



Middle School Student Sound Off

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What Being a Middle Schooler in 2023 Means to Me

Being a middle schooler is unlike anything you've ever experienced up to that age. You and your peers are changing in ways that you have not thought about before - emotionally, physically, and mentally. In this day and age, it is different than anything that has happened in the past. Previously, the internet was not as easily accessible nor cellphones as a means of communication. Today the majority of elementary, middle, and high school students have all had to complete one part of their education completely virtual. Virtual learning did come with a few challenges though. It was harder to understand what we needed to learn and not everybody knew how to function but we as a generation are overcoming it.

Something that is really important to me as a middle schooler is being heard for who I am. At times when you are a middle schooler, people do not realize how important it is to hear your creative process. It is even worse when teachers do not give you a chance because you have made mistakes in the past. For example, I once needed an extension on an essay and my teacher said no because I had missed assignments in the past. Sometimes people do not realize we are still learning and if you give us a chance it could make a difference for a lifetime.

Another thing that is almost as equally important to me as being understood by adults is my relationship with my friends. It is nice to have people your age whom you can talk to and they can understand what you are going through. It is nice to have friends because friends can get you through rough patches in life. They can help you through thick and thin and (hopefully) will always be there for you. But that is not always the case. You have to find the right people. The right people are those who get you for you and who do not judge you.

One of the biggest advantages of being a middle schooler today is the online resources available. You have anything you want to know at the touch of your fingertips but with that you have to learn how to exercise self-discipline. For example, we used to have regular classes where assignments were due at the end of the class period. Now we have online assignments where it is easier to get side tracked with the amount of material you can see

in the span of one second. As a middle schooler today learning to form life skills, one way to learn self discipline is to focus.

One thing I have learned to do is to set a short timer and just sit and work without breaks. Once the timer goes off, I take a small break and repeat the cycle until the assignment is finished. Also, I am working on getting help from guardians or teachers about how to manage time properly.

All of these adults have already gone through the growth stage of learning how to discipline themselves for success. It is my hope that asking these first hand resources for help is going to really give me a sense of what growing older and having tighter deadlines is going to be like.

Another advantage of being a middle schooler today is the amount of liberty we are given. The teachers understand that we lack some critical skills because we were stripped of our last in-person elementary school years and give us extra time to make sure our best work is turned in. This can also come with a negative though. You never truly understand the real deadlines and what it is going to be like to have real deadlines.

I wish the adults in my life better understood that not all pressure is positive pressure. Applying too much pressure to someone our age can affect the way they think of themselves or the people in their lives. The constant type of pressure I hear about in my group of peers is pressure to do well in school, especially the seventh grade. We are told that seventh grade is supposed to determine your whole future and everyone wants the best for us. But constantly pressuring our group to do too well can eventually lead to burn out. It can cause us to be too frustrated to want to do anything school related, including even getting up and going to school.

The biggest motivator for doing well in school that I hear about from my peers is their friends. Friends at this age really play a vital role in who you are and what you become so I recommend finding the people who are best for you and help you work towards becoming a good person. Being a middle schooler in today's day and age comes with its ups and downs but you have to find the people, adults and peers, who are really going to be there for you throughout the whole thing.