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# GRACE'S GUIDE



THE ART OF  
PRETENDING  
TO BE A  
GROWN-UP



# GRACE HELBIG

Host of  it's Grace on YouTube



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TO BE A  
GROWN-UP

By  
Grace Helbig

A Touchstone Book

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*Thank You to . . .*

*About Grace Helbig*



For the anxious, awkward, wonderful weirds who constantly inspire me.





First "photo"





## FOREWORD

Ali/Frazier. Red Sox/Yankees. Navratilova/Evert. Babe Ruth/mild physical activity. Many consider these to be some of the greatest sports rivalries in history. But are they?

The only legendary rivalry that interests me is the one between Tim Helbig (me) and Grace Helbig in the sport of kings: Nintendo 64's sushi-go-round mini-game in Pokémon Stadium.

For those of you who don't know, sushi-go-round is a game where you play a Lickitung (Pokémon #108) racing to outspend your opponents by "eating" sushi of various prices that are circling on a conveyor belt around your Pokémon. The fact that I even have to explain what sushi-go-round is reveals the abhorrent state of our educational system. (What are they even teaching you in school these days?)

Grace, my older sister of two years, and I were fervent sushi-go-round players, and one weekend went by in the early to mid-2000s when we weren't poised with our N64 controllers, sitting uncomfortably next to a pool table our parents thought we wanted for some reason. The rivalry was heated, and we were prone to sabotage. She would push me into eating a sushi roll that would break my combo; I would nudge her into swallowing a vat of wasabi, causing her Lickitung to convulse wildly.

We seemed to be constantly competing as kids, whether in soccer or ultimate Frisbee or for our parents' love, and this resulted in a lot of tears (almost all of them mine). Grace has always been a ruthless competitor. I remember, one time, she kicked sand in my eyes so that she would win a race on the beach. She really didn't even have to, either—those were what could best be described as "My Chubby Years" and, unless the race was consuming a bag of sandy Doritos, I was no real threat.

But we weren't always rivals; sometimes we were on the same team. When we were little, Grace and I used to play basketball against our dad. Grace devised a play called The Screaming Banshee, wherein we would scream from the back of the court and hand our



the ball to each other while zigzagging toward the basket. It failed as a play, because apparently in basketball you have to dribble, but I've never screamed or laughed so hard in my life.

I'd like to think this mix of competition and teamwork with Grace turned me into the person I am today. And now Grace has written a book to help do for you what she did for me. And why shouldn't she have written it? She's got ALL THE CREDENTIALS.

Just like the Screaming Banshee play, *Grace's Guide* is her unique—and sometimes questionable—take on the game of life. Whether you're winning or losing, Grace will keep you laughing. She always has for me.

—Tim Helbig  
May 2011

# ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

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Thank you for purchasing the eBook of GRACE'S GUIDE: The Art of Pretending to Be a Grown-up!  
Here are two videos Grace made just for eBook readers

<http://www.gracesguidebook.com/workpoot>

You can download all the interactive worksheets in GRACE'S GUIDE at  
<http://www.gracesguidebook.com>



## INTRODUCTION

Hello, beautiful stranger. My name is Grace Helbig, otherwise known as it'sGrace on that smorgasbord of digital tubes frequently referred to as the Internet.

I have a comedic vlog (video + blog = vlog . . . inform your parents) on YouTube. It's been happening for about six years now and in that time I've amassed a library (ew, what's a library? Jk. GO BOOKS!) of over a thousand videos ranging on topics from how to make nachos with mac and cheese to critiquing Barack Obama's fashion choices to teaching my viewers how to fall down in public.

I sometimes consider myself to be the Internet's awkward older sister. I may not have ALL the answers, but I've got my own advice, opinions, and theories to help you get you through this arbitrary piss den called life.

I'm the only girl in a family of four brothers and I'm the product of a very emotionally repressed British family. Growing up, I was incredibly insecure about expressing my feelings and interacting socially.

As soon as my family got the Internet installed when I was in seventh grade, I finally found my personal paradise. I could ask questions I was too afraid to ask, research problems I was too embarrassed to bring up to my parents, and interact with individuals I normally be too insecure to engage with.

