Changing Relationship with Parents

I am honored to stand before you all today. I was asked to speak about my relationship with my parents and how it changed as I transitioned through college.

My relationship with my parents has always been very good. In high school, they were supportive of my choices to play sports, join clubs and participate in after school activities. They attended all of my athletic events and sat front and center. It was in high school that they taught me how to prioritize my life. They always told me that no matter what talent God gave me, the greatest gift was my intelligence. Although my relationship with my parents was good, we never really got in too deep about my personal life. I was too shy about it and I mean, what high school student wants their parents to know EVERYTHING about their personal life. Not many. Well, once I got to college things changed.

At first, my transition to Marquette was tough. Socially, I was ready. Academically, I was also ready but very scared. I didn’t know what to expect from the curriculum, and it proved to be pretty challenging. However, it was nothing that I couldn’t overcome. Through my rough transition, my parents were beside me every step of the way. They knew that I could do better and that I would do better. So they continued to encourage me instead of scolding me. Their understanding was all that I needed to help me to successfully complete my second semester of college.

Over the past 3 years my parents and I have become even closer than we were when before I came to Marquette. One of the biggest changes I have noticed is that our lines of communication have opened tremendously. I got to Marquette and started to experience life away from home. I quickly picked up the phone to seek advice and just to talk to my parents. They’ve been my main support system and I’ve relied on them a lot since I’ve been here. When I was broke and had no food, they did what they could to make sure that I was taken care of. They’ve paid a couple of my bills on occasion. Thank God!

When it came to relationship issues and concerns about how I would survive the next year of school, my mom was there to calm me down and tell me that everything would be okay. As the years passed, I called on my parents a lot more, not because I needed something but just to talk and to check on them. Parents, while your student may not pick up the phone and call every day, know that it’s only because they are busy meeting new people and experiencing the excitement of a new environment.

Now that I’ve told you a little bit about me, I’d like to share with you a few suggestions, in my TOP 10 TIPS FOR PARENTS OF 1ST YEAR STUDENTS:

NUMBER 10: Send care packages or something to show your student that they aren’t forgotten. Money is also acceptable.

NUMBER 9: Give your son or daughter the space that they need to grow. I know they’re your babies but soon they’ll leave as young adults

NUMBER 8: Even when your son or daughter says “Mom/dad I don’t need any help.” Help anyway. Usually, they just want to appear to have things under control.
NUMBER 7: Try to be understanding. Whether it’s about grades, social life, dorm life, friendships, etc. For those of you parents who have first generation students, be especially proud of them. I know from experience that there’s a lot of pressure being the first child to go to college.

NUMBER 6: Continue to support your student no matter what they decide to do. Let them choose what makes them happy.

NUMBER 5: Encourage your student to get involved. It’s a great way for him or her to get to know new people, network and acquire new friends. Marquette has a great sense of community and getting involved will make your student feel a part of it right away.

NUMBER 4: Be as embarrassing as you possibly can in front of their friends. Believe me; they’ll appreciate the laughs later.

NUMBER 3: Visit if you can. Even though most of your students will be away from home, they’ll appreciate the sight of your faces every now and then.

NUMBER 2: Love your students. Care for them. Life is too short to worry about the small things.

NUMBER 1: Continue being the awesome parents that you are! Your student will love you all the more for that!

Thank you, and welcome to Marquette!

Kiarri M., Junior in the Diederich College of Communication