Off to college and losing touch with friends

Alice,

Help me! I left my two best friends at home when I went to college. Now don't get me wrong, I love college! I'm making new friends and I even love some of my classes. I just feel like I'm forgetting these friends. I only get to talk to them for like 15 minutes, if that, a week. I feel like we are losing touch and I don't want that to happen. Can you help me? Thanks!

? Losing touch

Answer

Dear Losing touch,

What you describe is something that's common during times of transition. Going from high school to college is often hard, and, as you've indicated, the balance between making new friends while maintaining old friendships can be tricky. With any type of long distance relationship, there are some tried and true ways to stay up-to-date with each other's lives. For instance, you can stay connected through the web, email, by text message, or by phone?you may even try snail mail! When you're able to, you can also rely on good old-fashioned in-person hang outs. In the end, it's probably best to use a combination of these methods to keep in touch. It's also worth pointing out that most relationships will continue to change over your lifetime, something that you're seeing first hand right now.

First, a focus on technology: you have a lot of options here! From the different forms of instant messaging to social media, there's a plethora of ways to send pictures or messages to quickly let friends know you're thinking of them. For more in-depth communication, you can call your friends or write longer emails (with pictures) about what's going on in your life. You can send these to individuals or a group of friends. If you're craving some face time with your besties, but can't manage to be in the same place at the same time, why not try to set up a video chat? To make sure you're setting time aside to catch up, you may even try setting a time each week to catch up with friends from home. If you're hoping for a more personal touch, you may also try sending letters, cards, or gifts through the old postal service. Keeping a list of birthdays in your planner or calendar will remind you of these opportunities to send a little something special.

Finally, you can take advantage of any in-person time you have with your friends from home. Many colleges and universities have overlapping holiday breaks, so it might be fun to plan mini-reunions if everyone is back in your hometown during these times. Maybe you and your
friends could take turns planning so that each person gets a chance to organize a little get-together or alternate visits to each others’ campuses.

Even with all of these great ways to stay in touch, remember that it’s natural for friendships to change over time, especially when friends move away for college. You might notice, as time goes on, that you mostly keep in touch with a just few close buddies from home. These might be the exceptional friendships, the ones that are able to withstand the test of time and distance. Keeping up with your best pals from home and making new friends can be a tough balancing act, but also an opportunity for growth. Enjoy your friends, wherever they’re to be found!

Alice!

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