MAKE IT WHAT YOU WILL

The rain, drops tap-tapping on your windowpane, is the only friend you're willing to let in. Grey is the sky, the grass, the smell, the sounds: you prefer the lack of flair.

The people around you glisten with pretension. It all seems so fake, so unnecessary, how overdone and happy.

Your mind twists and falls, tripping on thoughts and tilting into your stomach.

"Yes, I'm fine."

Untethered and lost, the world, which once was your cradle, rocks.

You balance precariously, the tips of your feet sliding forward, your toes gripping to the brinks.

But you master withdrawing with a sense of ease . Those emotions could pierce the veil, the air of your sleepless nights, your daily wanderings, your "places-I-need-to-be", if the scream rolling off your tongue would echo in your mouth.

You know the earth is in constant motion, that time is constantly passing. There is evidence around you, in the shuffling rabble, and somewhere on the outskirts of your mind you think to ask why the astrophysical laws don't affect you. In theory, you are the matter without dimension, without a tethering pull.

"I'm sorry for your loss."

- Anonymous



TEACHERS

Here are a few descriptions of teachers at our school. Read through them and guess which teachers are being described!

The teacher who always gives too much homework:

This candidate assumes that we have nothing better to do than homework. When you remind him that we also get assignments from other teachers, he says, "Well this is obviously a more important subject!" Then he smiles and tells us that we will be grateful in the future. Really? I doubt it.

The teacher who obviously does not know what they are talking about:

This teacher often says things like "That's a great question! It's your homework to look it up and share the answer with us next time." Or, "I would love to explain this in greater depth, but I think it would be too complicated for you." By saying these things, they are admitting that they do not know the answer. Einstein said,"If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it enough." This teacher needs to spend some more time doing their homework.

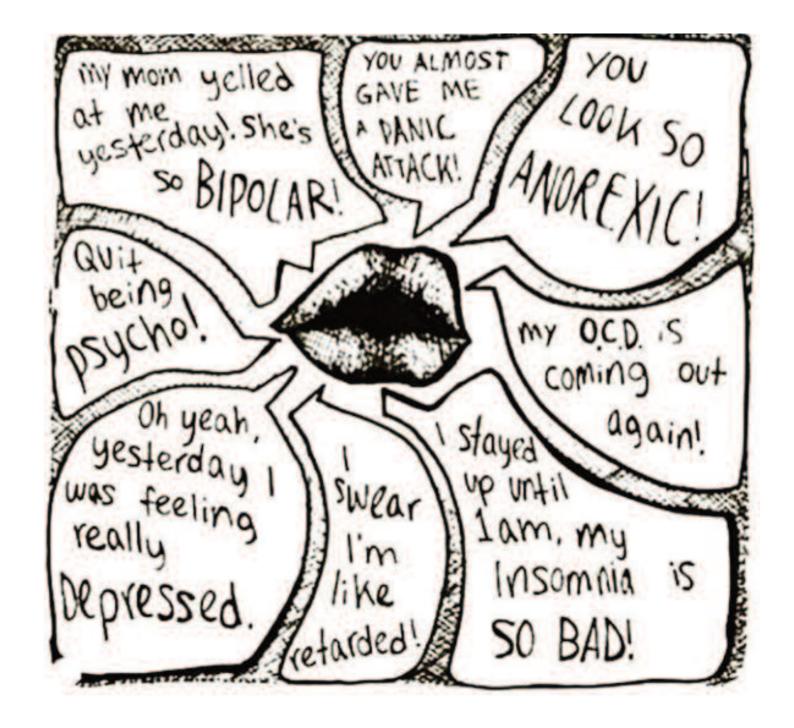
The depressed teacher:

The teacher on the first day of school: "Hi kids. Did the bell ring? I guess we have to start now. (sigh) Let's all get to know each other first. I actually wanted to become a doctor, but sadly that did not work out. So I became a teacher."

- Anonymous

THE

MUCKRAKER



Muckraker

OCTOBER 2015 CIRCULATION: 300 **VOLUME XVI** ISSUE VI

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Speaks

As the days grow short and the trees stand naked, the tired student might feel tempted by his drab and listless surroundings to descend into a state of mental gloom. It would be to our flattery if this newest issue could rake away some of the knee-deep muck of stress, boredom, and exhaustion into which our student body may otherwise sink. Fortunately, two journalists stand undaunted in the midst of all this dullness and draw their quills: while one points out various ways of improving our everyday life at school, the other wittily satirizes some universally known teacher-archetypes. And, of course, those who were plagued by school work during that interlude of supposed relaxation known to us as fall break will be delighted to find that they have found a mouthpiece for their complaints.

