

TIPS FOR DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL ROOMMATE RELATIONSHIPS

Be Open Minded - Don't judge a book by its cover.

Don't jump to conclusions about your roommate based on an internet profile, a picture, one conversation or someone else's opinion. An internet profile like MySpace® or Facebook® on its own doesn't always provide a completely accurate portrayal of an individual. Keep an open mind and a positive attitude. Also, think about the messages your own Facebook® or MySpace® page say about you.

Give it Time

A successful roommate relationship takes time to develop. Make plans to talk several times on the phone. In the beginning, avoid discussing too much over email or IM. It is often difficult to interpret emotion and intent over email or IM which can lead to misunderstandings.

Discuss Expectations

Keep your expectations of your roommate realistic. Not all successful roommates will become best friends and that is okay. Discussing expectations may help avoid misunderstandings and hurt feelings down the road.

Details, Details, Details

Most roommates are quick to talk about who is bringing what and how the room will be set up but many forget to talk about the things that can make the roommate relationship a real success. Don't wait for issues to come up, go ahead and talk about study habits, sleeping habits, room cleanliness, guests, items to share and anything else that is important to you.

Below are a few questions you might want to think about and then discuss with your roommate before any potential conflicts arise:

- Are you a day or night person? How will that impact your ability to live together?
- What are your expectations of noise in the room? When you are studying? When you are sleeping?
- What type of relationship are you looking for in a roommate? Are you looking for someone to hang out with or just share space with?
- How do you feel about the use of alcohol and/or tobacco?
- Is it important for you to be able to study in the room?
- How do you feel about your roommate borrowing your belongings?
- How neat do you like the room?
- How do you feel about guests in the room? Is there a significant other that will be visiting? How often? Will they be staying the night? How often?
- How do you like the temperature in the room? If you have a medical need such as needing a cool or very warm room, mention to your roommate.

Being roommates is a little like being in a marriage. It is two different lives and lifestyles coming together in one shared space. Like any successful relationship a good roommate relationship takes time and a willingness to communicate and compromise. It means not always having everything exactly the way you want it but, rather being willing to compromise and find the middle ground where everyone is happy.

What Do I Do If I am Not Getting Along with my Roommate?

Unfortunately conflict can be a part of life, whether with a roommate, classmate, neighbor or a coworker. Our ultimate goal is to hopefully equip students with the skills to be able to address and work through conflict whenever it may arise. There are several resources in place to help students work through any potential conflicts or to help talk through ways to approach a roommate about an issue or concern.

- Resident Assistants (RAs)
- Head Residents (HRs) /Hall Directors (HDs)
- Area Directors (ADs)
- Orientation Aides (OAs)
- Residence Life Office
- Counseling Center
- Dean of Students Office

If you feel that resolution can not be reached you can request a room change through the Residence Life Office. Please refer to the House Contract and Resource Guide <http://www.wm.edu/reslife/contract/2007-2008/contractguide.php> for additional information on room changes.