

*knowing your place*



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**Higher Education: Who's in Control?**



photo credits: Alejandra Andrade

## **Living Someone Else's Dream**

Alejandra Andrade

As I sat on my desk looking at the pictures of my high school graduation, a thought came to mind:

Was my major optional?

If so, was I the one who chose it?

I grew up thinking I wanted to be a doctor.

More than raised, I was trained to think I wanted to be a doctor.

I now see that I was never allowed to choose my future, my dreams, or my aspirations. They were passed down to me by my father.

Now I'm away from home and surrounded by people who are either passionate about their careers or undecided.

As a child I was constantly asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" My response was always the same, "I want to become a doctor."

My father always asked me what I wanted to be, but he also answered for me. I didn't choose medicine as my career, but I was taught that in order to make my parents proud, I had to be a doctor.

Under my parents' wings I knew what I had to be to make them proud.

Now that I'm here in college with people who know they would love their career or who rather explore...

The people around me influence me to want to try new things and explore different careers.

I wish I could explore different majors and find which I love the most...

But I'm scared. Scared of disappointing my parents, my siblings, and my family.

Every time I go home my father reminds me of how much my siblings look up to me. Of how much they all depend on me. He also mentions that he wishes the best for me and that all he wants is for me to do what makes me happy...

But at the same time he reminds me that if I become a doctor, I'll be able to help them more and that it would make everyone happy.

I feel in debt for all my parents have done for me. They remind me of all they've ever done to give us a life better than the one they had...

So, do I really have a choice? If I become a doctor they'll be happy, but will I?

I am not following my dreams for fear of disappointing my family. I am following His dream.

## College Bound

Marina Aguirre

Around eighth grade, I began thinking about college and



furthering my education post-high school. I knew college was in my future and that I was going directly there right after graduation. The choice was obvious, local or far away. I was going to college. Even in the eighth grade I was already

attending college fairs and looking at all the choices around me. As each year passed the reality of attending college grew closer and closer and making a selection was fast approaching.

As I entered high school I knew that my college choice was going to be a life changing decisions. It was where I would spend the next couple of years of my life so I wanted to make

sure I made the right choice. I looked into all my options, found which schools fit me best and those I wouldn't even bother applying to. It was a huge motivational factor when I needed anything accomplished and kept me involved in school. I knew what colleges were looking for and I had to make sure that I stood out from the rest.

I was never worried about not being accepted to college or the fear of rejection, but the cost of attendance was my largest worry. Going away for college was always in the back of my mind, but with room and board costs I was uneasy with the thought of paying so much to leave my family. So I began to apply for colleges the numerous acceptance letters I received helped to reassure me that I was headed in the right direction.

When it was the time to begin narrowing down my options and choose my top two contenders it was clear that I was torn between getting the "ideal college experience" of leaving the house and surviving on my own or saving money and staying with my parents. I knew my parents wanted to keep me at home in the comfort of what I was used to for the past seventeen years. Talking to my parents helped with my decisions, but the

major factor in play was my lack of financial aid. I was academically very smart, graduating with honors and numerous scholarships behind me, but I knew it wasn't enough to assure that I would be financially stable if I left for college.

Throughout the journey, one thing was evident, whatever choice I made was mine, I did have some factors pushing me toward one choice, and others pushing me towards another, but not matter what decisions I chose I knew that it was solemnly up to me .I had the strongest support system from my family and lots of choices to make that were all determined by how I felt. I had the authority of accepting one offer over another or declining those that did not satisfy my needs. It was my place to make the choices, make the decisions of where I would continue my education, and at the end of the Summer I found myself ready to conquer my first semester at CSU Stanislaus.



## **First Year Experience**

Morgan Veenhuis

Your place in the world is not always the first thing on anyone's mind. Focusing on your life and experiences is usually what is on someone's mind. It is only human nature to worry about your life and view situations based on your own experiences. They are just trying to get through what needs to be done. Which is exactly how I was coming into college. I did not think about my role in school. I was just trying to pass my classes and still have a social life. I never thought about my place on a larger scale.

College was, and still is difficult for me to adjust to. I am taking this first semester as a learning experience for the rest of my college career. I have had a hard time finding my place in a lot of my classes. I do not really know anyone and I am not a very talkative person. But I have learned a lot during this year. One thing is staying organized and keeping up on assignments really helps with stress. Once you fall behind it is hard to feel in control anymore. Keeping all papers from one class together

and writing down what needs to get done for each class helps with not forgetting assignments. Talking with someone about problems in school or anything else can keep stress under control. It has helped me think things through a little better and I have even received some great advice. It helps with not feeling alone in everything. And one more thing is how sleep is important to stay sane.

