



The first day Constance and I met.

How To Live With A Roommate

By Samantha Vitale

When moving into college, what is the first thing you think of? I would think having a roommate would be up there on the list. You are probably wondering “Why should I take advice from you? I don’t even know you.” Well I will give you this: I have never had someone else live with me before. Ever. And my first year with a roommate has gone great so far. Hopefully that is enough information for you to trust some of my advice at least a little.

KNOW WHO YOU ARE

Know who you are? Not in the context of your innermost soul. I mean as a person who has lived in a room before. Are you messy or clean? Do you like to share things? How comfortable are you with people in the room? Do you snore? Ask yourself these basic questions before going to the interweb to find a roommate or completing the questionnaire. Your future self will be thanking you for being able to sleep in peace, not having to worry about a snorer as a roommate.

“HONESTY
IS THE
BEST
POLICY.”

This is especially important if you have never lived with someone before, even a sibling. You have to understand if you usually “take over” a room with your stuff. That includes “the chair” with clothes piled on top of it. My own roommate, Constance Levis '27, commented on that new type of thinking: “You’re sharing a space with another person, living with a roommate requires changing up how you lived at home.” Acknowledging where you fall short as a potential roommate and where you excel is one step towards a great roommate relationship.

You also need to be willing to be okay with your faults when you are living with a roommate. Honesty is the best policy. Even if that is with yourself. Really dive deep into how you are in the present rather than who you want to be in future. You can’t count on future college you being neat if you are not already neat in the present. Being fully aware of how you are now is a great mindset to be in while going into the roommate process.



Our beautiful room.



DON'T FAKE IT

You will not “deal with it” if a person has a really annoying rooming quality. Let me repeat that: YOU WILL NOT DEAL WITH IT. Trust me. Don’t justify someone being okay with dirty dishes or not wanting to take out the trash by saying that you will do it. If you are crazy about the room being clean, but your potential roommate is not, this person is not for you.

You will find your perfect roommate, do not fret. So, in the meantime, do not be a person you aren't. You are not setting yourself up for success by doing that. Your potential roommate will not know the real you if you are being a fake person online. You will not be that same person when it comes time to move in during Fall Welcome Weekend.

BE OPEN

This is a new experience for all parties involved. It will take time to get used to each other's schedules and habits. That is okay. I just ask that you are open to everything that comes your way. Fully commit yourself to the new late night talks or waking up because your roommate is being loud while getting ready. Yes, it can be stressful with always being around people or never actually being truly alone, but embrace it and take it all in. You will never have another experience like this. It's a great chance to find out how you handle conflict and to see what you really like in a roommate for the future.

It is also okay to have a few hiccups along the road. Be open to those as well. Those spatters will force you to grow into a stronger person and be comfortable with confrontation. You might face common problems like trash being left out or when only one of you is doing the cleaning. The easiest solution is to open up a conversation and to create standards that both of you will follow. That could be a cleaning schedule, how you want the room to look or even a plan in case of a fight happening. A sophomore Evergreen, Darcy, advised, "Communicate right away what you don't like because the longer you wait the worse the conflict will be." The fights are natural and will aid you into having a two-way communication with your roommate. Freshman athlete, Gabi Verdicchio, added, "Definitely keep your boundaries and make sure you set those to begin with." Even if your roommate is not open to everything, it is important that you are, as this will really force you to jump into the first-year rooming experience.



Hanging out before the school year started.

**“EVERYTHING
WILL WORK
OUT.”**

DON'T STRESS IT

Everything will work out. Picking someone from Instagram or choosing to go random won't improve your odds of finding your lifelong bff; either way is a perfectly normal way of finding your first roommate. Being tense will just ruin your whole rooming experience. If the person you picked or get thrown with doesn't work out after the year, that is totally okay. Your roommate does not need to be your best friend or even in your friend group at all. You both need to be able to live with each other and respect each other's boundaries.

Many will say that your roommate is your built-in college best friend, but that is not always the case. They can show up on the first day and be a completely different person from when you originally started talking to them. Yes, your roommate is a great person to cultivate a relationship with, but remember that a whole college is out there for you. My friend Mimi Walker, who is also a first-year, said, "Try not to limit yourself because then you are not going to meet new people." Do not worry about if your roommate will be your maid of honor or your best friend because then you won't be willing to go out and meet more people.

Everything really does happen for a reason. So even if your roommate is an awful person to live with—this experience will benefit you even if you don't know it yet. I know it is easy for me to say that it will all work out, but just trust me, you



Alyssa '27 and Elyn '27 who live down the hall from me.

stressing about a roommate is just wasted energy that could go somewhere else.

JUST A FEW REMINDERS

I know I said to trust me, but also take this advice with a grain of salt. I am not you, so some of this advice might not work for you. That is totally fine, I will not get offended. But if you have no idea what to expect or what mindset to go into dorm life with, this could be a good baseline for you.

The only way any of these guidelines can work is if you are yourself, unapologetically. You are going into a new environment with new people who have had different experiences than you. They want to get to know you and what you bring to the table! No one is judging because they are all in the same boat. Fully jump into the new waters and don't look back.

The great part of college is that you can experience the good, the bad, and the ugly. Any type of experience is a good experience and can help you later in life. Let's say that you have a horrendous fight with your roommate about trash. This conflict is difficult, yes, but needed. After resolving the conflict, you are now equipped with tools on how to handle face-to-face fights and learned how to truly stand up for yourself. Having a roommate is not just about learning to live with someone, but also learning to live with their personality.

If you are confused about how to handle a roommate argument or just overall about having a roommate, do not hesitate to go ask someone. You will have a Resident Assistant (RA) for your floor, who is an upperclass student, so they know the ropes. They can help you if you are having a roommate disagreement or even if you need to totally change rooms during [move week](#). You will also have one or two Evergreens, who also have been through the process of experiencing a roommate for the first time. Also, pretty much any upperclass student is willing to help and offer advice if you need another perspective on an issue.

This will be my last little tangent. I promise. It is okay to be nervous, unsure, worried, or any other adjective in that realm. Every person is, even if you can't tell. If your future roommate is at your wedding, that's amazing! Or if you never speak to your roommate ever again, that is also perfectly okay. Every first-year is trying to find their people, and your roommate is a great way to help you on that journey. That person can be a connector or somehow introduce you to your best friend. Remember that everything will work out in the end!

John '27 and Nathan '27 who also live on my floor.



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