

Embrace the freedom uniforms bring

By Rock Bottom Staff

Twas the night before a dress down day,
When all through the house, not a creature was awake,
Except the teenager with a headache,
Struggling with what to wear,
Clothes thrown over the floor everywhere.
Wanting to scream,
Maybe uniforms are not as bad as they seem...

Life is simple and less stressful when there is no thought of what to wear. It is hard to figure out an outfit to wear for P.E class; how are people able to do it everyday for school?

Many think that uniforms are restrictive and serve no purpose. The Rock Bottom staff believes they are beneficial to schools and their students. Uniforms save time for students, reduce comparison, are cheaper for

families in the long run, and provide representation for schools.

When getting ready for school, it is less stressful when the options are limited. Choosing what to wear is one less thing to worry about in one's morning routine if there is a uniform. There is more time that can be spent on making breakfast or studying for a test. It is easier to grab what is needed for school and go without having to think about what to wear. No one would know if someone put on the same thing multiple days in a row, so there is no need to stress about outfit repeating, and it saves a load of laundry. Spending less time getting ready in the morning eases anxiety for already-stressed students.

With uniforms, everyone is wearing close to the same thing, so comparison is not a problem. According to the website *Everyday Health*, 73% of teen girls and 69% of teen

boys are self-conscious about their appearance at school. The top thing they stress about is hair and clothing, along with acne and body image. Uniforms eliminate the worry of trying to fit in. Having to buy new clothes is not often a problem when there is a uniform.

According to the website *The Guardian*, an average family spends about \$586 per child on clothing for going back to school; meanwhile, school uniforms can last a couple years if kept in good condition. For parents, there is no need to buy a new uniform unless their child grows.

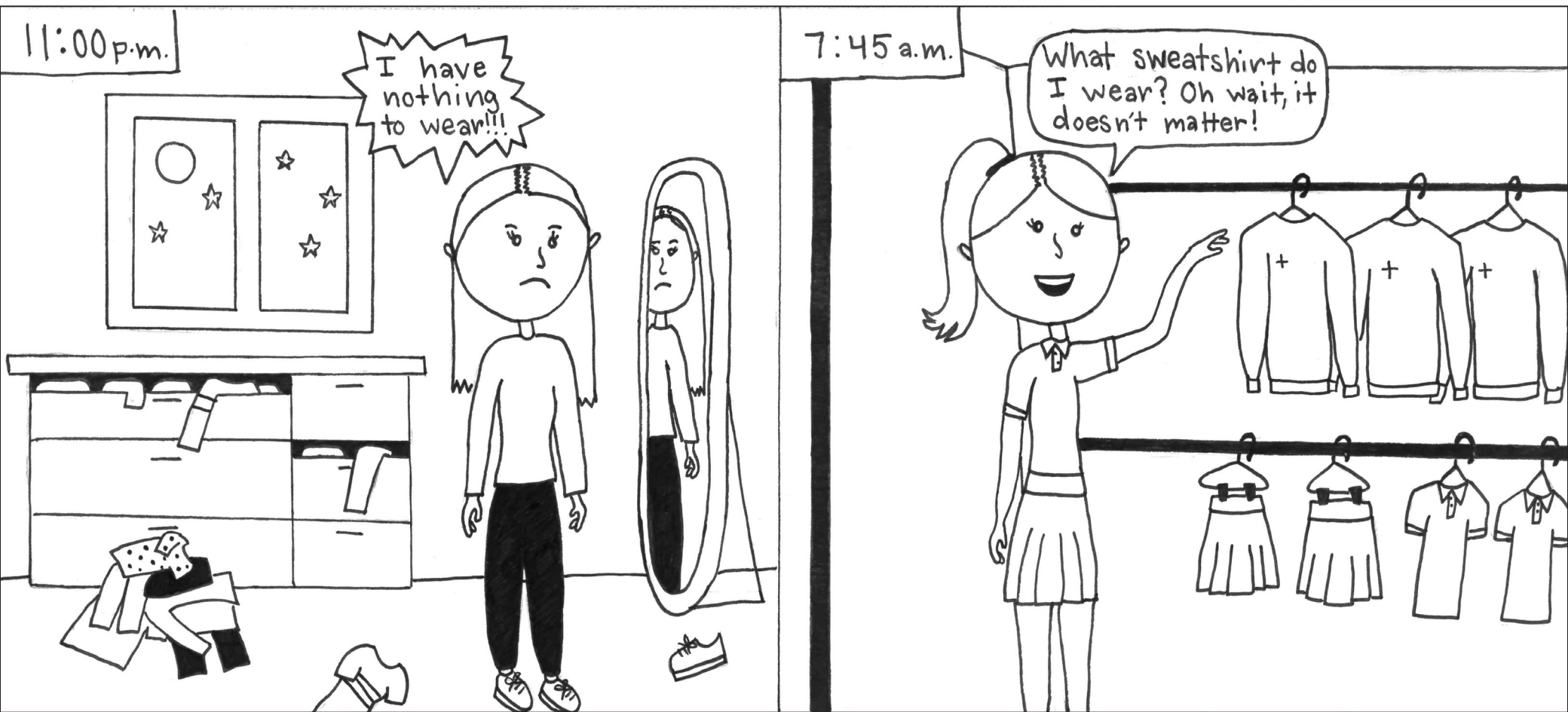
At a non-uniform school, students tend to want to conform to the crowd rather than stand out. They feel the need to stay on top of the trends in order to do that. A uniform removes that need.