Reading some other people's experiences shared that they felt the same about fitting in in college. Alexis Jane Torre wrote an article on how her first year was about not getting what she wanted. She did not get what she applied for, did not fit in with the friends she wanted, did not get the guys she wanted, did not get the grades she assumed she would get. Through this she learned to stop trying to fit in with people it clearly is not working with. Getting yourself motivated helps with getting things done and that things get better. They become more familiar and comfortable. She quotes Randy Pausch from his Last Lecture, "Experience is what you get when you didn't get what you wanted," and "Experience is often the most valuable thing you have to offer."

Even college is intimidating and difficult, but our society is based off of higher education and jobs. Everyone knows how important it is to receive an education to be successful in life. College helps build a person into who they are through many programs and education for a career. It helps them find their place in the world. An article from The Washington Post explains how higher education develops us to work in higher-paying jobs, to gain a stance on civic and political issues in our society, to create self-awareness and expression, and to develop relationships and interact with people college is a place where people can find out who they are and control their future. Where they can learn new skills and interact with people with like minds. Going through many experiences is what adds to someone's perspective.

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# Community & Family: Who We Walk With

## Light

Onel Isha



*Mar Addai Youth Group, photo credit to Steven Lelham*

Ever since I came into this world I was raised a specific way that was centered around religion. Although, as a small child, my mind could not comprehend what religion was. What was so important about a man named Jesus dying on a cross. I

thought dying was bad. Why did my parents kneel, worship, and at times utter prayers from their tear-filled eyes so that their messages could reach a place called heaven? What was it that made this certain aspect of my life, this idea that my whole world and my family's world centered on of utter importance?

On Sundays my parents would take me to our grand cathedral and place me in Sunday school in hopes of me learning about this idea of religion. From hearing the screaming of the 2 year olds, to the barbaric arguments of the 11 year olds I desperately tried grasping any type of information that would help me in my journey of deciphering this complexity known as religion. Yet, Sunday school after Sunday school I just couldn't figure it out. I mean I know Jesus died for our sins, I know the story behind Noah, I knew everything pertaining to Genesis from the creation of the world to the story of Abel and Cain, but something was missing. I needed a sign to make me believe, something that would make me more involved in church, to take a place

amongst family and kneel with them and do everything that they would do.

It wasn't until around the age of 6 that something struck me as to helping me understand religion. One Sunday school passed me as I decided to join my parents in Holy Mass and go to what seemed to be the source to understanding religion. As an hour passed by in the sacred ceremony of mysteries I saw 4 boys go to the altar and hold candles. "There!" I thought to myself, there lay the answer to my dilemma, the answer to the mystery behind religion. Soon after my epiphany, and of course as soon as Holy Mass was over, I rushed to my priest with my father in hand to tell him I wished to partake in Holy Mass as a candle boy.

Soon after my conversation with my priest I was allowed the opportunity to become a candle boy. Finally after wondering for so long I would figure out what's been on my mind since I was born. Although it seemed my joy was short-lived as being a candle boy only seemed to be a title, nothing more than prestige. Saddened by my frivolous attempts as to understanding religion I finally tried something out that wasn't

like my other attempts. Instead of trying to pry out information from something as mysterious and complex as religion I decided to do what anyone in a religion would do when in a state of wonder.

Prayer, plain and simple as it may be, I decided to pray. Through prayer I finally found an answer to the mystery behind religion. Instead of trying to analyze religion with logic, prayer allowed me to analyze religion in a philosophical way through pondering, and through this pondering an answer came to me in the form of a ray of light. From that day forward I knew the mystery behind religion, and I was able to take my place amongst my church in serving in mass. Seek and you will find, if you put in the effort to seek, you will find your place, just as I did to find my place amongst my church.

## My Family “Soccer Team”

Erik Jimenez



Today, typical families consist of four to five individuals. In my family we have enough people to form a soccer team. Eleven people including my parents make up my family. Having nine siblings is something that is not common in today's society and in some peculiar way it is a micro society. Being a large family creates a variety of family dynamics and relational interactions



that influence each individual, and I am glad to know every individual well.

