



Middlebury

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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

## What are you working towards?

As we learned last week, there is a lot that can be gained from reflecting on the reasons why you are devoting so much effort to your studies. One way to reframe the question of **why**, is to start to think about what you are ultimately working towards. This is a good opportunity to invoke the final virtue we will be learning about in these weekly newsletters, transcendence. Transcendence is the collection of strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning. This week, I encourage you to begin practicing one of the defining character strengths of transcendence - hope, optimism and future-mindedness. One way to begin to develop the habit of hope, optimism and future-mindedness is to take a few minutes to reflect on the following

prompt.

1. **“How could the world be a better place? Sometimes the world isn't fair, and so everyone thinks it could be better in one way or another. Some people want there to be less hunger, some want less prejudice, and others want less violence or disease. Other people want lots of other changes. What are some ways that you think the world could be a better place?”**
2. **While many students are motivated to do well in school at least in part “to gain knowledge so that they can have a career that they personally enjoy” they also want “to learn so they can make a positive contribution to the world.” What are your reasons for learning? Write these down so you can refer to them later on.” (Yeager et al., 2014)**

Research shows that students who connect their learning to prosocial and self-transcendent goals, like the one you identified in your version of a better world, can persist longer at both difficult and mundane tasks, avoid distractions, and achieve a higher level of education. It also allows us to work towards our college mission to “address the world’s most challenging problems.”

Follow the links below to learn more about this research and/or to hear how Cordae translates this same idea, in addition to some of the other character strengths we’ve discussed, into what he calls his “high level mindset.”



Boring but Important: A Self-Transcendent Purpose for Learning Fosters Academic Self-Regulation (article)



How a "Hi Level" Mindset Helps You Realize Your Potential (video)

## Resources

If you are having a hard time developing a self-transcendent goal or seeing the link between your course work or intended major with a greater purpose, it's time to start having some conversations. Attend the office hours of your First Year Seminar professor, instructor of a class you particularly enjoy, or department chair of a major you are interested in to have a curiosity conversation. You can also follow [this link to book an appointment with someone from the CCE](#) to learn more about opportunities to work towards the greater good. Lastly, [meet with an advisor](#) from the CCI to start taking the steps towards attaining a career with purpose.



Center for Community Engagement (CCE)



Center for Careers and Internships (CCI)

## Important Dates

- Stressbusters 2023. Ongoing this week ([link to schedule](#))
- 5/15 Last day of classes (Friday class schedule observed)
- 5/17-22 Self scheduled exam period
- 5/18-23 Final exam period
- 5/24 Residence halls close. Students are expected to move out within 24 hours of their last final or by the time the halls close (whichever comes first)
- 5/28 Commencement
- 6/5 Spring grades available for students to view online



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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Dean of the First Year Experience

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

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