

20 Things I Wish I'd Known

By Kevin McMullin - the founder and Head of Talent at Collegewise

1. Give your parents a break. Recognize that parenting a teenager is stressful and difficult. It's a learning experience for everyone involved!

2. GET A JOB IN HIGH SCHOOL. LEARN HOW TO WORK WITH DIFFERENT PEOPLE AND RECOGNIZE THAT SOMEONE IS YOUR BOSS.

3. **Guys, when you pick a girl up for a date, the first thing you should do is notice how nice she looks. The second thing you should do is compliment her—out loud—on how nice she looks. Seriously, do this one.**

4. Appreciate what other kids are committed to, even if their activities are different from yours. You don't have to participate understand it to be able to appreciate it.

5. Ask for help when you need it. A lot of the highest achieving students get there in part by asking for help when they don't understand the material. If I'd known that, I would have been asking for help a lot.

6. Don't eat out with a group of people unless you're willing and able to pay for more than your share. Everybody gets frustrated with the guy who always forgets his wallet.

7. ANYONE WHO SAYS TERRIBLE THINGS TO YOU ABOUT PEOPLE THEY SUPPOSEDLY CARE ABOUT IS NOT TO BE TRUSTED. THEY'RE DOING THE SAME THING TO YOU WHEN YOU'RE NOT AROUND.

8. **If you especially enjoy a class, tell the teacher. Write him\her an email, or just mention it after class. You have no idea how hard it is to be a teacher.**

9. Be excited about the opportunity to attend school, and be thankful for it. There are a lot of students in the world who would give anything to be able to go to a safe, public school for free.

10. Try to learn as much as you can about the things that interest you. Be that person who loves to learn and knows things that aren't necessarily on the test.

11. Be nice to the kid that nobody else is nice to. Two years after my graduation, that kid everyone made fun of was killed in a plane crash. A lot of other people have to live with the fact that they went out of their way to make his high school years as unhappy as possible. No one needs that guilt.

12. IT'S HARD TO OVERSTATE THE VALUE OF WORKING HARD AND BEING NICE TO PEOPLE.

13. If you simply pay attention in class, you'll cut your study time dramatically and get better grades with half the effort. That is true for other aspects of life too.

14. **Try not to worry too much about the drama that goes on in high school. Who's popular and who's not, who gets invited to the right party and who gets left home. Just stay out of it as much as you can. Don't participate in or contribute to it.**

15. DON'T WASTE YOUR WORRY ON THINGS THAT DON'T MATTER. IT'S NOT FOR ME TO SAY WHAT YOU SHOULD OR SHOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT, BUT IT'S A BIG WORLD WITH PLENTY OF OTHER PEOPLE AND CAUSES THAT DESERVE YOUR WORRY.

16. A good standardized test-taker eliminates wrong answers and guesses. Eliminate, guess, move on and feel good about it. That's the difference between high scores and average scores.

17. Remember that eventually there will be no such thing as summer vacation. So take advantage of summers. I mean really take advantage of them.

18. Don't put a senior quote in the yearbook that will make you look stupid when you read it 20 years later. This could have saved some friends some embarrassment.

19. There's honor in driving the worst car at school. Call it vintage - that kid's got style.

20. Remember that you've got your whole life ahead of you. You can endure almost any teen setback, angst or humiliation if you remember that.