

Anthony Wallace: Welcome to the companion podcast for the Sixth Edition of the bestselling book, *How to Survive Your Freshman Year of College*. We interviewed hundreds of real life college students and recent graduates to get the real answers to the endless questions you must have on living in a dorm room, dating, the dining hall, classes, extracurriculars, Greek life, and more. Like in the book, on the podcast you can hear the uncensored voices of these freshman year veterans as they share their candid and cautionary tales. They have been where you are now and they want to help. This episode of the podcast is brought to you by Quad Jobs, where small jobs count.

Anthony Wallace: Just so everybody knows, what's your name?

Vincent Wallace: Vincent.

Anthony Wallace: And what's your relationship to me?

Vincent Wallace: I'm your brother.

Anthony Wallace: Okay. And your freshman year is coming this upcoming fall?

Vincent Wallace: Yeah.

Anthony Wallace: Okay. And where are you going to school?

Vincent Wallace: Lake Forest College, Chicago.

Anthony Wallace: And you live right now in?

Vincent Wallace: Chandler, Arizona.

Anthony Wallace: So it's a pretty far move.

Vincent Wallace: Yeah, a couple ... I think it's like a thousand miles. I don't know.

Anthony Wallace: A thousand miles? Yeah, I think that sounds about right.

Vincent Wallace: Yeah. So, it's pretty far.

Anthony Wallace: So what are your thoughts about moving that far away?

Vincent Wallace: I always wanted to. Going to college, I wanted to leave Arizona. I'm excited to be on my own and kind of not be babied in a way. My mom and dad give me freedoms and stuff but they always track me. So I think that's what I'm most excited about, to just kind of-

Anthony Wallace: Just to not be tracked?

Vincent Wallace: To not be tracked and actually have freedom.

Anthony Wallace: Are you nervous about anything related specifically to being that far away from home?

Vincent Wallace: Not really, honestly.

Anthony Wallace: Really?

Vincent Wallace: I think it's mostly excitement.

Anthony Wallace: Okay.

Vincent Wallace: In a way. I mean I might be nervous because I've never been away from my parents that long and my family.

Vincent Wallace: So just not having that actual face to face contact with them everyday could be interesting.

Anthony Wallace: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Is there anything that you would like to know from other people that have moved away that you're curious about?

Vincent Wallace: Kind of how they transitioned. I guess the big thing about Chicago is it's going to be way colder than here.

Anthony Wallace: 'Cause you've never lived in any other city.

Vincent Wallace: No, I've lived here my whole time.

Anthony Wallace: Or any other kind of weather.

Vincent Wallace: Yeah. I'm always used to wearing shorts the whole time.

Vincent Wallace: And getting by, you can wear shorts every single day. So ... and maybe I'd just ask them if they got homesick at all which I'm sure they probably did. I think that probably came for a lot of people.

Vincent Wallace: I'm sure it'll probably happen to me, too.

Anthony Wallace: In this second episode of the podcast, we're talking about leaving home. To answer my brother's and hopefully all of your questions about this intimidating experience, I talked to freshman year veterans who have moved all kinds of distances for college. We'll start with our shortest mover and work our way up to our longest. Nick, who went to Arizona State University, didn't move at all. I wanted to know, did he feel like he missed out on some critical part of the college experience living at his parent's house as opposed to the dorms?

Anthony Wallace: Did you think about maybe living the dorms?

Nick: Yeah, I was actually planning on it.

Anthony Wallace: Oh, really?

Nick: Living with Tom. But then we found out that if your major differed, then you couldn't live together. It was grouped by major.

Anthony Wallace: Oh, okay.

Nick: And so once I found that out, I was kind of reluctant to be paired with someone random. And that kind of ... that and cost was another thing.

Anthony Wallace: Oh, okay. It's hard to justify moving down the street basically when it's going to cost you so much.

Nick: It's like, "Why? Why not just stay home and drive 20 minutes every day?"