I am the fourth in line of nine children so I am one of the few middle children. It is convenience that we are nine because we are easily distinguished into three groups. The three eldest were born in Mexico, where my parents are from. The third eldest was actually born eleven months after the second eldest making them “Irish twins”. There is a close to a two-year gap between the third and myself, the fourth, because my parents were in the process of moving to the United States. This move had an impact on the way my parents named us. The three eldest are in order as follows: Juan, Josue, and Jose. I don't have to explain too much to say that these are very Hispanic names. After moving to the U.S. the names of those born in here are: Erik, Angel, Jesica, Aida, Moses, and Gabriel. These names are more American or neutral reflecting the culture my parents were trying to integrate to.

Juan, Josue, and Jose are very comfortable with the Hispanic culture by the fact that they spent their early childhood immersed in it. One can make a noticeable distinction when

they observe the second group- Angel, Jesica, and me- because we were raised in a sort of hybrid culture split between the English from school and the constant Spanish at home. This created a comfort, and strangely a “conflict”, between both cultures. One funny example is the combination of the two languages into what is commonly known as Spanglish, words such as *trocka*, is in neither Spanish nor English. This “Spanglish” word translates to truck in English, or *camioneta* in Spanish. Sometimes I would forget a word in either of the languages and try to remember it by repeating the word in the language that I did remember it in hoping that this will somehow flash the word into my head. The youngest ones have grown up in a predominately English world. They speak it at school and now speak it at home with their older siblings.

Having a family of this size has greatly influenced my relational skills as well. I would say that naturally I have an introversive personality with my temperaments predominantly phlegmatic-melancholic, which have qualities of being introversive. However being a public school student and having to come home to nine siblings I virtually had no time for myself.

This challenged me to interact with people all the time stretching my comfort zone. I can see how this has influenced me in the way that I do prefer time alone or with a small group of friends, however I am no longer uncomfortable in a room filled with people and I can actually be comfortably outgoing.

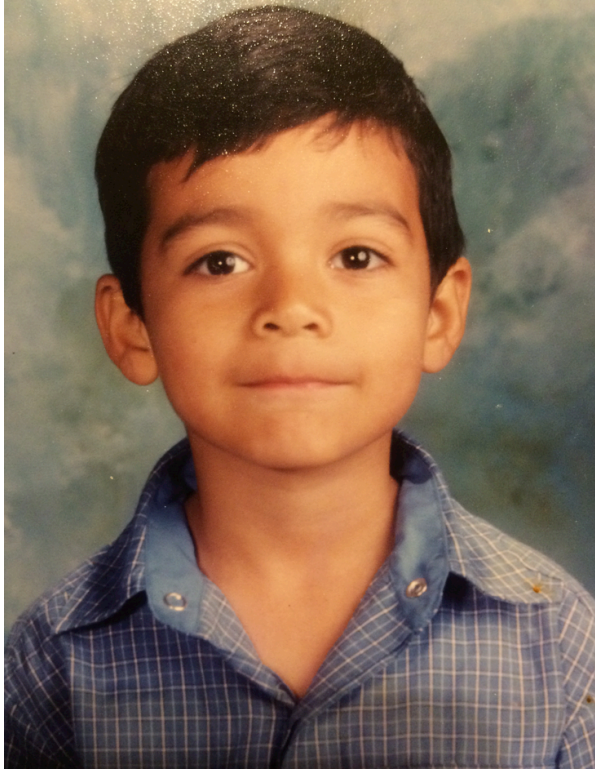
I am very thankful for my large family and I can see the benefits of having so many siblings as well. Like I mentioned before have so many siblings stretched my comfort zone which allowed me to have the ability to participate in things that I could not have without their support. I do not feel any less loved because my parents have eight other children to care for. Love is not divisible, it cannot be divided into parts, it is something that is given in full to all children. Okay, parents can get along better with one child over another but any sane parent wants what is best for all of their children and would die for any of them if they had to, my parents would for me. Growing up I also felt more loved because I was loved by my siblings. There are more of us to share the love, because love is given and shared not traded like money and goods. I am not saying that bigger families are somehow better than the smaller

ones, although maybe they can't form a full soccer team on their own.

I can say trust is strong in my family. I know that I can trust anyone in my family and this was built up by the way are parents treated us and raised us. This trust aspect is one that helps us communicate in more holistic way. I can confidently say that I know both of my parents and all eight of my siblings very well, and that is something I see as an enormous blessing of which I am very grateful for.

