

COLLEGE BOUND

YOUR APPLICATION MENTORSM

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:: NY Times College Corner

:: US News and World Report

Gaining Perspective on the College Application Process:

What I learned from Climbing a Glacier

September, 2009



We landed by helicopter on the Mendenhall Glacier with ice peaks and mountains as far as the eye could see. The guides outfitted us in ice hiking gear complete with gloves, crampons, and boots to ready us for our climb to the top. Gabe, our guide, explained how to use our crampons and ice pick to help us hike up the ice hills. He started off putting the ice pick up above his head and then effortlessly kicking the toe of his boots into the ice hill and one, two, three, he was at the top. My 13 year old, rock climbing, gymnast daughter went next and made it look like the easiest thing in the world.

Then it was my turn. I did what he said. I put the ice pick above my head to serve as a pulley. I then inserted my right foot into the ice hill as the guide and Gabby did before. I took a big step with my left foot up over my right, but the agility that I saw before did not come. I was inert, and worse, I felt like I was slipping down the hill. I looked up and started to panic. I screamed out in frustration:

"I can't do this. There is no way I can make it all the way to the top!"

"Lisa, calm down. You are taking too big of steps. Just put your ice pick up and take small, little steps. First your right foot, then meet it with your left foot. That's it. Now just keep climbing up with small little steps." Gabe, gently replied.

I listened to his sage advice, and slowly, but surely, I got to the top. Then as we moved toward the next hill, I got up with much less effort. By the time we reached the top of the glacier it became second nature, one step, then another.

This experience reminded me of the college process. It seems daunting and overwhelming when looking at it as a rising sophomore, junior, or even senior. But as this experience reminded me when I was on the other side of the panic, that everything in life requires small steps. Rather than looking at all of the steps as a whole, it is important to approach each step in the journey as a separate hill.

Seniors, the hardest step of writing your personal statement is finding your voice. Once you get the main essay done, each subsequent essay becomes easier. **Juniors**, the looming SAT/ACT test schedule

seems impossible, but once you get the first one under your belt and know where you need to focus your energy, it becomes easier. **Sophomores**, this year's classes may be much harder than last year. Take a deep breath and pace yourself. Once you realize what it takes to succeed, you will be able to do well. **Freshman**, getting to all your classes on time the first week of class is the first step! Do not get so caught up in reaching the top that you forget the journey.

Just like I was able to climb to the top of the glacier with the constant encouragement and guidance from my guide, I see students reach their own summit as they take their own small steps throughout the process.

The New York Times

College Corner

I am featured as one of the "bloggers" for the local NY Times College Corner. If anyone wants to be a guest writer, or be interviewed or quoted for one of my next blogs, please let me know. Below are the two latest entries. Upcoming articles will be on *NJ Colleges* and *Tips for the Interview*.

[College Prep Calendar for Juniors and Seniors](#)

[Where Would Harry Potter Go to College?](#)

Knowing the Methodology Helps Understand the Surveys.

The U.S. News Report has long been considered *the* source for rankings of colleges. Did you know that 25% of the weighting relies on how other institutions rate their peers? This article uncovers that while most school administrators try to be fair, many just do not know enough about their peer institutions to assess their strengths fairly. Clemson University was the only institution who actually tried to game the system by intentionally ranking others lower to boost their score. You should all do your own rankings based on your own set of criteria, because in the end, those are the only rankings that are relevant to your college search.

[U.S. News Report](#)

Lisa Bleich
908-789-8566
Lisa@collegeboundmentor.com
[College Bound Mentor, LLC](#)



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College Bound Mentor, LLC | 15 Normandy Dr. | Westfield | NJ | 07090