Mary Miele (00:03):

Welcome to Be Evolved, a podcast for parents and educators who prioritize developing possibility and expansion within the total educational process for themselves and their children or students. We invite you to listen to the podcast with your child or student in mind and with yourself at the center of the learning experience. Ultimately, our goal is to bridge the gap between educational expertise and research translating it into practical action. Gaining knowledge plus taking action is what it means to be evolved.

Sarah Bergin (00:40):

Hi everybody. Welcome back. I am director of college counseling at Evolved Education. My name is Sarah Bergen and this is our second episode of a three-part series about college visits and this is the on the way there. So this is a car ride conversation or maybe a plane ride or a walk to a campus before you actually walk through the gates. So I'm guessing you're somewhere on your way to a college campus right now and that's wonderful. I'm so excited for you. So this is really more of an interactive episode where you'll listen a little bit and then talk. And my hope is that I will be your copilot as you are traveling to your destination and throughout the remainder of this podcast, I'll pause and ask you both parents and students to turn to each other and actually have a conversation. So hit that pause point when I ask you to do so and do the talking and then press play when you're ready to come back to the listening.

(01:41):

So I really want you to think of this as a warmup before the main event. So by the time you pull into the campus, you'll have already done some of the most valuable work of the whole visit together. So this is really important. So I hope you're ready and let's go. So let's start out. So why is this school on your list? We really want to think about that. So let's start at the beginning of this. Why this school? And I'm not asking for the textbook answer, the real one. Was it a name you've always heard, a program, a friend who goes there? Being honest about why a school is on your radar is actually really useful information. And here's what I notice. Sometimes students are visiting schools that are really on their parents' lists and sometimes parents are along for the ride on a school their student found entirely on their own.

(02:33):

And knowing where you fall in that kind of area, whether of how you put this school on your list is going to kind of shape how you experienced the visit. So I want you to take a moment to pause the podcast and answer the why are we here. And I'm going to give you some prompts to think about as you pause the podcast. So first one to the student. In one sentence, explain why did this school make your list? And I want you to really be honest, even if the answer is I'm not totally sure. Parents, what is one thing you're hoping to learn or feel on today's visit? And then for both students and parents on a scale of one to 10, how excited are you about this school right now and why? So I want you to hit pause, take some time to talk to each other and then press play when you're ready to continue.

(03:31):

Okay, welcome back. We're going to talk a little bit about what each of you is looking for in this visit. So students and parents are often looking for completely different things on a college visit and neither really realizes it. A student might immediately kind of take in the social vibes thinking about are students happy? Do people look like they belong? And a parent might be scanning for safety or career outcomes or return on investment. And both sets of questions are completely valid and important. But when you're not aware of the different lenses you're each using, you can walk off the same campus and feel like you visited two totally different schools. So let's get those lenses on the table now. So at this pause point, we're going to think about different lenses but the same campus. And again, I'm going to give you some questions to ponder during this pause point.

(04:28):

So for students, what is the one thing you most want to get a feel for today academically, socially, or practically? And if you listen to podcast one, you'll remember I touched on those three points. For parents, what is the one thing you most want to understand or learn by the end of this visit? And then a little bonus question here. Are there any topics that feel off limits or stressful to bring up? And I want you to really name them so that they're less kind of loaded later. So again, pause the episode here, take some time to talk through these questions and then go ahead and press play when you're ready to continue with the listening. Okay. I hope that that felt valuable. We're now going to think about the student in four years and this is an exercise that I really love. I call it the four years from now picture.

(05:21):

So students, picture yourself the week before graduation. You're standing on a campus and genuinely happy about how college turned out. What does that look like? Are you surrounded by close friends or someone who knows everything deep in a research project or finally really found the thing after you bounced around a little bit? Did you study abroad? Start something from scratch. This isn't about having a perfect plan. It's about understanding what kind of college experience actually fits who you are so that when you're on campus today, you can ask, "Does this place feel like somewhere that version of me could actually exist?" So we're going to pause again here and now think about the four years from now picture. So students during this pause point, describe your ideal college experience in three words. First instinct, I don't want you to overthink this and nobody's going to hold you to this, but I want you to think at this point in your life, what does the ideal college experience look like?

(06:24):

Three words. Parents, describe what you hope your students' college experience gives them. And again, I want this in three words. So is it growth? Is it independence? Is it direction? Is it joy? And then for both students and parents, do your three words line up. Where are they similar and where are they different? So hit pause and take a minute to think about these and then go ahead and hit play when you're ready to continue. Okay. Let's dive into the ground rules for the visit. Visits go better when both people know what to expect from each other. So I always like to give families a few ground rules. First one, no real time verdicts. We're not going to do, I love this or this isn't for me. Save that until you're back in the car. Students, you lead the questions. Parents save yours for the info session or after.

(07:21):

Give the campus a fair shot. First impressions are often wrong and this is in both directions. And I always, always, always encourage students and parents to take some notes. Even if it's a couple words or phrases or you could put a voice memo into your phone. But when you're comparing schools later, this is actually really helpful. And you can even do this when you jump back in the car at the end of the day, but take a little time to reflect and agree in advance. You're not making any decisions today. A visit is information gathering. It is not a verdict and this really takes the pressure off and it's so important and makes it easier to just experience the school that you're visiting. So again, let's have our pause point here to set some ground rules. Two things I want you to think about. Agree on one ground rule each, something you want the other person to do or not during the visit.

(08:16):

And then a fun one, if you had to pick a word that describes how you want to feel walking off the campus today, what would it be? So take a minute, pause the video and go ahead and press play when you're ready to keep listening. All right, let's set an intention. You're probably getting closer now. So let's take a breath and set an intention. Students walk into this visit with genuine curiosity, not a checklist, not an audition mentality, just openness. You're here to learn something. Maybe you'll learn that this is the right place and maybe it isn't. Maybe you'll learn something about yourself you didn't expect and all of those are really good and important outcomes. Parents, please walk in as a supportive observer. Your student is trying to picture their future today and your job is to help them do that clearly without your own feelings getting in the way.

(09:07):

And I know it can be hard, but it is a genuinely generous thing to offer someone that you really love and care about. So let's take a minute to pause the video and set your intentions. Students, finish the sentence. Today I am going into this visit hoping to feel and tell your parent or whoever's with you going on this journey what you're hoping to feel. And parents, finish this sentence. Today I am going to let my student go ahead and finish that. And then for both student and parent, name one thing you're genuinely looking forward to about today and even if it's just the lunch. Okay. So take a minute to pause and come on back when you are ready. So let's wrap things up here. Okay? I think you're probably just about getting there and you've had some good listening here and the fact that you listened to this together and that you actually talked before walking through the gates of the campus already really puts you ahead of most people heading onto these tours.

(10:09):

So many families arrive distracted and rushed and hoping the campus does the work for them and we want you to go in prepared. So you showed up ready and that really matters. Be curious, go be honest with each other. Take a few notes and when you're back in the car, episode three of this series will be waiting for you and that is all about how to proces what you just experienced. Okay, go and enjoy the campus and I'm excited to talk to you on the way home.

Mary Miele (10:40):

We hope you found this episode of Be Evolved Helpful. Please be sure to review and subscribe. It really helps us to reach more listeners like you. Have a question or a topic that you'd like us to explore? I'd love to hear from you. You can reach out at any time at admin@evolveded.com. That's A- D-M-I-N at E-V-O-L-V-E-D-E-D.com. Don't forget you can find a full transcript for today's episode along with our terms, conditions and disclaimers and privacy policy at www.evolvededucationcompany.com. Thanks for listening and until next time, learn well and live well and be evolved.