

# Illumination

Business



The weather taunts me. The eighty-degree sunshine beckons from the other side of glass windowpanes, peeking out from behind curtains and slipping between cracks in the doorframe. It calls for me to join it, to bask in the atmospheric warmth, but I have a seemingly endless list of reasons to reject its summons. History presentation, Spanish test, band audition, Vietnam speech, Spanish final project, diacritical journals, place essay... I could start now and have them finished by Wednesday if I forgo sleep, but I've spent the last week battling the flu, which means that sleeping is the only activity I currently have any interest in. With so many assignments and so little motivation, I've been asking myself the same questions that most high school students ponder around this time of year.

What will happen if I just don't do this assignment? Will it affect my grade? Do my grades even matter? What does matter? A simple question of fifteen points leads to an epic philosophical quandary. It's an awkwardly deep line of thought, to be sure, but it's either that or homework, so the choice appears obvious. So what does matter, really? At some point over the last year- the exact day or month escapes me- I arrived at a startlingly obvious realization: if you don't care where you're going, you don't have to worry about getting there. Applying this to life is both freeing and dangerous. The academic repercussions affect millions of students every year. Don't care about having a prestigious job? Well then, no need to worry about which college to attend.

And since college doesn't matter anymore, academic performance can fall by the wayside. If I'm fine with bagging groceries for the rest of my life, do I really need to write this essay? The short answer is "no". The long answer could be "not if I truly believe that people can settle for bagging groceries

for the rest of their lives without losing an integral part of themselves,” or “not if I don’t care about being happy” or perhaps simply “ maybe.” But this concept, this bizarre form of self-determination, has social repercussions too. What will happen if we stop trying to get along? If I stop struggling to make this relationship work, and it falls apart, doesn’t that mean that it wasn’t meant to be? The ramifications of this approach can damage lives even more thoroughly than academic apathy. Not caring about the relationships in your life, as I learned this semester, leads to a sharp decrease in friendships, or at least in casual acquaintances.

But maybe distinguishing between true friends and false ones can be healthy; maybe everyone should try it from time to time, a sort of relationship purge. Would that be healthier than forced pleasantries? Does anyone know? Does anyone care, about this, about anything? So much angst. So much apathy. Maybe everyone should just do their homework and fake their relationships and shut up. Or better yet, maybe we should give in to temptation and go take a nice long nap in the sunshine.

Because if we decide that nothing really matters, we may as well be warm.