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Ask Anna Anything: An Advice Column for College Students

Anna Popp, News Editor

As a soon-to-be graduated student of Seattle University, I have spent the last few years of college relying on the good--and the bad--advice I have received from peers, family and friends. Each week I will answer two questions submitted by readers to the best of my ability. The opinions expressed in this article are the author's own.

How do I keep my plants alive?

Honestly, there needs to be more conversation about how difficult it is to keep houseplants alive and thriving. I have a dog and it's way easier keeping her happy than my jungle of plants in my room. I was always told that I just didn't have the "green thumb" to keep plants going strong, with which I wholeheartedly disagree with. One of the most important aspects to keeping houseplants alive is to make sure you are investing in plants that fit your habits and lifestyle best.

If you know you aren't home very often or are a tad forgetful, then I wouldn't recommend getting a plant that needs to be watered often like a tradescantia plant. For college students who are just starting out on their household plant journey, I would recommend plants that can go a while without water or an abundance of sunlight--especially in Seattle--like cacti or ferns.

Houseplants aren't just an investment in time and effort, but they can also be expensive and somewhat time consuming. I recently repotted all of my fast-growing and temperamental houseplants and it was significantly more expensive than I thought. After buying soil and used pots off of Facebook Marketplace, I had invested nearly \$100 in the rehabilitation of the plants.

Before you buy the prettiest or most fun-looking plant, I also recommend doing some research or talking to your local plant expert. If you live near campus, I suggest visiting the Plant Shop in Capitol Hill, City People's Garden Store in Madison Valley or Colors Abloom in the International District.

How do I deal with a to-do list that keeps getting longer?

If you're like me, you may have a to-do list that's a mile long. The hardest things on my list are often the tasks that will take me less than 15 minutes to complete and I can often feel incredibly unproductive when those seemingly tiny tasks don't get done. Now don't get me wrong, I adore my to-do list and holding myself accountable, but this can sometimes leave me feeling like I've failed to do enough as my list grows.

Firstly, I think it's crucial to acknowledge that during a pandemic, taking care of yourself is a priority, even if that means something(s) on your list won't get done. This past year has been difficult--to say the least--and you should be proud of yourself for both the little and big things you have accomplished.



Andrew Mori

Personally, I prioritize my list of things to do weekly. As a college student, that usually means my priorities are assignments first, followed by phone calls and then emails. This won't work for everyone, but I also designate certain times to do tasks on my list. When I need to make phone calls, I will put my headphones on and go for a walk.

I also think it's helpful to organize tasks one at a time and give yourself incentives to complete them. The Pomodoro Technique can be helpful for organizing tasks into time intervals, and I usually designate 15 or 20 minutes to do certain tasks.

To-do lists can seem never-ending and frustrating when tasks don't get accomplished, but some days that's just how it will go--especially during a global pandemic. Shifting your perspective on accomplishments can be difficult, but helpful if you're like me and feel bad about yourself if you don't look productive on-paper. If you need to take a nap, then take that nap. If you need to wind down from class and watch Netflix, then binge that show. Finding a balance and shifting your perspective on priorities is a great first step to managing to-do lists.

Looking for some advice and wanting to remain anonymous? Submit a question to this form [here](#) or email apopp@su-spectator.com for any questions.