

Passages Press



I Don't Want To

Marion Webster, Westbrook

Throughout your life, there are things you have to do even though you don't want to do them. As a child, it might be that you don't want to share with others or that you don't want to clean your room or go to school. As you grow older it turns into not wanting to clean your house, pay your bills, and sometimes you don't even want to get up out of bed to go to work. You spend your whole life doing things you don't want to do just because you have to. For me writing this essay is one of those things.

I've been dreading this essay which might sound kind of silly. Especially since it can be about whatever topic I want it to be. My teacher, Dana, always tells me to stop overthinking things. I'm positive that if I told her I didn't know what to write this five-paragraph essay about she would tell me, "Stop overthinking it." So here I am not overthinking and just writing, writing about how I don't want to write it. The only thing that's making me write this is that I know once it's finished I'm one step closer to getting my diploma.

You see, getting my diploma has always been a goal of mine even when I didn't want to go to school, or do the work. Most of my family members don't have a diploma, and some don't even have a GED. To be honest I probably wouldn't be sitting here typing away on my laptop if it wasn't for them and my very persistent yet encouraging teacher. As I sit here typing and rereading I can't help but think about how much I don't want to be doing this right now. I'd

much rather be doing anything else while I have this short break from my daughter while she takes her nap, but here I am.

I've always had this love/hate relationship with school, especially this program. In Passages, you're given the foundation and tools for what you need to do, but when there's room for imagination and creativity I start to overthink, the reason being that I don't want to do something if I can't do it perfectly. I make fun of myself quite regularly for this. My motto is "If I'm not going to do it perfectly, then don't do it at all." That's where my overthinking and procrastination come in. I'm sure there have been many times when my teacher has wanted to strangle me because of it. I mean I want to strangle myself sometimes because of it. Yet, I still make sure things get done on time and perfectly even if I procrastinated until the night before.

I've realized while writing this that I don't need to overthink everything and that it's okay not to be perfect sometimes. I mean, I'm literally writing about how I don't want to do something, and I'm already on paragraph five. So something you and I can both take from this essay is that doing the things you don't want to do is worth it. By finishing something you can say you've accomplished it and I know when I finish something I never wanted to do in the first place I'm proud of myself for putting my best foot forward and completing it anyway. So do that thing you don't want to do just because you can.

Time Management & Organization

Aya Salman, Portland

Time management is a way to accomplish your goals. You need to determine what you'll do when you need to finish your work, and what tasks you need to solve to do it. A few things that could help are having a routine, having proper stress management, writing things down on paper or your phone, and looking back on things you did just to make sure you did them well. One of the most important things is to do the hardest task first, so it won't waste your time, and then doing the easier tasks afterward.

Setting S. M. A. R. T. goals can help make sure that the goals you set are reasonable, realistic, achievable, and important.

S: Specific - I want to walk every day for one hour.

M: Measurable - Every day for one hour I will walk around the house until I get tired.

A: Achievable - I can make it exciting by getting a coffee and doing some homework, or going to the park.

R: Relevant - I want to live my dream.

T: Time-Bound - December 16 until March 16.

I like to keep things organized at home, school, and in public. I keep things in order and by colors such as having matching outfits, bags, etc. At home, I like to decorate and keep things in order like having a first aid kit, dishes, cups, and any home supplies organized. In public, I like to carry my bag with a first aid kit, pads, wallet, charger, water, keys, and anything that I need that will fit in my bag. Some people put things in order but then forget about them. There are a few things that could help like

taking pictures of the things you just put away, or you can write it down.

I make sure things are perfect and how I like them and if I use them I'll make sure it goes back in the same place so I won't forget. After I graduate I will keep my work in order and write notes so I know what I want to become and won't let things get in my way. I don't want to get distracted from achieving my dream job.



TikTok Side Effects

Maddy Dorais, Buxton

Purpose: I'm trying to find out if watching less TikTok will make me exercise more and draw.

Hypothesis: I think it will make me have more free time and be more myself.

Materials: phone

Procedure: For four days I will be taking pictures and videos of my exercising results after spending less time on TikTok. I will also be taking screenshots of my activity log for TikTok. I set a time limit app on my phone for TikTok to two hours a day.

