

PROGRESS Over Achievement

The Power of the Journey

You've likely heard the phrase, "It's the journey, not the destination." While it might evoke thoughts of road trips or vacations, this idea also applies to the process of applying for colleges, internships, and other opportunities. It's about what you learn along the way.

Focus on Growth, Not Results

Applying for opportunities like colleges, internships, or volunteer programs often feels overwhelming. Hitting 'submit' can spark fear and anxiety, rooted in the pressure to succeed. Society tends to equate success with achievements like prestigious scholarships or university acceptances, but this mindset can be harmful.

While doing your best is important, it's crucial to shift your focus from outcomes to personal growth. The application process is not just about getting into your top choice; it's an opportunity to reflect on how much you've learned and grown. Focusing only on results can diminish your confidence and negatively affect your mental health. Remember, rejection doesn't define your worth, and admissions decisions are often based on factors beyond your control. Embrace the process for the lessons it offers.

Tips/Steps

Practice Gratitude

Write a list of everything you've learned from freshman year to now. Focusing on your progress helps shift attention from external validation to personal growth.

Find a Neutral Support System

Talk to a trusted person who isn't applying for the same opportunity. Having someone to confide in without feeling competitive pressure is essential. They can offer support without adding to your stress or anxiety.



Mobilization Activity

Reflection on Growth and Next Steps

Step 1: Reflect on Your Journey

Take 10 minutes to write down three moments in your high school journey where you've overcome a challenge or learned something new—whether academically, socially, or personally.

1

2

3

How did these experiences shape you?

Mobilization Activity

Reflection on Growth and Next Steps

Step 2: Identify Your Strengths

From those reflections, identify the strengths or skills you developed. Did you become more resilient? Did you learn to communicate better? Write these down and keep them as a reminder of your growth, no matter the outcome of your applications.

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Step 3: Share Your Journey

Partner up with a classmate or teammate and share your reflection. Encourage each other by discussing how to hold one another accountable to your plans. Together, you can build confidence and reduce performance anxiety as a team or group.

Step 4: Take Action Together

Organize a support group at school where students can share their challenges and celebrate their growth. Create a space where the focus is on the journey, not just the outcome, to mobilize others in your community to adopt this healthier mindset.

active minds



This resource was created for the Your Voice is Your Power resource hub.
A collection of mental health resources for youth and young adults who are looking to begin or grow as a mental health leader.
