



Middlebury

[Academic Calendar](#) [CTLR](#) [Health & Wellness](#) [Presence](#) [SFS](#)

There is no singular college experience. While some things such as taking classes are a given, the rest of college is by and large what you make of it. In this weekly newsletter, I will share ways to hone your strengths and take advantage of some of the things Middlebury offers that are designed to help you succeed, grow and realize your goals. Read on to see this week's tips for thriving at

Middlebury!



Jennifer Guinn Sellers, Ph.D.
Dean of the First Year Experience

The Myth of Effortless Perfection

The halfway point of a semester is a natural time to pause and check in with yourself. After all, it's the time of the semester when you start to get concrete feedback from midterm exams and papers. While it is always good to make sure our behaviors are aligned with our goals, and to make corrections when we are getting off track, one type of comparison that isn't good to get in the habit of making is the one where we compare ourselves to people who look like they have it all. It is not uncommon for me to hear from students that they don't feel like they belong at Middlebury because "everyone else gets good grades, does lots of fun stuff with their friends and they don't have to spend any time studying. Oh yeah, and they wake up looking amazing too." This phenomenon is so common, it actually has a name, the "myth of

effortless perfection.” Note the first word in that phrase...myth.

The reality is that most students struggle with at least one facet of their lives at college. And even those things they succeed at, or rather especially those things they succeed at, take a lot of focused time, attention, and effort to achieve. There is also likely a good amount of “failure” along the way. It’s to be expected. You can read more about the myth of effortless perfection and a related concern, imposter phenomenon, here.



Imposter Phenomenon



The Myth of Effortless Perfection

Courage and the Character Strength of Integrity

This leads us to the next virtue associated with our Community Standards, courage. Courage is the collection of emotional strengths that helps us accomplish goals in the face of internal and external opposition. The first character strength that defines courage that we will be discussing is integrity, also known as honesty or authenticity.

If you are feeling like you don’t belong on campus or that you are somehow lacking, the best thing you can do is turn to a trusted friend or mentor and honestly share how you are feeling. Not only will you get some helpful perspective when you do this, but you will also be making things better for the people you are being honest with. The more we all develop the habit of sharing the process vs the outcome, and the struggle vs. the achievement, the more we will be able to compare ourselves to the reality of college life and not the myth of effortless perfection. If you want to see an example of a student acting with courage and integrity, take a few moments to watch this short video clip. If it makes you feel better,

think about the ways you can make someone else feel better by being your authentic self.



WATCH THIS VIDEO:
My College Transition

Resources

Resident Advisors are great people to turn to when you are feeling uncertain because they were a new student on campus not that long ago and can likely relate with many of the things you are going through. In addition to these student leaders, all Middlebury students have access to a broad range of caring adult mentors who are great to turn to if you ever start to question why you are here. Academic Advisors, Compass Mentors, and me, the Dean of the First Year Experience, are all more than happy to meet with you to share an honest conversation. Additionally, the Anderson Freeman Center is a space where students can connect around their identities and find support in achieving their academic, personal, social, and communal goals. For students looking for a confidential space to talk about their feelings, Chaplains in the Scott Center for Religious and Spiritual Life and Counselors in our Center for Health and Wellness and TimelyCare are also available by appointment.



Anderson Freeman
Resource Center



Scott Center for
Spiritual and Religious
Life



Off-Campus Mental
Health Clinicians



TimelyCare



Meet with your RA



On-Campus Counseling



Meet with Jen

Important Dates

- 4/17@5pm: Deadline to invoke [CR/NCR option](#)
- 4/17@5pm: Deadline to Drop a Course with Permission (see Registration Information and Instructions below)
- 4/1: [CSS Profile and FAFSA deadline](#). Financial aid recipients must complete these forms by this deadline to remain eligible for aid.
- 4/14: [Spring Student Symposium](#)
- 4/16: MCAB [Executive Board Applications](#) due
- 4/23 23/24 [Judicial Board Applications](#) due



Registration Information
and Instructions

Was this information helpful?

Please take less than one minute to let me know!

Feedback

No minimum order value

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[Self-schedule an appointment here!](#)

Contact me.

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