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Time on TikTok: I watched animal videos, dancing videos, or random ones.	Time on TikTok: I did not watch any TikTok today	Time on Tiktok: Spent my time watching videos about animals, kids, or just random things.	Time on Tiktok: Spent my time watching videos about animals, kids, or just random things.
Time doing something else: I spent my time exercising and hanging out with Jackson and family.	Time doing something else: I spent my time exercising and stretching.	Time doing something else: I exercised and worked out during my free time	Time doing something else: I got a little exercise in but I ended up hanging out/ watching kids.
How did it feel? It felt good to exercise and spend time with family during the time I usually spend watching TikTok.	How did it feel? It felt good to exercise and stretch and work on self-care during the time I usually spend watching TikTok.	How did it feel? I felt good and more motivated to do stuff during the day after I exercised.	How did it feel? It felt less stressful not watching TikTok and watching/ hanging out with the children.

Conclusion: I learned that if you focus on what you really want to do you can accomplish it. I wanted to watch less TikTok and exercise more in my free time. All of the data came back in my favor and it was possible to shut TikTok out and be more myself with less of a distraction even though I wasn't sure it was going to work 100% or even at all. If I were to try the same experiment differently I would just try deleting the app and see how long before I end up downloading it or watching it from another source, or I would set a limit for 30 min instead of 2 hrs.



Oshima Brothers;

an interview with Sean Oshima

Sierra Leigh, Rockland

“Oshima Brothers [Sean & Jamie Oshima] is a Maine-based duo creating dreamy melodies and a harmony-drenched blend of contemporary folk, acoustic pop, and Americana.” - oshimabrothers.com



Sean Oshima

What got you into music? My parents. Both of my parents play music. When I was little there were instruments around the house and I liked to use them. When I was in my teen’s music became a way for me to journal and/or reflect on what was going on in my life. It helped me get things out of my head and into the world.

What's it like becoming famous? Well, I don't think I'm famous, but our band is getting more popular! It's fun. It's crazy to know that people are listening to songs that I wrote in Australia, Germany, or India. I hope my music helps people feel emotions.

Do you have any side jobs? I have worked many side jobs in the past. I've worked at restaurants, doing carpentry, and farming. Now I only do music. It barely gets me by, but I'm a full-time musician now.

What is your favorite thing about creating music? Two things: I like to process life and share that with people. And performing. There's nothing more fun than looking people in the eyes and singing to them night after night.

Does it get hard or stressful at times? Oh yes! Traveling stresses me out and there's a lot of traveling. It is a grind! The job is 90% really hard work, traveling, moving gear, scheduling, computer work, logistics, creating art, and then 10% you're performing or making the music — and that's why I do it, for that 10%.

How have things been going since the pandemic? Things have been different. We make 95% of our income when we play live concerts, and since the pandemic, we haven't played many. We've had to figure out other ways to get by, but there's hope! We will make it though.



Oshima Brothers

Where I'm From

Autumn Francis-Stevens, Motahkomikuk

I am from television
from my blanket and pillow
I am from my tiny and cute apartment
It feels good cause its mine
I am from the roses and
The fir trees whose long limbs I remember as if
they were my own.

I am from tipping and fishing and lobstering
and hard workers
from Andrew and Tayhia and
Kendall
I'm from pack rats and good cooks and from
green thumbs

I'm from finishing school and never lying and
singing Mockingbird
I'm from clamming
I'm from Pleasant Point and
Passamaquoddy

I am from scallops and red hot dogs
From having a good time working on the boat
with my dad
We made work fun. He's pretty funny
Baskets & dream catchers
My gram has them in a glass case.

[inspired by a poem by George Ella Lyon titled,
Where I'm From]



French Culture

Mikayla Desruisseux, Sanford

Since the seventeenth century, France has been regarded as a “center of high culture.” France is internationally recognized for its fashion, cuisine, art, and cinema. The unique thing about the French culture is that it is also well known for being a very romantic country. Not only for love and relationships but also for their food, wine, and living well. They even wear similar styled clothes and shoes. There are a lot of similarities from our culture compared to the French culture but there are also many differences.

What are some differences?

