

## Roots and Wings

Taking your kids to college ranks as one of the best (and worst) moments of life. It most definitely takes "awkward" to a new level.

It's a rite of passage that began at the kindergarten door. Well do you remember that day. And then there were drop-offs at summer camp -and every other ritual of parting independence. Eighteen years in a blink of an eye... No one knows it more than parents driving their sons and daughters to college.

Parental emotions are all over the map. That map takes us from the heights of pride to the valley of self-pity; from resignation to something that feels like grief. Yet you plod on with what you know you must do. And don't let anyone tell you that dad's don't cry. We cry on inside. Okay, today we cry on the outside, too.

If it's any consolation, the other parents you see scurrying into/out of the dorm, all feel the same numbness. They won't show it, of course, so you'll feel like you're the only one. You're not. You'll feel like there is something wrong with you. There isn't.

Then there is the awkward moment of meeting your son or daughter's new roommate. And their parents. You size up one another for fifteen seconds and then move on to Target or Wal-Mart -- where you buy dorm room essentials like Lysol, air freshener, and a five-gallon container of hand sanitizer.

Being a parent offers multiple lessons in patience and sacrifice, but its biggest lesson is humility. It's a willingness to play a supportive role in the bigger story of their life. And in that we rejoice. We have given them roots and wings and today they fly a little farther. Humility is letting go. Pride is watching them soar.

Two years ago we took our youngest to college in Tampa. We made this deal: we would cry all the way back to Georgia and then we would stop. Great plan. It didn't work.

Roots and wings. Wipe your tears watch them soar. And they will. Then come home and do what we did -mark a big fat "X" on the days of the calendar until they are home again. That's okay, too.

**Wilson Adams**