It became my nonjudgmental parent away from my parents. But the Internet wasn't always the best guide. I would search for advice or answers and quickly stumble into some racy, weird, highly inappropriate, disturbing, and/or nonapplicable yet fascinating information. I learned what (anal) sex was. I learned that there were entire chat rooms dedicated to suicide. I learned you could embed a code on your GeoCities website that made glitter shoot out of the mouse pointer. I learned you could learn a lot about people you barely knew.

Even though I had the entire world at my fingertips, for most of my girlhood I felt very alone. If I had had a guidebook like this one back then, maybe things might have been different (cough cough, sorry, the air is very dry in here).

I've led a relatively normal, anxiety-ridden life and I'm excited to share all of the ups and downs (reminds me I want to buy myself a trampoline) that have shaped me into the person I've become over the years; the person that sometimes finagles a grocery bag into a shirt as a means to teach girls how to do the walk of shame without shame.



I'm here to support you. I'm here to help you grow and to remind you that stupid is fun and failure is rewarding. Listen, I won't tell your mom you puked in her Jet last Thursday. This is a self-help book that went to happy hour.

What you're about to read is (hopefully) a fun and funny Millennial's handbook. It has everything you need to know, from surviving a breakup to surviving a hangover (shockingly, those two have very similar healing methods).

*Grace's Guide* can be read start to finish or you can flip around—it's reader's choice! At the end of many of the chapters you'll see an acronym (like DANCE CROTCH) to help you remember the tips I just discussed. Sprinkled throughout the book you'll also find little words of wisdom from my mom (truly from my mom) and fun "Grace Note" worksheets you can fill out. Share your "Grace Notes" with me online!

I'm going to try to help you with school, work, social activities, and lifestyle stuff to the best of my dubious abilities. Trust me, I don't have definitive answers, but I do have plenty of misadventures and lessons learned the hard way to share.

Let us begin.



