

Transcript Season 1 Episode 1: Top 3 Tips for Going Back to School or Starting Work

Podcast Opener:

Adulting – Thinking of all the things adults have to do can be intimidating. Maybe you are realizing just how much you don't know about living on your own.

If this sounds familiar, join us today to learn the skills you need and take some of the stress out of being an adult.

This is Grown Up U, an adulting podcast to help you navigate the twists and turns of adult life. Listen and get life skills you didn't learn in school.

Podcast Script:

Rachel Chaney: Welcome to the first episode of our Grown Up U podcast, I'm Rachel Chaney, I am the Yell County family and consumer sciences agent and I'm with the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service.

And today we're going to be talking about starting college or maybe starting your first job and maybe you're nervous about that. And if you are, that's OK. I hope you'll keep listening. We've definitely been there.

And here with me is Pamela Luker, and I'm going to let her introduce herself.

Pamela Luker: I'm Pamela Luker and I'm the family and consumer sciences agent for Pope County.

Rachel Chaney: So, we have definitely been there and during this podcast, we are going to share some tips to make a transition from high school to college or to your first job little easier if you'll keep them in mind and put them in place. Hopefully they'll help you out.

As someone who I'm kind of more of a traditional student if you look at it that way. I was graduated college, sorry, graduated high school and went on to college, to the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. I got my bachelor's and then right out of college, got a job with Extension actually. And I've been with them for nine years.

But I moved to an area that I didn't know anyone. So, I definitely understand the nerves. That was definitely probably the scariest for me. Fresh out of college, moving to somewhere where I didn't know very many people. In the end, you know, I got my master's while working.

So, I understand juggling your time, too, with that. But, Pam, you had a little a little different background than what I did, right?

Pamela Luker: Yeah. So, my experience was more of a non-traditional experience for a college student. So actually, not too long after I graduated from high school, I went into a career and moved out the state and just started fresh and had to learn some of these things as I went, and I wish I had someone to tell me some of these pointers.

But in my late twenties, I went back to school and get my bachelor's degree and then later my master's degree and I actually switched career path.

So hopefully my experience, as well as Rachel's is a little bit of a different experience and can help you guys, whether you're getting a new job just starting out or if you're starting college for the first time.

Rachel Chaney: Yes, so we've got two different experiences here. We're going to share with you three tips for maybe getting started and hopefully this will be helpful to you.

If you've been there, done that and you want to share your experiences, use the #grownupu. You can follow us on social media and share with us what you've learned and what are some things, tips that you would like to share or your own experiences or maybe how this has helped you first.

So, our tips for getting started is to get social, be engaged, and manage your time wisely. You know, Pam, if you don't mind, tell us what we mean by getting social.

Pamela Luker: Alright! Sure Rachel. So, what we mean by getting social is actually putting your phone down, and I know that's hard for some of us these days but put your phone down and start talking face to face with other people.

As soon as you start college or maybe even your new job, make it a point to introduce yourself to other students or your coworkers. You may have to get out of your comfort zone and remember, first impressions matter. So, if you're not getting that phone down and talking face to face and having that interaction, that can really be a negative experience at your first job or with your first college professor.

So, make sure that you are putting the phone down and getting that Face-To-Face interaction also with the other person talk and listen to what they're saying, become involved in on campus, in your office and professional groups and activities. So that's really important because if you don't become involved, you might not make it.

I know even on campus, I noticed that some students who didn't go out of their way to try to see

what was going on or speak to the professor, especially when they were having trouble with something, they didn't seem to make it through to get their goal. Which is get their degree.

Or at the office, they didn't stick around as long. So also in an office situation, make sure you're avoiding those slackers. I know most of us have been in that situation, and we know after a few days exactly who those slackers are.

So, you don't want to get that reputation and you don't want that to rub off on you. Instead, what you can do is you can find a mentor. And as you grow in your job, you can also become a newbie's mentor. So, learn who those leaders are and get to know them.

