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editor's SOAPBOX

They're just regular people

After handing out copies of Next Step Magazine at a recent college fair, I went out for dinner with a couple of college admissions representatives. A few reps were from big-name private schools. A few were from smaller state universities. All of them were exceedingly normal, nice people.

I told them,

†You know what? A lot of our Next Steppers are scared of you guys."†

They laughed.

"Us?" they said, while reaching for more chicken wings. "You've got to be kidding!"

But it's true! I get so many e-mails and instant messages from teens who are scared to call a college's admissions office and ask a question, scared of talking to a rep in an interview—scared of the whole college-planning process in general.

But you've got to relax. If you're nervous every time you talk to a Big Scary Admissions Rep, how are you ever going to show these people how cool you really are?

Admissions reps aren't out to get you. They're not sitting in a faraway castle tower hoping you'll fall or casting you off for a life of flipping burgers. They're just doing their best to sort through thousands of applications so they can admit students who will fit in at their school.

So, relax. Admissions reps are just regular people. They just want to know who you are. Remember that when you're filling out your college applications and your true self—not your nervous one—will shine through!