

Nick Sullivan - St. Ignatius of Loyola - Elder High School

Perfection is an elusive word for many people. Some possess a more shallow aspect of the word, viewing it as being 'popular' and juggling as many sports as they possibly can. While I do agree that it's important to have a lot of friends to support you and to be involved in different activities, I define perfection in a very different way. Perfection, to me, is living as pure of a life as I can in all that I say, think, and do. To me, popularity is being respected among your peers in a way that is meaningful and in a way that they all appreciate you and your impact on their lives. I want to be popular with those around me so that they all enjoy my company and know that they can turn to me when they are having a particularly hard day. In fact, I want to be a person that people turn to when they are having particularly good days. I want to share in the lives of the people around me so that even when I am no longer on Earth, I will still live on through others and through all of the good that I have done. My goal in life is to always strive for a more perfect way of living and to leave a lasting mark on everybody that I meet.

In life, I have found that a smile can change a bad day into a great one. Everybody has bad days, but it is how we deal with them that defines us as either optimists or pessimists. School was never intended to be easy. There are constantly large projects, important essays, and stressful exams thrown at students. I used to stress and worry for days over these things and my days and nights would be quite unpleasant for me and everybody around me. But, one day, I decided to change all of this negativity into positive energy. If I am going to finish something, it is not going to be because I spent weeks dreading over it. When we take a step back and ask ourselves what the point in all of the worrying and frustrations are, we can recollect ourselves and move on. There is no point in worrying, so I go into every day with an open mind and ready for whatever life may throw my way. For this reason, I like to think of myself as an optimist.

Keeping all of that in mind, I know that I'm not the only one with struggles. Everybody at my school has to push themselves in order to succeed. My hopes are that I can make life a little bit easier on them. Seventh grade was pretty much a blur. I spent so much time worrying about myself that I never got the chance to know the people around me. I decided to set a goal for myself going into the eighth grade: I was going to get to know as many classmates as I could. I had gone to school with most of these people for eight years, yet there were still some people that I had never had a conversation with. This was a very disappointing revelation for me, because I felt as if I were just wasting away my time in grade school. Now, every day I try to make as many people smile as I can. I have gotten to know a lot of new people this year and I have created many new friendships simply by having brief conversations. Once I began to talk to the people around me, it only became easier from there on. I really enjoy going to school now and it means a lot to me that I was able to meet so many new people in my last year at St. Ignatius of Loyola.

Everybody in my school is so different from everybody else. We all learn differently, have different senses of humor, and hang out with different people. I've gotten to know each person individually and try to improve their days the best that I know how. I used to have the mind set of, "don't do anything to stand out and try not to leave that big of an impression." My closest friends were really the only ones that knew

the true me. I have since come to realize that this is a terrible way to live life. Rather than trying not to leave an impression, my newest 'philosophy' is to leave an impression on everybody around me, and to always make it a positive one. I want to be remembered by everybody as the guy that could bring out the best in everybody and that could make them laugh through the smallest gestures.

Everybody now knows me as someone who is living life to the fullest and having fun. Everyday is a lot of fun because I make those around me smile and laugh. I'm just being myself, and that's all it takes to be happy. I make school easier for the people around me by laughing and having fun. Laughter truly is contagious, and that's why I pretty much laugh at everything. This seems a bit extreme, I realize this, but laughter just makes everything so much more joyful. I can't really help it, I just enjoy finding the small things around me that I can laugh at. It's good to take time to do things like that.

Through being a more positive person, I have made myself appear much more open to everybody. I have had several people come to me just to talk because they may have been feeling alone or just needed somebody to talk to. It means a lot to me that they would come to me and share these kinds of things. This shows me that people feel comfortable with me and that they enjoy talking to me. All I want in life is to impact the lives of those around me for the better. I always talk them through whatever issues they are facing and offer some positive energy to them. Many issues can be made to feel petty when we face them with confidence.

I am open to talking with anyone and initiate conversations all of the time with people that I don't usually talk to. I want to be seen as a trustworthy and genuinely kind person to everybody around me and I want to help them have fun in their lives. I hope that I can continue to strive to make a difference in the lives around me and that I may someday have a career that focuses on the betterment of others.