- French people tend to be very formal. When meeting people they either shake hands or kiss on the cheek twice.
- They peel and slice their fruit and expect the same from you.
- There is no such thing as a kids' menu in this part of the world.
- In France, parents have a method called *Le pause* (the break). It means when your child is having a meltdown or even crying in the middle of the night, wait 3-5 minutes to see if they can calm down themselves.
- You must bag your own groceries when shopping.
- In France, there is no eating on the go. Traditionally, people sit down to eat every meal.
- Making small talk is considered rude.
- Having your cell phone out during meals or drinks is considered very rude.

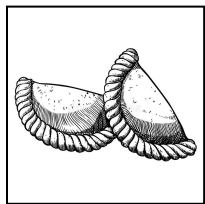
Columbia, England, & Italy

Savannah Senay, Tenants Harbor

Columbia

Columbia was colonized by the Spanish so most of the food has some degree of Spanish influence. Columbia is a rather large and diverse country so there are many different types of things to try. Coffee and soup are a big part of Columbian cuisine.

Something I'd like to try sometime and

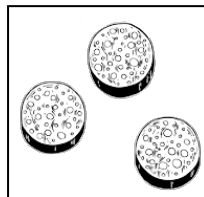


maybe learn to make would be empanadas which are deep-fried and usually filled with things like rice, meat, eggs, potatoes, and vegetables. Something I'm not interested in trying is

hormigas culonas which are large ants that have been roasted or fried and covered in salt.

England

The dishes I looked at use every last bit of the animal, none going to waste — including the blood. For example, there's a dish called black pudding which is made of pig's blood, and there are other puddings made out of butcher scraps and put into lamb intestines and boiled. This cuisine was influenced by the Romans and the French in ancient and medieval times. When the Frankish Normans invaded, they brought things like spices and sugar from the East, which were considered rare and expensive at that time.

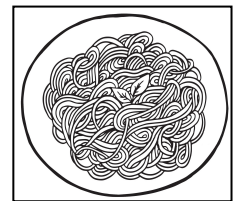


Italy

Italy is known as a young country. It wasn't until 1871 that Rome became its capital and after WWII is when it became more of the Italy

that we know of today. Some of the influences of the Italian food we know today came from other cultures and discoveries from distant islands.

Romans are known for large lavish feasts and their love for wine. In the Middle Ages, the rise of Christianity had a large influence on acceptable food consumption behaviors. Rules were put in place that believed that eating meat was a sin. Fasting became a new norm. In Sicily, things were different as they were exposed to different influences when they were invaded by the neighboring Arab conquerors. The biggest thing they brought was pasta because it was convenient. The Italians made it an art and it spread all over Europe. In the sixteenth century, tomatoes came into the picture, changing the course of some



Italian cuisine. Over time, the religious beliefs of food gave way, traditions of the past were rediscovered, and food, especially sugar, became a symbol of wealth.

Home-Cooked & Healthy

Julia Porter, Rockland

Lately, we have been trying new meals including steak, chicken, and hamburger. I kept a food log for about one week. From this log, it has been brought to my attention that I should change my eating habits. What I noticed is that some days I eat hardly anything. I don't even notice. On those days, I feel very irritable and exhausted. It's like feeling drained or out of energy.

I want to start eating more home-cooked meals instead of eating out all the time. I need

to make sure I am eating fruits, vegetables, protein, and more water throughout the day. I was a little intimidated by trying this new recipe for chicken fried rice, since I don't have much experience cooking home-cooked meals, but I was extremely surprised with how good it came out. It was a fairly simple recipe to follow.

Chicken Fried Rice

from gimmesomeoven.com

3 tablespoons butter, divided
2 eggs, whisked
2 medium carrots, peeled and diced
1 small white onion, diced
1/2 cup frozen peas
3 cloves garlic, minced
salt and black pepper
4 cups cooked and chilled rice (I prefer short-grain white rice)
3 green onions, thinly sliced
3–4 tablespoons soy sauce, or more to taste
2 teaspoons oyster sauce (optional)
1/2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil
Chicken - cooked and diced or shredded



Heat 1/2 tablespoon of butter in a large sauté pan over medium-high heat until melted. Add egg, and cook until scrambled, stirring occasionally. Remove egg, and transfer to a separate plate.

Add an additional one tablespoon butter to the pan and heat until melted. Add carrots, onion, peas, and garlic, and season with a generous pinch of salt and pepper. Sauté for about five minutes or until the onion and carrots are soft.

Increase heat to high, add in the remaining 1 1/2 tablespoons of butter and stir until melted. Immediately add the rice, green onions, soy sauce, and oyster sauce (if using), and stir until combined.