The coming of the cold will impact most heavily the incessant stream of refugees which presses on towards our borders. One more #refugeeswelcome article addresses this greatest of trials, and an article about the controversial topic of political correctness is also certainly relevant. Similar issues, such as the male gender and the metal health of students, are also subject to discussion. And finally, those who wish to combat their intellectual fatigue by means of emotional anecdotes will be happy to find a new episode of 'Humans of JFKS' and a sample of personal poetic expression enclosed within this newest of issues.

Elated by the hope that this little creation will provide you with an island of enjoyment in the midst of scholarly morass, we thus put down our pens and heartily proclaim:

The Editors.

Cheers to all.

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Schoolwork during Vacation

CHANCE OR INFRINGEMENT?

choolwork during vacation – Chance or Infringement?

One look in the Oxford Dictionary provides the obvious answer to this question. Said source defines vacation as "any time or period of rest and freedom from work". All work required to do during such a period hence presents an obvious encroachment on this freedom. Here lies the origin of the rule forbidding assignments during any of our vacations. Regarding the teachers' favorite loophole of giving out work with a due date later than the first day back, enabling the claim that it therefore can be done in the days between the due date and the break, and that they are thus not strictly violating the rule- we appreciate the attempt to revisit vacation's true meaning. But these kind of loophole assignments aside - what about learning for possible post-break tests/Klausuren, reviewing class material from the weeks before? Should students use these school-free days as an opportunity to learn in a more relaxed environment or actually take the time off and unwind? As the answer varies depending on the individual, this topic is a controversial one.

Many educationalists support the opinion that our brain does not simply "go on vacation" and that it retains material learned in a relaxed environment better. Consequently, studying during break is helpful academically. Among these supporters of "holiday studying" is Sabrine Angelkorte, a working tutor. She makes the case that our brains are in constant need of stimulation and lack thereof will not only cause indolence, but make the return to school increasingly difficult. As a remedy for such a hard start, she suggests short periods of learning throughout the vacation and says, "one hour of learning in the morning is enough to animate the brain, and leaves the rest of the day for other, more fun activities". This is sufficient to close any gaps that may have developed during the year, and fights frustration once classes commence. As it turns out, in-break-studying is the norm in over half of German households anyway. A survey of parents conducted by the SPIEGEL shows that 55% of students review material during school free weeks, 42% of those for at least 2 hours a week, and 20% do so intensely and on a regular basis.

Another point within that study, however, contradicts Angelkorte's recommendation: 83% of asked parents said it is most important to them that their child develops their creativity, their interests, independence, and social skills during vacation.

The opposing side of the argument agrees with the parent's opinion and contends that vacation is not a privilege but a necessity. "Students work extremely hard and are exposed to enormous pressure to perform. They need vacation to relax and regenerate themselves just as much as any adult," says Dr. Cornelia Sussieck, chair of the VNN. Some scientists even believe that the estival intelligence loss is a mere myth. Psychologist Detlef Rost summarized the issue in numbers: per month of school, the average student's IQ rises by between 0,3 and 0,5 points. This demonstrates a reassuring conclusion: even during a two month vacation from class, the highest possible loss of intelligence amounts to one IQ point. Now, this does not mean we don't lose practice and possibly become temporarily slower mathematicians, writers, or scientists, but it shows even vacations in which an individual "chills" the entire time will not "make us dumber". It's not that we aren't learning things during breaks, they are merely different types of things; some might even say more valuable ones. This acquisition of skills, ranging from building sandcastles to making new friends, is what vacation should be reserved for.

As so often, the conclusion seems to be that balance is the key to success, and everyone has to see what works for them individually. However, in order for us to learn to prioritize and study without the pressure of a due-date, teachers should at least reconsider the workload they assign over breaks.

