

GOOD SOPHOMORE TO THRIVING SOPHOMORE

Copyright © 2015 Joshua Hill & Chadney Hill

First Edition

All rights reserved.

ISBN: 978-0-9969286-2-5 (Electronic)

ISBN: 978-0-9969286-3-2 (Print)

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except under the terms of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 or under the terms of a license issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd.

Legal Disclaimer

The Publisher and the Author make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this work and specifically disclaim all warranties, including without limitation warranties for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales or promotional materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for every situation.

Neither the publisher nor the author shall be liable for damages arising here from. The fact that an organization or website is referred to in this work as a citation and/or a potential source of further information does not mean that the author or the publisher endorses the information the organization or website may provide or recommendations it may make.

Further, readers should be aware that Internet websites listed in this work may have changed or disappeared between when this work was written and when it is read.

Dedicated to you, an achiever.

Section

01

**Well, How Good Was It?
(It's Time For Some Honesty)**

Chapter 1

Assess, Evaluate and Adjust

You did it! You not only survived your Freshman Year, you thrived! And here you are getting ready to start the second year of high school. Sophomore Year...

Has a nice ring to it, doesn't it? Before long, you won't be a freshman any longer. You won't be one of those students who don't quite know how to get from one class to another; now you know how to get to your next class—all the way across campus—without being tardy.

You're not wondering about which teachers are sticklers about dress code, or noise, or even chewing gum in the halls, and you know who they are and how to avoid them.

You know which freshman myths are based in reality and which ones are just plain ridiculous.

You know all this, but you still might be a little nervous about starting school this year. Don't be. You survived being a freshman, and you'll make it through your sophomore year, too—better than making it, you can thrive on it.

You just need to be aware of some important things about your sophomore year.

You need to know how important it will be to formulate and put into action a plan—your Sophomore Plan. There are some steps you can take this year, which will make the remainder of high school so much easier for you.

You need to develop and maintain a strong team of supporters who will help guide you through not just this year but also the next two years.

In addition, you need to know some steps you can take to make the remainder of your high school years lead to you achieving the goals you have set for yourself: graduation and acceptance to a college of your choice.

So, let's get started. Let's talk about your Sophomore Plan.

All successful journeys begin with a plan. You already have completed a fourth of your journey through high school. Now it's time to reassess your plan. Let's take a few minutes to reflect on last year.

Did you follow the plan you set out for yourself last year, or did you veer off the path just a little? Did your study routine result in the grades you wanted, or did you fall short of your goal?

Were you able to meet new people, make new friends, and join new clubs and organizations; or did you get bogged down? Just realize how important it is to keep focused on where you want to be by the end of this year. Remember, a lot of IT is about grades, but it's NOT ALL about grades.

“Your grade-point average (GPA) isn't everything. Sure, you may be a 4.00 GPA student, but what else can you do? One of the key things admissions officers look for in college applications is diversity. Admissions officers are constantly looking for applicants who can bring something special to their school, not just students who study all the time. For example, even though I had a 3.68 GPA, I still managed to get into every school I applied to, including UC Berkeley. But the reason why I was accepted wasn't because of my grades, it was because I made myself stand out with my extracurricular activities. Eagle Scout, Tennis, Academic Decathlon and “We The People.” There are plenty of good students, but not many who are well rounded.” (Malcolm Rivera, student at UC Davis,

source link: <http://www.southkernsol.org/2013/08/30/six-tips-to-get-into-your-dream-college/>

Many of your classmates will start making college commitments by the end of next year. That means that the coveted spots available at your dream college will start disappearing very soon.

According to MaxPreps.com, as many as 50% or more of student athletes, for example, will typically verbally commit during their junior year. In addition, most college application deadlines are in December of your senior year, which means that there is a lot more focus on your first three years of college.

You can do the math. You only have, really, two years left to build the high school resume that will get you into your dream college. Last year is now water under the bridge. Whatever happened.... happened. Remember, this book is called GOOD SOPHOMORE TO THRIVING SOPHOMORE. If you totally blew it last year you need to find a book called BAD SOPHOMORE TO THRIVING SOPHOMORE.

However, we are going to assume you did okay last year. But this year, you need to really thrive. Dream colleges don't admit kids who just do "okay". The sophomore year is one of the most important years of your high school career, especially in terms of boosting your competitiveness. So one of the first things you need to do immediately is assess your performance last year, identify where you can improve, create a strategy for improving and then execute on that strategy. We are going to help you through that process in this book. However, the most important thing for you is to be honest with yourself and your capabilities. We will keep hammering on this point throughout this book because it is critical that you understand it. Too often young people like us think we have a handle on a situation but we really don't. Deep

down inside we know this to be true. For whatever reason we tend to make assumptions about a reality without having any real data to back it up. Most of what we believe to be real, in terms of high school, comes from conversations with friends. As much as we love our friends, they don't always prove to be completely in the know. Do you really want to rest your future success on Austin? Great kid but he forgets his locker combo twice a week.

Honest assessment starts with honesty. Unless you can come to grips with the idea that there is better information and a better path for you to overachieve this year you will likely end up with the same results as you did last year. Wasn't it Einstein who said, "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over but expecting different results?"

THRIVING SOPHOMORE TIP #1

Assess Your Academic Performance Before School Starts And Determine Where You Have Deficiencies In Your Study Plan.

First, let's talk about grades. I know that might not be the first thing you want to think about right now, but your grades determine your GPA (along with your class rank), and colleges take GPAs very seriously. It's one of the most important aspects of judging success in high school simply because it's one of the most important ways college admissions officers can judge your ability to be successful at their particular college.

One of the most important lessons I learned was that a poor academic performance has absolutely no reflection on my intelligence or on my potential ability to do well. This was very important. Teachers and counselors have a tendency to try to group kids into categories of intelligence. So if you're pegged as a kid who should be in the remedial classes it could have a serious impact on your self-esteem and overall confidence. My advice is REJECT IT. In fact, get pissed off.

The only thing a bad grade demonstrates is that you have not developed the study skills or discipline to get the good grades. Sure, there are some students who have legitimate learning disabilities, but chances are pretty good that you are not one of those kids. In fact, if you are reading this book, then I would bet you are absolutely capable of getting good grades.

I had a few bad test scores early on and was approached by one of my teachers who suggested that I may not be "ready" for the challenges of her course. What she should have asked was, "What is going on in your life that is causing you to under-perform?" or "Tell me about your study habits and how you are preparing for my tests."

Fortunately for me, I had parents and a brother who were able to help me develop a better study strategy. My grades instantly improved and I ended that honors course with a B+. My advice is that you need to try to block out any negative noise that is trying to hold you back and believe in yourself first. Then, sit with your parents or counselors or even other high performing students and get some help. Start to build a study regiment that incorporates both strategy and time. Then commit to it. Remember, you are not a failure you just need a better plan, but time is critical so get on this immediately.

It is a true statement that grades are only one of the many elements that colleges look at, but good grades reflect the ability to manage time, and although colleges are looking other qualities in applicants—such as having a clear sense of goals and an ability to organize—time management is a valuable commodity in college, one the college admissions folks consider a must-have quality of successful college students ("Qualities of a Successful College Student"), so they're looking for any indications you possessed it during high school.

The good news is that while the freshman year does in fact matter, admission officers generally will provide some grace as long as you demonstrate a pattern of continual improvement. So, while some admission officers will give an allowance for one or two mishaps during your freshman year, you will not get that pass this year.