

ADVICE

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You're always told to treasure being young.

No matter how hard I tried to enjoy childhood, there were always things I wasn't old enough to do.

I couldn't wait to grow up -- I'd be able to go wherever I wanted and stay up until whenever. That's right, once I grew up, I'd have it all.

Because what more is adulthood in the eyes of a nine-year-old than a free pass to make your own rules?

I was excited to micromanage myself, to be my own boss and fully, no, properly immerse myself in the human experience.

Well, time went on and I began a slow and surreal immigration into adult society.

Life isn't as easy as I'd decided it would be all those years ago.

I constantly have deadlines to meet.

I am consistently exhausted from playing trial and error with my bedtime.

Some days I can't even tell whether I'm lonely or content.

Sometimes I spend three weeks paying for mistakes that took three seconds to make.

I'm two years into living on my own and I'm still figuring out how to feed myself.

Not one place I've applied to in the last month wants to hire me.

I'm expected to write two papers a week thoroughly explaining my informed opinion on random facets of society without offending anyone.

You could argue that I encounter stress pretty often.

One of the first bits of advice I was given during my first semester at UNC Asheville was to, "find a vice and stick to it, whatever

it is."

During my first semester of college, I struggled a lot with stress management.

I would procrastinate massive assignments until the day before they were due, rush through them, and set myself up to get as anxious as humanly possible.

I took no pride in my work. Assignments became impossibly long-winded, and I was slowly starting to drown in them as the semester progressed.

My biggest obstacle was unloading the accumulated stress from the school week.

I was moving from one procrastinated frustration to the next without blowing off any steam in-between.

I needed something to make me forget about the stress of the week, something that was going to get me through chaining assignments back-to-back.

A vice, as I define it, is a bad or unhealthy habit that brings an effective form of satisfaction.

Vices comes in all shapes and sizes.

My roommate likes to drink energy drinks, particularly NOS and Monster, when he's stressed out.

My neighbor prefers to chew and spit tobacco after a long day at work.

My mother obsessively cleans and vacuums the house when she's about to blow.

A girl down the hall from me in the dorms last year had to eat ice cream every time she finished studying.

We all have some weird little tics that help us get by, and I can't stress how important it is for every college student to find theirs.

There's much to be said about the art of discovering yourself. You're not always going to like what you find, and quite often, it's hard to step out of your initial comfort zone in order to learn more.

Approaching new experiences with open-mindedness and curiosity can truly lead to self-discovery in the right environment.

Try writing a poem about your shitty co-worker today.

Create a poorly-drawn comic strip about falling asleep in humanities today.

Pick up a sketchbook and see if it makes you forget about the group assignment you've been ignoring all week.

Go for a long drive after your exam.

Even running can become a vice. Anything that helps clear your head and get your mind off of reality can be a vice.

With all this being said, it's important to indulge in vices with moderation.

Some people pick up high-risk high-reward gambling as their way to blow off steam, using adrenaline from victory streaks to justify higher stakes as their vice gets a better hold of them.

Others turn to alcohol or drugs to escape their duties in society. While the occasional drink doesn't lead to catastrophe, it's important to realize how damaging depending on substances to function can be to your body.

Some vices, like stress-eating, are both immediately damaging and harmful down the road.

No matter what kind of person you are or what you happen to do for a living, a vice is a crucial coping mechanism for the adult world.

Many people who don't blow off steam wind up with heart and health conditions later due to high blood pressure and stress.

While bad habits can't necessarily be declared good, some can be practiced in a healthy way.

If you're struggling to find your vice, don't be discouraged to keep on searching.



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