## Family

Rodrigo Ledesma



As I think about what has contributed to making me the person I am today, I would have to thank my friends, my experiences in school, and more importantly my family. My family I would have to say has had the biggest impact on who I am. When I think

about major characteristics about myself I can attribute them to members of my family. I get my playful behavior from my mom and my somewhat short temper from my dad. I get my taste of music from my older brothers and my compassionate behavior from my sisters. But most of the lessons learned from my family and everywhere else has been through observation.

Growing up being 1 out of 12 children I remember my family not having a lot but always having enough. The lessons I learn

from my family have hardly ever been verbal. They have more or less been through observation. Through observing my family growing up I learned a lot of lessons, like always be respectful to others and be compassionate to others. But one of the biggest lessons comes from my parents and two little words they used whenever they had the chance, "*Echale ganas*" is what they would always say whenever school was mentioned. It translates to give it all you got or try your best. These words always resonated with me, partly because they were repeated so many times, but also because I would look at how my parents struggled with 12 children and how hard they worked and that put me in the mind frame that I have to try my best at everything especially school, and to be serious when it matters and carefree when it is okay.

It resulted in me always staying focused when I needed to and trying my best and really putting effort in whatever I have to do. On a personality level my family has affected me a lot. When it comes to my humor I contribute it to my mother and my siblings. My brothers and I have always lightly teased each other about anything. I've always looked up to my older brothers when

it came to what they liked I tended to like the same thing. My love for hip-hop and my admiration of classical and jazz music comes from following trends they established within me. That in turn has led to me growing connections to friends that like the same music I do and with my sense of humor I have made connections with people who share a similar type of humor. As a result of characteristics and attributes I've gained through experiences with my family I have been able to become part of a bigger groups of my peers as friends and as students. But even though I may belong to a group of friends and a group of students as I remain focused on school. When it comes down to it and I look for a place where I belong family always comes first.

## **My Place at Home**

Branden Escobar

I find describing the way things are in my home to be a fantastic way to lay out my place in life, particularly in my community. My father has often told my mother, brothers, and me a very simple maxim (if you could call it that). Besides a few people outside of our home (i.e. very close relatives, girlfriends, etc.), my father says the only people who really matter in our life are the people in our immediate family. When things are falling apart, when life is rough, when nothing seems to go right, we will always have God and we will always have each other.

From a very early age this has been at the core of how I operate. My best advisors for most of my life have been parents, and my brothers have always been there to support me. I of course am always there for my family no matter what. Our Christian faith is also at the center of our family affairs, as it is part of what has taught us to love one another no matter what happens.

Love is the centerpiece of our family: it is common practice for us to say, “I love you” or “Love ya” with every goodbye. It’s



a practice that I've always been very fond of. I've never felt unloved, and I feel that love is an important thing to have within any family.

A day in the life of my family isn't too different from many others' lives, but it is unique because it's MY family. My mom and dad work hard for my brothers and me and always make time to get us where we need to be. They both do their best for us, even if it's something we don't particularly like. At the end of the day, they always have our best interests in mind. My brothers are always busy with something. Whether it be playing baseball (my middle brother Josh plays travel ball and my younger brother Aaron plays elementary level baseball), playing outside together, or hanging out together in their room, my brothers are really active, and do what they need to for the house (their chores).

My job in the family is a mixed bag. Being the only computer science major in my family, I often get called on to fix technical issues that occur. I always watch the house when need be, and make sure things are getting done. I always drive my brothers where they need to go if my mom and dad can't.

This life may seem overly simple to some, but it has what I feel many strive for but have trouble obtaining: contentment. In “knowing my place” within my family, I’ve learned to be content with what I have. We’ve been blessed to have the life we have. My parents have imparted on me from a young age that the world is open to me and that there are countless possibilities out there for me. I just need to reach out and go for them. But at the root of it all, they have taught me that I must temper this ambition with contentment and thankfulness. If I stumble, at least I have what’s been given to me. I always count my blessings because I know there are people who don’t have what I have. My family has always taught me that being thankful, honest, and honorable, while not always the easiest things to be, have in the end benefited me most. My place has always been with my family, but one day it will change. Nevertheless, the values that they have taught me will stay with me until the day I die. Isn’t that, after all, what family is for?

## Somewhere I Belong

Alyssa Hess



I'm sitting in my dorm room, stressed out of my mind and I feel like I just need a place to escape. Where do I go? Down to room 222: the home of Ethan, Trevor, Gabe, and Max, or as my mom refers to them, the "Puzzle Boys" because they went through a period of doing 1000 piece puzzles every day. All of them are just like brothers and are very welcoming. Ethan is the one you could go to for help with

anything. He drops everything to help me with my homework or make me peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Trevor is the Papa teddy bear who takes care of all of us. When I feel down or just need a hug, Trevor is always there with arms wide open. Gabe is the other teddy bear whose giggle could make the saddest baby laugh. Max has a unique personality. He is very embracive and bright. Overall, room 222 is a great place for everyone to come together.

