPORTATION

A car? The bus? A bicycle? Roller skates? Snowshoes? Shoe-leather? However you do it, getting back and forth consumes too much of most students' days. A car sounds very tempting to most students, UNTIL they find that student parking is located about two miles beyond the furthest outpost of recognizable civilization on most campuses. A student parking permit is usually a written permission to STAY AWAY from all areas where you want to go. Any tiny time savings for the "I'll park here for just a minute." student drivers is *more* than consumed in recovering their towed-away cars or waiting in line to pay for a fist-full of parking tickets before they can reregister or graduate.



Public transportation (where available), a bicycle, or simply walking are frequently more desirable in the long run. But however you come and go, try to schedule just ONE ROUND TRIP PER DAY. Carry *everything* you'll need for your day's work. That way those valuable (and efficient) pre-class and post-class hours will not be sacrificed to transportation.

Incidentally, to maximize organization and minimize loss of property, have a backpack or briefcase that will contain *all* of your necessary items. Be sure that you pack it *systematically* and *efficiently* so that you can *find* what you need.

9.6 LOST AND FOUND

It appears that the absent-mindedness for which profs are so famous may be severely contagious! Students get distracted and forget literally TONS of things every year. Fortunately, MOST lost items do get turned in to the lost-and-found counters. *Unfortunately*, the owners of MOST items can never be identified! 100 black folding umbrellas look very much alike—as do the texts, not to mention calculators, back-packs, notebooks, pens, and even jackets. This time your mother WAS RIGHT! You *do* need to put your name (and preferably your phone number) onto EVERYTHING THAT YOU EVER PUT DOWN on a desk, table, or the classroom floor. This is *particularly* important for your personal (and irreplaceable) class notes.

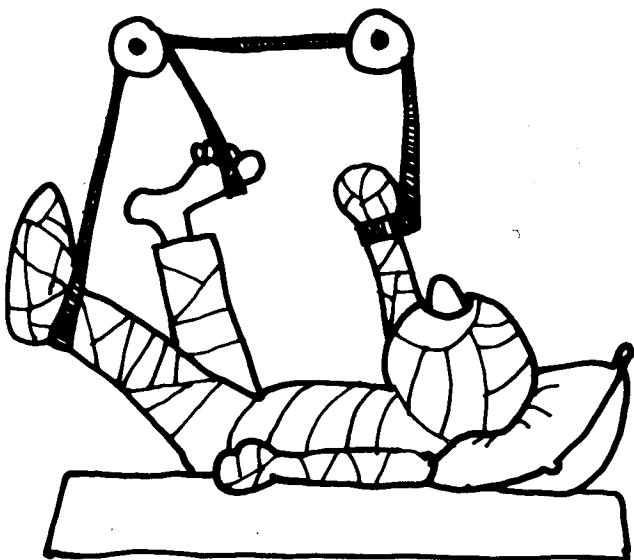
While you're at it, why not label everything, right down to your underwear? Probably, you won't be leaving that in the classroom, but yours could suddenly become indistinguishable from your roommate's. Labels also help recover clothing accidentally left at the laundromat.

Incidentally, don't forget to be thoughtful about taking a few extra minutes to deliver someone else's possessions that you *found* to the proper campus "lost and found" location.

9.7 EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

How would you like to scuba-dive? Learn to fly? Go skiing? Participate in intramural sports? Be in student government? Work on the student newspaper? Become a spelunker? It all sounds pretty fascinating and attractive to most students entering college. Also, when you were in high-school, you probably were involved in a long list of the available activities without having your "study time" seriously affected.

COLLEGE IS DIFFERENT! The activities are there but it is very easy to become **OVER COMMITTED**. It's an *extremely* wise idea to limit yourself to **ONE** (or a maximum of two) extracurricular activities **UNTIL** your academic progress is **WELL UNDER CONTROL**. *When* your classwork is rolling smoothly and your schedule is working, you will know how much **TRULY FREE TIME** is available to you. The clubs, organizations and other activities will still be there at that time. You will also get more out of these activities and have more fun in them when that little voice is not there saying, "You're doing this at the expense of your professional preparation".