Sauté some chicken in a separate sauté pan while making your fried rice then shred or dice and add to your fried rice.

Continue sautéing for an additional three minutes to fry the rice, stirring occasionally. (I like to let the rice rest for a bit between stirs so that it can crisp up on the bottom.) Then add in the eggs and stir to combine.

Remove from heat, and stir in the sesame oil until combined. Taste and season with extra soy sauce, if needed.

Serve immediately, or refrigerate in a sealed container for up to three days.

Financial Goals

Isaiah Ellis, Waldoboro

For my short-term financial goal, I think about traveling funds. Lily and I planned a while back to travel to as many places as we can together so we could explore America to its fullest. We want to go to all fifty states which will be very expensive, but we want to do it. The reason I'm making this a short-term goal and not a long-term is because for now, I have plans for only New York. I already made my list of

how much everything will cost and I think I can do it.

For my mid-term goal, I want to get a used car. Since buying a used car is favored when it comes to building your credit, I think this is a good choice. Used cars are also not as expensive as new cars, but the biggest downside is it may cost way more with the repairs you may have to do on them and that will build up over time.

For my long-term goal, I want to get a home. I feel like this goes for most teenagers when they discuss long-term goals since having your own home means you have your own space. I want to get a trailer to put in a park because I find trailers better than houses. I don't need a basement or attic since I don't have much stuff. I find trailers easier to navigate since you are walking in a straight line from point a to point b. I also find trailers better to look at than a house, but that may change. A trailer can be temporary and I could sell mine to buy a new house.

Those are some of my financial goals. These may change as time goes on but a home will always be my long-term goal. I think the importance of goals is to know that you want to do those things. If you think to yourself, "I want to do this" you may never think of it again, but if you turn that thought into a goal you will have that on your mind for a long time. You can prepare for the things you want to do by knowing that you have goals that you want to achieve by a certain time, and this will make you want to save a few dollars or more for your goal.

What should you do if ...

Daisy Ingraham, Hope

What should you do if your car breaks down while traveling?

- Pull off the road. Some materials you may need are flares, a roadside emergency kit, and warning lights.
Alert other drivers. Turn on your emergency flashers, raise your vehicle hood, and tie a brightly colored item on your vehicle.
- Remain in your vehicle.
- Call roadside assistance and figure out your wait time.
- Talk to the mechanic and figure out what's wrong with your vehicle. Consider getting a hotel room, renting a car, or calling a close friend or family member.

What should you do if you are in an accident?

- Stay where you are and don't go anywhere.
- Call for help if you can or have someone nearby call for you.
- Determine whether it is safer inside or outside of the vehicle.
- Wait for help to arrive.
- Make sure you have your insurance card and any other important information with you.

"If you find your here and now intolerable and it makes you unhappy, you have three options: remove yourself from the situation, change it, or accept it totally. If you want to take responsibility for your life, you must choose one of those three options, and you must choose now.
Then accept the consequences."

- Eckhart Tolle

Film: *Inside Yemen, Frontline*

Kayli Preston, Westbrook

This short film from 2017 told about the hundreds of people who are dying in Yemen because of bad nutrition. Most deaths from bad nutrition are children and babies. Everyone is getting sick and dying because they're not earning a salary, and they can't get a salary because of the bombings. There were fewer deaths before the war, and now after the bombings by the Saudi, there are deaths of children every 10 minutes due to lack of nutrition. Yemeni people blame the nation. The death toll in 2017 reached over 10,000 people. Seven million people are facing famine. The UN declared Yemen the largest humanitarian crisis in the world.



I learned so much from watching this film, which is only 15 minutes long. It opened my eyes and made me realize that there are people out there suffering, dying, and have it way worse than us in the United States. It made me sad knowing that children are dying every 10 minutes, adults are dying, and their country has become a fortress so that other people can't get in. These people are jobless and so they pay for food with coupons because they don't get a salary. Their water became polluted and grew bacteria because the trash clean-up had stopped because of war. I didn't know any of these things. I didn't see or hear about it on social media, at school, or on the news. Important

things like this don't get talked about or shown on the news or social media. Things like this NEED to be shown and heard. The Yemen people need help. Millions of people and other countries need our help and no one is doing anything.