Sometimes I walk in and the Puzzle Boys are all in the living room, either playing videogames, doing homework, or just talking and hanging out. They always allow me to come over whenever I want to. But I'm not the only one that comes over. My best friend, Angel, who also lives on the third floor, is always down in 222 as well. Angel is always making everyone's day better, either by dancing, singing, or just constantly laughing. Moryn is my roommate, who also comes down to 222. She is a really great roommate and can always tell when something is wrong. When I hug her, I always feel better. Then there's Jennica, who lives 2 rooms down from 222. Kindhearted and gentle, but has a strong

personality. Jennica lights up a room with her smiles. Finally there's Taylor, Athena, and Malachi, who live in Phase 2, but might as well live in Phase 1. Taylor is my SoCal buddy. She is not the stereotypical spoiled, prissy bitch from Southern California. She loves everyone and is the most down-to-earth person I've ever met. Athena is short and loud, but sweet and always there to give advice. Malachi is athletic, but not the stereotypical "jock" type. He is warm and caring, and always ready for an adventure. And me? I'm the Jew who sometimes gets picked on, but my friends often enjoy learning about my beliefs and culture.

Room 222 has become a place where we all tend to gather. We all have different personalities, but that adds new perspectives to different conversations and situations. Anytime we are talking or arguing we listen to the other's opinion. We all make fun of each other a lot, but it's because we love each other and we know when it is too much. Don't get me wrong, we do have arguments and there are times when we can't stand each other and we sometimes have to take a step back and take time for ourselves, separate from

the group. But we always find our way back. This group has become a family. We have dinner together every night. We listen to each other. We care about each other.

A lot of young people feel they don't belong because they are surrounded by people that make them feel uncomfortable by pressuring them into doing things they don't want to do. I believe you should always feel 100% safe when you are with true friends, and you should feel free to say or do anything you want. I am fortunate because I have found a place where I belong. These are my true friends and they love me for who I am. I didn't have to change myself for anyone.

# Surviving the Ultimate Armageddon

Brittaney Castner



At the end of a long day, you're gathered around the television with friends and family when your favorite celebrity gossip program has been interrupted. "Breaking news!" the screen flashes, "our sources have informed us that there have been multiple cases reported of a genetic mutation that has caused

the deceased to rise from their graves and attack civilians." This is it, every science fiction writer's dream has come true: the Zombie Apocalypse is nigh!

After having to explain to sweet, old gam-gam what *exactly* a zombie is, you should have enough sense to calmly assess the situation, while everyone else loses their cool. Or you can lose your cool as well, whatever floats your boat. But, for the sake of your survival, it's best to remain calm, or at least appoint someone who is capable of keeping a level head in stressful situations. Pro Tip: Look for the person who is screaming the less.

Boom. Step one already done; find a leader.

The leader is the one person that the group can turn to when things are looking grim. Your leader must be quick of wits and capable of soothing mass terror while simultaneously constructing a solid battle plan. But it is not only pertinent that one thinks like a leader, one must be received in such a manner as well. The group as a whole must agree and obey their leader's decisions, or else chaos will ensue. A democratic government will not suffice simply because too many people in control will easily divide the pack, and there is safety in numbers. Find the most capable person in your lot because without a leader, everyone will be heading towards the hills or worse off- the city.



What's wrong with the city? Well, besides the vicious noise, blatant homelessness, growing crime rates, and excessive rudeness, you must consider the traffic. Although traffic may seem minor in day-to-day life, the near stop travel time in big city traffic slows down the rate at which you can escape, therefore lowering your chances of survival. In the Zombie Apocalypse, every second counts.

Okay, so find a leader and avoid cities. What's next? Well, if you aren't the leader, then who are you to the group? Freeloaders will *not* be tolerated, however they may be sacrificed. Are you willing to be the sacrificial lamb? No? Not even for the sake of your friends and loved ones? Still no? Then figure out your place in the situation and make it prevalent that the position has been filled.

How to find your position can be tricky. You must have a unique and irreplaceable skill. Some persons that are necessary for surviving the zombie apocalypse would be hunters, cooks, thieves, doctors, pyrotechnicians, and a tactical force. Fear not, if you and a member in your squad share the same talents, there is still hope for your survival. The leader may elect a Keeper for any persons that have multiple talents.

