Extra Credit: 10 Most Important Things I Learned in Counseling

1. **Showing up on time** is very important, because it conveys many important personality characteristics about your person. It shows that you are respectful, punctual, responsible, and are thinking ahead. Believe it or not, showing up on time – or even a couple of minutes earlier, is easier than you have ever thought. All you have to do is plow through the first few mornings with the proper routine of events in mind, and after you show up on time forcefully, it will become your second nature.

2. **Prepare to meet higher expectations** than you have thought. Myself personally, I worked really hard for the first few weeks of the semester, and that set a high standard for me. At a later time, you cannot possibly start to slack, because you will noticeably fall off the up-sloping improvement curve, and your professor will motivate you by being extra strict with grading your work. It’s all for the best, though, because your next professor may be a low-standard guy, and you will have that class covered, and with ease at that.

3. **Sit in front of the class.** Sure, everyone says that, but have you tried it? Not only are you able to see and hear better, but all the heads that turn around will not be affecting your fragile focus. The only thing in front of you is an intimidating professor, and you have to pay attention. If you sit in the back of class, you see a lot of stupid things happen all over again – just like in high school. Sitting in class upfront is making a decision to be a responsible student for that day.

4. **Push yourself at the beginning of the semester.** That is the right time to begin working hard, not in the middle or the end when you are just trying to fix things. If you work hard enough and even get ahead in those few weeks, you will be able to surf off of that not only with confidence, but with well-earned competence. You will be able to do assignments ahead of time, so when things pop up, you will be able to do them sweat- and stress-free.

5. **Eat breakfast. That’s right, just eat breakfast.** Your body has been fasting all night, and it needs energy. Some people say they are not hungry in the morning. Well, true, sometimes you feel not hungry, but still have some tea and toast just to have something in your stomach. I noticed a drastic change in my focus and energy levels after I had a huge omelet and coffee, as opposed just having a quick yogurt or two, and some coffee. Not only your body will be able to assist you in
focusing better, but you won't be thinking about the food 80% of the class time.

6 **Analyze assignments** that have been handed back to you. This allows you to monitor your progress and fix your mistakes so that there is less of a chance that you will make them again in the future. Otherwise you are just throwing yourself to chance when you take another exam without making the previous information concrete in your brain. Don’t learn from other people’s mistakes – that’s dumb, because you were not there and you did not pay attention to the details. The best thing you can do is learn from your own mistakes, and learn quickly. Know what you did wrong, ask yourself how you can avoid doing that again, and don’t do that again – and if you do, at least you will be able to deal with the consequences.

7 **Ask questions.** Some people may feel dumb because they ask questions, but you are in college to learn things that you do not know, not to pretend you know things that you do not know. Just ask the question – any question, and I bet you money that a few other people wanted to ask the same question, but just didn’t have the balls to do so. Not only are you learning new helpful things and helping others learn, but you also grow in their eyes. Don’t believe me? Think about the last time you thought someone was an idiot for asking a question. If you can, then you are an ignorant and egocentric person with no grasp of reality.

8 **Get that sleep.** Don’t surf the internet, just sleep. And read before you go to sleep, it will make you fall asleep faster, and you will develop your brain. Waking up refreshed in its own starts a good day, so why not do it?

9 **Get to know your professor.** I am not suggesting you kiss up to him or her, just get to know them so that you can relate on a level that you can follow. It will also make it easier for you to ask for questions and for help. Contrary to the common belief, professors are human beings.

10 **Do that homework** – no one can do it for you! You are not doing anyone a favor when you come to class unprepared, and it’s just disrespectful and wasteful of your time and the professor’s. Don’t question this one, just do it.