Anthony Wallace: Yeah.

Nick: I commuted every day. Took the light rail so it made the commute a little longer which kind of sucked. But on days that I would have two or three hour breaks in between classes, I would go to Tom's or go to a friend's and hang out.

Nick: And so I still kind of got that experience and kind of got the feel of what the dorms were like. And then, yeah, on the weekends I would still go out if something was going on.

Anthony Wallace: Do you ever wish that you lived at the dorms?

Nick: Yeah. I mean, there's certain aspects. Just like fully living there and getting that experience and being on your own. I didn't have that which is what a lot of people did. But, yeah, at the same time, like I said, I felt like I still got to experience college in the ways that freshmen do, I guess. I would do it again.

Anthony Wallace: Okay. If you had to give advice to kids that were in your same situation, you would say it's chill to live at home?

Nick: Yeah. Yeah. It's hard to say. It just depends on the type of person you are, I guess.

Anthony Wallace: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nick: I mean, if you're really a homebody and need to be motivated to go do something, then I would say probably go to the dorms and kind of force yourself into experiencing something new.

Anthony Wallace: Next, we'll hear from that very same Tom Nick just mentioned. Tom also went to school right down the road from his parents' house but unlike Nick he elected to live in the dorms.

Anthony Wallace: And so that really wasn't a consideration for you?

Tom: Living at home?

Anthony Wallace: Yeah.

Tom: Absolutely not, man. I'd done that for 18 years already. You know?

Anthony Wallace: Yeah. You wanted to get out of your parents' place?

Tom: Yeah, I was an adult ... like, by law. Definitely not in reality. And I was ready for that experience and I think that, obviously, not everybody is the same that way but I was.

Anthony Wallace: Yeah.

Tom: I was ready for that. So, anyway, I went to Arizona State and I lived in the Hassayampa dorms. It was eight miles down Rural Road from there to my parents' house but very much out of sight out of mind until I started having to go home again for a couple reasons. Like after a month of being in school, I got a job and to get to my job I needed a car. So to solve me not having a car at school, every Friday afternoon I would go down to Rural Road and jump on the 71 South bus and ride the bus. For the first time in my life, because I went to private schools my whole life growing up so there was never a school bus, I rode the bus home every weekend. I grabbed my car, usually raided the fridge, and then took my truck back to school but then come Sunday night, of course, every night I had to get it back to my parent's house. Otherwise, I'd get ticketed or towed.

Tom: So that also allowed me to have a ritual and it's something that got annoying at some point too. Like my parents were like, "Oh, we haven't seen you in a couple weeks." And I'm like, "Yeah, my roommate is from El Paso. He hasn't seen his mom in four months. It's been two weeks, Mom. Relax. You know?" So I still got to see my parents and it was important for them. I'm an only child. I got a nice, home cooked meal every week and I definitely appreciated that further into college and actually kind of watching some of my other friends maybe struggle with not seeing their parents. Taking some friends home with me on Sundays because it was opportunity for them to not eat dorm food and get a family atmosphere.

Anthony Wallace: Yeah, yeah.

Tom: That was actually a really nice thing. Also, I took laundry home almost every Sunday. So that was definitely a bonus. But it was kind of an interesting sort of limbo between ... I am very much out of sight out of mind, doing whatever I wanted, experiencing and going out and having this away college experience and then every weekend sort of ... not being brought back to earth but like, "Oh, yeah. They're still right there." And that was great.

Anthony Wallace: It's nice. The distance that you were away from home you could go for a couple hours or just an evening, as opposed to if you're further away and you want to go home your only choice is to make a trip and spend a really extended period of time there. Like you could do basically your whole weekend at ASU and then go home on Sunday.

Tom: Exactly. Yeah. So when you put it that way, it's absolutely a nice balance because I never was missing out on anything happening in school.

Anthony Wallace: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, exactly.