Keepers are the ones that are responsible for the safe keeping of those in their sect. For example, a Keeper of the Hunt would be responsible for the various hunters and would make decisions whilst out on hunting missions. The Keepers are charged with the safety of the lower ranks while simultaneously speaking on behalf of their troops. This is the basic form of your hierarchy.

In your hierarchy, the highest tier is reserved for the leader. After the leader is the General. This post is reserved for the most capable tactical thinker and can be selected by either the leader or the group. If no one can fill the position then the leader may also double over as the General. Following the General are the Keepers and then finally the working ranks. If everyone is capable of cooperating and doing their jobs then you should be able to form a decent commune and survive the flesh eating undead monsters trying to kill you.

After figuring out who belongs where, it's time to form the survival plan. Ideas can be expressed, but generally the planning is reserved for the leader, General and Keepers. This is your Council. They work as the leader's advisors and are responsible for every major decision in your pack such as: where to set camp, when to leave, and especially

who is permitted to join. If you do not agree with what your Council has decreed, then you must follow your heart. However, if your heart gets ripped out by a mob of half-dead cretins, then that's your problem.

You have your position for a reason. Understand that this is not a corporate rat race for the biggest office; this is the Zombie Apocalypse. It's eat or be eaten- literally. If you are unable to comply with the demands of your superiors and are unwilling to work towards the overall survival of your unit, then your fate will be determined for you. *Sacrificial lamb*. Enjoy being a delicious distraction as your former oppressors make for the hills.

As a recap: keep calm, know your place, stay out of the city, obey the rules, and don't die. These are your basic laws for surviving the foreign world that is so very ready to consume you. However, there is one last pro tip to prolong your life: stay calm. Keeping cool when life gets the most extreme will always be beneficial. There will be moments in your life where you'll feel like everything is coming at you from every side. That's normal. Your comrades will understand. The best advice to remember is to keep calm and carry on and you will be just fine.

# Un-Belonging: Displaced & Not Fitting In

## Hiding Places

Alyssa Washburn

I'm from the top shelf of my parents' bedroom linen closet

I'm from chewed fingers, lips, and inner cheeks

I'm from across the street

I'm from on my right side with my legs curled in with the comforter

pulled up to my chin

I'm from behind the dryer in the laundry room

I'm from not knowing when to stop taking a pull from the bottle

I'm from being the half sister

I'm from "They just don't like you because you're pretty"

I'm from on my back with the dog on my left and the cat on my right

I'm from liking the feeling

I'm from crying over a dead animal in the road

I'm from "You're too skinny, eat a cheeseburger"

I'm from heartbreak and heartbreaking

I'm from not minding being alone, but not liking feeling alone

I'm from "You remind me so much of Jesse when you make  
that face"

# The Displaced

Mario Pineda

Knowing your place in school, work, and community is extremely beneficial and helps people in their everyday

lives. But

what happens

to those who

don't know

their place?

What happens

to those who

don't have a

place? To

those who

are rejected

by most of

society and



deemed useless in civilization? Homeless men, women, and children are shunned every day, for they are seen to

be unfit in our society. There is a tragic misconception that homeless people are in the position they are today by virtue of their own bad decisions. But most are victims of missed opportunities and bad luck. Everyone has bad days, and for some those days never end.

Our society believes that it is because someone is not trying hard enough that they become homeless. Some think the answer to homelessness is “Try harder,” as if the homeless are not already fighting hard enough to get through day after day for a better tomorrow. Our local Homeless shelter here in Turlock, the We Care Program, does their absolute best to help the homeless be well nourished and have a comfortable place to be in on cold winter nights. They run on the philosophy that humanity as a whole needs to help the homeless. Their program coordinator says, “We do our best to give them hope and strength to survive the streets, but at the end of the day after they leave here they are still homeless and it is going to take other people to find their humanity and help them as well.”

Homeless people are often categorized as dangerous, drug addicted, uncivilized, and almost inhuman, for they are seen and treated like animals by a majority of people. Ironically showing who the true animals in our society are. While we waste money adding bum blockers on benches and cement spikes to our streets; we could be spending that money on building homeless shelters and soup kitchens.

We live in a society that pressures people to do their best and work hard for what they want, because nobody is going to do it for you. By doing this more and more people have stopped caring for others and lost empathy towards one another. People do not want to help the homeless, because their mentality is it is not their fault the homeless are in the position they are in so why should they help them.



