Don’t worry be happy: making new friends at university

Most students are anxious about making friends when they first move into residence. I personally didn’t sleep the night before I moved in. Fortunately, I quickly realized that there was really no need to worry at all. Now I share a residence building with eight hundred students just like myself, all wanting to meet new people and make new friends. Unlike the first day of high school when you had your best friends from elementary school with you, in first year university everyone is in the same boat. The majority of students know no more than a few friends or acquaintances and so you can feel less nervous about being the only one who hardly knows anyone there.

The first new person you will meet in residence is your roommate but don’t feel pressured to instantly become their best friend! Sometimes when you meet someone, you both have an instant connection and know that you will be good friends for a long time coming. Most of the time though friendship needs time to blossom, especially when you were randomly assigned your roommate or you have very different communication styles. My roommate is significantly quieter than I am and for the first few days we didn’t even speak to each other; we only exchanged good mornings and pleasant smiles. I’ve been patient with her and gave her space to come out of her shell all on her own. Now that it has been a week, we are starting to get used to each other and are working together to help organize our rooms.

The next new people you will meet are your floor mates. The first few days of Frosh are designed for students to get to know everyone living on the same floor. It is really important to participate in the activities planned on these days as making these floor connections can make your stay in residence a lot easier. For that purpose, most residences have Residence Advisors (RAs) on every floor who act as mentors and give guidance to the students living on that floor. RAs will call a floor meeting on the first day so that everyone can introduce themselves and explain the ‘house’ rules.

Finally, you will start to get to know the students from all the other floors in your building. At your interactive orientation you’ll meet people in your program, some of whom will be from your city and some with common interests while others will have absolutely nothing in common with you. There`s no cause to get stressed because during orientation you just need to be open to meeting new people.

University is a new experience, in a new environment, with new people. Take it all in since this is one of the last times you will ever be in a class of 1000 new kids. Living on campus will give you many opportunities to meet new people and make connections with some that you would never have had without school. Have fun and leave the anxiety for meeting your deadlines, not new people.

By Rachel M. a first year student at Ryerson University.