When students wear uniforms, they are representing their school. In uniforms, the

school's colors are showcased, allowing students to be identified easier throughout the community. The wearer of the uniform has a responsibility to uphold the school's morals and values, encouraging positive behavior.

Some students prefer not to wear uniforms because they want to be able to express themselves with their clothes. However, there are many other ways to express oneself. The most important way to show who you are is by revealing your personality. Clothing is not what makes a person; it is how they act. Uniforms encourage more authentic relationships that are not based on image.

Uniforms are not as terrible as people think. They are more helpful to families and to students who have enough to worry about already.



Ainsley Kuhl / Rock Bottom Staff

In defense of the so-called stubborn

By Lillian Miller



We all know someone who always insists they are right. Maybe it is the classmate who asks for help with a math problem but then argues with every step of your explanation. Maybe it is the uncle who refuses to use GPS because "he knows a shortcut." You try to help, and they insist they are right. It is irritatingly comical, and, unfortunately, we all have been there.

Stubbornness, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is defined as being unyieldingly determined to not change one's attitude or position on something, especially when given good reasons to do so. This kind

of rigidity limits communication and hurts relationships. In fact, playwright and critic George Bernard Shaw stated, "Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything." Lately, however, stubbornness has become a lazy label for anyone who does not immediately agree with society, and it is tossed at anyone who refuses to let the world tell them what to think.

When someone knows what they believe and stands by it thoughtfully and humbly enough to listen, it is not stubbornness. It is being grounded in their beliefs.

Standing firm in an opinion is not the same as being inflexible. Stubborn people are often bad listeners and will not consider other perspectives. A person grounded in their beliefs listens, learns, reflects, and carefully chooses their position. They are open to growth but not easily swayed. Even if they do not agree, a grounded individual can hear an argument and appreciate it. There is a huge difference between saying "You're wrong" and saying "I hear you, and I still disagree."

Society has adopted a copy-and-paste culture where true thinking is discouraged.

Teenagers are told to "be themselves," but only if "themselves" look, talk, and post similarly to everyone else. While it might be easier to scroll than to study and copy instead of consider, these habits lead to an inability to form opinions and original ideas. Forming a true opinion takes work: listening, reading, questioning, and wrestling with ideas. Stubbornness often stems from holding an opinion without ever wrestling with it. Independent thinking is rare, and it makes others uncomfortable. People often call it "stubborn" when someone refuses to go along with the crowd for this reason.

