

Episode 89 - Dale Troy

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SPEAKERS

Moira McCullough, Dale Troy



Moira McCullough 00:00

Welcome to the College Scoops podcast. I'm your host, Moira McCullough. And today we're talking with Dale Troy, a health coach who works with students to reduce their daily stress, enabling them to thrive whether they're in high school or in college.



Dale Troy 00:15

As soon as you feel like there's a problem, if you feel off in any way, whether it's academically, mentally or physically, you need to do something about it. You don't have a parent there saying, Are you okay? There's nobody there. To do that. You have to check in with yourself.



Moira McCullough 00:38

This is the College Scoops podcast and I'm your host, Moira McCullough, we focus on everything college related from the admissions process to where to eat, stay and explore on and round campuses. Our guests include founders, educators, authors and experts in the college space. Join us as these experts share their knowledge, experiences and lessons learned to help you have stress free and formative and tasty college journeys. Whether it's your first or last child going to college, or you're just interested in going to a college town for a game or meal, we've got you covered. If you haven't already, please subscribe to the

College scoops podcast to get the inside scoop, send everything college related, and leave us a review. Thanks to all of our sponsors partners in the entire College Scoops Ambassador team for helping us bring valuable content to our community. If you would like to support College Scoops as a sponsor, please head over to patreon@patreon.com/collegescoops and sign up as a sustaining listener, insider or Deluxe sponsor. We have exclusive benefits for our members and even a College Scoops care package. Dale Troy is a college success coach and certified health coach. Parents hire her to help their children transition successfully from high school to college. Dale is the mom to three daughters who graduated from Yale College, and she is a graduate of Yale College and Yale Law School. Dale's mission is to give all students confidence in their ability to handle college by teaching them strategies that reduce their daily stress and enable them to thrive. The freshmen dropout rate is currently 30% Dale's college success formula program protects parents college investment by setting their children up for success from the start of freshman year into the college skills podcast. Dale, thanks so much for joining us today.

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Dale Troy 02:32

Thanks for having me. Looking forward to it. So I was thrilled to meet you through a good mutual friend of ours, The College Spy Michelle, she's wonderful at connecting, introducing people and sharing information. So I just want to put a plug in for Michelle for always helping get the word out about college scoops and introducing us to people like yourself, and I have kids in college, I have one freshman who just left and when I heard the work that you do working with students, as a health coach, and as a college coach, I'm like, Oh my gosh, I need to talk to you. I have all these students who are going out who would really benefit from your expertise. What inspired you to be a health coach? Like, how did that come about? Well, thank you. It was a little bit of a journey my whole life. I thought, I'm gonna be a lawyer. My dad was a lawyer, my grandparents grandfather, both were lawyers. And that seemed like a great profession. As it turns out, lawyering was in at least in a big firm sense was in New York City was really about documents and not about people at the lower levels. And I found that extremely frustrating because I wanted to help people. I wanted to make a difference in people's lives. So that didn't last very long. I became a headhunter for lawyers, where I was helping people and that was awesome. But I had to transition once I had my twins who are now 25. And I wanted to do something that, yes, again, would help people but also would be an area that really interested me. And it was health, because I had had a lot of health issues growing up, and particularly in college, and that really affected my college experience. So I wanted to learn more about the body and how to live a healthy lifestyle and how I could have more control over how I felt. So that's why I decided to be a health coach.

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Moira McCullough 04:25

And you said, you're a parent, you have three daughters, you know who I think we learned so much from our kids to what were stressors for us as going through college or law school or you know, work. I think so much has changed as well. And I'm sure through your experience as a parent and with your daughters or their friends. There's a whole nother level of or different types of stress factors that and stressors that we didn't really have growing up. Did you find that at all?

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Dale Troy 04:56

Yeah, well, I often think to myself now I know I was stressed in college, but nobody talked about stress. Today, everybody's says they're stressed very easily, and people are much more open. But I also think that there's a lot more pressure on kids, I think a lot of that has to do with social media, they're just so connected to the, what's going on around them in comparing themselves. And that puts a lot of pressure on them. And I also think that just in general, I think parents are putting more expectations on their kids that they are, you know, they're really kind of, we're trying to design our kids to have a certain kind of life. And they feel that and that gives them added stress, whether they're gonna meet the expectations of their parents. So those two things, and then the world in general is just a much more competitive place, much more global, they're competing with other kids from other countries, not just within the United States. So all in all, it's harder, it's a harder life growing up.

