

High School Relationships: A Reflection

By: Alexa Dentai
Co-News Editor

From the first day at RHS to my last days here, I've gained friends and have molded and formed better relationships, but I've lost relationships throughout my high school journey.

When I was a freshman, I had three best friends I trusted with anything and everything. But I never really knew what any of that meant.

I was thirteen maybe fourteen; I'm not exactly sure.

Being so young, I didn't know much about friendship and how much work it involved in order to have the best kind of relationships you can have.

When you have a relationship, whether it be boyfriend or girlfriend relationship, or even just a friendship, it takes work.

The old saying, "Relationships take work", is true.

During my freshman year, I didn't know that I just knew I had three best friends who loved and cared about me, and I took that for granted.

When my sophomore year had been at its peak, that's when I lost them.

I had been so horrible to them for so long and it had finally caught up to me.

I lost my three best friends that I loved and cared about.

But did I really love them and care about them enough to treat them better than I had?

I had tried to win them back, but I had lost them, of course.

And it was all my fault.

While losing friends, however, I gained a very special one.

I remember the day like it was yesterday: I was still trying to ruse ways to win back my friends, when Mr. Murphy assigned a project to the class.

A partner was required for this project. I looked to the person next to me and saw she didn't have a partner as well, and then a friendship was formed over a potato famine three-paged paper and a PowerPoint.

Those two years I lost my best friends, yet I gained one of the best people I know now. The best people I know now, have also been a part of my life even before I started high school.

When my high school career started, I also had a boyfriend. We had gotten together my eighth grade year but we hadn't officially started dating until track season that year.

My boyfriend and I met through track, but the real reason we started talking to each other was during our run to Dairy Queen.

During our run to Dairy Queen, I had gotten tired so I jumped on his back, after he offered, and he carried me off into the sunset, or in this case, the middle school.

My boyfriend today, is still the same man I loved then, except high school has changed us and has separated us every now and then along the way.

We had broken up and had gotten back together so many times that I lost count.

But I know this much: We have never been broken up for more than three months at a time. We have been together for more than four years total; not many high school students of any age can say that.

I learned about relationships, love, and caring for others through my many different relationships, my boyfriend included.

I learned that it takes love, commitment, honesty, forgiveness and dedication for a relationship of any kind to work.

I admit, I have made so many mistakes when it comes to my relationships, but forgiveness is one of the most honorable and brave acts a person can make in a relationship.

Forgiveness means, according to Google, an intentional and voluntary process by which a victim undergoes a change in feelings and attitude regarding an offense.

Forgiving someone means trusting them again and reaching out to give a second chance.

Being brave means trusting yourself and others to make a better version of yourself.

If allowing yourself to forgive someone makes you honorable, for being so trusting and honest with yourself and others surrounding you, and brave for trusting others to not make the same mistake, what's to say that doesn't make you a better person?

Going through the process of forgiving, like I had with my friends and occasionally my boyfriend, makes you a better person for learning what is right and wrong, and allows one to glimpse into how much hard work, love, dedication, and trust goes into a single relationship.

From my freshman year at RHS to my last days walking the halls, I've learned about relationships and what it's like putting everything you have into trusting and committing to something. This is when a relationship perhaps.

When I think of possible future relationships, I can reflect on my past relationships to help guide me. I know now to trust more, communicate in a respectful and nice way, be honest, and be brave. My future relationships will include a lot more trust and better communications on my part, along with my newly acquired relationship skills I have gained through my high school journey.

Because thinking about my past relationships, I realize how wrong I was and how I have learned from them.

Moondance

By: Beau Brockett, Jr.
Co-Features Editor

Ray Bradbury once said we are able to express an experience best when never experienced before.

For once, I no longer want to be alone. For once, I will no longer tell myself I am content. I no longer want to be the third wheel of love, but its engine.

A single dance. It could mean nothing or everything; let it be captured as a single flashbulb memory never forgotten.

I am easily content. I am happy with all of life's good fortunes and monkey wrenches alike. Just give me Friday, May 9, 2015 between the hours of seven and eleven o' clock p.m. and let me find platonic magic.

I can see it, so close I could clutch it never let go (if I had the courage).

The night would commence as it always has. Pictures with friends (nothing more), carpool, arrive, eat dinner, share laughs, set off to the floor.

Time ticks by. I've accepted my loveless fate. Then the penultimate slow song begins to hum. Maybe it's "What a Good Boy" or "Break Your Heart" by Barenaked Ladies. Or "Land of a 1000 Words" or "Mary" by Scissor Sisters. Or "You Ain't Alone" or "Boys and Girls" by Alabama Shakes. It doesn't matter which; they've all been through the scenario before.

I'll be ecstatic to have a song of my taste being played, yet crushed that there is no one to get lost

in it with. Then the crowd of couples suddenly blurs to a backdrop and time slows and there will be one person just standing there.

