

A Fear of that Future

Each day as I walk through the crowded high school halls, the same chant runs through my head. *Take honors classes. Get good grades. Go to a good college. Get a good job. Be successful.* I seem to have a plan, but I've never been more confused in my life. Every step I take, I ask myself a new question. *Where do I want to go to college? Who do I even want to be? How much money do I want to make?* No matter how hard I try, I can never answer my own questions. There has never been a geometry problem or scientific word problem I have not been able to solve with a little bit of learning, but now, I am completely stumped. Never in my life have I ever felt so stupid, scared, and frustrated. Sometimes I wonder why I force myself down such an overwhelming path. I want to be known as successful, and the path I follow seems to be the best way to get there.

Deep down, I know that my life is never going to be perfect. Taking honors classes can be challenging. There is always a packet to do, a test to study for, and a textbook chapter to read. There is never a break. This makes it hard to always have good grades. Every once in a while, I will slip up and get a B or maybe even a C. Students all over the world fight for Ivy League spots, and I know there is only a small chance that I will even be recognized for one.

As for what I want to be, who knows? One minute I want to be a writer, then a teacher, a doctor, a detective, or a police officer. It's all stressful. As I continue to move on, I feel like an old barn with my paint slowly starting to chip and fade as each year goes by. If I do not do something about it, I'll be worn out until no end. I want my future to be amazing. In some ways, I just have to wait and see what happens, and the Rotary Four-Way Test is helping me learn to face my fear of that future.

“Is it True?”

After taking a deep breath, and carefully reading over Rotary’s test questions, I finally have come up with an answer for the first one. Do others expect many things from me? No. My family and teachers stress to tell me that they want me to do something I love. Sometimes my family says they could see me as a surgeon. In their eyes, it is a complement. I should not see it as their way of pressuring me into something I may not be able to do.

Do I need to know who I am right away? Of course not. I have a the rest of high school and some of college until I have to know what I want to do. I can learn all about myself until then. Another question I asked myself is, do I have to get into one of the best colleges in the states to be successful? No. People all around the world can get great jobs as long as they have a degree in their field. Some jobs do not even require a college degree at all, and they can still be considered high-end jobs. Yet again, do I need a sophisticated job and money to make myself feel successful? No. I just have to be happy with what I am doing and make enough money for an average life. In all honesty, I only need happiness to be successful.

“Is it Fair to All Concerned?”

Truly, it’s not. I’ve stressed myself out to the brim. Some days I’ll come home from school with a migraine. My body wants to shut down, but it can’t with all of the homework and chores I have yet to do. I’ve come so accustomed to this behavior that when I look at the top of a graded paper and the red ink says anything less than 100%, I cringe. All I think about is how I could have done better.

It’s also not fair to my family. When I am stressed out, especially for large test, I can get very grumpy. I snap at the smallest things, and most of the time, my family is on the receiving end. Whether it be an essay prompt or algebra equation I do not understand, my family tries to

help me. Usually my parents and I both get frustrated because they cannot seem to remember how to do it, and I do not understand it. They have to drive me to all of my extracurriculars too. Sometimes my heart is not even into them. I just want my college application to be full of things I do, and I want to find something I am interested in.

My friends are also affected by this whole ordeal. I never have time to hang out because I am always stressing out about school work and trying to discover my importance. In the end, crazy classes that stress my family, friends, and me out and extracurriculars that bore me, create extra running for my family, and annoyance in friends are not worth it anymore.

“Will it Build Good Will and Better Friendships?”

All this fear inside me has caused me to push others away. When friends tell me their passions and dreams, sometimes I get jealous. Why can't I be driven to do something like them? Jealousy breaks relationships more than it helps build them. My family can grow very irritated with me when I express fear of my future. They try to show me guidance and get frustrated when I do not listen.

Deep down I wish to stop fighting them and let go of my fears. The idea of good will coming out of this fear is unrealistic. Yes, it was my way of being where I thought I wanted to be, but in the end, it will destroy me because I am unhappy. Getting good grades and going to a good college will not make me content. Pursuing what I love and having fun along the way will. I may not know what that passion is yet but, I will learn in the long amount of time I have before left. Honestly, fearing the future ahead will not shape me into a good person with good relationships if I keep fighting them.

"Will it be Beneficial to All Concerned?"

Even though my mind has tricked itself into thinking my plan is beneficial, it is not. Pressuring myself into trying to find my passion has just caused me complete boredom. I do not want to rush into picking a career path either because I will never be happy if I choose the wrong one. Good grades are always nice, but I should set my standards a little lower. A's and B's should both be considered good grades. It would be amazing to get into an Ivy League college, but it's okay if I don't. I can still get a degree, have an amazing job, and money to provide for a future family if I decide to. My friends and family are definitely not earning from this.

What's the point in pushing myself through the fear of future failure, if I can get the life I want in a different way? My second semester will be different. Sitting at my desk while studying for finals, I will keep my cool. If I do not understand something, I will take a deep breath and ask the teacher the next day. Instead of being a part of so many clubs, I will focus on the things I genuinely enjoy doing. Instead of lying awake at night, I will get some peaceful sleep knowing I have lots of time to decide what I want to do. When thinking about college, I will no longer be worried about my academic scores, but instead, show them how I've grown as a person. After taking much time to ponder about the Rotary Four-Way Test questions, I realize that my real worries are unreasonable. I should just be me and let life choose my path along the way.