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Netflix and Chill

“What are your plans after high school,” they asked. Being an upstanding American citizen whose only aspiration is to live “The American Dream” (white picket fences and all), I regurgitated my plan, premeditated by societal ideals, to go to college so that I could pursue a well-paying job. This path, which was once a dream, is now becoming the norm for the millennial generation. Inevitably, the obstacles encountered along the way are also becoming the norm: the financial stress of attending college. In response, the culture surrounding college becomes one of meals comprised of Top Ramen noodles, a new war waged over the limited amount of used textbooks every semester, and desperate pleas for financial aid—many of which are not adhered to. This group of young adults often jokingly refer to themselves as being the spitting image of the “broke, college student.” And it is this financial state that pressures college students to be as cheap as possible, whether it involves their diet, their apparel or their entertainment. Luxuries such as movie going become too financially taxing, so they resort to other means of entertainment: Netflix. Watching Netflix at home poses more advantages to college students than movie going for the following reasons: it is more affordable, has a broader library to chose from, and offers TV shows.

First off, it is a known fact that college students are “broke,” so an affordable means of entertainment is important. Netflix costs about nine dollars and ninety-nine cents a month,

whereas one movie ticket costs anywhere between ten to seventeen dollars—and, that’s only for one movie. Essentially, one movie a month at the theater equates to several movies or tv show episodes on Netflix. This price tag, however, doesn’t include the overpriced snacks that theaters serve. At home, one might already have snacks that they love. If not, then they can purchase at a local Target, Walmart, Dollar Tree, or Safeway for a much more reasonable price. The rate at which tuition is climbing is absurdly high. The cost of college alone can put people into debt from which will take one year to recover. Paying for Netflix as opposed to going to the movie theater is obviously not going to relieve the financial burden of college tuition, but it would mean that this group of young adults can spend their money on worthwhile, cost-efficient entertainment.

In addition to the financial stress of college, these students undergo a lot of other kinds of stress simultaneously: the transition from childhood to adulthood, discovery of one’s niche in life, and the workload of school itself. Entertainment (specifically, watching movies and tv shows) is a great way to destress. Movie going only has the latest films to choose from. The movie theater doesn’t give one the option to watch films and tv shows that have been archived. Watching classics—commonly referred to as “throwbacks”—like *Titanic* and *Power Rangers* at a theater in 2016 is unheard of. Netflix gives these young adults the option to choose from their favorite films and tv shows, and thus, increase their capacity to destress with the aid of entertainment. Yes, one might argue that the latest films can be just as, if not, more effective. But, many times, that same content is released to Netflix shortly after its premier in the theaters. For example, the beloved film *Zootopia* was released to Netflix about six months after it was released to the theaters. While this time period may seem daunting to some, others would argue

that the time spent waiting for this content to be released to Netflix only makes finally being able to watch it all the more rewarding. All in all, Netflix gives college students not only affordable entertainment, but the best entertainment.

And last, but not least, Netflix can be watched under conditions catered to your needs at any given moment. Where you watch Netflix is irrelevant; it is portable, meaning, whether you are at home, on the go, at your college library, or at coffee shop nearby, one can watch Netflix. The theater isn't portable. It also can't be watched however one pleases. Many times, the theaters is something you have to make yourself look presentable for. It is something you have to prepare for. Rarely do you see people going to the theaters in their cozy pajamas, snug sweats, or unencumbered boxer shorts. This is because the theaters has become a place for "going out" or first dates, not the place to "hang out" or "chill". The theaters has adopted a culture of formality, whereas Netflix is framed in a comforting light of casualness. Most college students don't have the time, energy, or desire to dress up simply to watch a film. Netflix eliminates this dilemma. With Netflix, the "how" and the "where" don't matter; the same also applies to the "what." Naturally, people are always cognisant of those around them, and the social implications of their actions, especially when it comes to youth. Certain individuals are afraid of going to the theaters to watch a movie because of what others might think of them. For instance, a young man that wants to see *The Notebook* in the theaters may decide against doing so because gender roles carry so much weight in our society. With Netflix, he could watch anything he pleases in the harbor of his home. At the end of the day, college students want watching movies to be nonchalant, not something to add on to their already full palette. Netflix allows these students to

watch whatever, whenever and however they please without having to worry about the social implications of doing such.

In final analysis, Netflix has become a keystone in the entertainment of the millennial generation. But because of its ability to provide unparalleled entertainment, at an affordable cost, under any condition, it is also one of the best means of entertainment for college students in particular. Next time I'm asked, "what are your plans after high school," I would give an almost identical response as before. But this time, for the sake of my well-being, I would also add resoundingly, "Netflix and Chill." This would surely warrant an odd look. But the social implications of that phrase is another conversation for another time.