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have a college education and you bring passion, skills and enthusiasm to an employer, so why not use the interview process as a way for you to ask some questions too? Ask your potential bosses if they like working with new graduates. Why or why not? Find out if they're willing to mentor you if you do a great job for them in return.

When I went for my first job at *The Buffalo News*, I wanted to be a features reporter. I ended up as an advertising copywriter. Do I regret it? Absolutely not. For one thing, I learned how to write great advertising copy, which serves me well as an entrepreneur today. More importantly though, I was blessed to have an amazing first boss at *The Buffalo News*. Joe Kirchmyer, senior creative services manager, was a mentor to me in every sense of the word. He pushed for me to attend the American Society of Journalists and Authors conference in New York City when I told him I wanted to go to enhance my freelance writing career; he edited my work and gave me fantastic feedback; and he was there to answer my questions whenever I barged into his office with my business or life crisis of the moment (I was a little bit of a drama queen back then).

Salary, perks and benefits packages are all important, but finding a boss who is willing to mentor you is more important for your first couple of jobs post-graduation.

Leverage Other Positive People's Strengths

The cool part about surrounding yourself with positive people is that you can all tap into each other's strengths. In school, we so often focus on our deficits instead of celebrating the positive. When you get your

report card and realize that you were excellent in three subjects and average in two, how often do you worry about the two less-than-stellar grades instead of celebrating what you're excelling in?

True innovators realize that success happens when you focus on your strengths and fill in the gaps by leveraging* other people's strengths. We give ourselves permission to stop trying to be great at everything. Take this book, for example. I love writing prose, but I'm not well-versed on the intricacies of grammar and the *many* rules of style. Granted, I know the difference between *there*, *their*, and *they're*. If you e-mail me with, "WHATS UP MARIA BTW I FOUND YOUR WEBSITE YOU ROCK TOTALLY ttys J.," I will probably have a coronary.

However, I know my limitations when it comes to editing. So I hired a professional editor and leveraged her strengths. I'm also not great at writing interactive quizzes. Luckily, my intern is fantastic at it! Actually, this book shows you what can happen when you surround yourself with other positive people and combine your strengths. All of my Campus Calm experts specialize in their own niche; together we provide you with the collective advice you need to stress less and transform your college experience.

So how can you and your friends leverage each other's strengths as students ... in a way that doesn't involve copying papers or cheating on an exam? ☺ Well, group projects come to mind. Maybe your group has to give an oral presentation for class. You love talking, one partner loves computer design and the other partner writes well. So you do the research together and outline the ideas. Then you present a

* *Sheri McConnell, my business coach, introduced me to the concept of leverage*
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majority of the speech, the designer designs a kick-a\$\$ PowerPoint presentation and the writer writes the speech. If you all love talking, turn your presentation into a debate. My friends and I took that approach for a group presentation on TV censorship for a freshman English class, and our classmates loved it.

What else can you and your friends help each other with?

How about if it's as simple as hanging out with your friends on a Saturday night? You're the quiet one who also happens to be a great listener. Steve's the rational one who can lead some heated debates about politics, religion, energy conservation, how ridiculous old boy Hugh Hefner looks in his red velvet bathrobe (or as my husband informs me, "It's not a bathrobe, Maria. It's a smoking jacket."). 😊 Steve can engage the group for hours. Syesha's sarcastic sense of humor provides the group with comic relief when the great debate starts to get too heavy. And maybe Danny makes a lethal nacho cheese dip—because every group deserves a chef!

What if Your Current Friends Aren't Positive People?

Sometimes surrounding yourself with positive people isn't easy, especially if you've spent your life gravitating toward people who make it easy for you to give up on your ideas. If you need further motivation to find positive support, listen to the words of Ross Szabo, Campus Calm's Mental Health Survival Expert.

