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### Cheating, Our Fault or Theirs

Cheating is bad, right? Then why is it that nearly 90% of students have probably cheated in their lives? Most children learn at a young age that cheating is a bad thing, yet somewhere in their futures these children will cheat on something. Stress! It's a killer, the main reason why we see tons of cheating in high school as oppose to elementary school is stress. The elementary student is usually at a very low risk of stress. When your 10 years old the biggest heart jerker that you'll probably experience on any given day is what's for lunch. While the average high school teenager has, appearance, the opposite sex, parents, peers, and not to be overlooked, colleges as a bag full of stressors. It's easy to see how a 10 year old and a 17 year old may have different levels of stress. In the March edition of Time magazine, Amanda Ripley wrote " Beating the Bubble Test". She touches on the new No Child Left Behind law, which states that starting with first graders on, children will have to pass efficiency tests to advance to the next grade. This is a bad way to approach our educational problems in my opinion, all this will do is create more stress at an earlier age. Students are all ready faced with pressures from parents, their peers, and for high school students the dreaded acceptance letters that await them.

That sick feeling in your stomach when your walking home or to the car after you just got your first 'F' is one that will never go away. Not because of the "F", I got a couple more of those down the road, but that feeling of having to tell your parents, that's what did it. "Mom, dad I need to tell you something", were the hardest words you've ever had to say up till then. The pressures set on a child by their parents isn't the same as any other pressure. The feeling of pressure your parents bestow upon you comes in a " I let

them down state". It hurts children a lot more than you would think to let their parents down, especially if the parent child relationship is strong. Parents want nothing more for their children than to see them succeed. All parents know that the key to a successful life now relies on education. Your parents know this, and that's why they pressure you so much on getting good grades. The bad thing though is that they may not know how much stress you are experiencing outside of their arms, and too much stress causes you to find stress relievers. A great stress reliever for high school students when it comes to grades is cheating. How good do you feel when you get an "A"? Well imagine having that feeling a whole day before you even took the test, that's what a cheater feels like if they're good and they do it right. That natural drive to please your parents is one that every child strives to meet. That's how the "parental push", which I like to call it can hurt an overly stressed out child. Cheating is bad, that's what your parents will always say when you ask them about it, but do they know they might be a huge factor causing you to do it?

Being the creepy dumb kid might be the biggest fear for an unpopular student at any age. We all know how that goes the guys pick on him, the girls laugh at him, and never make conversation. The low whispers of "there goes Timmy", can be heard all around him. It's a sad place that no student want to be, the dumber children will try and fit in by doing something good, this is usually sports. The athlete will always be accepted by the "in" crowd, if they're good at what they do. The smart kids might let the popular ones cheat off of them just to make sure they're accepted. A nerd whose friends with the star player won't get picked on much, just because of that one friend. Let's not forget though, that giving the answers to someone, although maybe not as bad as getting the answers from someone, is still cheating. This small group of answer givers is what makes

the statistics rise just a little. Cheating for most students is the easy way out, and I'm not going to lie, I've taken before. That huge test, or that tiny quiz all require studying, and let's face most kids don't. That's why whenever they have the chance, most students cheat. I mean that's got to be an angry situation when you write a paper or take a test and a cheater gets a better grade than you. You know you can't tell or you'll get made fun of, or even worse beaten up, so you hold that anger in until the next test. You're probably saying why the next test, because that's when instead of studying you find the way to cheat, and for some odd reason when the tests get handed back and yours has a big "A" at the top you don't feel bad at all. Instead you feel like "Okay I'm playing the game now, and I just did pretty good". The reason why you did this is the competitive force that's makes everyone try to be better than the next. It's why average is never good enough, that force is what makes an average player good and a good player great. No one wants to be last not even in academics. "The dumb kid" is someone nobody wants to be.

"We are sorry to inform you that you do not meet our academic requirements." This is how some college rejection letters begin, and the thought of every application you sent out returning with this heading can cause a lot of stress. The college acceptance is just as important as life and death to some high school students. These kids are the ones who work their tails off all throughout high school, because they know bad grades means no college. The pressure to perform is just as demanding on these kids as the pressure to win the game is on the star athlete. The smartest kids at your school were probably identified somewhere around the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. The geniuses as I liked to call them were looked at to get "A's" on everything. The class would look every time once these kids got their scores back, not to see the "A", but hope to see a "C" or worse. It's a cruel

world out there and yes some people root against the favored party, and unfortunately that party is the geniuses when it comes to the classroom. The pressures they have are more than I could ever imagine when it comes to academics. College is expected of them, so this time is magnified for them not so much in sense of will they go, but more as to where they'll go. All student are faced with the college decisions, not just getting in, but moving out, of the house that is. Some kids can't handle the thought of leaving home, I'm not one of them, but I know kids who are attending junior college at home, because they were scared to leave. All this stress leads us to change, and for some that change may be cheating. Cheating can help the "C" student pull their averages to "B" in a last ditch effort to get into college. By this time it's usually too late, but it sure doesn't stop them. And the biggest change may come in the form of "senioritis". This is where a lot of students get into trouble, smart kids stop going to class and use cheating as a means to keep their G.P.A's up. This change come from not a year of stress, but the four years that have built up. Granted that stress may have only led to one cut, but the relief and freedom you feel is what leads to more and more. And the only way to maintain your grades once this happens is to cheat! Now you can see how this long term stress is a bad thing, and all that occurs because of it.

In conclusion, our parents, peers, and pressure from colleges may want relook at cheating as our way of slacking off, and instead see a desperate attempt to cope. The may reason for this essay is to show you how stress hurts us, and that by starting stress at the 1<sup>st</sup> grade level instead of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level will cause much more damage than we think. I understand that George W. Bush is trying to create a disciplined academic basis which will keep our educational system from slacking, but at the same time I don't think he sees

the people it's affecting. The kids, they are the future and if we have a society of stressed out people all day, what do you think is going to happen. I said it earlier in the essay, and I'll say it again, they'll look to relieve the stress. My guess is that this stress reliever will be a whole lot worse than cheating. Kids make mistakes, and cheating is one of them, but adults make mistakes too. Drugs, alcohol, guns, violence, and ultimately war will all be ways I think the stress will try to be relieved.

#### Work Cited

Ripley, Amanda. "Beating the Bubble Test." Time March 2, 2004