Find out what the social media policy is, and the dress code is for your campus or your company, because I know that this can get you in trouble. If you don't know the social media policy or dress code, you don't want that negative reputation.

And as you become more comfortable around campus or in your job, make sure you're willing to help out or volunteer when need is put in the work and effort from the beginning, and you will be rewarded later.

But those are a few tips that I have on getting social. Rachel is there anything that you've experienced you might want to share?

Rachel Chaney: Yeah, just to kind of add to what you had already mentioned is becoming involved in your campus office and professional groups or activities is really important. That may seem like it's not at first, but it helps you in the long run.

As far as college goes, that professional group might have alumni that can help you when looking for a job. Because I keep hearing the thing, it's not sometimes what you know, it's who you know. And so, networking is super important.

I know in our organization we have professional associations that we can be a part of that help us in our career as we go. It helps with getting promoted because we can get awards for different things that we do. And a lot of times jobs have that as well.

Different jobs have different kind of things that you can do, but even just those birthday parties or were stuff like that. It may seem kind of like, "Oh, I have to go to another party", but I mean, it's also OK, who doesn't love cake?

But I think it's very important to have those interactions at networking opportunity and get to know the people you work with. Or that if you're in a dorm, go into some of the dorm activities that they have. If you're new and don't really know anybody at the college who might be joining a sorority or fraternity. And there's different things you can do to get social.

And one thing also to add on the social media policy and dress code, you know, social media is a

part of our life. It's something we have that will always be around. And, you know, I'm not saying trying to be the social media police or anything like that, but I will say people will check you out. So as someone who is fresh out of college joining extension, I remember thinking back the administrative assistant said we tried to find you on Facebook to get to know you before you started. And so that first impression, they actually already had a first impression of me based off of my social media.

That's really all I have for getting social. The next one is be engaged. So, are we talking about someone getting a ring? Is that what this is? Pam?

Pamela Luker: No, we are not talking about Beyonce putting a ring on it. Well, so what we mean is now your assignments. You want to be engaged in your work. Write down everything. In a new job, ask for a copy of your job description. On campus or in your new job, learn everything you can about what's expected of you, and you want to identify resources that are available. Take every training opportunity that is offered.

I know whenever I first started, that was some advice that I think Rachel, you may have been given me, is to get out there wanting to be social and learn, learn who everyone was within extension, but also to take the training opportunities whenever they become available because they can benefit you.

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Asked for clear clarification, but whenever you do that, you are showing that you're interested, and you're engaged. So, for me, it makes me feel like someone really cares about their job and wants to do a good job. It also helps you not to make assumptions.

So, Rachel, I know you gave me some good advice from whenever I started on that. Do you have any additional that you'd like to add?

Rachel Chaney: Yeah, I'll just say and again, those training opportunities are a great way to get to know people. So, it's a great way to kind of check off the checklist of getting social because sometimes those trainings will have networking opportunities.

And so, you want to be involved in those and having those certificates look good on your resume for other jobs. And maybe this is just a steppingstone to something else for college, you know, is it someone who was doing the trainings and teaching?

I always felt good when someone would ask a question because that meant that they were listening. So be engaged in class, ask questions afterwards, take advantage of those office hours that they give you, because I've heard a lot of teachers say they'll wait till the last minute, as in trying to get their grades up or whatever, and that teacher maybe has never heard of you. And so, it's really important to make those relationships and be engaged in class, drop out and visit them with their office hours, ask for those clarifications.

And just something I've seen in this job has a lot of times with people who maybe didn't last as long or chose to leave extension because they didn't try to be engaged. They didn't ask questions when they needed help.

And a lot of times people aren't going to just hold your hand. They're going to expect you to be a self-starter. They're not going to micromanage you. I mean, you might have that in some cases, but at least in our job, we don't have that. And so, you kind of have to make that step to ask the question.

