Rhyann Bowman

Professor Brown

“This I Believe…”

I believe that your sense of self shouldn’t come from others. You can never know who you truly are if you depend on others to tell you. This belief began in my senior year of high school. I think it began because this was a transitional stage in my life and also a time when others tend to tell you what to do with your life. I realized that I’m the one who has to live my life so I’d better make sure that I like the way I live.

Before my senior year of high school, I was a people-pleaser. In elementary school, I was a teacher’s pet. I needed to be on the teacher’s good side at all times and I needed to make sure that I was their favorite student. I also needed the approval from my classmates. Surprisingly, they didn’t mind that I was the teacher’s pet. I maintained the approval from my teachers and my peers throughout elementary school. I thought that this is how I should if I want to be successful.

As for middle school, we moved in the middle of my first year as a middle-schooler. We had also moved when I was in elementary school but it didn’t affect me. However, middle school is much different. I found out that the kids in middle school were more cruel and less accepting, especially in the middle of the year when cliques have already formed. I was deemed a loser and everyone avoided me. This was the complete opposite of what I was used to. On top of this, I missed my old friends and my old neighborhood. This was a traumatic experience that still affects me today.

This new reputation stuck with me throughout both middle school and high school because most of the kids from middle school went to the same high school. Now that I didn’t have approval from my peers and I wasn’t a teacher’s pet, I didn’t know what to do next. So I turned into a loner. I would say that becoming a loner was a transitional stage, from caring about what everyone says to doing what I want to do. Part of being a loner is not caring about what other people think so it was an easy transition. To this day, I am still a bit of a loner but I have grown to like it. The word “loner” has a negative connotation but being a loner has its perks.

As a loner, you learn more about yourself because there’s more time to think about who you are. Being introverted is seen as an issue in society but introverts have a lot to offer. They are the creative minds. They stop, observe, and interpret their surroundings. They are deep thinkers. I have yet to meet a boring introvert.

I can truly say that I enjoy being a loner with a few close friends than being in a crowd with acquaintances. I’m glad that I had a bad experience in middle school because I gained my sense of self in the end. This doesn’t mean that my belief isn’t tested. As humans, we’re going to want to know what others think, even if it’s only a little bit. But if it interferes with how you view yourself, that’s when it becomes unhealthy.

My belief was tested when I decided to get my hair cut into a mohawk. I really liked how it looked so I built up the courage to cut my hair into one. Y doing this, I thought that I was showing that I didn’t care what others thought. It’s my hair and I was going to do what I wanted. Their opinions didn’t have a say. However, as soon as I left the hair salon, the worries and concerns about what other people would think flooded my mind. My heart was racing. I couldn’t believe what I had done. But in the back of my mind, I thought to myself, “This is good. Let’s see how strong my belief is”.

Some feedback was positive and some was negative. The more feedback I got, the less I cared. “You can’t please everyone”, I thought. This reaffirmed my newfound belief. This belief will not change over time. It’s a very solid belief and there’s no logical reason to turn back. Since I gained this new belief, I found that I am much happier and confident. It takes a lot of effort to try to please everyone because everyone is different with different perspectives and opinions. It’s impossible to please everyone and I had to learn that the hard way.