Tom: I was at every football game my freshman year, every fraternity party, everything that I wanted to be at, I was at.

Anthony Wallace: Yeah, right.

Tom: And I never missed out because, "Oh, I'm going home to see my folks."

Anthony Wallace: Interestingly enough, Dane from Sioux City, Iowa had two freshman years. And, as I learned talking to him, his first one was cut short in large part because of the distance in between him and the discipline of home.

Anthony Wallace: So you were a freshman in college twice?

Dane: Yeah. I went to school at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa which is about a three hour drive from my hometown.

Anthony Wallace: Oh, okay. Were you nervous to move that far away?

Dane: I was a little bit nervous but I think the excitement kind of overpowered it.

Anthony Wallace: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dane: I had quite a few friends who were going to Iowa State, too. And we had all already pre-committed to join a fraternity.

Anthony Wallace: But you say you left after just one semester then?

Dane: Right.

Anthony Wallace: Because why?

Dane: The grades weren't that great.

Anthony Wallace: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dane: And I was majoring in engineering and I realized that that was going to be a ton of work and I don't think I was ready for that workload. I actually took like a year off and I realized working minimum wage jobs was crappy and school sounded much better again at that point.

Anthony Wallace: So when you were going to Briar Cliff, which was in Sioux City where your family lived-

Dane: Yep.

Anthony Wallace: ... in your hometown, did you live at home or did you live at the dorms?

Dane: So the first two and a half years I lived at my parents' house.

Anthony Wallace: Okay.

Dane: We live a mile away from the university. I thought about living on campus. It was like an extra ten grand so I was like, "Yeah, no. I'm just going to live at home." It might not be as exciting but I got to experience college at Iowa State so I wasn't too worried about the college experience.

Anthony Wallace: And how'd it go then? Living at home?

Dane: It was fine.

Anthony Wallace: Yeah?

Dane: I was so busy with school and football that I wasn't even home that often anyways.

Anthony Wallace: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dane: So it wasn't a big deal.

Anthony Wallace: Yeah, so your experience at Iowa State and Briar Cliff were way different. How would you compare those two?

Dane: Yeah, I would say I probably didn't utilize my time as well being farther away with no one to really keep me accountable but myself.

Dane: And that's kind of tough for some people to do at the age of 18.

Anthony Wallace: Yeah.

Dane: It's a big change, having all that freedom. 'Cause when I was at Briar Cliff, I couldn't really miss a class. My parents would be like, "Hey. Why'd you miss class?"

Anthony Wallace: Meghan, now a senior at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, spent the entirety of her one and only freshman year two and a half hours away from her family. At this distance, it can be tough to decide how often to go home. The comforts of Mom, personal space, and a fully stocked fridge are tempting but what do you miss out on when you leave campus for the weekend?

Meghan: I think at that point in my life, I was just so excited to move away from home. It wasn't until I was actually away from home that I started to realize how different this is, how weird this is. I got major homesick but not until the second semester. That first semester I did a lot of things, I was really excited, but then it all kind of settled second semester and I was realizing that I was missing these things at home, like Sunday dinner and my family's birthdays, and I was just really over dorm life. It wasn't cool anymore. I thought it was just cramped and I had no privacy. Going to bathroom freaked me out.

Anthony Wallace: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meghan: I just missed the comfortability in home.

Anthony Wallace: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meghan: So it wasn't until then that I started going home a lot. I went home almost every other weekend. I think a lot about all the potential time that I missed out on freshman year by going home so much because that's when a lot of critical friendships were made. And even now as a fifth year senior, I'm reflecting on my experience. I don't have a big group of friends and I've noticed that a lot of times those groups were formed freshman year when everyone is really eager. And so I guess my advice for anyone in a situation where they're homesick is to remember that you can't really get this time back and home will always be there and to try and embrace this really critical time in college life because it is a lot different than even sophomore year and junior year and senior year. I know that it's uncomfortable to be homesick but being uncomfortable is good. There's a lot of change surrounding it. I think that's where you grow. Find things to do that you wouldn't normally do. Don't just revert back to old comfortable habits.

