

**THE**



**STANDARD**

"CONFIDENT IN GOD'S LOVE FOR US,  
WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO HIS SERVICE"

***As we draw to the end of the academic year, it's a great time to reflect on your personal journey. What have you achieved? How have you grown? What were the challenges and the lows?***

***Whatever your year may have looked like it's also important to have the right outlook to continue striving and believing that things can get better and situations can change.***

***We hope you enjoy this edition of the Sacred Standard and most importantly that you continue to grow in self-confidence.***



### **Self-confidence**

Confidence is a state of being clear-headed. Confidence comes from a Latin word 'fidere' which means "to trust"; therefore, having self-confidence is having trust in one's self. Having high or low self-confidence is rarely related to your actual abilities, and mostly based on your perceptions.

Perceptions are the way you think about yourself and these thoughts can be flawed. Low self-confidence might stem from different experiences, such as growing up in an

unsupportive and critical environment, being separated from your friends or family for the first time, judging yourself too harshly, or being afraid of failure. People with low self-confidence often have errors in their thinking

### **How to boost Your Self-Confidence**

- Recognise and emphasise your strengths.
- When you stumble on an obstacle, treat yourself with kindness and compassion. Don't dwell on failure.
- Set realistic and achievable goals. Do not expect perfection; it is impossible to be perfect in every aspect of life.
- Slow down when you are feeling intense emotions and try to be still.
- Challenge making assumptions about yourself, people and situations.
- Recognise that past negative life experiences do not dictate your future.
- Express your feelings, beliefs and needs directly and respectfully
- Learn to say no to unreasonable requests.
- Individual counselling can also help increase your self-confidence if you need more help.

### **How can Self-Confidence benefit you?**

- Experience less fear and anxiety.
- Increase your motivation.
- You'll have more resilience.

- Your relationships will improve.
- The authentic you will shine through.

The importance of self-confidence is that it subconsciously alerts others that they're in the presence of someone who is a leader and sure of themselves. People with a strong sense of self can project their inner confidence and tend to be more likely to lead.

To conclude, self-confidence helps us feel ready for life's experiences. When we're confident, we're more likely to move forward with people and opportunities — not back away from them. People who are low on confidence might be less likely to try new things or reach out to new people.

by **Kenechi Ezeajughi 9E**

### **Embrace Who You Are**

It was a quiet, nonchalant act. It was Saturday, and I was just sitting on the bus. It was just some guy, walking past me with a little bit of a smug swagger, and it was just two words.

“Ching chong, ching chong, ching chong” - (a racist phrase used against Eastern Asian people, like me, mocking our languages) in a relaxed, sing-song voice as he walked by me, and it took a moment to settle in. By the time I realised what had happened, he'd already walked past, so I just gave the dirtiest look I could muster to his general direction, and then I continued my conversation with my friend who sat next to me. That was that.

It wasn't the first time I'd been hate-crimes on the bus. It didn't make its way into the front of my mind much at all for the rest of that

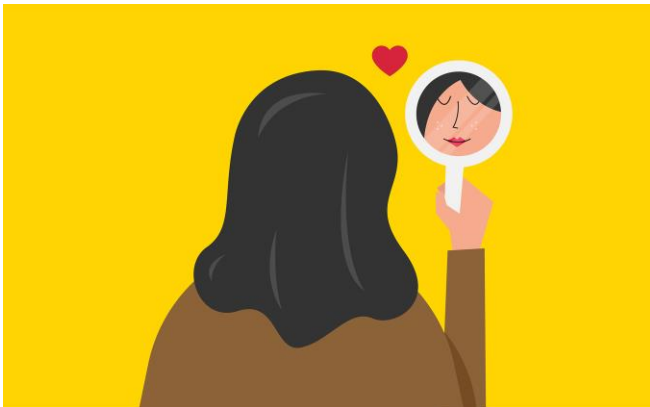
day, apart from occasionally thinking, “what a cowardly way to be racist, he could've at least stopped to say it to my face”. Unfortunately, however, some things have a tendency to stick with you, whether you think they're important or not.

*It's the Sunday after the bus incident. I'm on the bus, again, on my way to meet up with a friend. The thought creeps into my brain, like a shadow or a stain, “What if it happens again?”. I feel my heart shudder in my chest and there's a sick feeling starting to boil up in my gut. I'm trying to slow my breathing back down as more anxiety-induced thoughts start to spill over. Who else is on this bus? Are they looking at me? What if they're all staring at me? Please don't let it happen again. I won't be able to say anything, I'm all by myself. I wish this mask covered my eyes, too. I wish I were wearing a paper bag over my head because then I'd be safe. I wish-*

*“I wish this mask covered my eyes”? I was horrified at myself for even hosting that thought, so I shook it out of my head. It wasn't until the Tuesday, two days later, that I realised it hadn't gone away. That Tuesday, Edition 8 of the Sacred Standard had been published. I sat down to read it, curious to remember what I had written in it — I'd interviewed my grandparents on their experiences as immigrants. I had done a short description of them and the setting at the beginning. As I read, I felt that weeping feeling, from the bottom of my throat and up to the bridge of my nose, and tears starting to well up in the dips of my eyes.*

***“My kung kung's eyes, like my Popo's, and like mine, disappeared into slits when he chuckled”.***

Reading that, I remembered all the pride I'd had about being Chinese which had fuelled me to write that piece. It struck me, because I realised that in the past few days, that pride had gone missing. It had been knocked from its rightful place in my gut, tarnished and shoved to the side, and replaced by that vile, dull shame - shame placed upon me by that man on that bus on that Saturday. I realised that I needed to regain that pride. Being proud of my race is too beautiful a thing, too empowering and too vibrant, for it to be kicked down by some ignorant bigot. I won't let it. My eyes are not to be covered- they are the eyes of my parents, the eyes of my grandparents, and the eyes of all my ancestors and of all the people who look like me today.