9.8 DEALING WITH ILLNESS

Sometime during your college years you will probably wind up sick in bed. The missed classes and "getting behind" can weigh very heavily on your already miserable-feeling body. What's to be done? **ABOVE ALL, DO WHAT THE DOCTOR TELLS YOU TO DO! GET WELL AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE!**

For cases of **MINOR ILLNESS** (one-to-three days missed), there is no serious problem *IF* you are truly up-to-date at the time the "bug" strikes. If the illness still permits you to study, go over your text first (like standard pre-class preparation). Have one of your friends from that class make a copy of his/her notes

for you. These notes won't be as good as yours, but they are much better than no notes at all. Go over these notes, with your friend if that's reasonable, and then carefully **REREAD** the text. Now make a set of *your own* notes using a *combination* of your friend's notes, **PLUS** the high points gleaned from the text. As health permits, do any homework assignments.

More commonly, you feel so lousy for a day or so that all you want is quiet, sleep and lots of liquids. Nonetheless, have a friend get you a copy of the notes, but do the other steps listed above **AFTER YOU START FEELING BETTER**. That's one of the reasons you scheduled "catch-up" time (page 10).

Upon recovery, but not until you have made a set of notes for yourself and tried the homework, **GO SEE YOUR PROF** to clear up any items that are in doubt. If you go to see the prof *without* having done the preparation, you will almost invariably be told to get notes from a classmate!

If your illness happens to fall on an exam day, GET WELL FIRST! *WHEN* you have recovered, go to your prof and explain that you were sick during the exam (and be prepared to verify it). Most profs have a “missed exam” policy or some arrangement for a make-up test (sometimes a bit tougher than the regular test was). Don’t attempt a make-up test unless you are FULLY recovered from your illness (*and* following the rules from Chapter 4 in this book).

If your *assignment* is late because of minor illness, don’t expect too much sympathy. If you are doing your work properly (WHEN WORK WAS ASSIGNED and NOT *just before* it was due), this problem won’t arise. Very few profs will listen seriously to such an excuse, *because* they are opposed to *last-minute work*.

For the rare cases of MAJOR ILLNESS, it’s a different ballgame. You now have a *lot* of work to do in EACH of your courses AND you’re trying to do it without the benefit of having heard the lectures. This case requires the type of analysis that is illustrated in Chapter 6 (page 74). Make this type of *realistic* appraisal to determine whether you should hang in there on all of your courses or drop something to reduce the load. The results of this analysis should be discussed with your advisor, AS WELL AS with the profs in your courses. Even when the drop-date has passed, virtually all schools have an emergency drop procedure for serious illness cases. Just remember that CATCHING UP requires more time than STAYING ON SCHEDULE.

If major illness occurs at the end of the term, it is usually possible to get an “incomplete” as a grade in the course. If you ever receive such a grade, consider the time requirements for completing the course(s) when you register for the following term. You may need to take a lighter-than-normal class load to allow time for making up incomplete work.

If your illness is both SERIOUS AND PROLONGED, your advisor may suggest withdrawing from school for the term. In such cases, you will simply start all over again in a later term. If your college distinguishes between “withdrawal *passing*” and “withdrawal *failing*”, be sure to discuss your situation with each prof to reduce the chances of a “withdrawal failing” being awarded.

