

Choose Your Anchors Wisely

Fortunately for many young students growing up, our society is beginning to understand that mental health is just as important as anything physical in school. Unfortunately however, many of these same students do not have anyone teaching them the importance of the people they choose to surround themselves with. I was one of these students, having grown up in a toxically masculine household that taught me to push my pain and mental health deep into a hole in hopes that it would never surface. For a long time I did exactly that and lost my negative emotions in the darkness of my subconscious and it was not until meeting my best friends that I was able to pull my emotions into the light. I was able to find my support group that broke me out of my emotional shell by pure luck and it was not until I did that I realized the societal pressure on young students of color to deal with things alone. A support group allows us to navigate the world with less fear, handle our negative emotions better, and creates a more productive environment, which is crucial for our well-being as young adults.

Finding a support group allows us as young adults to make our way through the world with less fear about the dangerous possibilities that come with new discoveries. Facing the world of endless possibilities can be daunting, especially when adults around you make you fear failure as many parents do. Personally speaking, adults around me during school and at home told me to pursue a career in something safe such as medicine or law. Because of this advice, I grew up having to suppress my dreams of creative careers and became afraid of failing at the game we call “life”. Many other kids grow up in similar situations and we do not realize until we are older that the people around us were inhibiting our growth as an individual. Due to our inability to develop our support groups as kids, we must endure until we can, but once we can, our entire view of the world can change. Having people who support our most creative and ambitious

endeavors removes our fear of failure because a good support system reminds us that if we fail, we have a group of people to help get back up. By removing this fear of failure that was instilled in us since childhood, we are free to dream as big as we want and create the perfect life for ourselves. It is crucial to remember that growth is not limited to our childhood and that we continue to grow as individuals for the rest of our lives so it is important to create a good mental space for growth with a support system that pushes us forward.

Having a support group also allows young adults to face their negative emotions with a better mindset and grow from them. As kids, any negative emotions are often punished by our parents, teachers, or other kids. We are taught to suppress our natural negative emotions so that we could subconsciously conform to the image of what a person should be like. The issue with this mindset is that it rejects our most natural instincts as people and as an individual. We all experience our emotions and react differently than others and so to create an “ideal” behavior is preventing us from growing as our own individual. We learn just as much about ourselves from anger or sadness as we do from joy. Keeping us from our natural emotions, therefore, prevents the growth that comes along with those emotions. Similar to the previous point, this is also rooted in our support system as children that were assigned to us. Being able to create our own support group allows us to choose others that support our growth and natural emotions in order to learn from them instead of rejecting them. As a student, this growth is important because it lets us face the difficulties of school and life as a student without giving up or bottling it up until it pops into frustration or depression. The correct support group can remind you that your emotions are uniquely yours and that you can learn about yourself from them.

Finally, one of the most important reasons for a good support system as a student is that it creates a more productive environment. Most of us face the same issues of procrastination and

distractions because of the technological world full of distractions that we grew up in. For some of us, we need another person to keep us on track with our deadlines and motivation. An ambitious support group can do exactly this by surrounding you with others who also want to succeed just as much as you do. If those that you surround yourself with work hard then so will you. As a student, this is super important to establish so that you can create a good work ethic that is supported by those around you. This also extends past academics and into personal endeavors. A support group that pushes you to follow your dreams every day and creates an environment for you to want to grow will make you more productive in your everyday life. In both school, and in personal life, a support group can help you create and maintain a good work ethic.

We do not get to choose our support group as children and that often creates a bad space for our growth but once we reach our teenage years, we are able to create our support group for ourselves. When creating it, we must be very careful in the people we choose to surround us because a good support group can help us navigate the stressful world, help us face our emotions to grow, and help us be more productive in our life. Many of us still have not found our support group yet and that is perfectly fine. We are still young, no matter our age. Our life is malleable and could be shaped into whatever we want. The first step towards shaping our life is finding those who will help us mold it along the way so choose wisely and carefully.