

# The scattered mind of an older sister

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Everyone is scared about leaving high school and becoming an adult and having real responsibilities, but in reality the scariest part of life is actually the years you spend struggling and working through high school. I'm not trying to say that high school isn't a great social experience and we need it to prepare us for the real world, but bad things happen when you put tired teenagers in a dark school for four years. I know "school" is a broad term, so I'm not going to use the phrase, "I hate school" because I remember loving every minute of elementary school. And for me, that's normal, because I had some good friends and great teachers in elementary school, but even my ten year old sister is having problems in fourth grade.

I mean for crying out loud, can't kids just be nice. I know that might be a lot to ask, but the term "mean girls" is a very real issue. My sister comes home sobbing some days from dance because the other girls won't be partners with her, or they don't like her unicorn hat. What happened to the type of social environments where you could walk up to anyone at recess and instantly become friends, no matter size or shape. I remember wearing purple velvet jumpsuits with crocs to school, and no one said anything. But, god forbid a ten year old girl has red and black sneakers, and those are boy colors, so it's not ok.

I can't believe that girls even have iPods, let alone an iPhone when they're seven years old. I was still playing with Barbies until I was twelve. I remember in elementary school when I didn't care what anyone thought about me. I was myself no matter what anyone said. I wore the clothes, even if they were all from Justice and had sparkles everywhere. Nowadays, we

have put up standards of what little girls should look like and what they should play with.

Maybe my sister doesn't want a pink Nerf gun. Is it allowed for her to just buy the other Nerf guns that are blue? Since when do we still believe in the blue is for boy babies and pink is for girl babies. Whoever said that Nerf guns were for boys, and Easy Bake is for girls? With that mentality, we are still implying that men are born to fight in wars, and women stay home to cook. I'm not the type of person to always pity people, like ever. Most of the time my sister is the most annoying person in my life, but it crushes me when I see her having struggles at school.

A couple years ago, my mom noticed that she was actually having more trouble than normal. We all know that the transition from kindergarten fun to actual first grade is hard, but it just didn't get better for her after first, second, and third grade. I myself had plenty of trips to the principal in first grade, but after first grade, I knew that you didn't mess around at school. My mom took my sister to the doctor and over a couple weeks, we found out she has ADHD. It's obviously not as severe as some disorders like dyslexia, but she is struggling with life at the moment. When she went to her first elementary school, she got targeted and bullied pretty badly.

I know that kids mess around sometimes but it was more than that. There was a group of girls that she wanted to be friends with and they just wouldn't accept her. Sometimes they would just lead her on, and then kick her out of their group. Then the other problems were actually with her teacher. A

person with ADHD has problems with staying on task and not getting out of control.

There are right and wrong ways to handle this type of kid. Her teacher would actually call her out in class and tells kids that she was a bad kid, or she didn't know what to do because she doesn't listen. My mom is not the type of person to just sit back and let some third grade teacher harass her child. On the other hand, my mom has somewhat tough love with my sister especially. Trust me, she yells at her plenty of times.

When it first started happening, my mom told my sister to just do her best and stay away from mean friends at school. She didn't really know what was happening. But you better believe that my mother went out of her mind when she found out that my sister's teacher was the reason she came home crying and never wanted to go to school. There's a difference between me saying I don't want to go to school because it's early in the morning and her pretending to be sick or throwing up just to get out of school. After my mom started hearing things from my sister, she started emailing the teacher, and when things got bigger, she made meetings with the principal, guidance counselor, and my sister's teacher to get to the bottom of this. My mom, stepdad, and grandma went to the meetings, and let's just say it was not pretty.

Naturally my mom defended my sister and started to become the Mama Bear of the situation. I wasn't there, but I think my mom was screaming and possibly crying during the meeting. I can understand why, because the staff at that school had no knowledge of what was happening, and when they

found out they did not have any motivation or heart to fix it. The principal flat out, just didn't care, and the teachers acted like nothing was wrong. I'm pretty sure after that meeting, my mom took my sister, walked out of that school, and did not bother coming back. Next chapter in her life started with a whole new school, great.

My sister wasn't going to school for a little while until my mom got details about a new elementary school. She got in touch with the counselor and the principal there, who were very understanding and welcoming, and then started from there. My sister finished out the year of third grade with some pretty great new teachers. I think she was happy because getting to know a new school is fun, but also terrifying: thinking about who to partner up with, sit with at lunch, and play with at recess. I know it worked out well, because she has made some amazing new friends at her new school.

She even invited some old friends and new friends to her birthday party in February. I think that was fun for her because she got to introduce her friends to her new friends or her dance friends. Friends are really hard to deal with because especially when you're becoming a teenager you think that friends are more important than everything from family to school to responsibility. It gets even harder when you start changing and maybe some of your friends aren't changing with you. I know this happened to me when I was leaving fifth grade at my elementary school and going into middle school.

I can count about five friends that I had sleepovers with every weekend and had the same class with that I don't even talk to anymore. Some of them

might have moved schools, and I wouldn't know. It's the three or four core people that I'm friends with now since first grade, those are the people you need to get through high school and being a teenager. I'm not saying that family isn't as important, by any means, but it's definitely hard for kids when they don't fit with any friend groups at school. I think even when you learn how to drive and apply for college, your parents are still a key role in your life. Think about who taught you how to drive and who paid for your car and who pushed you to stay in school, so you could go to a good college.

As much as I want my mom to just leave me alone most days, she has kept me and my sister strong our whole lives. Maybe I'm different from other teenagers, but sometimes I love spending the day with my mom and sister, whether it's going out to lunch, shopping or just laying around together. Most of the time my sister and I fight about everything, but it's really weird when we are all together how much our personalities are somewhat the same, and we can talk about anything. I just get this great feeling, when my mom and I are together, about how I'm going to be carrying on her legacy, and I have this personality because this strong, independent woman raised us the way she did.