Tips to Support Your College Student

1. **Understand the Demands**: Your child’s workload and the time it takes to complete will increase significantly from high school. They may have many late nights studying or completing assignments at the library and may need to work on homework on weekends and during breaks. Asking them to come home every weekend or expecting them to be home by a certain hour could place additional stress on them.
2. **Building Community is Key**: Building connections and finding community are important parts of your student’s social well-being and helps them stay in school. Spending time on campus and participating in activities is an important part of building that support network. Encourage and allow them the time and space to do this.
3. **Give Them Space to be an Adult**: Your child is going through a major transition in which they will learn how to navigate their world as an adult without you there. When your child faces challenges and obstacles, encourage them to think through the steps to overcome them rather than giving them your answers or addressing the problem yourself. Space with support will allow them to learn to be autonomous, functioning adults. This leads us to…
4. **Accept That Your Child is Their Own Person**: Just as you thought and did some things differently than your parents, your child will think and do things differently than you too. As frustrating as that can be, your child needs that space to find out who they are, and this process will take leaps and bounds when they are away from home. So…
5. **Expect Change**: College and the experiences associated with it can affect changes in social, vocational, and personal behavior and choices. It’s natural, inevitable, and it can be inspiring, yet challenging. You can’t stop change, you may never understand it, but it is within your power (and to you and your student’s advantage) to accept it. Remember that your child will still be the same person at their core.
6. **Trust Your Child**: College is also a time for students to discover who they are and find oneself and one’s path in life. Trust that they will remember the lessons you instilled in them as they navigate this process. Allow your students the opportunity to avoid mistakes, make mistakes, and to learn from them when they happen.
7. **Trust Your Instincts**: As a parent, you know when something is not right or when your child is struggling. Don’t hesitate to reach out or get help if your instincts tell you something is not right.
8. **Stay Connected**: It is very important that your student doesn’t feel abandoned by their family. They appreciate parents staying appropriately connected and at a frequency that works for them. Communicate with them in ways they welcome and appreciate (calling, text message, social medial, e-mail, instant messaging etc.). It is very likely that your student will not respond to all of your contacts (remember the first tip), but they will appreciate the preserved connection with you.