

New Year, New Roommate



The time has come for a fresh new school year with new classes, new professors, and new classmates. What else might be new this year? Your college roommate. Some of you might have the same roommate as the year before, some of you may be getting a new roommate, and some of you may be getting a roommate for the first time. This can be a huge adjustment if you are not used to sharing a space with someone else. Even if you know your roommate, it can still be difficult to manage your relationship sometimes.

Here are some tips and tricks to help with the roommate process!

ESTABLISH BOUNDARIES



It is very important to discuss boundaries early to avoid conflict later down the road. Is your roommate an early bird or night owl? Do they plan on having several friends over all the time? How do they feel about noise? Discussing questions like those will help you get to know your roommate and open the door for more discussion on what boundaries need to be set in place for both of you to get along and enjoy living together.

It is also important to discuss chores and how you will assign duties. Conflict can arise when one roommate feels like they are doing most of the work to keep the place clean. Try to create a chore chart or switch duties every week to keep the work fair to everyone involved.

This is another concept that we all had to learn about as little kids. Sharing. Where do you draw the line? Common things that you would share include dishware, pots and pans, a tv in the living room, and maybe toilet paper if you share one bathroom. Make sure to establish what items you are comfortable sharing.

I had a roommate in college once that brought a ginormous dog that slobbered and shed on everything in our dorm room. You might want to have a discussion on pets and whether or not you would mind them in your space. Some people might be allergic to pet hair, so make sure to see if everyone is on board before bringing home a pet.

COMMUNICATE



Learning how to communicate with others is extremely important for all relationships that you may have. Sometimes it is hard to bring up issues that you are having with others, but ignoring the problem is much worse than not saying anything about what you are feeling. When you communicate, avoid saying things sarcastically, loudly, or non-constructively as it will escalate the situation. Approach your roommate with empathy and actively listen to their side without

jumping to conclusions and interrupting them. Always work together to reach a compromise if you are not able to completely agree.

BOND OVER COMMON INTERESTS



You can always start with a common interest that you know you both have – living on campus and beginning your college journey! You can discuss professors, classes, student life, and all sorts of other campus happenings. Talk about things you like to do, and maybe you will discover that you both like to go hiking or doing arts and crafts. You can start planning activities to do together to strengthen your relationship!

FIND TIME FOR YOURSELF



While it is very important to get to know your roommate, you also need to make some time for yourself. Spending a lot of time with someone could cause you to butt heads, so it is important

to have your personal space. You may want to go to the gym or library to create that space for yourself. Remember that your roommate will need some alone time, too. Just make sure to have that conversation with your roommate so you will both be on the same page.

Even though it can be challenging, moving in with a new roommate can be rewarding. Your roommate may become a life-long friend and living with them will teach you many valuable lessons. Look back at these tips and always be willing to communicate when troubles arise.