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Moira McCullough 05:58

Yes, and we, as parents are always trying to help. But sometimes our help is, is an added stress factor. So what are some of the key stressors that students are feeling right now? What are the strategies or help work with them?

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Dale Troy 06:13

Yeah, well, as a freshman, I feel like the main one of the main things they're worried about is making friends. Because they go into a new environment, generally speaking, not knowing anyone, and not having their parents there to lean on. And they feel kind of alone. They know, like, how am I going to navigate this social situation, how, and I need to figure out how to fit in, quote, right, find my people, that's an expression that people use now. So I think there's a lot of pressure on I need to make friends. And if I don't, it's going to be a disaster. And then my daughter, one of my daughters did that me, she thought that she had chosen the wrong college. Like, after a few weeks, I chose the wrong college,

there's no one here I'm going to ever like and there's 1000s of kids there. And I need to transfer. But kids tend to be impatient. And they don't really understand, you know, you've taken a little bit of time, you have to go out there and smile and meet people and talk to people and join clubs and participate. There's a lot that you can do. And so when I'm working with the student who's having that issue, I'm reminding them of all those things. And I'm suggesting what really interests you Where can you find kids that are going to be similar to you where you're gonna feel like you can connect with them. And maybe we'll look at the list of clubs and figure out, you know, that one makes sense, you know, always wanted to do robotics, and that interests me, whatever it happens to be.

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Moira McCullough 07:39

Well, it's interesting when you're talking about even, you know, the stresses, I just remember walking into the cafeteria, the first time at college, I could feel the tray, you know, just shaking, and just wondering, like, how do I even make that decision about what table to sit at, you know, my roommate would didn't come with me. So it was just that, walking into that new environment. And as you said, they've been in high school, they've known these kids for so long. So it's the first time they're really walking into a whole new situation, without any familiarity at all. And many kids haven't lived away from home. So I'm somebody who works out. So I get my stress out through working out, just trying to go up and pick out what to eat. Or the second overwhelming thing, because I'm like, no one's telling me that I can't eat this, or Captain Crunch for breakfast, or dinner, that that's a good thing. My son's a freshman at college. And I think being fit physically and eating well, nutrition is a big concern, and worry of a lot of students.

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Dale Troy 08:41

Well, and it's interesting I, the students I've worked with haven't really expressed that as a concern. I'm more concerned because as you said, the parents aren't there and they have like free rein to do whatever they want. And a lot of them don't really your kids are probably more attuned to being healthy and fit. A lot of kids aren't. And they don't even have a sense of what what would be healthy or what should I not eat. So they really are kind of antsy about that. And, you know, I try to make it really easy for them and point out how do you know whether choosing healthy things. And one way I've come up with is to say, look at your plate, and how many colors on the plate. So if you have a plate of all white food, you're missing out on a lot of nutrients. So the more colors that you can have, the better off and kind of we start from there. And I also might say, check out the salad bar before you go to the hot food line with the french fries and hamburgers. You know, find some things on a salad but you can eat and focus on that more than the other stuff. So there are simple things that you can tell them but they a lot of them really have no

idea because they never you know their parents fed them. They just ate whatever was in front of them, especially boys. I think They just didn't don't really think about it. They just want they're just hungry. They just hungry, right?

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Moira McCullough 10:04

They don't care. It's like, I just want food. And I'm just gonna put it into my mouth before I realized what I ate. I love the colors. Yeah, I love that color. I remember, during the summer, you know, it was one of these camp things. And the kids requested like a lunch bunch from another family. And I remember, the parent walked up to me and said, you're going to be so disappointed at what your kids ordered. And I'm like, Dear God, tell me what they did. And it was white bread with fluff. And I thought, it's only one afternoon, it's the summer, let them go for it. That's an interesting point. And especially I think, sometimes we focus a lot on women and nutrition and health. But actually, the men and the boys have a similar situation where they're trying to gather the nutrients and the protein, and you will their body, as they're more active, where they're growing, etc. So walk us through kind of, again, what you do working as a health coach, and the key strategies or points that you go through with students, whether they're in high school or college,