It could be anyone, any one of a million lovely faces. They'll ask me timidly if I want to dance. I'll graciously and humbly accept and we'll fall into nervous embrace as the crash of a drum and cymbal set the music off.

As the song builds, so do our feelings – mutual or something more – and we'll grip closer together to keep them from escaping. But four measures before the singer's hair-raising zenith, we'll look into each other's eyes.

And at the zenith, they open. An upbeat song will take over the following euphonious silence and, after some coaxing on my part, together we'll dance and dance.

The scene will fade to a courtyard. With the scrape of silvered spoons against glass and custerard and shuffling feet and muffled beats behind us, we will sit on a rock ledge above a cart path with the moon's reflection spanning across a golf course ocean.

And we'll just sit there. In the company of one another, feeling and feeding off the verve of the night, gazing at the stars or the water or at everything.

And then I'll find myself back on the floor with that same verve and that same person and nothing else. For once, not even the song matters. It could mean nothing or everything. It could all end as the lights rise up or continue for all eternity. It does not matter. Not even the courtyard or the final song matters. Just that single dance.

Just give me one dance before I go. Just give me one dance before I go.

Weathered Spikes

By: Beau Brockett, Jr.
Co-Features Editor

The gun fires but my mind is already racing. My eyes serpentine, darting from one target to the next. My stomach churns with sick anticipation and this morning's breakfast.

Then my feet are lead, stomping down on the gas pedal, and I'm off in a frenzy down the cross country course. I'm flying.

Then the lead melts to gold and the adrenaline from the crowd's raucous cries sends me soaring to Neverland on a runner's high straight on 'til afternoon. This is it.

The bathroom. My mind races back to all those bathrooms. The bathrooms of solace. The worst place to sit but the best to contemplate. There, I clear my doubts before the shot, wipe off the queasy anxieties that slicken my heart.

In those port-a-potties, I think. Eight years of running and the clock is now ticking down to Zero Hour. Four years of cross country and I still need another run at it.

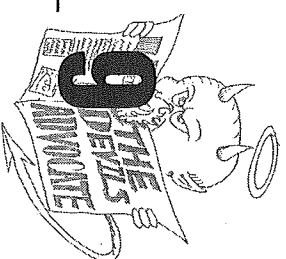
Six newbies; four years later, two remain. One year IV, two years varsity, final year: captain. Three years raised by a tight-knit family of extraordinary, inspiring runners – now I'm their wise grandfather.

Half my team of eight are freshmen. Looking at them now, at their progress, they'll be sprinting down whatever chute life sends them through.

I hope I instilled something in them. In those port-a-potties, I think.

My high school orientation wasn't in
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building, but on its track, gasping through ten 400s in the blistering June sun. That sun's now setting in the autumn chill of a lakeshore park.

I was born into the 5K world a Thirty-Two Minuteman. Now, I'm a Seventeen. As frost sets in, I stride for Sixteen.

All those glastly workouts; buddy bags; conditionings; team dinners; long runs; dance-offs; watching and racing; talking with the unsung heroes I've grown up with who barrel through the ochre forest of fallen leaves as if the universe was condensed into that one meet; all those times where my mind said, "Slow down!" but my legs pushed onward as I bladed my heart and soul into the course's dirt....

... Those were some of the greatest moments I have experienced.

Four years of determination and fervent passion. Four years of setting new goals because I surged past the old.

I'm on the edge of destiny and these final barriers must be broken so I may reach its precipice. And jump.

And here I am with bloodshot eyes up to the finish line. It was any other race, but in its midst, I have never felt — *ram* — better. To feel like that again. To feel like that for all eternity. Sixteenth out of 129.

Gloriously bitersweet, though, because my time is running out.

Winter falls upon me and yet there's still so much more I have to offer.

I'm treading on weathered spikes and they fall closer to collapse with every step forward. I've put in so much work — I just can't let it slip by. But that's what running always comes down to: time.

I should've given it more. I should've.

I don't want to go

Change: The Power it Holds

By: Maximillian Leesch

Staff Writer

You cannot avoid the inevitable. Many seniors, including myself, believe we are ready for graduation.

We aren't.

Nothing can quite prepare us for a change of this magnitude. We just need to accept it as it happens.

Change is powerful, subtle, volatile, benign, predictable, unpredictable. We hope for it and yet we fear everything about it.

But we've experienced change before, right? We have seen silent ball come and go, recess fade out, and even experienced the end of having French fries every Friday for lunch.

Those changes were but miniscule to the changes the seniors face right now.

There are things that many seniors wish they could change about their past. Maybe they want to take back a snarky comment to a friend or try harder on that one Algebra test they failed freshman year.

