

Learning to Embrace the Unexpected : Roommate Edition By Kendal Murphy



Liv (my roommate) and me on the first day of classes!

"Hi! My name is Kendal Murphy and I'm from Summit, NJ! I'm not 100% committed to Loyola Maryland but it's my top choice and I plan on studying elementary education and possibly doing club swimming! I love summer, a good movie, hockey, swimming and music. I'm looking for a roommate so don't be afraid to reach out!!"

Whether this blurb brings up good memories or not, I can almost guarantee it's a familiar sight to most of you. For me, posting on the Loyola '28 commits Instagram account compelled me to commit to a college so fast! I felt such a rush the minute I pushed "send DM" to the account, patiently waiting for them to curate my post so I could meet new people who also committed to Loyola, beginning the next phase of their lives at the same place as me. I had been contemplating the best time to send my information because, technically, I had not yet committed, but I worried "all of the good roommates would be taken" by the time I officially committed. So, on February 17, 2024, I finally sent the post in. A couple hours later, I checked Instagram to find my DM's flooded with messages from girls. Every Murphy 2 message sounded somewhat the same- "Hi! I'm ____, I saw your post on the Loyola commits account and we seemed really similar so I just wanted to reach out and say hi!" I immediately felt overwhelmed. So many different people and so many different conversations, I couldn't even keep track of which conversation I had with which person. When my (now) roommate, Liv Miralaeff, reached out, the conversation started the same as all of the others. We addressed the basic questions and I immediately had a good feeling about her. After only a day or two of conversation, I mustered up the strength to ask Liv if she wanted to be my roommate. Luckily for me, she said yes, and at that moment, college suddenly felt really real.

"YOU HAVE TO GET COMFORTABLE BEING A BIT UNCOMFORTABLE. HAVE HARD CONVERSATIONS TO SET BOUNDARIES FOR YOURSELF, BUT ALSO BE OPEN AND FLEXIBLE TO ADAPTING TO BOUNDARIES THAT YOUR ROOMMATE HAS."
-TAYLOR HADLEY

GOING RANDOM

College comes with so many expectations, but, in reality, coming in with an open mind and open heart can make your experience so much better- regardless of where you go. Of course, you want your room to have the perfect "vibe," a roommate who's your perfect match, the most interesting classes, but sometimes plans don't always go the way we want. In my experience, I've noticed incoming freshmen have an idea in their heads that if you don't find a roommate on Instagram, you are going to have a terrible year. But rest assured, that statement is just a misconception. Many students at Loyola, like Jenna Caruso, a Junior rising Senior, chose to go random their freshman year and ended up having a great experience! Curious, I asked Jenna why she chose to go random and she told me; "...I got waitlisted from my top school and chose Loyola kind of last minute. The roommate selection process was stressing me out and I felt conflicted about it, so [I] just chose to go random" (Caruso). In Jenna's case, going random ended up being the best thing to happen to her; "the three of us became best friends!" (Caruso) While I can understand where the stress of finding somebody who doesn't necessarily fit your personality can come from, even if you get paired with somebody who might not end up "your person," coexisting peacefully is still possible. My friend and hockey captain, Astrid Chase, also chose not to find her roommate through Instagram and the two did not "hit it off" as Jenna did with her roommates, but they found a peaceful way to live together. While it can seem discouraging not to click in-



