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New Collegiate You

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YOU will change! To every high school student, especially a brand-new graduate, this statement seems like a shocking improbability. Right now you don't want to change. After all, you have spent 18 years of your life becoming what you are.

Everyone has ideas on education, religious ideals and a code of social ethics. These are formed throughout your entire life by four main factors: your home life and parents' personalities, your environment, the people with whom you associate and your unique experiences. So it has been a time period of 18 years in which these factors could interact and develop YOU.

But you are still forming YOU. Just because you have been presented with a high school diploma does not mean that you are the end product of your development. It means that you have reached just another step in that development.

Regardless of whether you are planning to go to college, to work or get married, your environment will be different. The people you will be exposed to and their ideals will be new and strange to you. One trait of a mature person is that he is adaptable to new surroundings and experiences. On the other hand, extremes in anything are to be avoided. If one is so adaptable that he changes into an entirely different person with every move of place and time, he has lost sight of his goal and crumpled any set of values he may have had. But one who refuses to adapt attitudes to different situations becomes fanatic and stubborn and is hard to get along with.

We'll use the college situation as an example. Perhaps you are imagining that after you finish college you will be entirely ready to meet the world; but just as junior high is a formative step between grade school and high school, so is college a transition between high school and real-life situations. The 2500 freshmen with whom you may come to Iowa State are in practically the same stage of development you are. They think that they "know their own mind." They have shaken hands with their best friends and been wished luck and success and told "never to change from the sweet girl we've always known." To themselves they say, "If I'm liked as I am, I need never change."

Then the process starts. They find out that they are forced to live and learn with many different people with different backgrounds and standards. If this living situation is successful, it is called "broadening." At first, this realization may come as a shock. A girl may be astonished when talking to her new dormitory friends to find that some phase of social behavior—definitely frowned upon in her "home" town—is a customary thing for her friends.

One of the first changes will be in regard to your parental influence. Of course, you'll miss your mother and father. After living 18 years with them it is only natural that an adjustment away from them will have to be made. And it is wise that this adjustment come gradually. A person changes from looking to his parents for comfort and sympathy and "services rendered" to depending on herself and her newly acquired friends. When one is in a depressed mood, she should be able to snap out of it herself without hearing her mother's soothing voice over the long distance phone.

Too, you get used to accepting your parents on your own level—as adult personalities; and you recognize and accept their shortcomings.

Your social life may change. Silly high school manners, which are the essence of fun in teen-age years, will be replaced by more courteous and more planned, perhaps "cultured" entertainment.

There will be a revolution in your tastes. You will find yourself reading Faulkner and Hemingway instead of Bess Streeter Aldrich . . . you may enjoy classical music more because of its depth as a media of expression.

One important and desirable change that comes to most college students is that they seek the reason "why." When they are up against a problem in attitude, they don't decide immediately for themselves if they are tolerant of the situation or if they are not—they learn to look into the causes of behavior and strive to understand why it is and how it got that way.

NEW COLLEGIATE YOU

by

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Some changes will be temporary changes. That is because college life could be termed an "artificial circumstance." All situations are not real; that is, social life is not indicative of that common in everyday life, pressures of time and effort are far accelerated, and one's community of friends is more select than can be found in most real-life situations. Therefore, some of the customs and practices which you will adopt in college will fade as the newness of the leather-bound degree wears off.

Failure to change and adjust often leads to discouragement in college students. They may feel that they aren't in the right field or haven't chosen the best college for them, when actually the reason for their unhappiness is that they are still living according to the stand of ethics they set up for themselves before they came to college.

This whole process is commonly called "growing up." It's possible to do it gracefully and happily if you arm yourself with an open mind, a goal and a wisely built set of values. Yes, of course you want to change! If you don't, $4500 is a lot of money to be spent merely existing!