

Stress: As Told By Juniors Life Happens



Emilee Montiel
—Staff Writer—

Happy second semester, Alamosa High School! This is the time of year where it is stressful, stressful, and even more stressful. I'm sure for any student, this time of year becomes difficult, but for Juniors, it especially does.

Being Juniors, there are many things we have to take into consideration. Getting good grades, the upcoming SAT's and their scores, and eventually, college. Typically, Junior year is the hardest, and the most stressful year out of the high school career.

We have to try our best, and succeed for a bright future. While talking to several students from my class, I asked them, "What makes your Junior year so hard?" The answers I received were similar to, "Everything counts on how well I do this year."

Though it can be good at times to worry and stress about preparation, a lot of Juniors make the mistake of over-doing it, and drive themselves absolutely crazy. Often times, we worry too much about getting a low SAT score, or doing poorly in our

classes. This takes us down the sad and windy road of, "I'm not good enough," or, "I cannot do this." But, this is very wrong. The sometimes hard-to-swallow truth is that in fact, we can do this.

I'm here to tell you that we can stress however much we want, and drive ourselves insane, but that could be a huge waste of time. There comes a point when over-doing it does not help anything at all. At this point in the school year, the constant stress of being "perfect" with amazing grades and a fantastic SAT score become far more stressful than those things in themselves.

After the amount of stressing about these commodities, it seems impossible to actually get the task done. However, it is not as impossible as it seems. If we learned to manage our tense nerves about the future, we would all be so much happier. So, how do we do this, exactly?

To start, we need to relax and take a deep breath. I think one of the biggest stress relievers is to put in some music, and try to come to the senses that everything is going to be okay. After all, we're only human. In the end, we are going to be able to figure out the plans for the future.

Continually drawing attention to something that we can't control will only make matters worse.

After taking one of those deep breaths, we can move on to eliminating these big worries. The best thing to do when we are struggling in a class is to ask for help where we fall short. The teachers here at AHS are happy to help at times when we are needing it the most. They know and understand that the classes can be tough, and they are glad we want to know the subject better.

When trying to find a way to improve our SAT scores, there are many resources that can help us. Instead of staying constantly worried about the test that's to come, we can prepare ourselves more. One of my most recommended ways to do so is by using *Khan Academy*.

I can connect my previous test scores, and the program specializes in coming up with the areas that I need to improve on before my next test. *Khan Academy* also does practice tests so I am able to see what I would get on the mock test after having practiced for a certain amount of time. This becomes very helpful in a time where all I want to do is stress!



Austyn McCormick
—Staff Writer—

As we approach the new year, I have decided to reflect on who I was a year ago from today. Coming back to my hometown from Arkansas, coming back to the small town of Alamosa, Colorado, the town that never changes, and reconnecting with old friends. From going out for the soccer team, spending the summer of 2019 with my friends and family. Everything in 2019 seemed to be going great.

As I spent most of my 2019 in Arkansas, I joined the colorguard team for Bentonville West High School. I was put in a program for "breaking down the walls" in Arkansas. I learned how to deal with school shootings, bullying, and suicide prevention.

I grew so much as a person; moving schools made me become more social and comfortable to talk to random people. I traveled through many different states for my colorguard team. Arkansas brought me so many opportunities but like all good things, it came to an end.

A big change was coming my way. I was told that we

were moving back to Colorado. In the middle of the school year is when everything changed for me. I reconnected with old friends and I once again had to adjust to the cold. I had to catch up to the Junior class at Alamosa High School. I went from being stress free and happy, to stressed and sad about starting all over.

The months passed by fast and my friend group changed. The school year was coming to a close and the new year was coming fast. I had to grow up and be a little more responsible. Including getting a job, taking school more seriously, and stepping up as the oldest in the family.

During the year of 2019, my family life changed. I found out that nothing was going to be the same for my family and I. My mom was diagnosed with breast cancer, which meant that I had to pick up the slack and grow up a bit faster. Growing up came faster than I wanted it to.

As we start 2020, new adventures will come and new challenges will be put in my path. My outlook on life has completely changed thanks to 2019. Last year prepared me to face this year with a positive outlook.

