

Who are you living for?

Jean Shinoda Bolen once said, "When you recover or discover something that nourishes your soul and brings joy, care enough about yourself to make room for it in your life." While we learn many valuable things throughout our high school careers, one thing that can't be answered during a lesson or through reading a textbook is finding joy in our lives. We set goals for ourselves to have nearly perfect attendance, achieve high marks, and to get into a good college or university like our parents did. While it is important for students to take their high school education seriously, it is also important to further develop our morals and values as we transition into becoming an adult.

Throughout my high school experience, I've often questioned what defines happiness. At our age, we are more likely to value materialistic things because society has such a big influence on us. Things like having a lot of money are seen as something that makes you have a higher social status - a sign of importance. Money is a tool that is used to separate society into three groups; lower-class, middle-class and upper-class. However, during my time here at Resurrection, I've learned to value myself as a person and focus on my priorities, rather than focus on receiving a large paycheck.

In our society, money is a sign of success. It's a powerful tool that can help you set a good impression and provides one with a sense of stability. You don't have to worry about paying next month's rent or providing food for your family if you have financial stability. While we spend four years at Resurrection, we don't get much time to thoroughly explore our career choices since we start picking crucial courses in Grade 9. We're told by majority of the adults around us to go for high paying careers that will offer us a better life than the one they had, but we might not feel content when it's time to go to work. "Be a lawyer or a doctor, something with a 6-digit annual salary." Money is important, but you won't smile with excitement as you enter the waiting room and invite your next patient in for their monthly checkup. There will be no passion or commitment when you are trying to win a case for someone and you're thinking about how you want to go home instead. Instead of listening to someone who values money over perseverance, pick the courses that feel right to you. Why should you live someone else's dream to the fullest if it's not what brings you a feeling of content and fulfillment?

Picking what courses you want to take in Grades 11 and 12 are the most important decisions you will make in your high school career. They don't tell you that it is the case until you have a small amount of time left, but what you pick sets the tone for your career choice. After seeing a close friend pick courses she wasn't passionate about to enter a career with a big paycheck, she was full of stress and anxiety. Up until 3 in the morning, she would finish her homework and replay reassuring words in her head: "It will be worth it" and "My parents have worked so hard to provide me with what I need to succeed" and "They will be so ashamed if I don't go through with this" and "This is the last time that I'll stay up this late." These words were replayed in her head for an entire semester. Her parents had moved to Canada in hopes of providing their kids with a better life. As the oldest, she had the most expected from her. She was told what major to go into, what college to apply to, and what marks to get. Subjects she wasn't

passionate about were what her timetable consisted of and the pressure of seeing others around her get accepted into post-secondary schools added to her anxiety. Due to how unhappy she was, she barely passed and changed up her schedule completely during second semester. Now she's in classes she is happy with and is able to get the marks necessary in order to enter programs of her choice. Without her willingness to risk dealing with her parents' disapproval regarding her change of career choice and courses, she wouldn't be as happy as she is right now.

Learning to value and pursue your dreams is a lesson that cannot be taught in a classroom, but through the experiences that happen once you're in the real world. Sometimes you'll have to take a risk and switch up your courses at the last minute or you have to take some time to rediscover yourself. In the end, what's most important is that when you ask yourself the following question, you're happy with your answer: who are you living for?