Pamela Luker: Well, our next step is going to be manage our time wisely. So, Rachel, we know college professors and employers expect you to be on time. Can you tell us a little bit about how we can make that happen?

Rachel Chaney: Yes, I can. And I will tell you, this is one area I have to work on myself. So, I think everybody can and a little better time of managing their time and you want to just plan ahead. Think about what you've got going on and give yourself plenty of time in the mornings.

You know, there's always going to be something that's going to happen that you want to allow time for in the morning to get there and getting ready, driving to campus, finding a parking spot at morning, traffic of the commute and there's a wreck. I mean, there's so many things that can happen. So definitely think about that.

Be aware of the planning fallacy which states that you will probably need more time than you think you will. Something I need to remember for sure.

When planning your class schedule or work schedule, ask yourself if you're an owl or a rooster, which is what this means is when do you have the most energy? Is it in the morning or in the afternoon? Now, for myself, I am definitely not a rooster. I'm an owl. I have always been a night owl and I definitely have more energy and productivity in the afternoon.

So, a lot of times I kind of plan in that and just know mornings is not good for me. And I think me and Pam are complete opposites on this. Right?

Pamela Luker: Absolutely! So, in the morning I'm ready to go. I want and I accomplish most of my task early in the day but by nighttime that energy is gone. And just for example, Rachel and I work a lot together. We actually work well together but one thing that we've learned is I am a rooster. She's an owl. So, when we work together, we've learned we have to do it kind of in the middle of the day.

Like right now we're recording our podcast and it is the middle of the day because it works out for both of us but if I were to ask Rachel to get on with me and let's get some work going at 8:00 in the morning, she may be calling me about 8:15 am, telling me I need to set that time back a little.

Rachel Chaney: Yes, yes, I definitely need coffee in the morning to get me going, but I can do it if I have to. But I just know I'm better in the afternoons, but which is very opposite of a lot of people. I'm just getting things done and checking things off.

And where some people hit that 2:00 p.m. lull and tiredness, I'm like, let's go, let's get started. So, I just know that going in and I think that's very important. Important to think about.

Researchers actually call this our circadian rhythm, a twenty-four-hour internal clock running in the background of our brain cycles between alertness and sleepiness. So do your most important work when you have the most energy.

This could be the same with class schedule. Thinking about that, and I will tell on myself, I thought because I went to high school and I had to be there eight o'clock, that I could do a college, eight o'clock class or seven. I think it was actually even seven thirty class.

And of course, my parents laughed at me because they know me well and said there's no way that's going to work. And they were right. It was very hard for that semester. And let's just say I never did the eight o'clock class again.

With that, when you're multitasking, you want to take small task. First, tackle those small tasks. We throw around that word multitasking, but studies have found that deeply focusing on a single task at a time can be more helpful and 500 percent more productive.

Pomodoro technique. So, this was really interesting looking this up. It's a time management method developed by Francesco Cirillo, and I will probably say his name wrong, but I highly recommend you look into this technique. It was developed in the late 1980s and this technique uses a timer to break work into intervals traditionally twenty-five minutes in length, separated by short breaks each.

And a roll is known as a pomodoro, which is the Italian word for tomato, after the tomato shaped kitchen timer that Cirillo used as a university student. So, I think that's a really neat technique to try. I'm definitely going to plan to try it myself and I'll keep you posted on how it goes.

But I know it's something in a way, I do want to have a little to do list. Once I marked something off, I take a little break because that's something definitely give yourself a little reward for getting through whatever you need to do on your checklist.

Pamela Luker: I can definitely see how I can benefit from it. I know that sometimes during the day I'll just take a little break and I'll go and take a walk around the block or something and I feel so much more focused when I come back. So, I haven't tried twenty five minutes, but that's a good little tip. I appreciate that, Rachel and I am going to try it myself.