Meghan: But two and half hours is perfect. Any drive more than that would be kind of an eye roll but I'm so used to it now. It goes by so fast.

Anthony Wallace: Unlike all our previous interviewees, Hank from Carlsbad, California decided to go across state lines and into an environment and climate totally different from the one that he grew up in.

Hank: I never lived anywhere in the snow so I thought it'll be a change. It'll be something I've never really done before. I knew a couple people that were also moving to Flagstaff, going to go NAU as freshman, so that made me feel a little bit more comfortable.

Hank: Like I didn't want to be too close to home. I didn't want to be so close to home that I could go home and make my mom do my laundry or make me a meal or something. I wanted to prove to myself that I could be more independent and I just felt like that was part of the college experience, at least for me. It's still really not that far. It's an eight hour drive. So if, for some reason, I really wanted to go home for the weekend I could do that really no problem. I would get homesick when I was sick. When I really just wanted to stay in my bed, that's when I was like, "Oh, man. I could use my mom right now. I could be home. That would be great."

Hank: But otherwise, maybe it's just my personality, but I don't feel like I got homesick all that much. I think I only went home my freshman year Thanksgiving, Easter, Christmas. Just holidays. I mean, I guess I really didn't have any expectations for living in the snow. That was just sort of trial and error, throwing myself in the fire. Like, oh, okay. This was a terrible day to try to grocery shop. Things that you don't really think about in a place like San Diego. Preparing for weather. It was never really a drag for me. There were times where it was inconvenient when there was a couple feet of snow on the ground or whatever but there was also a lot of excitement. It's snowing so much we're getting a snow day tomorrow. Come on.

Hank: There were fun, exciting aspects about the same thing that were maybe also inconvenient. I liked it. I really liked living in a different climate for as long as I did but by the end of four years I was totally ready to move away from that. So looking back on it, I'm definitely glad that's the decision I made. I got that experience, that different climate experience that I wanted. I wanted to live in different weather. Had I chose Santa Barbara, I would've been with a lot of my best friends which is really cool and really fun but I think some discomfort can be good. It kind of keeps you on your toes and a little more focused.

Anthony Wallace: Rhetta, currently a sophomore at Notre Dame University in South Bend, Indiana, much like my brother will do, traveled nearly 2000 miles for her freshman year. That is much too far for a weekend drive home.

Rhetta: Yeah, it was a far move for sure. I actually didn't consider any schools in state and no schools in California.

Anthony Wallace: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Rhetta: So the goal was kind of to go far. I've always wanted to go to school out of state. I always wanted to experience a new place. That was always a big thing for me.

Anthony Wallace: How did it feel leading up to leaving? Were you nervous?

Rhetta: Yeah, I was nervous. I also didn't really know what to expect. So I think I would've been more nervous if I had realized how far away it was or how long I was going to be gone. But it was more just kind of jumping into the great unknown.

Anthony Wallace: Yeah.

Rhetta: And so I wasn't as nervous as I probably could have been. Or even should have been because I had no idea what I was doing.

Anthony Wallace: Did you get homesick?

Rhetta: Yeah. So my first semester of college, I didn't go home at all.

Anthony Wallace: Wow.

Rhetta: I didn't go home for Thanksgiving or fall break or anything. And so it was five straight months essentially away from home.

Rhetta: And so, yeah, I got really homesick. I spent Thanksgiving with a friend's sister in Chicago and that weekend was one of the hardest because I FaceTimed my sister and it was like my whole family and I'm sitting on some couch in a studio apartment in Chicago like, "Why am I 2000 miles away from everything I care about?"

Anthony Wallace: How was it for your family?