-Emma Defty



MEN, SEX AND PROPAGANDA

A LESSON OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

whose central purpose it was to coax young men into taking an all-inclusive trip to the European Western Front. Included in the deal was a choice between grueling deaths by barbed wire, mustard gas, disease or just plain old bullets, for those harboring a taste for the traditional. Unsurprisingly, the price for return tickets was not featured.

vincing the United Kingdom's youth to throw away their lives in muddy trenches is notable: two women gaze dreamily out of the window at a line of soldiers departing to some nightmarish destination. Any ambiguity about the women's disposition towards the unwise embarkation is dispelled by the bold white letters which fill the upper half of the sign, forming the caption: "Women of Britain 'GO!" Say

It is for this reason that this casual advertisement of sanctioned manslaughter constitutes a very crude exploitation of the male sex urge and 'gender role'. Those whose eyebrows are raised by such a declaration need not worry: a short excursion into the field of biology will

species it is to protect the corresponding females. "But", the ardent feminist will say, "nature provides multifarious evidence of species in which the masculine is the weaker and more submissive side of the equation. Lionesses are more menacing and less lazy than their male counterparts, and certain female spiders devour their suitor after copulation." All true. However, there is one critical phase in which a female will inevitably need protection from on civilization seems at the very least recommendable. a male – that of pregnancy.

A ccompanying this text, should the present au- Consequently, a man who is, at least in theory, capable thor's faith in the school printing machine have of fending off wild beasts and building a primitive hut been rewarded, is the reproduction of a 1914 poster for his bloated companion will always seem subconsciously attractive to a woman. And to perform any of these feats, he must be either tall, or strong, or combative -- or all three.

by women. And what better way to achieve this than to fight in the glorious culmination of inter-European rivalries in the same way the revered Achilles, Agamem-The form taken by this base attempt at con- non and Ajax are said to have done three millennia

What happened next is very vividly described by Wilfred Owen in his poem Dulce et Decorum Est, and for purposes of brevity, we shall limit ourselves to saying that the streets of European cities were flooded with traumatized, mentally shattered, mutilated young men members of what was later to become known as the 'lost generation'.

The fundamental message of this article is a warn-

amply support and underscore the point. ing that the urge to seem male, if not properly The traditional role of males in almost any controlled, kills. Granted, schools have done their share in demystifying armed conflict for our generation, and those who still feel compelled to indicate that they would excel at fending off tigers mostly confine themselves to imbibing protein shakes in large quantities and audibly discussing recent accomplishments at the nearby gym. Nonetheless, human nature is never more than dormant, and so keeping in mind the disastrous effects the wish to appear extraordinarily 'manly' can have

Men, as a result, desire to be perceived as such

earlier. The not-so-subtle message of the propaganda

item in discussion thus translates into plain English as follows: "Go fight for us. Women want you to fight for us, and they will like you if you do". Or, even more simply: "Go to war, and you'll laid."

JFKS IMPROVEMENTS

Tere at JFKS, there is room for improvement. The restrooms should be cleaner, there is not much of a structure in classes, the schedules should be cut down a little, attendance and participation matter too much, the wifi is bad, you can't see your grading and attendance online, you're fined on overdue books, and there are no water fountains. Listed below the reasons for these complaints.

I don't find the restrooms very clean. If they were cleaned every week, they would be more hygienic. Also, if students tried to maintain the cleanliness of the restrooms, for example by throwing their paper towels in the trash instead of on the floor, then the restrooms would stay cleaner longer.

In classes, to me, we just do a bunch of random stuff. There is no such thing as a lesson 1 or 2, it's just unspecific components. We should have more of a structure. We can accomplish this by using order. From my point of view, the mornings are too packed; five periods in one morning is too much. So, if we students must have eight periods in one day, we should have four in the morning and three after lunch versus five in the morning and two after lunch. The solution to this is to try to cut down the schedules. What is bothersome, in my opinion, is that attendance and participation matter a lot. For attendance, you have to to turn in a note that says you're excused within three days; otherwise, it's an unexcused absence next to your name; why can't you just tell the teacher you were out sick? Concerning participation, what if you're tired or you prefer working alone? It would be nice if this could change. The wifi is bad here at JFKS. It disappears, it's slow, and some rooms don't have it. We need wifi for the classrooms so that the teachers can teach us what they want (they might need it to show their points on the computer). Hopefully good wifi can be installed. I find that not being able to see your grading and attendance is irritating. We only get grades for individual assignments, not an overall grade. It would be nice if there was a website where we could see our grades and attendance so we know whether we have to bump up a grade or if we have to turn in an excused note.