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Dale Troy 11:10

Well, I have a program that I call College Success Formula, it really could apply to a high school student as well. But I see it as these are like, basic life skills that all kids really need to have need to be aware of and be able to use when they go to college. So the first one is setting goals for themselves and having like a plan of what do I want to get out of this semester? Why am I here, you know, there has to be some thought put into it. Otherwise, there's like no direction, and you don't really feel like you're accomplishing anything. So we talk a lot about that in the very beginning. So they have some kind of direction. I also have found for even for my when I think about myself in college, I knew I want to go to law school. And that goal they are in mind, even though it was a long term, well, that helped me stay straight, you know, really focused in my classes, because I would always think, you know, I'm doing this because I want to go to law school, it doesn't have to be that big of a goal. It could be you know, there's also goals. For instance, we talked about friends, a goal could be I want to find one good friend this semester. So I feel comfortable on campus. small goals, I want to be able to walk into the dining hall and not be nervous and just go sit down with some other people and start talking. That's what college is for. You know, college is about socializing and networking and getting to meet people. And the second one is all about time management, which sounds daunting. But it really is basically

getting kids to realize that they are in control of their own schedule. They don't have a parent waking them up or telling them you know when to eat, or when to study, they have to really figure it out and be responsible for it. And I helped them learn how to use the planner and the to do list and combine the two. Because I don't want them to think that they're going to remember everything I want everything to be written down. And that's really the way to be successful in college.

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Moira McCullough 13:09

Do they even use planners? Like I'm a paper and pen person? I love that. But do you find that students are receptive to that and they use it?

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Dale Troy 13:17

Well, when they work with me, they have to use a regular planner that they can hold on to. Because the research is that they remember things better. It just is much it's a much better way to function. They can use the digital, in addition, but everything has to be written down by hand, I have to say, I can think of this one kid who was at a university in Texas, and he his mom said he'll never use a planner. You know, I've been trying for years. 10 years won't do it. Well, he did. He did. And it you know, he has some ADHD and it really helped him feel much more in control. He liked the structure, he became a planner.

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Moira McCullough 14:03

You know, the other thing is, I think that they pull them out at different times of their life to and reflect back like, you know, if they were going to the next, you know, getting a job and moving to a new state once they graduate. And I've heard that all of a sudden, it's like pulling out that planner and looking Oh, what was I feeling when I was going to college? This is kind of like the same thing. What did I do and kind of learning and reflecting back on that and helping them gain the strength and the competence to go with the next challenge that they have or adventure as we say,

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Dale Troy 14:35

That's true. It's the same planner that my students use so that I can relate to what they're doing.

 Moira McCullough 14:41

You can model good behavior.

 Dale Troy 14:44

Yes, along with that, we talked a lot about study skills, where's the best place to study and how to study for a test versus a quiz and all those kinds of things. You know, it's amazing because I mean, there's a huge difference between studying in high school versus studying in college. It's just a whole lot. Their level. And it takes a little while for them to realize that, you know, we're talking about a different thing. It's not like you can just cram a couple hours before the test and get an A, that's just not how it's gonna work.

 Moira McCullough 15:11

And the teachers are not professors and the professors are not going to be daily. Remember, we have a quiz coming up in a week. So they're not they're kind of holding their hand and walking them through it. So it's more of self advocating, and, as you said, keeping things in track so that they're prepared to handle college level work in an unstructured environment.

 15:37

Totally. Yes. To me that, honestly, that is like the key to college is if you can do well with that the time management, study skills, everything else can fall into place. So the next thing after we talk about that is self advocacy, as you just mentioned, you know, finding all those mentors on your campus and knowing where to go where the resources are getting to know the residential assistant and go to professor's office hours, you know, so that they get to know you and you're not afraid to ask them a question, because that's why they're there. It's amazing how many students will say, I'm so glad I went to my professors office hours, because they told me about an internship, they're willing to write a letter of reference for me or you know, something like that. And if you don't do what they don't know you, exactly, yeah, you have to make the effort. And then also even knowing where the tutoring center is, and not being afraid to step to ask for help. Because a lot of kids are they don't want to, they don't want to think that somebody thinks I don't know anything, or I'm stupid, or, you know, I don't belong here because I have to go to the tutoring center. It's not like that in college.