Rhetta: I think it was pretty hard. I know my mom was really happy to just have me back home when I finally got home again. And then my sister, yeah. She had been alone for five months for the first time ever. That was the longest we've ever been apart by a long shot.

Anthony Wallace: Yeah.

Rhetta: And so I know that was really hard for her because it was like everything was the same, just something was missing. Versus for me, it was like I was in a completely new environment.

Rhetta: I wasn't necessarily missing everyone as much as they missed me. Coming back is hard because suddenly Mom's in charge again and I can't do anything about it. I have to be home by midnight again and I can't go to places that she doesn't want me to go. So that is a really hard thing about going away to school. Not that I don't want be around my family, because of course I do. I love them. But it's hard for an extended period of time to have to readjust to not being in charge of myself.

Anthony Wallace: Finally, we hear from our furthest mover. Susana grew up playing golf in Medellin, Colombia and since she was a kid she dreamed of earning a scholarship to play at a university in the United States. Her dream came true and to fulfill it she had to move more than 3000 miles away from home into a country where she knew no one and hardly spoke the language.

Susana: I wanted to go to Miami University but my parents didn't want me to go that close to Colombia because I wouldn't learn English. So golf courses in Arizona are great and I wanted to be close to California. So it worked perfectly.

Anthony Wallace: Wow. So your freshman year, not only were you in a totally different country but you're in a place where you didn't really speak the language that well.

Susana: Yeah and I didn't like speaking English, like at a restaurant and stuff, so my teammates would order for me and my coach would get super mad and she started telling me I had to learn. I didn't like my accent at that moment because everyone is ... they don't make fun of it. Actually, they like it but everyone's amazed by it.

Susana: They don't treat you normally. I don't know how to explain it to you.

Anthony Wallace: I know what you mean.

Susana: Yeah. So at the beginning I didn't like that but now I love it. I got used to it pretty fast. I think I was so excited about playing golf, about having a team, I didn't even miss home.

Susana: I missed my food. I missed Colombian food and I missed someone doing the laundry for me and my mom cooking for me.

Anthony Wallace: How long of a flight is that?

Susana: Oh my god, it was so long. I have family that lives in Miami so I will just stop in Miami for a couple days. But it takes me like seven hours to get from Arizona to Miami and then I will stay in Miami for a couple of days and then just fly from Miami to Medellin which is not bad. It's just like three hours each.

Anthony Wallace: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Susana: And my parents only went once to watch me play. My mom went a couple times to be with me. But to watch me play, they only went in senior year.

Anthony Wallace: Was it hard for you to see your teammates have their parents there and not have yours there, too?

Susana: Yeah. That was kind of shitty because in every tournament, all the parents would get there to watch them and then they'll have dinner with them.

Susana: And I was like, "Okay. My parents are not here." But friends, they will take me with them or sometimes I will just hang out with my coach.

Susana: He was pretty nice to me. So I didn't feel that lonely. You know?

Anthony Wallace: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Are you glad that you went to school abroad and how do you think that effected you and changed you?

Susana: Yeah, I love it there. Like Colombian culture is pretty different from yours and just, for example, I'm just so different from my friends from here.

Susana: I just think different a little bit. I'm more chill, I'm more open minded, and I just love having the opportunity I had. I love meeting people from all around the world. I like learning from people and from different experiences. I just love that.

Susana: So it was great.

Anthony Wallace: We heard from freshman year veterans who moved all kind of distances for their first years of college and in the process hopefully answered some of yours and my brother's questions. And if you're nervous, I hope it eased your mind a little bit. If Susana could do it, so can you. For more enlightening and entertaining advice from past students, read the Sixth Edition of the best selling book *How to Survive Your Freshman Year of College* published by Hundred of Heads available at your local bookstore, on Amazon, or at our website howisurvived.com.

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Anthony Wallace: My name is Anthony Wallace. Our theme music is by Bob Rabbit. Check him out on all social media and music streaming platforms. As always, thank you for listening and good luck out there.