I hope that we can have something like this in the future.

I understand that if you lose or damage a book you are fined, but I don't understand why you're fined on overdue books here. I turned a book in late by about two days and I was fined twenty cents. I know it's only twenty cents, but I think it's absurd that you're charged on late books. I wish that in due time, this complaint can change.

Lastly, there are no water fountains here at school. If you don't bring a water bottle, you have to buy water. And if you don't bring any money, then you're thirsty. There is a water dispenser in the large Aula, but you need to buy a hot lunch to use the glasses (when you're done with the glass it must be placed on a tray). Water fountains should be put in place throughout the school.

I hope that the Student Council sees this article so that these complaints can be no more. JFKS can then be a better school.

- Morgan Tombargue



A COMMENTARY ON MENTAL HEALTH

Our lungs, hearts, bones, and blood. Just like the health of the body, the mind's health can deteriorate throughout life.

According to the World Health Organization, mental health is "a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal pressures of life, can work productively, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community." Easier said than done. The demands of life are such that consistently maintaining immaculate mental health is nearly impossible. In particular, we can all attest that high school is an incubator for stress and anxiety in many ways, as the pressure to craft a flawless academic career grows more present and intimidating. A student with a perfect grade point average seems almost humdrum when thousands and thousands of students appear to participate in every activity under the sun, while still scoring in the stratosphere on their SAT's. It's as though you need to end world hunger to distinguish yourself in a mob of over-achieving collegebound teenagers. When you're taking a dozen classes, juggling multiple extracurriculars, and trying to maintain some semblance of a social life, your mental health may take a backseat to the hundred other things you need to think about. We're all too familiar with the weeks of limbo, when "tired" seems to be the only apposite word to describe how we feel. It's easy to neglect your mental health in the same way you might forget to take in a vitamin or eat healthy food.

You may think (that) you're the only one who's struggling, but you aren't. With today's technology, it's become a routine to obsessively crave for the picturesque and desirable qualities of everyone else's lives. Social media let's us painlessly (and shamelessly) show people exactly how much fun we're having without them. If you already feel as though your life is dissatisfying, you're bound to think that it's also inadequate. However, in actuality, we're all lying to some extent — or at the very least, omitting parts of the truth. No one posts pictures of their lazy Saturday nights spent at home or tweets about the test they failed.

That's not cool, so mental illness isn't cool either. We're all smiles in flattering VSCO Cam filters and no one is the wiser.

The International Medical Corps estimates that some 450 million people suffer from mental illness each year and around 20% of young adults and teenagers struggle with mental disorders. Mental illness has proven more prevalent than cancer, yet the conversation on mental health is a static and muffled one. Maybe people don't talk about mental illness because there is no definite diagnosis. While it's straightforward to put a cast on a broken arm, tackling a mental disorder is a far more complicated and ambiguous process.

And maybe another reason for the lack of dialogue is our watered-down understanding of mental illness. We fling around words insouciantly – "This song makes me depressed"; "Quit being so bipolar"; "Don't mess up my room, I'm really OCD" – and the words we use as ammunition lose their meaning. Depression, Bipolar Disorder, and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder are things that plague people everyday, not casual emotions that you can cycle through flippantly. It's not so much a matter of political correctness as it is simply a matter of factual correctness. If you're not bi-polar, don't claim to be. Someone out there is, so choose choose your words wisely and don't discredit the hardship they are experiencing.

Not only is mental illness discussed inaccurately; it's also often stigmatized. "Time to Change", a charitable campaign aiming to end mental health discrimination, reports that although the general public perceives mentally ill individuals as likely to commit violent crimes, academic studies have not supported this claim. In fact, some studies suggest that mentally ill people are more likely than the average person to be a victim to violence, rather than a perpetrator. By generalizing and dismissing all those afflicted by mental illness as insane or dangerous, the conversation on mental health becomes not only static, but also harmful.