The Time of A New Year: Accepting Me



Dominique Lopez
—Section Editor—

New year, new me, right? This seems to be a phrase everyone knows and knows well, but what does it really mean? Does it mean that we are changing ourselves completely to fit into the social norms, or does it mean that we are just slightly changing our purposes, ways, and means to become more "normal?"

See with this new year and new decade being here this has been crossing my mind a lot and, I can't really decide where this phrase truly holds importance in the time of year changing. Is it because of new year resolutions, or suddenly shaming yourself because you didn't cut those five pounds before the new year?

All of these have been crossing my mind but still, somehow, my brain is stuck on social norms being the reason. These social norms have been following us around since elementary school and are still how we "find" an establishment for our popularity and normality. Of course these are all the common cliques: jocks, nerds, gamers, and even the popular girls, all of these are the places where they want to fit in. However these establish-

ments still force me to question who actually established them and even who made these the important aspects to aspire for.

If we are all changing to fit in one or four societies we are soon going to become a conformed society with no true meaning of an identity that makes us different. We aren't even really establishing ourselves as being worthy of our imperfections. Their is no real normal yet, we are still striving for that fulfillment of knowing we are a bit closer to that "normal-ness."

This phrase new year, new me is not making us feel like we are truly making a change but it is more turning us into a conformed society. If we knew that conformity is what we are really searching for, would we still want to change every time the new year comes? This all comes from what society thinks is best and right, so maybe if we change our perceptions we'll feel better about ourselves and not feel like we have to become a new person each year.

Social normalities are something we have to have all aspired to at least once in our lives, I mean even I have, but still these aren't normal. In all honesty who gets to decide what normal actually is? If all we have

are these four norms to base our decisions off of aren't we really ignoring what make us different? In any case if all we can do is classify one another into these categories aren't we taking away who really was born to stand out from the rest of the world? These social norms were created to classify people and have something to aspire for. However, the creation of these norms have actually made it easier for people to judge those who don't fit in.

Knowing that they were created as the foundation for judgment would we continue to aspire them? Honestly, conformity is a part of life, but it is the ones who stand out and establish themselves as being worthy of being noticed, who make this conformity less possible. Being noticed for being different is what makes someone known and allows them to feel worthy. Through embracing your imperfections you're ultimately showing the world that you love yourself for who you are and that you aren't aspiring that look like any model.

Imperfections define our identities, they are our way for saying that although I don't look like a model I am still loving myself for who I am. Our identities are much more than just how we

look, it is also our personalities, but still we get stuck on the idea of it all being based off of how we look. We don't all look the same and that was done for a reason, but we still are all searching for that conformity where we all look the same. So if we are searching for a new year, new me why is it all based on how we get stuck on not losing enough weight or even starting dieting so we can lose that weight?

If we change ourselves to focus on fitting into the social norms of high school how horribly are we damaging our identities. By choosing to want to fit into these norms we are not only changing the physical side of our identities but also the personality side. We are looking for a way to fit in by changing ourselves to be more jocky, nerdy, or even to look and be a little more model like. All of these are classifications but also are what we base our cliques off of. One's dumb, one's really smart, and one's the perfect in between. All of these are society based and all are damaging our perceptions of one another.

If we continue to knock each other down to make one of us feel better aren't we really basing our whole lives off of judgment? Not only that but if

we begin our year knocking each other down we will end our year the exact same way leading to us say new year, new me once again.

These ideas have not only been crossing my mind a lot but are also making me question where can equilibrium be found in accepting one another. Equilibrium would be the place in which we consider everyone to be the same and worthy of not being judged. Yet still as I continue to write this story, I feel as though this area is not really established for everyone, that aren't close family members, who feel close to one another.

New year, new me is a phrase that has been around for ages and still we use this phrase as a way of putting each other down. So what if you didn't lose those extra ten pounds, it is okay. These social norms are controlling our life choices making equilibrium move farther away.

It is time for equilibrium and to find safe sanctions where we all are being equally accepted despite our flaws. We need to know that we don't have to fit nicely into one of the four categories, we can be different and explore our flaws without feeling judged or being demeaning to yourself. So it's time to embrace these flaws