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Moira McCullough 16:44

And which is that's a hard thing to kind of be at peace with.

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Dale Troy 16:49

Yes, definitely. But I will tell you, my girls who are, you know, very bright, they really use the tutors. I mean, I told them, absolutely go, you know, if you need to get your own tutor, and they don't have one available me, because that's self advocacy, right? In order to really understand the material and get to where you want to be. You can't just say, Oh, you know, it's okay. If I don't understand this, I'll just forget about it. Right? Yes not good.

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Moira McCullough 17:16

Well, I always, as a parent, saying that college is so expensive, my whole thing is, unless you've gone in there and made them work. Yeah, you need to go in and work with the professors they have ta is their there's their mentoring centers. So there's a lot of free available resources that you can work through, before you get in a situation if you have to go out and look for somebody else for private tutoring. But there's a lot there that's free and accessible, that students should give a try.

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Dale Troy 17:50

First, they're not used that, well, they exist, but students aren't using them enough. So that's one thing that I really helped them, realize that you are paying for this, that's their job to help you go use them. And that includes therapists, if you're having, you know, a mental health issue, don't be afraid to go make an appointment. As soon as you feel like there's a problem. If you feel off in any way, whether it's academically mentally, physically, you need to do something about it. You don't have a parent, they're saying, Are you okay? You know, they, there's nobody there to do that. You have to check in with yourself. Yeah. So that's number three. Number four is all of the healthy habits that we started kind of talking about. So I want to make sure that not only do they know what to eat in the cafeteria, but they know what to eat for snacks, they're making sure that they're drinking enough water every day and have a formula for that, and then getting enough sleep, and good sleep and exercising or doing some kind of movement every day.

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Moira McCullough 18:54

So in terms of just I'm going to go to the eating part, do you have set ideas and give them

examples of like, here's some really healthy good things to eat. I do have a list of healthy snacks. What is a healthy snack? I want to be able to share that with my kids.

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Dale Troy 19:12

Okay, let me show you. Let's say what a non healthy snack Okay, like what the common choices might be like a candy bar, potato chips, cookies, brownie, you know, that kind of stuff. A Starbucks thing with lots of whipped cream and

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Moira McCullough 19:28

Yes, everything that's easy, fast and it is expensive but easy and fast. Which is sometimes the what most students do in between running from one place to the next.

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Dale Troy 19:39

Okay, so what could be healthy? Ah, let's see if so a piece of fruit like banana or an apple or something like that. You could have like a small thing and that's in your purse. If you could get hummus and carrots sticks. That was a favorite.

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Moira McCullough 19:55

I love that. Yes, okay. I just thought my son protein balls. What are we thinking about that.

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Dale Troy 20:00

Oh, protein balls? Yes, I did. I did I because he is my guy who doesn't eat sugar. Okay. And I would typically send my other care packages, which our treat or something special that one would not eat all the time. But he's so particular with what he puts in his body, which I think is wonderful, but I'm like, you need fuel. So I made him protein balls. So I went through the recipe to make sure that they were healthy ingredients. There are some good protein bars, like KIND bars, and things that don't have a lot of ingredients that are kind of more real. To me, you do have to read the ingredients. You know what else? I would say guacamole would be healthy, that might be a little bit of a treat, because you're gonna have some corn chips with it. That's okay. I'll accept that. Do you think crackers would be fine? Okay, all right. Yeah, protein shake. There's probably places on campus where they make that as long as they're not being added sugar into it, you know, be careful about that.

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Moira McCullough 21:09

Okay, great. And then you mentioned sleep, which is something that I think when we first talked, I said eating and I work out, but sleep is something that afterthought.