Others refrain from regretting their faults.

Sometimes I wish I could go back and fix a few of my mistakes. Sometimes I don't.

I know those mistakes are there for a reason: to teach me how to overcome obstacles and confront my problems. They taught me how to accept what needs to change.

Maybe if I *hadn't* made that rude remark in my sixth grade science class, I wouldn't be the same person I know I am now.

Maybe if I *had* stuck with track after eighth grade, I would be more popular during my high school career. Do I regret my mistakes and

the decisions I made?

No.

If I had fixed and redone everything in my past, I wouldn't be who I am. I might've not been friends with the great people I am proud to call companions. I wouldn't have learned so many life lessons from my teachers and have gained their support.

I wouldn't have known how to write a formal email, present myself in a professional environment, or accept criticism without making mistakes and allowing my mentors to lend me their wisdom.

Would I have learned the importance of respect and tenacity? The thin line between criticism and insult?

Who can say for sure?

And I certainly couldn't imagine my life without theatre. Where would I be? What would I be doing? I might've gone to Panama City Beach for Spring Break with the rest of the 'in crowd' or been a well-respected athlete. But I'm glad I stuck with the stage. I'm glad I decided to audition for my first play.

When I nervously walked into the high school auditorium for the first time as a freshman, I was afraid of what to expect. Nevertheless, I walked up onstage, sang my part, read a sample of the *West Side Story* script, and walked off. Sure I was shaking the whole time, but I knew this was the right activity to pursue.

To my surprise, I received the part of Baby John, a member of the Jets gang. Finally I wasn't just another chorus member!

The cast and I, especially my fellow Jets, bonded the next few

months. I became good friends with a lot of them, and I knew they would always hold a place for me on that stage for the rest of my life.

I wouldn't change my choice to audition for anything.

And what's to be said about my academics? Sure, I got off to a rough start my freshman year, but that only gave me more of a reason to do better, try my hardest. I'm glad I struggled at first. I'm glad I struggled at first. I'm glad I gave myself room to grow into the hard-working person I am.

Now with straight A's my final semester of high school, I look back and appreciate the fact that I had a few C's my first year.

I wasn't always accustomed to change.

It took years for me to accept it as a normal occurrence. But now that I am aware of what positive things can come from change, I've learned how to embrace it. However, we can't always measure how much of an impact it will make on our lives at the moment change happens.

Change is for the better — for the most part. But like I said, we aren't always prepared for what's in store when change find us. It will always find a way to tap us (or push us) on the shoulder and tell us that to go on with our lives, we must begin an entirely new chapter.

Since elementary school we've been taught how to accept change and move on.

So that is what the Class of 2015 and I will do.

A Message to More Than One Freshman

By: Brandon Stein

Staff Writer

That time of the year has come: When the seniors make their courageous leap into the world to start a new part of their lives.

It is with much anticipated excitement and apprehensiveness that we leave the halls, the rooms, the lockers, the teachers, and the friends that we have known dearly for the last four years. For the freshman that just came in this year, you may be thinking, "I barely even know the seniors. Who cares?"

Most of you probably find us annoying and obnoxious.

This is true. We can be very strange. I thought the same way when I was an underclassman.

But you will soon learn something: You will most likely be the same

way when you reach our grade. You may not even realize it's happening, but it will. It just comes with getting older.

But we are just people too; don't be afraid to talk to us. Most of us are genuine individuals who would love to talk to new people.

You will meet many new people throughout your high school career, and they may replace your current friends. It's sad to think that the people you are closest to right now may fade away by the time you reach your senior year. This will most likely happen to at least one person you know now.

But maybe it's for the best. As we age, we get more mature and move toward higher levels of functioning. Which means that we meet better people as we move through this journey we call life. We see what is best

for ourselves as individuals. You may not have any hard feelings toward that person you no longer hang out with; you've just simply grown apart.

Time is a strange entity that swirls around us all. It practically controls us all, from deadlines to daily tasks.

I cannot stress the concept of time enough. You may remember freshman orientation clear as day right now, but I can almost guarantee you that by your junior year, you will be asking yourself, "Did I even go to that?"

And by senior year, that early year will be a mere blur, a distant memory.

Earlier this year, you may have gotten the advice to do well your freshman year and to get good grades. Follow this advice. And not only

to freshman year, but apply it to all four years.

Follow it after high school. Follow it through life.

It is one of the best pieces of advice I can give. You may not think it matters now, but it most definitely will. If you work hard and keep your studies up, that is a major burden and worry lifted off your shoulders.

Down time is important as well; however, keeping up your grades can be a big advantage over others that may not work as hard. It opens many doors to go to whatever college you want.

College may seem far off; however, it is much closer than you think.

That is why in your four short years here, I encourage you to take a variety of classes, and take challenging classes too.

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