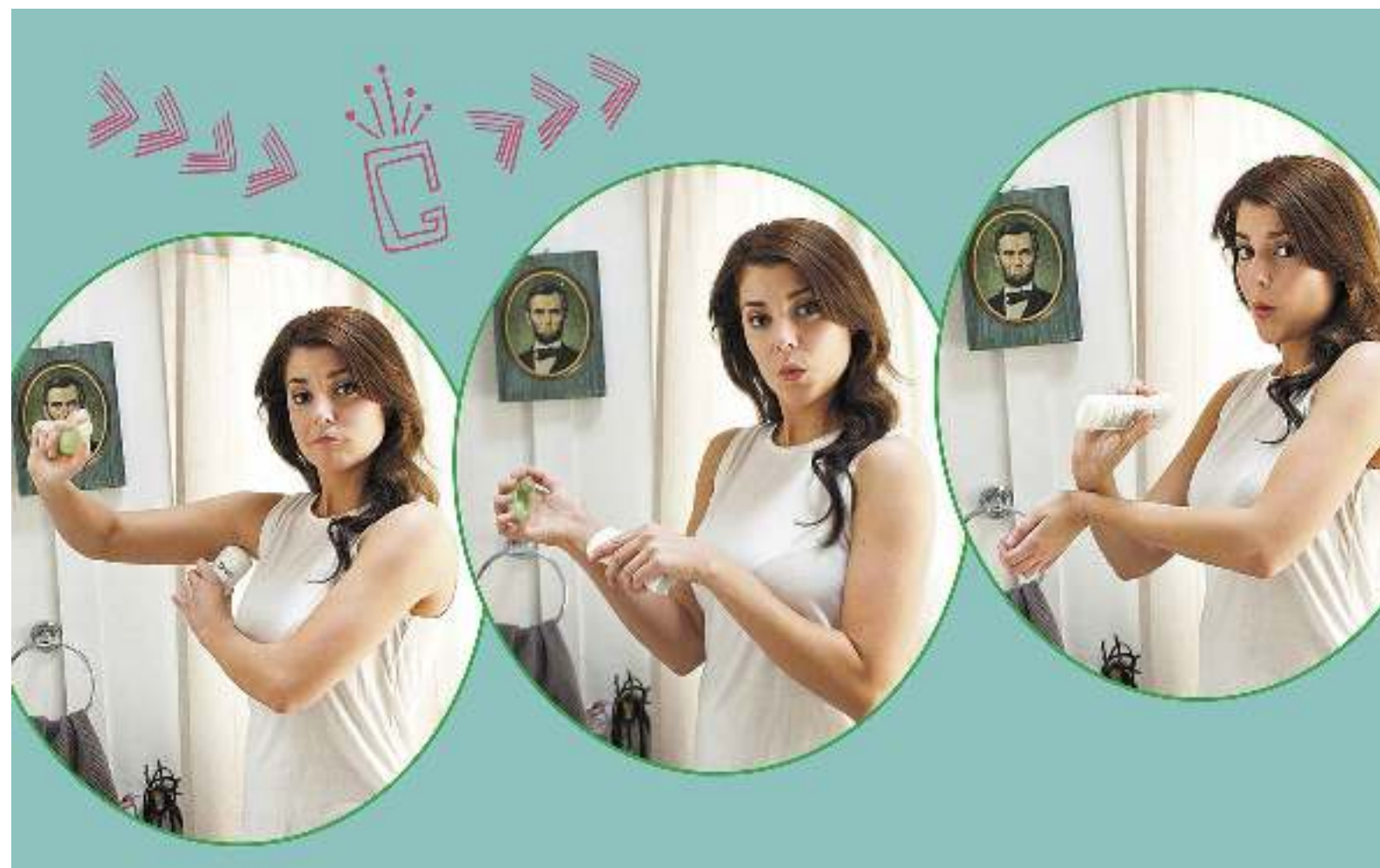
## ADULT SURVIVAL TIPS

Being an adult is both super cool and super scary. You can eat ice cream whenever you want, but you might also develop a lactose issue. You can drive a car across the country if you feel like it, but you'll probably have to pay for your own car insurance. It's amazing and awful!

But there's no need to be discouraged, you skin-covered meat puppet of potential. I'm here to help. Sort of. Take all of this advice with a grain of salt. But watch your sodium levels. I'm no expert. Definitely not in life. But who is? I'm trying to get through it just like you. So what you're about to read are some of my thoughts, theories, and reflections on living a life that isn't entirely terrible. Think of this as the CliffsNotes version of my book.

Here are my fifty overall adult survival tips:

1. Deodorant CAN be perfume. This was almost the title of the book. I carry travel-size deodorants in my bags, because I'm self-conscious about how I smell and I'm forgetful when it comes to basic hygiene.



2. Never trust a middle-aged man named "Josh." Unless he's your Russian bodyguard at YouTube convention. True story. The most stereotypical sixtyish-year-old Russian-looking man I'd ever seen, in a sleek suit and expensive glasses, walked over and introduced himself to me as my bodyguard for the meet-and-greet event I was doing. I immediately thought to myself, *This guy has killed a man.* He had that too-calm, calm vibe like he could just touch a pressure point on my shoulder and knock me out. I said, "Hi, I'm Grace," and he replied, "I'm Josh." Um, excuse me, what? Josh? This Russian man with a full Russian accent and just-shined shoes and an expensive ring that I figured was an association with his Mafia ties because I take stereotypes too far was named JOSH? Josh is supposed to be the name of a slightly attractive yet still pretty generic teenage Abercrombie & Fitch model. Long story short, Josh was great and loved whiskey. But I still don't trust middle-aged men named Josh.

3. Wear socks. If your shoes are supposed to be worn with socks, WEAR SOCKS. I should take my own advice. My feet staaaank. And yes, I have put deodorant on my feet before attending social events.



4. Do your taxes. Just do them. And don't be afraid to ask someone for help. They are confusing and annoying and UGH. But just get them done.

5. Have spare keys. Either hidden somewhere near your place of shelter or with your introverted friend that you can always trust to be home. Also it's helpful to have a backup plan to get into your place if somehow the keys are gone or your hermit friend got a weird haircut and went out. Can you go through a window? Pick the lock? Be prepared; you never know when your digestive tract is going to turn on you and you'll need to get into your place ASAP (oops).