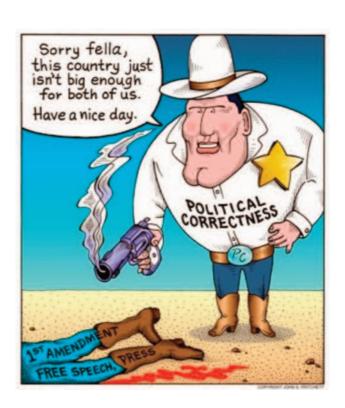
If you or someone you know is struggling with mental illness, it's crucial that you treat it like what it is – an illness. They're not crazy, you're dealing with a sickness alongside millions of other people. If you're not grappling with a mental illness, stay vigilant about your own health and show civility and empathy to others.

The list goes on, and while I personally agree with some changes of the last years—"Sinti and Roma" instead of "Gypsies"—others seem completely ridiculous. Did you know that the terms Before Christ (BC) and Anno Domini (AD) are no longer acceptable because of their religious connotation? Instead, we should say "Before Common Era". 'Common Era". Similarly, don't look forward to next year's Easter eggs, they are called "spring spheres" now. Oh, and when starting a group project, please don't brainstorm. It's offensive to epileptics. You can thought shower instead.

Here, I see two of the main problems concerning the issue of political correctness. In many cases, such as the latter one, people find insult in a term that in no way aims to offend people. Nonetheless, it keeps some groups from feeling discriminated against. This connects to the second big issue, which is point of view. This argument is simply a very subjective one and varies from personal perspective to personal perspective. I find the term "Sinti and Roma" appropriate, but this opinion might differ from other people's. There will never be full agreement between all parties involved, so is the solution to completely abandon the use of all labels? No, because again, we find protest coming from those who want labels.

The vicious circle of political correctness seems hopeless. Certainly, an agreement satisfying everyone lies far in the future. We should not dream of a utopia where everybody accepts everybody, forging a language neutral in meaning. The individual has to decide for himself until laws officially set rules for certain terms; until then, peace is in our own hands. So, for now, we can start by listening to the wishes of others and respect those. In return, they will do the same for us.

-Celestine Landt



RPC or TPCWNIAHT?

RIDICULOUS POLITICAL CORRECTNESS OR THE POLITICAL CORRECTNESS WE NEED IN A HEALTHY COMMUNITY?

In a recent debate on political correctness, my English class once again realized the complexity of the said topic and its effect on society. Whether in politics or the arts, public or private life, non-discriminating vocabulary plays a growing role in the evaluation of the aforementioned categories and alters language audibly. While the dispute over certain terms is justifiable and the use of respectable labels should be discussed, the debate over politically correct or incorrect language does take ridiculous forms and oversteps lines of absurdity. The problem: who decides where that line is and when it is crossed, and how will we make sure that there will never be a group or individual not feeling discriminated against?

"Political Correctness" was originally introduced in 1936 as a term meant to minimize offence—particular in reference to minorities. Merriam-Webster defines it as "conforming to a belief that language and practices which could offend political sensibilities (as in matters of sex or race) should be eliminated" and an anonymous user on Urban Dictionary simply states "A way that we speak in America so we don't offend whining pussies". Whichever definition speaks to you, the phrase aims to minimize all possibilities of offending a particular group of individuals and attempts to guarantee equal and just treatment for every member of our community. Most would probably agree to the need of these values as foundations of a healthy and fair society, so why do debates disputing whether a term is politically correct or not continually come up?



With the attempt of appeasing all involved, one would have to accept every individual's request for a certain label. The "LGBT Community" exemplifies a case in which this might evolve into a larger problem, because, in order to be politically correct and not exclude any members from this group, the term "LGBT" would have to be expanded to "LGBTQQIP2SAA". With more and more sexual preferences becoming publicly represented, the issue resulting in language here is obvious. One the one hand, shortening the term to the earlier one does not aim to offend or exclude anyone, but simply ease the acronym to a more colloquial one. On the Contrary, however, the wish to be represented if one does not identify as simply gay, lesbian, bi- or transsexual is understandable and should be respected. In a case such as this, who is to decide what is ridiculous, what sexual orientation exists, and exactly which sexual preference is important (or even valid) enough to make the abbreviated version, LGBT, of the acronym LGBTQQIP2SAA? I myself would not want to take responsibility for this decision, which shows how complex the issue of political correctness can be.