Rachel Chaney: Yeah. Yeah, I know. I kind of can get hyper focus so I get maybe two into

whatever task I'm working on so that twenty-five-minute timer can help me with maybe my procrastination and putting things off. Where it just, it's just twenty-five minutes or so. It can help me wrap up things because you get too involved in something, maybe keep working on it like a paper or something, keep fine tuning it. Giving you that timer helps you with that deadline too.

And according to sleep researcher Nathaniel Kleitman, our minds naturally crave breaks after every 90 minutes of intense work. So that's very important to think about. And especially, you know, when a job you may not get set breaks are not our job doesn't have that.

And so scheduling breaks for yourself is very important when thinking about the different tasks that you have to do in the day. You can use your phone to save time by setting up reminders and your calendar.

I actually have on my calendar at work and have this option to set up different things. And so, it has like a focus time where it gives me kind of a reminder, here's a two hour window to just focus and then actually has one on checking emails. So that way I can, like, turn off my emails because that's a distraction that I have.

And so that's something you could look at too is setting up that in your calendar. And I set reminders if I have to write things down, that's one thing. I have to have my calendar. And Pam knows this if I don't have my calendar. I can write something down. I'm more likely going to forget it. So a lot of times if I don't write it in my calendar, if you look at my phone, my reminders have stuff that I've thought about that I need to do for the next day.

And I love to do lists. And so, a to do list tells you what to do, but a schedule is going to tell you when you're going to do it. And then checklist can be useful to help you check off task and think about what other tasks you need to accomplish so you can kind of do a combination where you start with that checklist and then figure out what you need to do for that week and then set it in your schedule when to do it.

I know Pam talked about we set she set time to block off for recording this session and put it in her schedule to block off for recording and editing. Right. So, it's definitely something you've used. And I know I've used to love getting things off my checklist. I feel a little bit of an accomplishment to want to do that.

But prioritize your checklist. And this is something I need to work on is sometimes I do things that maybe aren't as important, but it's a task I know I can complete easily and sometimes they're just too daunting. But it's important to get in there and do it. Don't just keep putting it off.

And I'm saying this to myself, learn to be organized so that you can stay focused when necessary. Don't be afraid to ask for help or when you can delegate if you have the option to delegate your time or if you, maybe you're starting a job and you are

over people. Don't feel like you have to tackle it all yourself, delegating it out, or we work as a team here in my office and some things we do together. And so, I work with my coworkers to figure that out. Me and Pam work together on a lot of things and trying to figure out who's doing what and talk about it when we're getting ready to do something and identify your time wasters and limit those distractions.

Maybe it's text messages, Facebook, Instagram, Tick Tock. I know you can be on Tick Tock for hours and not realize it. So, is it something that can wait until after work or class? So, putting away those distractions and know some people turn off their emails when they're at work and only check it at a certain time. So, they kind of let you know you're not going to get it, if you're needing something immediate, you need to contact me because I only check my emails at eight o'clock in the morning and then I do my job and don't check them until later in the evening or whatever.

So, figure out what is your distraction and try to limit it. If procrastination is a concern of yours, try to follow the five-minute rule. This was actually popularized by the Instagram founder, Kevin Systrom. The rule means telling yourself you're only going to do five minutes of work on a project, in most cases that's enough to get you motivated. So maybe try the five minutes and then it turns into your twenty-five minutes of work that you need to do to get ahead at college and in work.

Set goals for yourself. Do you have a short term, medium term or long-term goal? Short term is going to be one year or less. Medium term is the next five years and long term is over five years.

So, think about your goals and set those goals and then reevaluate your goals. You know, your long-term goals might change. So, think about that as you're looking at college and getting out of college and going to work or maybe just getting out of high school and go into work, it may change.

I know Pam just talked about how she decided to go back to college. Right. You mentioned you had started in work. And so, your goals changed over the time period.