6. Make sure you have your wallet and phone. Before you get out of a cab just take three

extra seconds to check. I've left my phone in many a cab, and it sucks. And then your needy friend is all like, *Why isn't she texting me back, did I do something wrong, she hates me, well now I hate her, this friendship is over forever, I will never forget this, I'm emotionally scarred for life.* Take a little extra time.

7. There's a YouTube video tutorial for that. You can find a YouTube tutorial for ANYTHING. I learned how to open a bottle of wine with a shoe! Yes, it took me over an hour and, yes, I later realized I could have purchased a bottle opener from the convenience store down the street, but it worked and I felt smart and resourceful and powerful.



8. Tell the cop there was a spider in your car. It's worth at least trying to explain to a cop that you were driving fast/crazy because of a really big spider. Or a bee. Or a wasp. Or you had to sneeze. Or you have explosive diarrhea. Or your vagina is bleeding. Get creative!

9. Just drink at least one goddamn glass of water a day. And then pat yourself on the back for doing something your parents can be proud of.





10. Invest in a box of thank-you cards. **Old people really, really want thank-you cards** learned that the hard way. Eeeeesh.

11. You can get it at Target.

12. You probably don't want that tattoo with the flames behind it. **Imagine seeing an old man or woman in an elderly home with that tattoo. Would you be like, *Whoa, I bet there's a super-cool story behind that, or would you be like, Whoa, I bet they were really desperate to be cool and interesting when they were younger?***

13. Don't be friends with someone who still "pokes" people on Facebook. **They're either your aunt or a serial killer trying to imitate normal human interaction.**

14. That really complicated Starbucks order doesn't make you interesting. **It makes you annoying. Coffee is coffee. It wakes up your brain and your butt. Just get a milkshake.**

15. Invest in at least two decent pairs of jeans/pants and two pairs of sweatpants. **It's apparently "inappropriate" to wear sweatpants to business meetings. But if you ever come to a business meeting at my place, it'll be inappropriate not to.**

16. Plants can trick people into thinking you have your sh\*t together. **A little bit of greenery in your home/office says, "Oh, I'm sophisticated. I'm the kind of person that likes nature and ambience and can maintain a living plant." I'd suggest starting with something like a cactus that needs zero maintenance.**

17. Build credit/get a credit card/pay off your credit card. **I'm still working on this. I can't even finish making a to-do list, let alone remember to pay off a credit card. But apparently it's an important life thing. Apparently you have to have "credit" to get "approved" for "loans" to buy things like "houses" and "cars" and other things you might "need" to make your life "good."**

18. At open-bar events, start by tipping the bartender(s) \$20. They should take care of you the rest of the night. Let them know you respect and acknowledge them, because they're your dance-juice gatekeepers.

19. Google that rash. Or don't Google it. Sometimes living in blissful ignorance is equal fun as applying a topical ointment.

20. Chips and salsa are a perfectly respectable adult meal. Also, chips and salsa are great to have in your house for expected and unexpected guests. Who doesn't like chips and salsa? Vegans and meat-chewers alike can finally find common ground.



21. When adding someone to your contacts, write something specific. For example: **Joe Interesting Wedding Dancer, Megan Lopsided Hair, Chris Red Lobster Adonis.**

22. Crest Whitestrips actually work. (Not sponsored. But I WISH.)

23. Succulents make the perfect gift. A box of succulents make for a super quick/cheap/seemingly cultured gift. You can give them to a man or a woman and they're easy to keep alive. Trust me, I kill everything (that's legal to kill).

24. You can never have too many tampons. Put them in any and every bag you might carry. Guys and gals alike, many a vagina will thank you.

25. Have easy-to-prepare food in the house at all times. This is essential. Your drunk and/or tired self will be so, so grateful.

26. The dogs of the Internet make it better. The dogs on Instagram in particular are an AMAZING resource for consoling people who are sad. Don't worry if you don't know what to say to that friend who just got dumped—send her the link to @beanzhart on Instagram.

and her day will turn around. If she doesn't derive any happiness from that dog, then she needs to do some digging and find out why she's terrible.