The first Instagram exchange between Liv and I in February, 2024

stantly, we tend to glance over what is most important when sharing a living space with somebody else— comfort. As long as you feel comfortable in your space, everything will work out. Thousands of other students are waiting to meet you! Astrid reflects on her freshman year explaining to me: “Although we never had any issues we never truly connected, and our relationship disappeared when summer came” (Chase). Since Astrid didn’t grow close to her roommate, I wondered what advice she might have for students who felt they were in the same situation. She shared, “it may be difficult at times since this is your first year living away from your parents with someone you never met before. It also may be very fun at times, but your relationship is likely to change and may not always be perfect. Sophomore year you’ll have more opportunities to meet and live with different people, so take that change if you need it” (Chase). Even though Astrid and her roommate didn’t become best friends, Astrid found “her people,” which I can almost guarantee somebody has told you is the whole point of college. Joining clubs and [club](#) sports teams opens up opportunities to meet lots of new people. For me and Astrid both, joining the women’s club hockey team helped us meet some of our best friends here on campus! Now, Astrid lives with four other hockey girls in a house off campus— a perfect example of everything working its way out. Whether you committed to Loyola last minute or you couldn’t connect with anybody over Instagram, Jenna and Astrid show even if you choose to go random, freshman year living still has the opportunity to turn out great!



Women’s club hockey team— Your people are out there!

SOMEBODY YOU KNOW?

Roommate expectations have been around long before Instagram accounts even became part of the committing picture. Like I said, joining the club hockey team became an incredible way to help me find a group of people I connected with. My coach, Taylor Hadley, who also happens to have graduated with the Loyola Class of 2015, also had lots of expectations at the time of coming to Loyola, proving that these expectations surrounding Instagram are not just societal pressures of today. Coach Taylor chose to room with the only other girl from her high school attending Loyola in hopes that the two would get along. Taylor recalls feeling “excited about the opportunity to make new friends” in college and found comfort in “hav[ing] a familiar face with ties to ‘back home’ in [her] roommate.” While seeming like a fool-proof plan at the time, the two ended up drifting away, but, she explained, even though her first living situation didn’t pan out as she had expected, if you have an open mind, crazy things happen and the universe puts you with the people you should be around. Coach Taylor even shared that “a roommate I sort of randomly ended up with sophomore year in a two bedroom apartment (not my direct bedroom) became my BEST friend in the world and maid of honor at my wedding” (Hadley). In my experiences, if I had any doubts about finding the right people at Loyola, Coach Taylor calmed my nerves and assured me, regardless of roommate or friend relationships, the right people are out there, you just need to find them.



The spring view from my Campion apartment!



INSTANT CLICK

While I have shared only about people finding their roommates through a previous relationship or going random through the school, of course, some people will find their roommate through Instagram. My friend Grace received a follow by her future roommate, (coincidentally also named Grace), on Instagram and the two hit it off over Snapchat. The two Graces met at orientation and continued talking the whole summer. The two share how grateful they are for one another. Like I mentioned before, I spoke to a lot of girls when in the thick of meeting people from Loyola but when Liv reached out, I knew she was the one. Because we met so early in the year, I had six months to build up expectations of what my relationship with her and what living together was going to like. While Liv and I have such a strong relationship, I did not anticipate the weeks where maybe we get on each other's nerves, or weeks when both need a break because we're sick of sharing a room with one another. Regardless if you love your roommate or not, these feelings will come up but remembering that they're temporary is so important. Having an open mind and being extra aware of emotions are super important and helpful when you're dealing with those stressful days. Whenever I can feel us getting on each other's nerves, I try to give her some space and remember that we all have hard days and sometimes we just need a break from each other.

THE BOTTOM LINE IS...

We all have expectations and, whether we try to or not, building up expectations about our college roommate is inevitable. In my experience, listening to those who have information to share will help with transitioning into new things a ton. While all of the ladies had great things to say, what Jenna said really resonated with me: "My advice to incoming freshmen is to not let roommate stress consume you. I firmly believe that everything happens for a reason, and I am grateful that it did in my case. You meet so many people freshman year, and some people will enter and leave your life, even roommates. Definitely follow your gut and don't be afraid of change." Letting down your guard to meet new people is what college is all about, and having an open heart and mind to any and all situations that present themselves to you will take you a long way. So remember, your college experience doesn't have to fit inside any hypothetical "box." Your experience will be unique to YOU and that is the amazing thing about coming to Loyola! Remember, try not to have so many expectations and just be yourself. You got this!



Early room décor conversations!

**"I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON, AND I AM GRATEFUL THAT IT DID IN MY CASE."
- JENNA CARUSO**

