

COLUMN

Take time to take care of yourself

By Tessa Castor
Editor in chief



I'm sure you think you shouldn't be reading this.

I'm sure you think you're too busy, too overwhelmed, too tired, to procrastinate one more time. With your random Twitter scrollings and intermittent snacking, I'm sure you think you've wasted too much time today. You have four papers and three readings and five assignments due all between rehearsal, practices, conditioning and service projects and you can't afford to take more time to read this. Please read it anyway.

Please read it, because you need

it. You need to hear someone tell you to slow down. You need to read it in print.

I understand you. You wake up each day with a to-do list, a schedule in mind and a tally of how many hours until you can fall asleep again. You go from class to meeting to class to work to practice to rehearsal and forget to pack your lunch.

Maybe your schedule has led to health problems. You stay up until 2 a.m. working on assignments and turn down time with friends, falling into a frantic scramble to get every assignment done.

Perhaps you eat cookies with every lunch and dinner, or maybe it's ice cream. It could be that you have gained weight and lost love for yourself. You might have even turned into someone you don't recognize.

After being involved in every organization your high school offered, you were sure you could handle the commitment of college activities. You ran for class officer, participated in plays and music groups, joined the improv class and a service learning or

athletic team, all on top of taking 18 credit hours. You began losing yourself with every meeting, and people around you could see it.

Your parents might notice a change, particularly when you go home. They can see it won't last long. You've developed bad habits. You have to do something before you implode.

You can choose a lighter course load to take better care of yourself. You can start to get six hours of sleep each night, eat a diet full of fruits and veggies, drink water and go to the gym at least four times a week.

You may need to decide it is okay to not finish the things you had once thought to be important. Sure, you want to be a good student, but at what cost? Go to bed right at 11, even if it means not finishing the reading or paper or project for the next day.

I know all of this because I've faced it. I had to make a change to save myself. I made the commitment to better health last semester.

You know what was surprising about this? I still did okay in my

classes. Just as well as before. I was shocked.

I made it through my classes. I was happy, happier than I ever had been at SC. I felt energized, excited to finally be in a good place mentally and physically. I defeated the insecurities I faced my freshman year.

I thought I could keep these healthy habits going. I thought I had it down. Then this school year began.

Like yours, my classes got harder. My to-do list grew. My relationships grew strained. I didn't know how to stop it.

I told my dad about these feelings over Fall Break. I told him I couldn't do this, all of this, for another year. He asked me why I was putting up with it for even another semester.

I wasn't expecting that response, nor was I expecting the calmness I felt at the idea of relieving myself of one responsibility, of taking care of myself just once.

I didn't quit everything, I didn't say "forget about it" to my homework, I didn't start sleeping in and going to bed early. Instead,

I made one small decision to change one big area of my life. And I felt better.

I had poured my energy into an organization, and I loved it and the people I worked with in it. But it wasn't healthy for me anymore.

Maybe you're there too.

So, you with the century-long to-do list, I know you probably won't go and quit something. I know you probably think you can't, or you shouldn't, or even that you don't want to. And I get it. I didn't want to, don't want to still.

I'm just asking you, pleading with you, to please, please take care of yourself. Notice when the weight of your responsibilities is taking away your ability to breathe. Notice when you're falling and the cliff's edge is coming. Notice when you're spiraling, because it's a chance for you to change something.

Listen to yourself. Know yourself. Take care of yourself. You're the only one who can.

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Change of seasons bring growth to campus, students

By Breanna Dittert
Guest columnist



When I think of fall, I always think of my mother. It's her favorite season. She loves seeing the leaves change. She claims that, in Texas, fall isn't as pretty, and that "sometime around August it gets so hot that the leaves just burn to a crisp and fall off."

Now it's November and we're

in Kansas, so the leaves are still gorgeous. Most trees have reached a halfway point, with many leaves on the ground and many still attached. We're in a time of in-betweens. Fall is a time of change, and we're right in the middle of it.

For me, change has always been hard. I used to throw temper tantrums when my parents rearranged the furniture, and I vividly remember crying when I realized that going to middle school meant leaving elementary school. I was devastated when, halfway through my sophomore year, my family packed up and moved to a completely new state. Somehow, though, I managed to survive moving to college with minimal difficulty.

Fall really is a great metaphor for going through change. I look out my dorm window and see the

beautiful colors, and I think about how the leaves have to die before spring can come and everything can be new again. The old has to move out to make room for the new.

As college students, we know about change. A good majority of us are living on our own for the first time, having left our parents behind and ventured into the world as adults, ready to make our own decisions and our own mistakes. Of course, change is part of the deal.

We can no longer run to our parents' bedroom down the hall when we have a nightmare. We can't expect them to pay for our clothes and food and rent. The comfort of the old way is gone. And yet, it is necessary to leave behind what doesn't fit anymore before we can slip into something that works.

In the summertime, a tree needs its leaves. The leaves are how the tree performs photosynthesis and gets its energy. Without them, it would die. In the winter, however, the tree can't afford the energy it takes to keep the leaves alive. If the leaves stayed, the tree would die.

The same goes for us. Just because a situation works for a while doesn't mean it'll be healthy in the future. We need our parents when we are children, but eventually, we must learn to let go of them and fend for ourselves.

It must be hard for the trees to give up their leaves. The leaves were there in the storms, and they fed the tree and made it beautiful all summer.

It's always hard for me to give up on the familiar. But seasons end, and seasons change, and with them our needs. What we need

when we are children is not the same as what we need as young adults. In college, we need the freedom to live our own lives on our own terms. The life we leave behind can be the foundation of something better.

College life is new and tough and I know that sometimes we just want things to go back to being simple and easy, but maybe it will help to look out your window and see the beauty in change. The vibrant colors of fall wouldn't be possible without it, and neither would a healthy, beautiful future for all of us. Change is scary, but necessary. It drives us forward to where we need to be.

This fall, we are learning to let go.

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