

Mental Notes

A Monthly Newsletter

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Home for Summer Break *surviving & thriving after a semester away*

by Adrian C. Péré, MSW, GSW



So you've decided to take off for the summer and spend some time with folks and friends back home. No doubt some (normal) anxiety accompanied that decision. If you've been living away from home while attending UNO, you've also been away from parental control and have likely established new routines for yourself and have enjoyed your independence. Keep in mind, however, things probably haven't changed much at home during your absence, so there's bound to be a bit of an adjustment period FOR EVERYONE upon your return. This period of adjustment may be characterized by tension, disagreements, and possibly even an argument or two. Here are a few hints you may find helpful while navigating the treacherous waters of that visit home.

Make Your Newfound Maturity Apparent. Are you concerned your parents will still treat you like a child? If so, evince your newfound maturity from the moment you walk in the door. Engage your parents in discussions and display behavior befitting an adult. If they still "treat you like a child," ask them to engage in a conversation about the behavior and discuss how you'd like to be treated...and don't forget to ask them how they'd like to be treated.

Be Willing to Compromise. The shift in the nature of your relationships with your parents may involve

compromise. They may assume pre-college rules will work without giving it much thought. Rather than allowing such assumptions to cause disagreement and potentially escalate into heated arguments, negotiate curfews and related issues (e.g., calling in if you'll be making it home later than expected). Show appreciation for the compromises they make by doing a little extra around the house.

Always Be Respectful. Treat your parents with (at least as much) courtesy and respect as you treat your roommates. Pick up after yourself, be aware of sound system and TV volumes, especially late at night, and pitch-in for the good of all. This will help with harmony and promote good will, in general.

Try to Understand Your Parents' Point of View. In spite of the fact that you're now (insert your age here), you'll always be your parents' child and, for that reason alone, they'll probably always be tempted to treat you like a (their) child. When this happens, "step back" from the situation and try to remember that somewhere in the deep recesses of your parents' minds, they'll still see you as the defenseless little baby they once rocked in their arms and, as such, they want to protect you from all possible harm.

Try to Spend Quality Time with Your Parents. Odds are, your parents have missed you a bit during your absence

and they'll probably be excited to hear about your studies and other goings-on during your time away at school. While you may be more excited to catch up with friends back home, but be sure to reserve time for your parents. Spending quality time with your parents is essential for the development of an adult relationship with them.

Concluding Thoughts. Keep in mind that different families have different dynamics so you may need to tweak some of these suggestions to make them apply to your situation. Needless to say, some issues and situations some of us face when making a visit home cannot be addressed in this short article. If you feel the need to get a little extra assistance with what you think you'll encounter this summer (or anytime) know that UNO Counseling Services' counselors are here to help. For more information about the services we provide, visit our website <http://counserv.uno.edu> or call 280-6683 for an appointment.

RELAXATION SESSIONS

Location: Kirschman Hall 401

May 7 - 3:00PM
May 21 - 3:00PM

For disability-related accommodations for these events, please contact Adrian Péré in Counseling Services at 280-6683.