It would be exaggerated if one was to say that political correctness influences everyday language, but since it takes an appearance in the media so often, it does seem to affect our lives more than expected. The renaming of "French Fries" to "Freedom Fries" or the frequent debate of "black people" versus "Afro-Americans" changes culture to a more modern version, which aims to not discriminate against anyone. However, hearing children call indigenous Africans "Afro-Americans" does shed a little light on the effects of such teachings in speech. Furthermore, a comment containing a discriminating term might cost the modern-day American his job or rapidly end him up in court, because they (inadvertently) violated the unwritten code of what is "appropriate" or "inappropriate".

A big factor in the sensitivity of people towards politically correct terms relates to its connection with historical disputes over discrimination, rights, and respect. While the term "Afro-Americans" aims to give a description that excludes all former insulting vocabulary towards a racial minority, others protect conflicts of feminism, sexual preference, religious or political opinion and/or physical or mental disabilities.

THE REPUGEE CRISIS IN GERMANY

any of you have probably heard that a lot of refugees or, as they are called in German, "Flüchtlinge" have come to Germany. They are here to start a new and better life for themselves because a lot of them come from countries like Syria, where there is civil war and they just do not feel safe anymore.

Exactly 216,973 refugees have come to Germany over the last four years. That's so many that politicians are struggling to decide where to put them all. Currently, many are staying in sport halls. We have already started to build houses for the refugees to stay in.

A lot of the refugees are actually kids children who have lost their parents or are separated from them for a period of time. I think it would really help and make them happy if they could get a toy or some nice clothes. Remember, they are only kids!

Other countries also accommodate many refugees. For example, Turkey is a home host to almost half of the 4.1 million Syrian refugees. America is also trying to take in at least 10,000 Syrian refugees next year.

Our school is doing many different things to help the refugees, like running initiatives to raise funds and collect donations, which you can be part of. So help support them by donating your old toys or clothes that don't fit you anymore and let them have the life they came here for!

I think, though, that we should do everything we have in our power to help them. So try to sponsor donate your clothes or toys to make one child very happy!

#WelcomeRefugees

- Darla Hoppe



5

THE STUDENT LOUNGE

F or the third anniversary of the Humans of JFKS series, there is a special: Humans of The Student Lounge. I present you thought-provoking, inspirational, and fun interviews to lighten up the mood in cold autumn times.

-Cosima Justus

I'm positive. But I have no energy left at the end of the day. Gone all week last week with tonsillitis. The week before I was really hyperactive, so the week after I was sick, because my immune system was dead.



What are you most excited about concerning college?

The cafeteria.

If you had one piece of advice for a large group of people, what would it be?

Find a purpose in life and live for that. Maybe I should take my own advice.

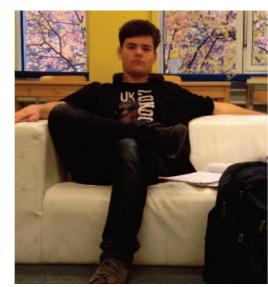
For me, my faith is important.



What's your greatest struggle right now?

Not planning out my life. I think that since we're alive, we should get to know life. That's the only thing worth doing. Let me explain this through an analogy. Say you really want to get to know the sea. Some people, they'd just take a cruise on boat, and they get laid, and they drink a lot. Champagne, whatever. I don't think that's a good way to get to know the sea. I think it's better to jump in and let the waves hit you. How do you want to jump into life?

By not doing anything. I'll fall into it, maybe that's better.



If you had one piece of advice for a large group of people, what would it be?

Don't take yourself too seriously. Eat your vegetables. I'm a vegan.

Why?

I realized the environmental and bodily impacts eating animal products has on February 10th, 2015. I realized the moral dilemma involved with eating animal products and decided I could not participate in that. Ever.



What's your greatest struggle right now? I don't have any struggles right now. I'm a very happy person. I have everything that I need. I'm actually happy.

What's the greatest risk you've ever taken? Taking French Leistungskurs.

What's your best quality?

I wish I could say I'm an honest person. But it's my top knot humor.



I don't want to do the whole thing: go to college, find a guy, marry, get a job, and have a family. I want to take a year off. Maybe work, just to get an experience. But I don't want to plan out everything now. I find that stupid: You won't know what you want to do in five years. Is there something you wish you had the courage to do?

Saying what I actually think to my parents. I usually get yelled at, so I tend to

keep quiet.

What's your best quality?

I'm a good listener.

