



Competitions are not necessary in creative fields

ANGELINA NODEE FRANCIS

A few years ago, I was sitting in a restaurant when a particular quote that was written on the wall caught my attention. It said, "Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."

Each one of us has our "thing" and a drive to work on our flaws to strive in that field. Someone out there might be acing in academics whereas their friend is hitting every note perfectly during their music classes.

If we put both of them together and exchange their fields, they might fail to complete each other's tasks.

Competitions make their way into academics and extracurricular activities to be the fair judge of a set of skills. It is equally important to note that winning or losing is not the main factor here. The idea of placing individuals with a similar set of skills in an environment where they would feel the need to amplify their abilities is the root cause of initiating competitions.

Creative fields that involve music, dance, and art do not require competitions as the learners are often at different stages of learning even after being divided into groups according to their ages. Honing your skills here takes a lot more time compared to other fields. When two children are of the same age, they can have different paces of learning. One of them will be able to process information faster than the other. But learners will eventually develop unique styles after some time and become subdivided into categories.

You will never be able to compare the styles of singers who are singing the same genre simply because of variations done during their performance.

One cannot compare the paintings of the two



artists, because their mindsets were completely different during the process.

However, friendly competitions where the participant is given feedback regarding their work can be a substitute instead of ranking them based on their performance.

The idea of winning and losing can make someone feel inferior or superior during their initial stages of learning. It can also cause the person to become disinterested in gathering more knowledge about the subject.

Their confidence level can drop low and result in self-doubt.

On the other hand, if someone develops a superiority complex after winning, it will affect their growth as an artist. It will only result in overconfidence that will not allow them to judge their work properly. They will overlook their flaws and focus on the parts that do not require fixing.

There will always be someone better than someone else in a field. One should not aim to defeat all others and prevail on top, but to learn from their mistakes and not repeat them.

Nodee is really good at running away from her problems. Give her some advice on how to face them at angelinafrancis004@gmail.com

Is popularity a high school myth?

As a teen binging these shows, I didn't realise that they are scripted in favor of the popular kid and don't reflect the realities of attending school. I never also took into account how American those shows were.

TAASEEN MOHAMMED ISLAM

In high school, we all fall prey to a hierarchy that dictates our standing and experience throughout those long years. Don't get me wrong, I'm not claiming to be above it, as I, along with every 14 to 17-year-old, used to enviously glorify the one popular kid who seemingly had it all, wishing to be the cream of the crop.

However, looking back, I wish I could tell my past self that popularity has no substance beyond high school. The concept of popularity seems like an extra ordeal to the chaotic rat race that the last couple of years of secondary schooling is.

Even though teenagers start to act like little know-it-alls after puberty, the truth is they're incredibly hormonal, emotional, and naive. (Words of wisdom from a slightly less hormonal and equally naive 21-year-old). In high school, our entire lives revolve around a relatively small group of people, and our minds fail to realize there's a whole world with 8 billion people and counting. Thus, many of us overestimate the value of being a popular kid during those years.

Furthermore, the tired American stereotypes that teen shows such as *One Tree Hill*, *The O.C.*, and even the dumpster fire that is *Riverdale* fed us played a significant role in affirming our beliefs in climbing the high school social hierarchy. As a teen binging these shows, I didn't realise that they are scripted in favor of the popular kid and don't reflect the realities of attending school. I never also took into account how American those shows were. After all, the crazy aftergame parties that football teams throw in American shows and movies are unlikely to happen even in the poshest schools in our neck of the woods.

I won't sugarcoat the reality of being unpopular in high school. Not being liked can become very isolating and demotivating. Sometimes these "popular" kids can be very bitter and hateful toward people they deem "less popular". Feeling like an afterthought in a community that they spend most of their year in is something that far too many teenagers grapple with.

Attending university helped me comprehend how small school circles are. Unlike school, it is

impossible to properly know even 10 percent of the people you go to classes with. Unless you get indoctrinated into a university club (please don't), the sheer diversity and amount of people in classes and the campus quickly render the high school hierarchy we all know and love pointless. Everyone's too busy thinking about themselves to pick on or even care about others. It's a system that can be both liberating and lonely, but it's a far more realistic representation of the real world.

Contradictory to what I've just typed out. The popular kids aren't the villains, but we shouldn't make achieving their temporary status the highlight of our last four years of school. There's more to life than being known within a small echo chamber. Remember, of all the social constructs that exist. The most meaningless one must be the one constructed by growing children.

Turns out Taaseen Mohammed Islam can write semi-decently at the expense of being able to do basic math. Send him pointers at taaseen.2001@gmail.com

HOW INSOMNIA AFFECTS the lives of young adults

ADRITA ZAIMA ISLAM

"Insomnia" has become a word lightly thrown around, one used in casual conversation whenever someone brings up the topic of a chaotic sleeping schedule. However, in the midst of our light-hearted jest, we often fail to acknowledge the gravity of insomnia as a medical condition and the connotations it holds for the person suffering from it.

Defined as a common sleep disorder that is characterised by difficulty in falling asleep or in staying asleep, insomnia affects the lives of an appreciable number of young adults, particularly in this period following the Covid-19 pandemic. The reasons behind it are numerous, as are the malignant ways it shapes a person's life.

Emotional, mental, and/or physical trauma has been known to be a major cause of chronic insomnia that stretches over months or years. Stress, anxiety, and discomfort are known to be the main culprits behind acute or short-term insomnia. Turmoil due to a multitude of reasons during the pandemic as well as



the skewing of sleep schedules because of months of inactivity can now be seen resulting in a new wave of sleeping trouble in people.

The appearance of under-eye bags and dark circles are only the most visible signs of insomnia. This insidious disease takes hold of a person's life in many more

nefarious ways, leaving them drained and disconnected.

The lives of young adults who are affected by insomnia have to suffer a major shift. The primary cause of this is an increased level of fatigue because of irregularity in sleep. These individuals struggle to fall asleep till the early hours of

the morning only for their sleep to be disrupted by commitments such as classes and work. Thus, they start their day off with feelings of tiredness. This can mean that they remain sluggish for the better part of the day. Not only does this affect their work or academic performance, but it also means they feel lethargic and are more

likely to fall prey to procrastination.

Material productivity is not the sole victim of insomnia. The absence of sleep can, in many cases, mean that people feel grouchy and moody. It leaves them dissatisfied with their lives and generally anxious about how they can deal with their sleeping disorder. The moodiness can mean they come off as stand-offish to other people. This can adversely impact their social dynamics and interpersonal relationships. If their insomnia is a result of pre-existing mental conditions, it can further aggravate them. The culmination of all this can finally present as depression.

Insomnia has also been known to cause health issues such as diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular diseases.

Although insomnia can sometimes go away on its own, in certain cases clinical intervention might become necessary. Medication is available and mental health professionals are equipped to deal with chronic insomnia with a hands-on approach. However, the availability of help isn't the hard part of treating insomnia. The difficulty arises in young adults being aware that their sleeping problems are caused by a genuine medical condition and that there are means that can help them resolve these issues.

Zaima is a struggling student, a failed guitarist and a poet in need of better poetic ideas. Send her your sympathies at zaima2004adrifa@gmail.com

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