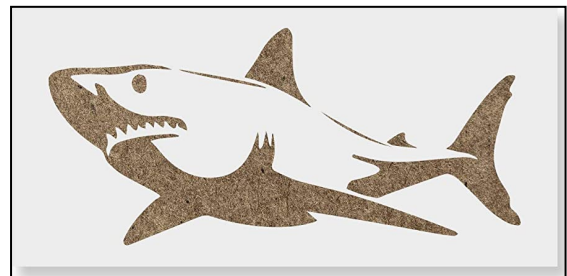
Editor's note from PBS: "As of February 2021, President Biden called for a cease-fire and to restore 'long dormant' peace talks. He also said the US would no longer provide 'relevant' arm sales."

Killing Sharks for Squalene?

Ethan Fogg, South Thomaston

I found an article titled "Will Over Half A Million Sharks Be Killed For Covid-19 Vaccine?" by NPR and it says that because sharks produce an oil in their liver called squalene that 500,000 sharks could be killed for the Covid-19 vaccine.

When I fact-checked this using snopes.com, it said that squalene can also be found in olive oil, sugar cane, wheat germ, and bacteria and yeast. It would cost more to manufacture the vaccine with these products and it wouldn't be as much squalene compared to using sharks, but they could manufacture it one of those ways instead of harvesting from the shark population.



Endless Suffering

Kenzie Phifer, Union

Stop this endless suffering
I am so,
So tired
I wish I could see myself the way you do
I need to see myself how you see me

I need worth
I need to be pretty

I don't want to be nothing
But the voices in my head won't let me think otherwise

Some days the voices grow louder
And I can't block them out

And I start to believe them


If only I could see myself how you see me
Maybe then
The voices won't matter
Because words mean nothing
Unless they come from yourself

I am nothing
I am worthless
I am fat
I am ugly
I have no friends
No one likes me
People just pity me
I am a bad person

There is nowhere to go other than here
Nowhere to run
Nowhere to hide
Just me
Myself
And my thoughts

I wonder if I will survive?
This endless war between me and my thoughts
It feels like sand through an hourglass
I can feel each grain pass through
Slowly reaching the climax
When I'm in my right mind
I think
I want to live philocally
But that soft token of hope
Unfortunately doesn't last long

The only good question
Is
Will this endless suffering stop?



Don Dunbar; an Interview

Willow Gabriel, Sipi yak

I interviewed Don Dunbar who owns Eastern Maine Images. He is a professional photographer who lives near me in Eastport. I asked him some questions I've always had about his pictures. I think he takes amazing photos. The answers he gave shocked me, especially when he said that he didn't go to school for photography. I thought he would have because of the way he takes photos.

I would like to take pictures as a hobby and also be a veterinarian for a job. Don told me he spends some time just watching animals such as birds and whatnot. I think that is amazing because I am just not a patient person. I am glad I asked him these questions because it gives me more of an explanation of what he does.

Did you have to go to school for taking pictures, and for how long, and if you didn't go to school, how did you learn?

I did not go to school for photography. I bought a camera outfit and started taking pictures a little over 20 years ago. Lots of trial and error, and reading books. It was just a hobby until four years ago when I opened a gallery and started selling pictures.

What got you into wanting to take pictures?

I have always had a love of nature and wildlife and I would always say, "That would make a great picture," so finally I started taking those pictures.

What things frustrate you while taking pictures?

One thing that frustrates me is when I am sitting for a long time to get a picture of a bird or animal and someone shows up and scares

them away. It's frustrating but it is okay because everyone has the right to be outdoors just like me, so I just wait longer.

How do you get to take pictures of animals like birds and everything without them flying away?

I do most of my wildlife photography while sitting in blinds or being very quiet while in my kayak or walking through the woods. I can sit in my blind all day if I have to.

What is your favorite thing about taking pictures?

I love being able to capture beautiful scenes and wildlife and sharing them with those who may not get a chance to see something like that. I also like that now my pictures are hanging on walls all over the world.

Do you travel to take your pictures?

I don't travel long distances much to get my pictures, mostly around this area. Sometimes I will go to Baxter Park or Acadia.

How many awards have you won?

I have won lots of ribbons in the Maine Sportsman's Show in Augusta every year. I have also been published in many magazines.

Of the pictures you've taken, which is your favorite?