Pamela Luker: Right. They did. What I thought I wanted to do, I decided that's not what I wanted to do. And so, I went back in and went to college so that I could do what I want or the career I wanted. But, you know, things and the situations in my life changed over the years, too. I had a family and some priorities changed.

And that's OK to change career paths in the middle of your life, if that's if that's what's going to make you want to get up and go to work every morning. There's nothing wrong with that. I know that I absolutely love my job and I'm so glad, even though it was difficult doing it later in life while I had a family but going back and making it possible to make that career change. Just know, it is OK to do it and it can be a positive thing.

Rachel Chaney: Yes, for sure, I know I went from high school to college, thinking I was going to be a go into radiology and quickly realized science is not necessarily my area of expertise, but something you kind of need for radiology.

And so, my short term goal change in that kind of change all my goals and went into family and consumer science and didn't even plan to be with Extension, even though my family's in that. So, I've known about it my whole life, but I just kind of worked out that way. And so, and now my goals have changed what I want to do as I get older too. So, I just generally set goals for yourself, but reevaluate those goals.

It's OK to change them if you have to. And then last thing is just keep to a routine. We are what we repeatedly do.

The best way to get ahead in school and on the job is to stay healthy. And that means getting the sleep that you need and thinking about work life balance. And that's something we hear about a lot. But it's really important to have that balance. This could be the same with college.

College has a lot that you're juggling in a way, prepares you for working. Is your juggling finals and, multiple jobs, getting social, getting that social aspect, and work, and not having money and all that or so many different things that you have to deal with in college, too, as well as with work starting out?

I'm trying to figure out how to be successful in your job, so I definitely feel for those getting started. And Pam, you had something?

Pamela Luker: I just wanted to go right along with you. You were talking about keeping a routine and the best way to get ahead in school and on the job is to stay healthy. And that means getting enough sleep that you need.

I know, especially whenever you're in college having to study for those finals and things like Rachel said, sometimes we don't take care of ourselves. But I can attest to just having a family and kids. You are running here and there and having more to keep up with and things at home, you know, it can become overwhelming. And I feel like I don't always get enough sleep.

But even yesterday, my family took a little time to relax, and I got extra sleep. And today I feel so refreshed and I can definitely see the difference in how I am approaching things at work, because I'll tell you, no one likes you to be cranky at work, at school. You know, you deserve the best. You and certainly your coworkers.

Rachel Chaney: Yes, and those all-nighters, while they may seem tempting, they do not always work. And maybe some of you it's worked out good for you. But I have found it doesn't always work out for me. And so, it's very important to set your time, schedule time wisely.

Think about what test you have coming up. And don't try to wait till the last minute to study all night or whatever. As someone who has tried it and it didn't work, just take it for me to do something different.

And we just hope these tips have helped you. So, when you're starting that new job or you're starting college, take time to get social, be engaged and plan your time wisely.

We're trying to say thank you for joining us for our first episode of Grown Up U. We have many more episodes to come that we hope you'll enjoy.

I know we have some on getting your utilities and stuff straight for your apartment to think. The next one is how to just establish yourself in a new place, getting along with coworkers and roommates. I'm intrigued to see on that one how that works because, you know, me and Pam have to work to get that's when we get along great.

So, budgeting your FASFA refund and a whole bunch of other topics that we have coming up. So be sure to join us for the Grown Up U podcast.

You can follow us and social media, follow us on whatever you listen to your podcast on how to keep up to date on new episodes. And once again, thank you for joining us. And share with us that #grownupu what you have tips for going back to school or starting work.

Podcast Closer:

For more information about this or any Grown Up U podcast or to learn more about Grown Up U educational opportunities, visit our website at www.uaex.uada.edu/grown-up-u/

Be sure and follow us on Facebook and Instagram @UADAgrownupupodcast.

The Grown Up U podcast series is brought to you through the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service. Contact your local county extension office for programs available in your area.

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture offers all its Extension and Research programs to all eligible persons without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.