

SAYING GOODBYE: LEAVING HOME FOR COLLEGE

From the Office of Student & Residence Life

The Office of Student & Residence Life is here to support you during your transition to college life. There are many things waiting for you here that will be exciting and pleasurable, others that will be a challenge and an adjustment. You can make your transition smoother by taking the time to say goodbye to those people in your life who have helped to get you to where you are today (and allowing them the opportunity to say goodbye to you).

A goodbye is really an acknowledgment of the significance of the people in your life, and a reflection on the loss of separation that is approaching. Saying goodbye allows us to reflect on all that was positive about the phases of our lives that are coming to an end. The process of saying goodbye allows us to evaluate all that we have and all that we are in the present, and allows us to enter new experiences with clear ideas of what is important to us. Learning to master changing environments and changing human relationships is important - change is constantly with us.

How should you say goodbye?

While each individual must develop their own style, the following five strategies are helpful to most people:

1. **Make it a gradual process.** Take the time to think about the changes that you are making in your life. Decide who has been important in your current life phase and plan ways to celebrate your connection to them over the next weeks.
2. **Think about the activities that have been fulfilling for you.** What is important to you? What can you take with you? What will have to be left behind? How can you celebrate these activities?
3. **Communicate with those around you.** Talk to family members and friends about how leaving home (or other communities) feels to you. Let important people know how much they mean to you and how they will be missed. Discuss ways in which you will reunite in the future (Thanksgiving break? Winter break? By telephone? By mail?).
4. **Take time to appreciate what you have and what is ahead.** Look through yearbooks and photographs. Talk about old times. Realize how much you've grown in your current environment. Read materials from Manhattan School of Music to remind yourself of exciting things to come. Read the New York Times or a New York City guidebook and think about the opportunities which lie ahead.

5. **Define areas of continuity in your life.** Although your relationships with the people in your life may be changing, they are not necessarily ending. With whom will you stay in touch? How? What things about you are unlikely to change? Chances are, if you are funny, or self-reflective, or athletic or charming in your current environment, you will be all of those things here as well as your musical ambitions with you to college. There are many activities that you do in your current environment that you will be able to enjoy in New York.

What should you avoid when saying goodbye?

1. **Do not deny the losses that you will face when you make your transition to college.**

Although you can keep busy enough not to think about these things, thinking only about what is to come, and not paying attention to where you are coming from, will only make the sense of loss greater. You may have to deal with the losses of the old environment and the challenges of the new all at once!

2. **Do not wear rose colored glasses.** If you overly glorify the environment you are leaving, the new one is unlikely to measure up. No matter how good your experiences are to date, nothing is perfect!

3. **Do not be overly critical of your current environment, activities and relationships.**

This approach does not give enough credit to what you have experienced in your life. It does not allow you to enjoy and hold on to all that has come before MSM. This also creates the opposite risk of over-glorifying - it puts pressure on life at MSM to be the answer to all past frustrations.

4. **Do not detach yourself too abruptly from your current life.** If you do not take the time to reflect and celebrate, you deny yourself an opportunity to create closure. In the end, this does not really protect you from loss, and it may leave others feeling hurt.

We at MSM are very much looking forward to saying, "Hello." But first, we hope you will take the time to say, "Goodbye."

(Adapted from work by Dr. Craig Vickio of Bowling Green State University)