I think my favorite (I have many) is also a best seller. It's called, *East Quoddy Lighthouse at 36 Below Zero*. (below)



What Would a Rat Do?

Raelynn Philbrook, Cushing



All of my rats have different personalities. *Bug* is very cuddly, hence named 'Cuddle' Bug. He is extremely friendly and loves to curl up in the warmth of your sweatshirt and nap. *Kisses* loves giving kisses. He is extremely friendly and curious and loves meeting new people — even dogs and cats. *Bear* is ironically named this because he is the opposite. He's very shy but luckily he has taken a liking to me. *Sugar* is very hyper and loves to explore, but also loves his nap time. And then there's *Bud*. He is kind of in the middle. He's friendly when he wants to be.

All of them love food, and so far their favorite is cucumber. I noticed that they like both the cucumber peel and the actual middle of the cucumber, but separately. I have observed



that they eat the middle first and then the peel. They would work from the middle out, which I thought was extremely weird so I decided to cut the peels off and give it to them separately.

Rat Park Experiment

The Rat Park Experiment was a series of studies on drug addiction conducted in the late 1970s by the Canadian psychologist Bruce K. Alexander and his colleagues at the Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, Canada.

A solo rat was put in a small, empty cage with only two water bottles. One was full of fresh, clean water and the other was full of water laced with either cocaine or heroin. The rat tried both and compulsively drained the laced water, causing an overdose.

Then they put a bunch of rats in a large cage with toys, food, and everything a rat could ever want, including both types of water bottles. This time, even though the rats tried both, they only wanted the fresh water. If you compare this to humans, this is the equivalent to someone who has nothing — no family, home, or food. These people might resort to drugs because they have nothing meaningful in their life, and they might feel like they have nothing to lose.

It was really weird reading about the study because I had never associated animals and humans in this way before. The similarity in our compulsive actions is surprising.

Super High Me

Lily Harvey, Washington

I watched a documentary called, *Super High Me*. It was about a comedian stoner who stopped smoking marijuana for 30 days. During



that time, he took a series of physical and psychological tests to check his sperm count, psychic abilities, breathing ability, memory, and weight. He also took a depression questionnaire, and he tested his thinking skills by taking the SAT.

Next, he smoked marijuana for 30 days, retook the tests, and looked for the differences in his health. I thought that the results would

show that when smoking marijuana, his mental and physical health would be worse than when he wasn't smoking, but the results showed that when he was smoking, he had a higher sperm count and higher score on the SAT. He also had better memory and was better at knowing the correct cards on the psychic ability test. A negative thing that happened because of smoking was that he gained weight. The results also showed that when he wasn't smoking, he had better breathing and was better at math.

After doing more research on livescience.com and healthline.com, I found out that there are some good and bad health benefits to marijuana. Depending on the quantity, quality, and method of consumption, marijuana can produce a high by stimulating brain cells to release the chemical dopamine. This neurotransmitter plays a role in pleasure.

For some, marijuana can cause an increased appetite, which can be useful for someone suffering from anorexia or help with decreased appetite in cancer patients going through treatment.

Some good health benefits of marijuana are pain management, sleep management, reduced inflammation, and it helps with some neurological and mental disorders as well. There are some diseases that cause pain that marijuana may help manage. Some of these are arthritis, fibromyalgia, endometriosis, and migraines. The cannabinoids in marijuana may reduce pain by altering pain perception pathways in the brain. The reason why marijuana helps some people that have sleep problems like insomnia is because of the relaxing effects of marijuana. Improved sleep may also happen for people in pain because of the reduced pain from using marijuana. Some inflammatory conditions marijuana may benefit

by reducing inflammation are Crohn's disease, irritable bowel syndrome, and rheumatoid arthritis. The neurological and mental disorders that marijuana may help are anxiety, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, post-traumatic stress disorder, and Tourette syndrome. The way that it does this is it affects the limbic system, which is the part of the brain that deals with emotions.

