

HELLO
my name is

Anxiety

Need Help Session: *Application Anxiety*

Some of the people most aware of the pressure high school seniors face at this time of the year are college admissions staff such as Jeff Schiffman (Tulane Director of Admissions). In an email, he shared his insights and tips (excerpted for space below) for managing the increased anxiety seniors (and their families) may be experiencing...

Part 1 Thoughts for Seniors...

Meditate. Give it a shot. Even just ten minutes a day. Keep at it for a few weeks. I promise you, you'll see remarkable results. I use [Calm](#) when I meditate, and I can't recommend it enough- it's one of the highest rated apps of all time. **Keep your college application status off social media.** If you get into a school, great! Keeping your results off social media will help those around you. Once you select a school to enroll at let the world know. **Treat your brain like it's your roommate.** This is something I learned from [The Untethered Soul](#). Like a roommate, your brain is always going to be nagging you, talking to you, reminding you of things, giving you its opinion in an endless narrative. Your brain sending you negative or anxious thoughts? Ignore it! You don't have to listen to negativity. **Take charge of your phone.** It tracks the amount of time you spend on your phone and WOW this can be an eye opener. The data from studies linking [phone addiction to anxiety](#) and depression is eye-popping. When I downloaded the Moment app I nearly threw up when I saw how many hours I spent on my phone in one day. In the new iOS update, you can limit your screen time and put your phone in downtime mode at a specific time in the evening to limit your social media use. Do all these things! **Leave your phone in the kitchen.** When you are on your phone right before you go to bed, the stimulation keeps your mind racing. Instead, read a book. Meditate. Simply enjoy the peace and quiet. If you have to look at your phone before bed, [adjust the Night Shift on your phone](#) before you do so. This takes out the colors that make it hard on your eyes in the evening. In the morning, save Instagram and Snapchat for the bus on the way to school. **Be bold -- take a break from social media altogether.** This one is tough, but it's remarkable how much anxiety is generated from comparing your life to your classmates. Small step? Delete the Facebook phone app and only check it when you're on your computer. Or, pick one: Instagram OR Snapchat, not both. Social media is you comparing your worst moments to everyone else's best moments. **Learn to respond, not react.** Simply put, *reacting* is the knee-jerk reaction to a situation. *Responding* is taking a breath, collecting your thoughts, mulling it over, and then replying. You'll be glad you did. Great example: if you get deferred or denied from a school, don't react. [Respond](#). **Be patient with others.** Make a point of sending compassionate vibes out into the world. Patience with others can lead to a remarkable amount of personal anxiety reduction. **Create college-free zones.** Set some ground rules with the fam. Mom and Dad, you might have to lead this charge. Let this be a time to decompress with family and truly enjoy each other's company. Leave all that college-talk for some other time. **Exercise.** One of the absolute best ways to reduce your anxiety is to get a really good workout in. Not just a casual jog, but something where you really push yourself!

Jeff is correct when he says "everything will be alright in the end. If it's not alright, it's not the end. You'll get in somewhere, you'll go somewhere. You'll do fine in school and the drama with your friends will come and go. This goes back to deciding what you listen to in your brain. It's not always going to be perfect, but you can be assured, eventually things have a way of working themselves out. I am not saying all will be completely stress-free all the time, but over the course of the next few months, if you try a few of the tips above, you might just experience reduced anxiety in life, even at a time when you'd expect it to be higher than ever." **Enjoy the final days of your last first semester in high school!**

Part 2 Thoughts for Parents (excerpts from Brennan Barnard at [Forbes](#))...

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Psychotherapist Lynn Lyons is a co-author of *"Anxious Kids, Anxious Parents: 7 Ways to Stop the Worry Cycle and Raise Courageous & Independent Children,"* says, "As early acceptances and rejections begin to arrive, we need to be keenly aware of the dangerous message that there is one path to success, that these decisions—made by an institution that doesn't even know your child—define a teen's future." Lyons asks, "How will you let your teen know that you understand the disappointment, but **how will you also model for them the ability to tolerate big emotions**, recover (over time) from disappointment and rejection, and make adjustments as they grow?" She emphasizes that "these are huge life skills and it's our job to teach them."

Rick Clark, director of undergraduate admission at Georgia Tech, emphasizes the importance of moving from "parent to partner" as our children apply to college. He says, "Prior to admission decisions coming out, my hope is parents will take their focus off the names of colleges, their own personal hopes, and the recent build-up of emotion or anticipation, and instead **consider the time, effort, and shared experiences that have led to this point.**"

Richard Weissbourd author of *"The Parents We Mean To Be: How Well-Intentioned Adults Undermine Children's Moral and Emotional Development"* says, "**Parents need to ask themselves how much of their own hopes and needs are getting confused with what is best for their child**—their own status concerns, their competitive feelings with other parents, their belief that the college their child attends is a clear and public reflection of their success as parents, their hopes that their child will live out their particular dreams or compensate for their shortcomings."

Jenifer Lippincott author of *"7 Things Your Teenager Won't Tell You: And How to Talk About Them Anyway"* explains that "for more years than we care to count, and often beyond conscious awareness, our conversations with our kids have pointed in the direction of college. Whether about extracurriculars, summers, grades, class choices, family history, personal experiences—these conversations often veer toward preparation for, or in anticipation of, college. And then, as if suddenly, the decisions land—sometimes with a thud, other times with celebratory fanfare." "No matter the degree of sweat, toil, and angst we have poured into the college application process, **we are not the ones embarking on this journey.** All the steering, cajoling, and directioning helped get them to this point. But only *they* will walk the halls and write the papers. Just as they needed to balance when learning to ride a bike, **if we don't let go, they will not learn how to right themselves on their own.**"

"Although possible that the choice they make may not ultimately be the best one (especially in our view), it will stand as one of their most monumental to date. Ask any successful leader whether they learned more from their successful decisions or their faulty ones. Invariably, they will cite the stumbles. Why? Because they provided an opportunity to learn and move on. Isn't that life skill one of the most important? **If we think about our own paths to college honestly, they quickly fade in importance compared to the others that follow.** So why do we outsize it so for our own kids? To quote Malcolm Gladwell, 'When I look at a resume, I require them to black out the names of the schools they went to. I don't want to know. I don't care. I'm interested in you. I'm interested in what you think and do and what books you read.'"



IMPORTANT: college applications are incomplete until all required information is received. **Transcripts** (mailed and electronic), **Common Application counselor assigning, and recommendation requests must be submitted by December 14th to meet early January deadlines.**