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Dale Troy 21:18

Kids don't prioritize sleep. And most people really need at least eight hours of sleep every night. And then going back to the time management concept, they have to figure out how am I going to get eight hours, that means I really have to have a good schedule, so that I can get in bed at the right time to get eight hours and then get up at the right time. And they really need to work on that. And then I have all sorts of tips on how to get good sleep, like it needs to be really dark in the room. And if you can't do that, you really should get one of those eye masks to cover your eyes. Because otherwise your your body is not getting the right sleep with the light, it needs to be quiet, it needs to be cool. And sometimes you can adjust in a dorm, you can't really adjust the tone. But maybe you can open the window crack, that's fine. You know, things like that. So there are there are a whole bunch of things that can help. So exercise, you know, when I say exercise, some kids do exercise on a regular basis, no big deal. Others students, like I don't exercise, then I will say to them, Well, how about just walking around campus, you just need to get your body moving. And you know, know that that's part of what's going to make you feel good, it reduces your stress gets your body the blood circulating, it's just a healthy thing to do. So try to figure out, you know, take the long way around to get to your classroom or to get back to your dorm. Or if you have stairs in your dorm, maybe go up and down the staircase a few times, you know, we have you can figure out something you can even do some simple kinds of exercises right in your dorm room with YouTube. So there's always something that can be done. Okay. Yeah, no excuse.

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Moira McCullough 23:01

Exactly, no.

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Dale Troy 23:04

Yes, so that was number four. Okay. And number five. Last but not least, is how to manage stress. And I want them to really understand that stress is normal. And there always will be stress and some level of stress is actually positive. That helps you function well and do well like on an exam, if you're a little bit stressed, that's okay, your body's getting ready to do it. What I don't want is for anyone to feel like they can never get rid of their stress. And that is that is such a high level that they can't function. And that's a red flag that there's

something wrong. So in order to avoid that, I introduced them to all sorts of ways to reduce stress, and they help they get to figure out what what can I do, like, do I want to do some deep breathing and to sit quietly and, and close my eyes for a few minutes? That's one option? Or do I want to have a practice of writing in a gratitude journal and always, you know, looking for the positive and what's going on in my day? Maybe I want to take a yoga class, or do I want to go out into a forest and observe nature, and that's very stress reducing main, there's so many different things that they can do. But I think a lot a lot of students don't even realize that they have control over that. They just think on like, I just can't handle this, I'm so stressed and then the parent will get all those text messages and think that this you know, something terrible is happening and is just basic stress and they don't know what to do with it. Well, it's also knowing those signs that lead up to that point, and knowing that there's an opportunity to kind of like rein it in. And I'm sure that given a couple different strategies, skill sets, you're like okay, this is I can feel it coming on. I'm going to attack it before it gets to the point where it like paralyzes me exactly what I want them to Be able to do. And actually I worked with a girl who was having panic attacks. And I taught her how to do deep breathing. And she just the panic attacks went away. And it just changed her life. Because, you know, she just didn't know what to do when that was happening. And so as soon as she started to feel that she would do this.

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Moira McCullough 25:19

The cycle that they go in this and they can't break out of it.

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Dale Troy 25:24

Yes, exactly. So that was so rewarding for me to know that I helped her through that.

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Moira McCullough 25:29

You're a parent, you went through it, is there certain advice that you would give to a lot of these freshmen, parents, first time freshmen parents whose kids are at school, and it might not be healthy to call every night, or it might not be healthy to go and visit. So soon? Are there any tips that you can give us?

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Dale Troy 25:51

I think the main thing is to realize that your role is has changed, that you're no longer there to be involved in every minute of their day. But you really have to step back, and let let them experience life. Let them make mistakes, and figure out how to handle them. And

so when you if you get a call, or you get a text, when there's a problem, don't immediately jump in and say, Well, this is how you fix it. Rather, you know, be in the mindset of I'm going to listen to what's going on first, you know, empathize with them, say I'm sorry, this is happening and then say, Do you want me to give you some help? Do you need help from me or something like that, before you go into ABCD? This is what you need to do. And then the other thing, I think, is to not immediately give them the answer to whatever the problem is, but say, what have you thought about? What do you think the options are? What are you thinking that you could do to solve this problem. So you're really trying to get them to become much more independent and think for themselves and act like an adult. Because really, that's what our goal is, so that they can become adults and function well, by themselves. Without us.

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Moira McCullough 27:08

It's really good advice. And when that you have to come to a as a parent, and almost have those two options, they're written down in our journal, they need to learn how to work through this because there are going to be times and honestly, you know, you want them to make mistakes that are recoverable, if you're constantly fixing their problems, and then one time you're not there, and maybe it is a serious problem. What are they going to do with not being able to get through? So that's really great advice. What do you wish you knew before you attended college?