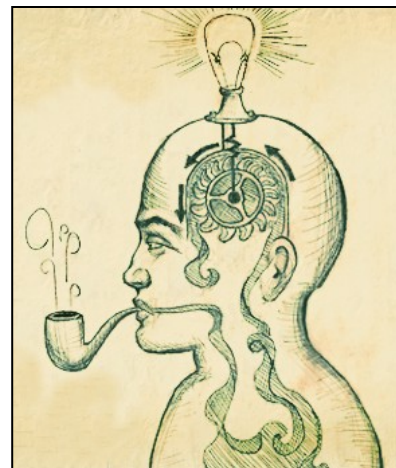
Even though there are many positive health effects from marijuana, the potential risks of marijuana need to be considered in equal measure. Some of the negative health effects that are possible with marijuana use are short term memory recall issues, feelings of panic and fear, trouble concentrating, decreased interest in completing tasks, increased daily cough and phlegm production, more frequent acute chest illnesses such as bronchitis, and a more remarkable instance of lung infections, tachycardia, which is a condition that makes your heart beat more than 100 times per minute and can last for up to three hours. And while marijuana use produces a mellow experience, for some it can heighten agitation, anxiety, insomnia, and irritability.

Marijuana also may reduce sperm production in men and can disrupt a woman's menstrual cycle; it may also cause mild hallucinations, poor motor skills, or altered perceptions of reality. For these reasons, certain activities may be unsafe after using marijuana, such as operating heavy machinery. Do not drive after using marijuana. Not only is it dangerous, but it is also illegal in every state even where marijuana use is legal.

I believe that marijuana use should not start before the age of 21 because when marijuana use begins in the teen years, it can have a significant impact on brain development,

including decreased brain activity, fewer neural fibers in certain areas, and a smaller than average hippocampus which controls learning memory functions. According to a 2014 Northwestern Medicine study of teen marijuana users, memory-related structures in the brain appeared to shrink, a possible sign of a decrease in neurons. These abnormalities remained two years after the teen stopped using marijuana, indicating that the drug has long-term effects and looks similar to the brains of people with schizophrenia. But those who started using marijuana after age 21 generally do not experience the same type of brain abnormalities as those who began using the drug earlier.

So after doing my research on the effects of marijuana, I think as long as it's for medical purposes and recreational use, and you are 21 years or older, that marijuana should be legal.



“Every truth has two sides; it is as well to look at both, before we commit ourselves to either.”

- Aesop

A Horse Story

Miranda Leavitt, New Gloucester

In the morning I opened my door and saw five horses standing in the street. I brought them home and made my mom mad. Dakota and I started to love them and gave them food and water. We walked them around so they would get used to the house and yard. Dakota and I gave them all a bath so they were nice and clean. They were very nice, sweet horses. All they wanted was attention. There were three mares and two geldings. They were all rescues who had gotten out. I found the owner and they said we could keep them.



Coloring pages by Miranda Leavitt



Uncomfortable Pregnancy?

- asking my Facebook friends

Lindsey Berube, Calais

I wrote a Facebook post asking my friends what the most uncomfortable part of their pregnancies was and these are the answers that they gave me.

What was the most uncomfortable part of your pregnancy?

S: All four times I had pelvic girdle pain. Couldn't lay down in my bed, couldn't get out of my bed, couldn't roll, couldn't walk, couldn't sit, couldn't stand. 13/10 on the pain scale for sure.

A: Pertaining to my pregnancy in general — gestational diabetes, hip pain, and how severe my depression and anxiety became.

D: The last couple of weeks were so uncomfortable. And I hated sex.

R: Right now at 24 weeks the most uncomfortable part is the back/hip pain, and feeling like I'm being stabbed in the cervix from time to time.

T: I was so big that I actually tore my muscles above my belly button and you could feel the split! Talk about painful. This started from 25 weeks until about 41 because I was overdue. Worst pain ever. Then after giving birth it took about two years to heal and I couldn't feel the split anymore.

F: Restless leg syndrome — only iron infusions helped. Also, I had acid reflux.

J: Contractions & birth itself! No pain meds with all three, no epidural, nothing! With my last baby, I had the tub in my room and it was

an amazing relief. It also allowed her to become buoyant so my cervix opened right up and I didn't get as much time to enjoy it!

H: Preeclampsia and the swelling with it and being sick the whole 9 months.

B: Sciatic nerve pain, restless leg syndrome, and God awful charley horse cramps in my calves.

K: This may sound weird, and don't get me wrong, it was worth it, but the most uncomfortable part for me was literally sharing my body with a baby if that makes sense. It felt very strange to me for a long time. Feeling something move and stretch inside me was amazing....and really weird.

