

Views

You only get one life

It is easy to get caught up in the politics of high school and it is hard to see an end in sight. As an MHS graduate who has been out of high school for five years, I think I can say with a little bit of experience that there is an amazing world beyond the walls of high school and beyond the safe confines of Melrose if you can just push through all the young drama.

What is heartbreaking, however, is that a lot of Melrose teens are dabbling in risky behaviors to such an extent that they have permanently jaded their future. As far as substance abuse goes, what may start as fun can quickly change to an addiction. What you will realize, if you can hang in there, is that going down that road doesn't impress anyone and it will not make you happy. It will make life more difficult than it needs to be and life is hard enough already.

Any number of things can trip you up in your younger years: Drugs, booze, peer pressure, bad grades, problems at home, awkward body changes, striving to be the best, being unpopular, bad relationships, looking for love and falling in love ... it is a big mess! The point is you will come out the other side OK, provided you have faith in yourself and patience.

Slash stereotypes to pieces because they won't help you. The nerd, the shy kid, the late bloomer and the ugly duckling will blossom into a swan while high school royalty may suddenly find that they have a lot of catching up to do.

The only person anyone should have to prove anything to is themselves. Now that may sound hokey but whether you're rich, poor, brainy, artsy, a people person or whatever there is a place in this world for you. Labels are hollow and deceiving, and caring what other people think only drives you mad.

In the scheme of life, high school is a blip on the radar and all bets are off once you graduate. High school is not the end all and be all regardless of your situation. Your future really can be anything you want it to be with hard work, thick skin and determination; it is never too late to change. Change is a matter of making up your mind to start anew and disciplining yourself to follow through.

There are so many amazing people you haven't met yet and so many incredible experiences that await you. Trust me when I tell you everything that happened in high school will fade into a memory with time and everything that happens after that is so much better.

You will have more than one new beginning in your life and you will encounter many of the same personalities and troubles that you did growing up, but the difference is you will be sitting behind the wheel and you can choose your path. No it won't be easy or fair but nothing in life is, and you only get one life. So cherish it, enjoy it and, yes, do take risks. Just make intelligent choices so you can have a happily ever after.