# **Roles & Obligations: More than Meets the Eye**

## **Knowing My Place on a Team**

Angel Jimenez

When I was put on a team at school, with friend just having fun or with a club all relating to specific sports games we were playing, I had to learn to try my best and play as a team.

First, I am very competitive. I will take board games like Risk seriously and try to win every game I play regardless of what it is or if I am interested in it. I noticed this in elementary school when I was dedicated to be the one who could finish the timed math tests the fastest and be upset if I wasn't the first one done. When we got to play games for P.E., I would try hard and only worry about myself in those games.

As time went by through elementary school all the way through high school, I kept this up, especially in games like volleyball. I would run everywhere around the court trying to hit the ball, leaving my position open and the ball would

strike the ground. Then there was the time I played as part of the defensive line in soccer and when I got bored of not being part of the action I would push forward and try to help out with the attacking men. I learned the hard way, though, that it was not the best idea since I left a hole in the formation and our team was in disarray. I then understood something was not right. I was responsible for some of the team's lack of success.

I came to see that I have to know my place in the team. I could not do everything myself on the team, and I had to trust my teammates to do their part of the job. If they needed me to be the attacker, then I would have to make that my priority. If I was entrusted to do defensive work, then I had to stay in my position since it was necessary for someone to hold the line even if I was not comfortable with it. My team needed someone to cover those responsibilities.

I've changed by seeing the importance of working as a team. I love watching soccer and I notice when a team is performing well and everyone is doing their part, and I

know the exact contrary. In some games that I have seen, the defenders are in the same situation I was in. They abandon their defensive duties and the whole team pays the price for their lack of responsibility. In some cases, I have seen some of the best teams in the world fall to less proficient teams for that reason.

This does not just apply to soccer or sports in general; this could happen in every job or performance that requires teamwork. A team is a group of people assigned a task they must complete. It is a *group* of people, not just one person doing everything themselves. Just imagine a team of eleven soccer players versus one man. It would not end well for that solo man. It also involves an *assigned task*. That assigned task is the responsibility the person must accomplish and the task is split between individuals who are entrusted to do their part no matter what. Every team member has a role and that role needs to be done.

## **Stress at Savemart**

Omar Fernandez

I recently started a job at Savemart, about 6 months ago, and it was nothing like I thought it would be. I thought it was going to be a job with a hierarchical structure. You know, you always have to answer to someone who's higher than you because, without them, you are nothing. This dynamic was not what I expected at all. Even though my job description states that my sole job is to serve the customer and my managers — with anything they ask, and without argument — I don't believe my job description is 100% true. Yes, I must serve the customer in whatever way they want (which honestly is very annoying, but I'll get to that later); but when it comes to my bosses or managers, it's a little different. Although they are old and have more experience than me, they are still human and thus can make mistakes, which is why it is important that I either correct them or point out what is wrong.

The company itself stresses the importance of teamwork within our workplace, they believe that we all must work together in order to be successful. Once again I figured out something that they probably have also, but don't want to tell us; I deduced that the reason that people come to shop to my store is because of baggers, or Service Specialists, like me. Honestly people can go anywhere to shop for food, there are places that are way cheaper than my store, but people come back because of the service that the SS (Service Specialists) provide. No other supermarket in California provides you with a personal "butler" for the short while that you are in the store. I'm the reason that people come back to the store, well me and the other SS, are the reason that we get over 1000 people walk through our doors every day.

What many people don't fully understand is how much we SS have to do to keep the store running efficiently. It's not an easy job like many people actually think, I've heard people say, "Oh, all they do is bag stuff, how hard can that be?" We do way more than bag. There are a lot of things

going on in the background that not many people know about. We have to put up with a lot of crap like irate customers complaining about how slow the lines are. *Of course they're slow— there are over 80 people in the store shopping!*

This job causes a lot of stress. It takes a special type of person to deal with it day in and day out without any form of retaliation, although I would love to take a swing at some of them. Especially the ones who directly talk down to me and use very foul language towards me for doing my job. The nerve of some people, but that's something I will never fully understand and even my managers, who have been working for at least 15 years with Savemart, tell me that they have never seen everything that there is to see. The reason this company has not failed is because of people like me and the SS I work with; we are special in our own way and our customer service skills cannot be taught. I personally believe that only a select few of us in the world are capable of mastering the skill of serving another and I pride myself with it. I am a Service Specialist.