N: When I stepped sideways and it felt like the baby was gonna fall out.

Y: Sciatica! And then contractions, once in labor. They were the worst with both of my pregnancies. Oh, and if you wanna get graphic, external hemorrhoids! I wouldn't wish those on my worst enemy.

L: All my pregnancies were pretty good. The most uncomfortable part besides actual labor was towards the end of pregnancy when I had that "I'm over this" feeling. My entire body was just sore and tired.

M: Chronic back pain and carrying a basketball in the front — no fun.

I: Being sick the entire time and people touching my belly.

“Everything grows rounder and wider and weirder, and I sit here in the middle of it all and wonder who in the world you will turn out to be.”
— *Carrie Fisher*



Hypertension & Pregnancy

Alison Moffett, Eastport

Some causes of high blood pressure during pregnancy can be from being overweight or not getting very much exercise. Taking walks and doing exercises can help regulate your blood pressure which will cause hypertension to calm down. Eating less salty foods and eating healthier can also help.

If you have high blood pressure it can put stress on the baby as it can decrease blood flow to the placenta which can cause the baby to receive less oxygen and fewer nutrients. This can lead to slow growth, low birth weight, or premature birth.

Zainab

Norma Richards, Hollis

Zainab is unique in many ways. When I was 20 weeks pregnant with Zainab, we learned that she had something called rocker bottom foot. When she was born, we found out that that wasn't what she had, but instead that something else was wrong with the shape of her foot. For the first five months of her life, she had to wear casts on both her feet to shape her feet until she got little braces that she had to wear for 16

hours a day. Now, she only has to wear them at night time.

Zainab makes me smile when she smiles, when she laughs, and when she says dada. She makes little faces and is quite the character. Zainab is just always so happy and loves everyone.

The person I see emerging is a loving, caring, happy girl and I can't wait to see where she will go. I'm looking forward to this pandemic being over so I can bring Zainab places that we can't go to right now like amusement parks, playgrounds, and playdates. When she is old enough, I can't wait to travel with her and show her the world. I want to teach her everything that she needs to know and guide her through life.

Brooklynn & Ava Krysten Chandler, Rockland

My first pregnancy was bad. I was 23 weeks pregnant and my appendix burst. I was shipped to the hospital in Portland. They gave me a lot of pain medication. The only thing I do remember is my cousin and my mom laughing at me for something. I told them to stop laughing at me. Then I came home for a day. My mom took the machine off my side that sucked up the infection, but it didn't work so I was shipped back to the hospital in Portland. I was home for five days and when I got into the shower I yelled to my mom because I thought I was blind. When I woke up I heard my mom yelling my name. She told me I blacked out and she brought me to the hospital. They said I had a blood clot, but that wasn't true I was just dehydrated. During all of this, Brooklyn was okay, but it was really scary.

Brooklynn and I almost died three times while I was pregnant with her. On July 5, 2018, I was induced at 11:50 pm. My nurse came in and said I was one centimeter dilated. When she left the room she called my midwife just as my water broke. I got an epidural at midnight and I slept until six am. I started pushing at 8:30 in the morning and Miss Brooklynn was born July 6, 2018, at 9:08 am. She weighed eight pounds, one ounce, and was healthy.

With my second pregnancy, it went so much better than my first. I thought my gallbladder was going, but I didn't. I was so lucky. My second pregnancy went so differently though. I was always sleeping, and I would think I was having contractions so I thought I was always in labor, but I wasn't.

I went to the hospital on May 2, 2020. They said I was one centimeter dilated and they told me I could stay and see what would happen. I wanted to go home instead and so I did. I walked all day and when I went to bed I was in a lot of pain. On May 3 I walked all day. By 11:30 that night my mom came and picked Brooklynn, Josh, and me up and brought me and Josh to the hospital. The nurse said I was still just one centimeter dilated but they called my midwife and she came in and checked me. She said I was three centimeters dilated. She asked me if I wanted an epidural and I said yes. After that, I tried to sleep. My midwife was in the room watching Ava's heartbeat and I was almost asleep when my water broke. I almost had to have an emergency C-section because Ava's heartbeat kept dropping. Then at 2:30 am I felt pressure, so I started to push. May 4, 2020, at

3:45 am Miss Ava was born. She weighed 6 pounds, 14 oz. She was a small baby.