What To Expect When Your Student Returns Home

Both students and parents are eager to see the school year end, and most look forward to a return home. But, there are a host of other feelings that go along with it. Here are some tips for helping to make your student’s transition back into the family easier and the summer months more pleasant:

• **Recognize that they’ve changed.** And maybe you have, too. Students have grown in independence and are used to managing their own lives, without curfews or many rules. And parents have developed a comfortable household rhythm while they were away. Your family may need some time to readjust. Communication, compromise, and perhaps some renegotiations are key.

• **Know that they’ll be exhausted.** Students will need some extra sleep to recover from the preparation and stress of final exams, completing projects and papers, and packing. Give them a few days to decompress and to catch up on some zzzzzz’s. They will emerge from their bedrooms eventually.

• **Expect them to miss their friends.** Although happy to see you, siblings and extended family, students have created a life apart from the family. Unless your student is a commuter, they have lived exclusively with other college students and have created strong bonds, sharing the daily ups-and-downs of college life. Texting and phone calls may increase as students attempt to stay connected to their closest pals.

• **Anticipate their requests for the car.** As tired as they might be, catching up with hometown friends won’t take a backseat. If your student doesn’t have a car of his/her own, they will be asking for yours…and probably for a little cash, too.

• **Plan ahead for the boxes.** When students come home, their “stuff” does, too, and typically, unpacking isn’t a high priority for them. They would prefer to park their belongings in the foyer, only reaching for the essentials. Carving out a place for storing their possessions now can help to keep the homefront somewhat intact as students slowly unpack and reorganize.

• **Keep your expectations realistic.** Parenting a college student is not for the fainthearted. The family dynamic may be different when your student returns home, and it’s okay to experience some disruption. Try to embrace the big picture and enjoy your time together. Your student will be back at school before you know it, and you’ll be missing their presence at home once again!