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If I Were a Freshman

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When you get to be a senior—a graduating senior—
you realize for the first time with a jolt that
you’re not going to be around forever. It’s a little
late, but you start to wonder just how it was that
you intended to run this college life of yours.

You remember how it was when you first got here.
You went through the agony of adjusting to Freshman
Days with a sort of helpless resignation. You were
scared to death you wouldn’t make the grade, so you
couldn’t wait until classes started. Then you could
be able to do something tangible about that fear—
you would be able to study hard to get where you
wanted to go.

Well, you did. You studied hard for a while. Then
you began to realize there wasn’t much danger of
flunking right then and you learned the fine art of
rationalization. You’re sorry now that you didn’t study
harder. You didn’t get a lot of the courses you wanted
to, but you could have taken a few more hours a
quarter and worked them in.

You didn’t get to know any of your professors well.
You read a lot and heard a lot from the older women
about getting to know the instructors, but it went
right past you. Now you’re sorry about that, too.
You’ve found out that they have a lot to offer besides
a lecture. You could have made the effort.

Another thing you did—you put too much time on
activities that didn’t matter to you. There were
some things that were pretty important to you per-
sonally, but you by-passed them to accept someone
else’s standards of importance. You made the choice
in favor of the things that would get you someplace
on campus. The thing is that you’ve decided you
missed a lot. You liked to go to Coffee Forum, but
before long you were too busy. There were concerts
and lectures you had to miss in order to study because
you had been too busy going to activities during the
week. So far you still haven’t been to a noon organ
concert, and you still haven’t taken the time to browse
through that new book shelf over at the library. And
it’s getting a little late.

You weren’t in any hurry to pick a major for your-
self. It bothered you a little, but you let it slide. It
should have bothered you more when the time
came you didn’t have any basis for selection. So
after the first quarter you changed and decided you
had something worth while the second time. You
were lucky there; not everybody did.

You felt the need of a couple of things in your major
field that you weren’t getting, but you didn’t do any-
thing about them. Maybe you should have tried a
little harder to get some of those substitutions through.

On the other hand, your counsellor probably knew
best, but you could have talked it over instead of just
accepting everything. There were things you could
have done something about yourself. For one, it’s
harder.

The last quarter of your junior year
you hit a course which fascinated
you. A little late,
you can’t do any-
thing more about
that now either.
It’s things like that
that you should
have found out
about yourself.
You wonder why
you didn’t sit down with yourself and have a good
analyzing session.

You were the prize scatter brain when you first
got to be an upperclassman. You formed some habits
then that have just about been the ruination of you.
You started studying late in spite of the fact that you
had always been able to get your work done by 10:30
when you were a freshman. Then your grades started
to slip. You just weren’t using the time right, but you
figured you had all night. You never did get those
grades back up.

So here you are—about to graduate, about to
leave. You’re not a naive as you were; you’re a
little more aware of the things you don’t know. You
hope you’ve acquired a little more tact and poise. You
hope you know a little more about human nature.
You’ve been associated with as many different kinds
of people during these 4 years as you probably ever
will be. You hope you’ve taken advantage of that.

It wasn’t that you didn’t have time for studies,
the courses you wanted, your friends, getting enough
sleep, the right kind of food and all those things you
wanted to do. You could have had all that without
cutting out anything if you hadn’t wasted about two-
thirds of your time. It’s that fine art of rationaliza-
tion again. But maybe you can convince somebody
that they should do things a little differently from the
way you have done them.

Reminiscences of a graduating senior over 4
years of college life are told by Jean Bunge

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