27. It's okay if you don't know how to pronounce that thing on the menu. If you don't know how to say the name of that entrée or wine, just tell the server you want their best piece of knot greg-eyo. And then give them two thumbs down with a smile and tell them to figure that out.

28. Always tip the valet. So much can be learned about a person based on the inside of their car. I currently have two empty bags of rice cakes, some old dried-up makeup wipe and a variety of dirty gym clothes in my car. The valet that has to spend time in that mess deserves at least a five.

### *Five Things Every Human Should Have*

- A phone. I've had friends who refused to get a phone up until about two years ago. They are thirty-plus years old. That is stupid.
- A moral compass.
- Credit cards.
- A taste for bacon. IT'S GREAT and if you don't even like the smell of it, you're probably a pig that's been magically turned into a human.
- A backup life plan. In case you ever poop your pants in an important situation and need to start a new life.

29. The car wash is a great place to be alone. You can gather your thoughts to the soothing sound of rubber slapping glass. Also, it's nice to wash your car from time to time.

30. Have clothing and accessories specifically dedicated to rain. Uggs are not rain boots. Umbrellas are cool.

31. You're not terrible because you didn't bring a reusable bag to the grocery store. Yes, everyone else that did is clearly better than you, but you're not the worst. Just try to recycle in other areas of your life to balance it out.

32. Salt, pepper, Tabasco sauce, and ranch dressing are the only condiments you need.

33. You don't need that gross underwear anymore. I know you rationalize it as "that time of the month" underwear, but that time of the month doesn't happen all month, so treat yourself. Your privates deserve something nice.

34. Wash your dishes. Your sink can be a reflection of your state of mind. If I'm having

tough day or a difficult time, I find washing dishes makes me feel better. When my sink is clean, my brain feels clear.

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35. Moist towelettes can be a real lifesaver. You never know when you're going to be held up at gunpoint and forced to stick your arms in jelly.

36. Portable speakers make showers more fun!

37. Tip the hotel housekeeping. They know ALL your secrets. WOOF.

38. Find a good hairstylist. Getting your hair done, especially for a lady, can be an awkward, annoying task. It usually takes a long time, you're going to have to have an extended conversation, and if you don't like what they did there can be problems. Once you find that person who nails your look, like a romantic relationship, hold on tight!

39. One wallet is all you need. Ladies, you can have a ton of purses but try to only have one wallet. As a serial purse and wallet swapper, I lose so many important things in the switch. So try to keep your money, IDs, credit cards, and ever-important loyalty cards in one place.

40. Buy a few stain sticks and put them in strategic places. Your bathroom, your car, your bag, your kitchen, etc.

41. Work on your handshake. It says a lot about you as a person and you can't redo it once it's done. Unless that becomes your handshake—the twice-over. Interesting choice.

42. Don't wear a shirt with a band/musical artist on it. Unless you're ready to have conversations with strangers about it.

43. Keep extra blankets and pillows in your house. It's very classy to actually have clean bedding for your guests.

44. Have a "guest basket" of toiletries. This will make you seem like a WONDERFUL THOUGHTFUL person. I know because I've been the guest in a house that had this type of basket, and I immediately felt like I should give them my first child.

45. If you can't find the expiration date, don't eat it. It's not worth the potential diarrhea at the office.

46. Never FORCE someone to watch/look at/read your creative project/work/game. Think about whether they really want to offer their opinion before you make them do it.

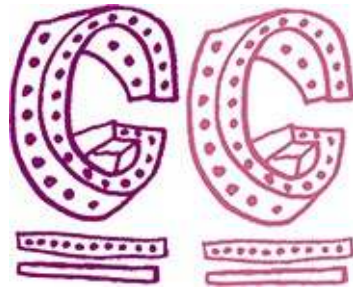
47. Don't hold a grudge. Especially over a board game. Do you really want the new headline "Board Game Becomes Sword Maim" written about you?

