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Life 101:
Basic Needs vs. Material Goods

Today I moved out of my dorm at Defiance College. It was a very interesting experience. I found some things that I did not know I even had in my room. I also noticed that I had a lot of things that needed to be taken home. Most of the things that I wanted to take home were materials things. My TV, Xbox 360, Laptop, and DVDs were at the top of my list of things to bring home with me. I made sure that they were the first things that I packed into my car. There were other things in my room that I did not have as much concern for. I had blankets, clothes, and lots of food that needed to be taken care of. I was valuing material goods over the basic necessities of life. People should not value material goods.

Too many people in the United States value material goods. Lars Eighner wrote an essay called "On Dumpster Diving." In this essay he shares his experiences on being homeless and living off things that come from a dumpster. In his journeys, he notices that many people throw away perfectly good things. From these journeys, he learns to value the basic necessities of life and not material goods (454-465). By not having the basic necessities of life, a person learns to see how important those things are when they are not there. When someone has a home, plenty of food, clothes, and other basic necessities, they grow used to having them and cannot picture a life without them. They think that those things will always be there. People lose the sight of how valuable those things are. That is what Eighner learned through his experiences of being homeless and dumpster diving. The basic needs of life are often overlooked when they are there on a daily basis.

Many college students, like me, tend to overlook the value of the basic needs of life. During my moving out process over the last four days, it has really come to the surface. I found myself guilty of the things Eighner talked about in his essay "On Dumpster Diving." Eighner says: "The students throw food away around the breaks because they do not know whether it has spoiled or will spoil before the return...and since it is Daddy's money, the student decides not to take a chance" (456-457). I was guilty of doing this in the last four days and have been in the past. I totally looked past the fact that the food was good and threw it away because it would have been inconvenient to take home. I was worried more about getting all of my electronics and other things with monetary value home. Eighner's essay really brings it all into a perspective for me. The essay made me view things from his eyes and to view life without any of the basic needs to survive or the material goods. Having the material goods is fun, but having a home, clothes, food, water, and other means to survive is a lot more meaningful.

People should not value material things. It brings out an attitude that makes them think that life is just handed to them. The basic necessities of life are overlooked. People do not notice the things that are actually getting them through life can be taken away from them in a short period of time. People do not see how great those basic necessities are to life until they are taken away from them. The next time I am moving out of somewhere, I am going to make sure to save the things that are important for survival along with all of the other things I take home. All the material things are great, but more importantly the basic necessities of life are more important than anything. People should judge value by what it does for you and not by how much it cost. People can see true value in something when they take a step back and look at the rest of the

world. A lot of people in the world do not have dumpsters to find the basic necessities of life. A home, food, clothes, and other basic needs should not be overlooked.

Works Cited

Eighner, Lars. "On Dumpster Diving." Covergences: Message, Method, Medium. Ed. Robert Atwan. 2nd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005. 454-465.