## **Promises Not Delivered**

Alexis Itzep

My mom is a hard working person who has two jobs. One job she has starts at 3am and ends at 8am. She comes back home to sleep for a few hours then she has to wake up 12pm to get ready to go to work. These are two different kinds of jobs. She finishes work at 8pm. She comes back home and greets us. She stays awake for a while then goes to sleep. She does this Monday to Friday.

I remember when I was younger, my mom didn't have a job. The only "job" she had was to take care of my siblings and me. This lasted for a while until she learned how to drive. This changed everything. Since my dad was the only one to work, sometimes there wasn't enough money for food so this was when my mom bought the idea that she should get a job so there could be enough money. She took a job as a driver/messenger, the same job my dad did. She eventually worked for the company many years and again the financial problem arise once more. This time my mom had to get another

job because my dad was laid off from one of his two jobs. The next job she got was from a different company.

The new job was very different from the one she had. In this job she had to be at work early in morning, which would be at 3am. Her job was to put the mail in a specific place, so when a driver comes he or she immediately takes it, and no time is lost. Supposedly men and women work alike, but what my mom has told me it's not. One time, the drivers had to wait until the mail was ready. The boss was blaming the workers who were putting it in order but in reality it was the driver who brought the mail late. The boss knew that this sometimes happened, but he still got angry with the workers who were mostly women. In her workplace, when a male worker isn't doing anything the boss doesn't order them back to work, but if it's a woman he tells her to get back to work. And to make things worse, she doesn't get paid a lot just because she's a woman. I have told her that she should quit because she earns so little, which isn't worth waking up at 3am, but the response I always receive is that I have studied hard so I don't have to work in the job she has.



When my mom started to work for the company, everything they promised—vacation time, a good paycheck, and holiday time off—wasn't available. During the last days of senior year I asked my parents if they were going to ask for the day off so they could go to my graduation. My dad did get the day off but my mom said that her boss said they needed my mom to go to work. This wasn't fair at all because she couldn't attend my high school graduation, which only happens once in life. She just called in sick, which wasn't the best excuse, but it did work. Employees like my mother are misled into thinking they will get benefits they are promised.

Overall there are some instances in which it is good for the employees to know their place, but there are other occasions where the boss just makes the employees' lives miserable. When problems like this arise it is also the job of the employees to stand up to this unfairness and protest. Sadly many people don't do this because they fear that they will most likely lose their job, and with the economy not in a good shape, many people can't afford this. That's one reason my mom still works in the morning job, and one reason companies are so powerful.

# Closing Comments

## The Cycle

Jackie Jimenez



Two years, seven days, and three weeks ago  
I looked down at the city  
The loud, hectic city  
Wondering where those people were going.

One year, six months, and two weeks ago  
I looked down at my papers

The papers with college names  
Wondering where I would end up.

Eighteen years, two weeks, and five days later  
I'm looking at my life  
A sister, daughter, best friend, girlfriend  
My life feels fulfilled, and I continue to live  
On and on and on  
Not only my spirit in me  
But also in those I have known  
Those I have touched.

My place on earth is that of everyone else's  
To come into people's lives  
Make my mark on them  
And they will do the same and shape others  
And the cycle continues.

## **Our Place**

Alejandra Andrade

I have witnessed evil many times, yet I have witnessed good many more times. I have seen people help each other with unselfish reasons. Not everyone cares about the reward you can get in return for helping others, some simply want to help. I myself have helped others, without expecting anything in return. This is where I belong. This is where we belong. We belong in a unique united community that helps and cares for one another, with no exclusions or selfishness. What are exclusions for, if we are all on the same boat! We are simply trying to find the meaning to our life. To find what we are good at and where we belong. Well let me break it down, we belong here, in the present and with those we cherish the most.

Our place is next to those who need us. If we do not help those in need, no one will help us when we are the ones in need. We must find our place, but also help those around us find theirs.

### ***Some Background to this Publication***

This “Zine is a publication of the University Honors Program at CSU Stanislaus. The contents were produced by freshmen in our Honors Composition course (under the direction of their instructor, Katrina Weber, Lecturer in English). The course readings, discussion and writing activities were organized around the theme of “Knowing Your Place.” The students were given free reign to determine the focus of the writings contained here, and are responsible for all content.

Jim Tuedio, Director

Ellen Bell, Co-Director

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The **University Honors Program** resides in the Innovative Center. For information on how to apply to the program, visit our webpage: ***honors.csustan.edu*** or call and ask to speak with our administrative coordinator (Becky Temple): **(209) 667-3180**.



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