9.9 MORAL, ETHICAL AND FAMILY CONSIDERATIONS

College WILL introduce you to many things that were not a part of your previous life. That is one of the major advantages of going to college—to gain a broader perspective of the world. On the other hand, these new viewpoints and experiences can also bring what seem like *tremendous* pressures to change *even your most basic* values. Some new things HAVE been added to your frame of reference. At first glance, the new viewpoints can easily seem so plausible that you wonder how you could have been so naive up to this point! These new viewpoints can seem to be the ONLY acceptable ones for mature thinking adults. But when you stop to think about it, you KNOW that the “mature thinking adults” of this world DO NOT AGREE with each other! How could this be the case when things seem so black-and-white? The real world has far more grey areas than it has black-and-white ones. If abrupt change seems to be forcing itself on you, just hold off long enough to see whether you have given your OLD IDEAS (surely held by many responsible, mature, and thinking adults whom you respect) an *equal* consideration. Abrupt changes are really NOT necessary. A new viewpoint will still be available, should you ultimately decide on it. Any fundamental moral or ethical question DESERVES A THOROUGH EVALUATION. To make your evaluation as thorough as possible, be sure that ALL sides receive an equal hearing. This is something like a debate. A good debate does not really RESOLVE an issue, but it DOES EXAMINE BOTH SIDES. One of the true signs of mature behavior is looking for the HELP which will *defend* the old views

as carefully as the new views are being presented. Many profs, a minister, and (especially) your parents can be extremely helpful WHEN you approach them on this adult level.

Both relatives and your high school buddies will seem drastically different the first time you go home from college for a visit. But it wasn't the home town that changed so much—you did!

Of course, YOUR CHANGES will be equally apparent to your home town friends and family! If you can resist the temptation to try to change others, then they will find it easier to relate to the new you.

Your changing relationship with your PARENTS is especially important. There may be times when you disagree with them strongly. There may be times when you feel that they are trying to control your life. Regardless of what happens, you can ALWAYS DEPEND ON THE FACT THAT THEY ARE *TRYING TO ACT IN YOUR BEST INTEREST*. One simple rule has allowed *many* students to retain (or regain) a good working relationship with their parents: WAIT FOR 5 SECONDS before you *ever* respond in disagreement. It allows you time to see their point and shows that you are listening.

As every college counselor knows, family relations change when one of the members leaves for college. Even divorce between parents is not an uncommon occurrence. You must ACCEPT the changes that occur within your family WITHOUT FEELING that *you* are responsible for them. *You* are changing without your family being responsible for these changes. The argument applies both ways.

9.10 DISTINGUISHING CATASTROPHES FROM PROBLEMS

When crises occur (and they *will* during your college years, as they do in all of life), be *prepared* to handle them. Successful people are skilled in “crisis management”. Although *you* are the only one who can *ultimately* manage your own crises, there *is* help available. Be willing to talk about BIG crises with your parents, with a pastor or rabbi, with a faculty “mentor” (page 103), or with another truly close friend.

All crises fall into one of two categories: CATASTROPHES (the things you can do *nothing* about) and PROBLEMS (which, by definition, have SOLUTIONS). It is wise to think ahead about how you can handle crises. The information in Table 9.2 can give you a framework for this advanced planning, and a reference to look back on when a crisis really occurs.

9.11 “BRAINS” AND “HEARTS”

There are areas in our lives that cannot be handled *entirely* by logic, reasoning, and the scientific “rules of evidence”. “Love” and “faith” are such areas. Although it is dangerous to be “ruled by your emotions”, it is at *least* as dangerous to attempt to make *all* of life's decisions by “pure logic”.

Your college career can help you learn to tackle many of life's problems on the basis of improved knowledge and reasoning skills. But, do *not* neglect the nurture of *love* and of *faith* during your college career. What “your heart tells you to do” will always be important in deciding what's *right* and what's *wrong*. *Then* your continuously improving reasoning skills can help you find the *best* ways of doing the *right* thing.

Faith can grow stronger by continuous testing. Love is the only treasure we have that grows larger as we give it away. As your time in college helps to expand your mind, find ways for it *also* to help expand your heart. Then you will truly leave college as a better person than you were when you came.

Table 9.2. Crisis Analysis