48. Use Q-tips sometimes!

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49. Invest in a giant Costco-sized bottle of pain medicine. **It's worth it.**

50. Be nice.



~~THE ART OF FAKING IT UNTIL SOMEONE CALLS YOU OUT ON IT~~

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~~THE ART OF DOING THE LEAST TO GET PAID MORE THAN YOU DID FOR BABYSITTING~~

~~THE ART OF FINDING YOUR INNER PANTS SUIT AND YOUR OUTER SWEATPANTS~~

## The Art of Balance, Commitment, and Finding the Bathroom No One Else Uses

~~THE ART OF CONVINCING A STRANGER TO GIVE YOU MONEY FOR USING A COMPUTER~~

~~THE ART OF MINIMIZING YOUR DEBT AND MAXIMIZING YOUR POTENTIAL TO LEARN WHAT THE  
WORD "COLLATE" MEANS~~

~~THE ART OF EXPANDING YOUR MIND AND DEBT~~

~~THE ART OF HOPEFULLY, EVENTUALLY MAKING SOME MONEY FOR DOING A JOB RELATIVELY  
CLOSE TO SOMETHING YOU SORT OF ENJOY~~

## Your Professional Life

I can practically smell the blazers and the classy leather business side-satchels.

Welcome to the part of the book about school and your brain and your professional life can practically smell the blazers and the classy leather business side-satchels.

When I was a little girl I used to flip through JCPenney's giant annual holiday catalog and circle all the toys I wanted for Christmas that year. I remember circling things like the cash register set; the "little miss professional" attaché case, complete with giant fake cell phone and legal pad; the nurse play set; the pop-up chalkboard; you get the idea. My favorite toys were all business/work-related. I was already an entrepreneur and hadn't even finished second grade.

Of course, I wanted dolls and princess dress-up kits, too, but my dad didn't like Barbie and the female ideal she represented. The only Barbie he ever caved and bought me was a Native American Barbie, because he thought it had educational value. What a guy. He loves education and hard work. I remember in fifth grade, I had an assignment to try to recreate something associated with the Sioux Indians. My dad and I set out to make a papoose. What I mean by that is my dad made a papoose. A papoose is a cradle backpack that the Native Americans used to carry their children. They looked something like this:



I watched helped my dad gather sticks, glue them together onto a piece of wood and tie them off with brown suede rope, then hand-stitch burlap into the shape of a headpiece and decorate the entire structure with beads and feathers. I had to stop him before he tried to put a fake baby inside for "realism." When I brought in my project, it was clear that I hadn't made it. Everyone else brought in handmade bows and arrows or rocks that they had painted with native motifs. I had a life-sized papoose. My dad got an A.

His feverish passion for work and education really influenced me as I got older. I became a sort of nerd-jock hybrid in high school. I always wanted to get good grades, I always wanted to win my events at track meets, I performed in plays, and I joined all the clubs I thought I should join to make my résumé look appealing to colleges. I even competed in mock trial for one year, until I realized that I'm NOT a good lawyer. I just like the excuse to wear a lady suit.

By the time I was a senior, the effort paid off. I got a full ride to the first college I applied to. Granted, it was a small liberal arts college in northern New Jersey that had a alarming number of skunks running around the campus (like, actual skunks; they were not in the brochure). But they took me on early decision in December and I thought, *Well, okay, I guess my college-search thing is done, cool.* While everyone else sent out all of their applications and did campus visits and interviews, I was done. I felt great.



Until I got there. I had a *terrible* time adjusting. Turns out I hate change and I'm not good at socializing. Good to know! I got really depressed and sat in my room a lot, researching other colleges. At one point, I started filling out applications to other, bigger schools like NYU and UCLA, because I thought they'd give me a more "authentic" college experience. Our college didn't have a football team and our mascot was the road runner (NOT the cartoon character) and there were skunks all over and I had ten Bulgarian exchange students living on my floor—this was not a real school.

But then I had a conversation with my mom and she encouraged me to stick it out until the end of the semester to see if I could find just one thing I liked. After all, it was a free ride, and it was up to me to make the most of it. So I did what I do best: I worked hard. I got a job off campus, I signed up for indoor track (turns out I had lost my edge and was no longer competitive in track—also fun to learn!), and I made friends with the Bulgarian exchange students who turned out to be some of the nicest, most hilarious people.



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