Conforming To Role Model Status Essay, Research Paper

Conforming to Role Model Status

Growing up in a small town had its benefits. Everyone knows who you are, friends and family are real close. Life is good. But, with the community being so small you have to watch what you do and say because it gets around. Your everyday life is influenced by one group: your community. Your everyday decisions are affected by your community. I was forced to conform to the status quo. Any deviation from that would result in my being shunned for life.

Once I attained the high school athlete status, everything I did was watched. Every thing I said was heard. Every little girl looked up to me. Every decision I made was positively or negatively criticized. I was the community’s kid. I was everyone’s daughter. That’s just what happens when you attain the status of an glorified athlete in the small town of Syracuse, Indiana. The decisions I made were swayed by them. I had to do things the right way, as opposed to the way every other one of my classmates were acting. Underage drinking at a corn field party was not necessarily something that was encouraged by the community. Yet, my friends seemed to think that it was the thing to do. So, this evidence gives support to the idea of group conformity. I turned away from group conformity at my peers’ level and went towards the norm on my community’s. Even if acting like my peers was what I truly wanted to do. The community expected a maturity level out of me that wasn’t expected out of my peers.

Acting within what a certain group thinks is called conformity. As tempting as it was to conform I struggled and remained an individual on my choices. “The fact is that we live our lives in groups-the family, work groups, social, religious and political groups” (Lessing 357). Conformity is acting similar to the norm. According to Doris Lessing, the author of “Group Minds,” “The hardest thing in the world is to stand out against one’s group, a group of one’s peers” (Lessing 358). So, my going against my peers was nothing easy. The decisions I made to not go out to a party, and or some rampant toilet papering event, went against what my peers had wanted, however, my friendships did not suffer. My friends new I had to keep my nose as clean as possible. As far as conforming to my communities expectations goes, I did exactly what they wanted. I conformed to their ideas of the ideal athlete and the ideal person. My entire purpose in life during my four years in high school was to please everybody. From getting our team out of the slum of our conference my freshman year, to becoming a state contender my senior year. The goal was to make everyone happy.. And to do that, I had to do what they wanted. Therefore, following their every instruction and every normality they had planned for me. The decision to come to Findlay is a good example. Everyone in my community had wanted me to go to a big division one school to play basketball. This was the one of the only instances where I went against their hopes and dreams for me. It was tough to choose to go to Findlay because it was a small division two school.

In Susan Walton’s “The Obedient Unlived Life,” a point is brought up concerning whether or not living an obedient life is getting you anywhere. Walton believes that if you are constantly on the line of obedience you are missing out on certain aspects of life. I for one, disagree on this. I missed out on certain aspects of my high school years, yet they weren’t huge events that would have changed the way I am today. Now that I am a college student, the things I missed out on in high school don’t seem that bad after all. Not going to a good close friend of mines mid year party did not effect me in any way. Life has gone on, and I really don’t think about missing it.

Walton also argues that the most common reason for living an obedient life is fear. The fact that something unfortunate could happen to you if you don’t do what is expected. This is true in my case, going back to the fact that I feared what the community would think if I didn’t do what they wanted, and what was right.

Walton seems to think that “The moral of the story is that you should stop to think whether being good is getting you anywhere you want to go?” (Walton 405). I stopped to think about this statement and then came to the conclusion that being good did get me to where I wanted to be. I survived the temptations of high school, and now I am a college student, with a future ahead of me. I would like to think that this is contributed to by the fact that I followed the rules and did what was right.

I believe that everyone takes their own paths occasionally. I do not however agree with Walton on her point made about people missing out on life if they are constantly following instructions. Instructions and rules are not set in order to hinder ones life, but take out the confusion and give it structure. My four years of high school were amazing even though I did follow the rules.

Living in a small community did have its disadvantages, but I turned out to be a acceptable kid in the end because of it. Hometown values, and trustworthiness is what I learned growing up. Even though, I never really became the individual who stood out against every group idea there was, I became the loved one in my hometown, and will be for a long time to come. Thanks to choosing to conform to the norm and living my life the way other people expected. Other people might complain, but me, I’m quite happy! Living your life the right way, the obedient way makes you a better person in the end.