Unfortunately, a person standing their ground and working to form their own opinions could risk isolation. Even a grounded person can become so focused on having a well-founded opinion that the opportunity for growth and change is missed. Sometimes, yielding is not conformity or cowardice, but an act of charity or empathy. This is a fair point. After all, moral strength does not only come from standing firm; knowing when to shift is a huge component as well. Everyone should stand firm when their conviction has been tested by honest study, listening, and

humility and yield when new evidence, clear moral obligation, or genuine charity calls them to do so.

Being grounded in one's beliefs requires humility. It requires listening, empathy, and being willing to be wrong along the way. Someone can be compassionate and kind without yielding their own ideas. Listening does not mean surrendering beliefs; it refines them. Research from the *National Institute of Health* suggests thinking critically after being presented with new ideas actually strengthens decision making, problem-solving, and creativity. It suggests the strongest people are not the ones who never change their minds. They are the ones who know why they believe what they do.

Someone cannot stand firm in a belief they do not understand. Therefore, when someone calls you stubborn for standing your ground, do not take it as an insult. Hear it as a challenge. A challenge to think deeply, listen carefully, and be the rare person in a copy-and-paste world who truly knows what they believe and *why*.

Teens should turn back to boredom

By Josie Rother



Lying on the floor with nothing to do but watch the minute hand make its way around the clock is a rite of passage for all kids. Begging your parents to entertain you because you are so bored you could "die" and throwing a tantrum when they say "being bored is good for you" is something many people have experienced as kids. It has taken a while, but I have realized our parents were right. Boredom is an essential feeling that fosters creativity and helps people find themselves.

As children, we had the ability to amuse

ourselves if we were ever bored. Our heads teeming with wonder made occupying ourselves simple. Being innovative seemed easier when we were younger because we were naive, but creativity is not limited to childhood. We had the ability to be imaginative because of boredom. Without the absence of an activity or some other stimulus, children would never have had to turn to their own curiosity for entertainment. Just as a flower needs the sun to bloom, a child needs boredom to activate inventive and critical thinking.

When a child grows into a teenager, imagination is replaced with harder schoolwork, more activities, and technology. The teenage years are an important time for the development of ideas and opinions, so with the absence of boredom and time for our artistic and problem solving skills

to improve, it is easy to say creativity disappears as a person gets older. This, of course, is untrue. Teens and adults still have creative ability; it is just neglected. The moments of silence in a teen's life, instead of being utilized, are usually covered by noise.

Our minds and bodies need moments of silence. By flooding our senses with noise all hours of the day, it is almost impossible for us to form our own opinions, pursue our passions, and truly realize who we are and who we want to be. Instead of allowing ourselves to grow, we restrict ourselves by constantly avoiding boredom. Endless scrolling, constant activities, or never ending work are ways we avoid the uncomfortable silence our minds and bodies long for.

We can see this decline of creativity in

subtle ways in our lives. One example of this is the ever growing trend culture. Trends are always changing and take root in the lives of teens. Instead of making their own decisions and judgments on what they like or do not like, many teens look to the latest trends in order to fit in. Now, buying a Stanley or liking bows is not a bad thing until you find yourself losing your identity by basing all of your interests and opinions on what others do or say. We are all created differently, yet many teens lose sight of who they are in order to fit in.

It is time for teens to look at boredom differently. The silence of not having anything to do needs to be utilized and not avoided. We need to be willing to sit in moments of silence and allow our minds to form our ideas, or we risk losing our individuality. We have not lost our creativity, we have just forgotten the importance of boredom. So, before you pick up your phone, consider taking a page out of your younger self's playbook. You may be surprised by how much you still enjoy drawing, playing with neighbors, building, riding your bike, and using your imagination.

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Josie Rother ROCK BOTTOM