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Dale Troy 27:42

You know, that was kind of a hard thing for me to figure out. But I think that I came from a very small high school, and I was a good student, and went knowing that I was going to Yale, I was petrified. And because I had always gotten accolades for being good student, you know, that's who I was. So I remember saying to my parents, I'm not going to get A's anymore. So I just want you to know that, like, don't, don't be mad at me, what I wish I'd known is that it's not all about natural ability to continue to do well, in school, there's so many other factors like I didn't have to worry about, maybe, you know, I'm not going to be the smartest person in class, it doesn't matter. And that's kind of what I'm trying to teach students. Also, there is all of us also about your mindset, time management, how determined you are, how focused you are in your class, and how much you care about doing well. So there could be plenty of other kids who are much brighter than me in the class. But if they're partying every night and not doing their homework they're not going to do as well, I wish I had known that. And so I wasn't so worried about going to college. That worry is so exhausting.

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Moira McCullough 28:53

Yes, everything that you have just described in all the work that you're doing with students, it's the frustration, the stress, the lack of confidence, it kind of just wears you down. And to your point, if you have a, say the fit mind fit body if they go in sync, right. And that's the way to have the ability and the strength to learn, which is what you're there for.

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Dale Troy 29:14

Yes, absolutely. Really, I believe really believe all students can be successful. You know, and getting all A's is not necessarily the bar either.

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Moira McCullough 29:24

More than 70% of your time, my college is outside of the classroom, you could get always and never work on your network, never meet with professors never grow your peer network and meet friends and never have the time for internships and all of a sudden, all that waste, not that waste. But you spent all this time in the classroom getting A's, but didn't grow from all other aspects of that will that are life skills that will take you into the next level and get a job or right at school. It's really, really good advice. We are foodies here at college scoops and now I would say what's your favorite dessert? But what's your favorite food on a college campus? Is there a and I love it because also the other connection you and I have is you went to Yale and I'm from New Haven. So there were great food spots there, but any food campus that you love,

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Dale Troy 30:15

My girls went to Yale. So I was on the Yale campus a lot. What I was shocked at was that Claire's Cornucopias still existed, because it's been around for like 40 years. And it's just crazy. But my girls love their cakes. And they were like, so unusual, and they were huge portions. But I want to put in a plug for I don't know if you're familiar with this in North Carolina, because we live in Carolina for two years in Greensboro. There is a place called Maxi bees, people come from all over to go there. They have, I don't know maybe like 30 cakes on display. Wow, at a time, plus cupcakes and they're all homemade. And they're amazing. And that was my favorite place when we were in Greensboro because I'm also gluten free. And they had gluten free pumpkin, chocolate chip cupcakes with cream cheese frosting.

M Moira McCullough 31:11

Oh, it sounds absolutely delicious.

D Dale Troy 31:14

I can still like picture that in my mind. They were amazing. But so if anyone is going to North Carolina schools, you know, it could be going to do Wake Forest, Ilan, anything in that area. It's not that far to go to Maxie B's.

M Moira McCullough 31:31

I need to hit the road. I need to get to North Carolina.

D Dale Troy 31:36

It's amazing. There's a line out the door. That's how good it is.

M Moira McCullough 31:40

Dale, thank you so much for sharing all that great insight. And as somebody who has had kids graduate to college, in college and freshmen, I think as a parent, we're always trying to look at how to de stress and share knowledge with our kids that they can take and implement on their own and use. Thank you for all the work that you do.

D Dale Troy 32:01

Oh, thank you for having me. I enjoyed it. Thank you. Thank you Dale for sharing your story and insights and how students can stay fit both mentally and physically. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is so important given the stress and pressure many students face in their academic and social lives. Developing basic life skills like setting goals for yourself. Developing time management and good study skills, self advocating for yourself eating well and getting enough sleep and learning how to de stress are all important life skills, especially for students as a transition from high school to college. You can find all of our show notes and links to helpful resources mentioned throughout our conversation on our website at collegescoops.cpm/podcast. You can learn more about Dale and Crush College Success on their website at Crush College Success calm please take a couple minutes to rate review and subscribe to College Scoops.



Moira McCullough 32:56

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