It is not an easy thing to regain self-assurance when you know that there are people all around you who would hate you without a second thought. Being confident in your identity is a euphoric feeling, and when it's gone, everything feels a little heavier. Unfortunately, my experience of the incident on the bus is not unique to me, and it is not unique to that Saturday. All the time there are comments made, micro aggressions, even violent acts from ignorant and bigoted people that can make us falter in confidence. I have friends who have been taunted by strangers, friends who've been screamed at from across the road, one whose *younger brother* was beaten up on his way home

from school, and it is so, so terrifying. The fear *is* a valid response; if you are ever hate crimed, the most important matter is your safety. If you can, cross the road, move downstairs on the bus or call somebody if ever you feel unsafe, and let a trusted adult know. You might feel anxious passing by the place where it happened, or wearing the same clothes, or looking at your pride flag. For a lot of us, that anxiety will stay there even after weeks, but it will never replace your pride.

If (god forbid) you are ever subject to bigotry, remember that a pride in what made them hate you- your race, gender, sexuality, disability, or culture- is more powerful and wonderful than any bigot could ever hope to be able to destroy. The best thing you can do to help is to surround yourself with people who you feel safe and seen with- try and find people who not only accept but celebrate your identity- in school, youth clubs, or even online. Remind yourself it does get better. The journey to accepting yourself can be made difficult and exhausting by the world we live in, but you deserve your place in it and nobody can take that from you.

**By Fen Lin 11A**

### Putting Yourself Out There

Do you ever feel like you might faint if you even dare to raise your hand up in class?

If you've ever felt this way before, trust me you are not the only one. So, how do you increase class participation without having a heart attack?

Firstly, changing your mindset is extremely vital when getting over fears and anxiety about class participation. It is important to understand that no one is going to judge you or blame you for raising your hand, everyone is there to learn and

making mistakes are a part of learning. Therefore, wouldn't you much rather clarify any doubts you have with your teacher rather than being confused later on?

Secondly, if you haven't tried it already, try breathing. This simple automatic process can help relieve some of the anxiety behind class participation. According to The American Institute of Stress, "Deep breathing increases the supply of oxygen to your brain and stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system, which promotes a state of calmness". Also, you might even want to try counting to three before raising your hand, this method will help you focus and build up the courage to do something on the count of three.



Thirdly, class participation is not just based on raising your hand, it also involves teamwork, and something called 'Socialising'. For some people socialising is an easy task, for others the word itself sounds daunting and immediately enables panic mode. To get over this fear, try getting to know your classmates. You could take simple steps to do this, maybe saying hello on a regular basis or simply offering a kind smile or nice compliment. In addition to this, don't be afraid to share your opinions and ideas with your team members, I assure you that your ideas are just as important and beneficial.

I hope this has in some way motivated you and given you some ideas on how you can get over the fear of class participation and achieve your goals without being held back by fear and anxiety.

**Clovi Herath 11R**

## Exam Stress

### How to deal with it

Exams. We all have them, it's a key part of school, sometimes we do well, sometimes we don't. But something we always face – exam stress. Whether it's a funny feeling in your stomach, struggling with motivation to study, becoming overwhelmed, or getting clammy hands, it's not uncommon to experience this before any sort of exam. But how do you deal with it?

Due to Covid causing a rapid increase to this exam stress, scientists have done countless amounts of research to come up with the right solution and using this I've made a guide of tips and activities to do when you've got a test coming up.

#### 1. **Exercise**

Many hate the idea of it, the sweat, the lack of breath, but there's no denying it lifts your mood, due to the increase in adrenaline, as well as improving your physical health. But how can you make it fun? Try playing sports with friends,



walking your dog or even just stretching. Anything will help!

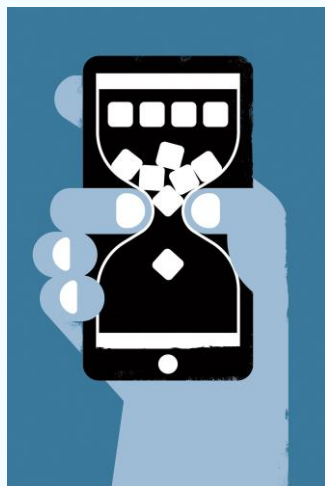


## 2. Organise your space and time effectively

In short, a messy room is **never** the answer. The more clutter you have around your workspace, the less you're able to concentrate. This leads to procrastination, a student's enemy, causing what would ordinarily take half an hour to learn takes 5. And don't forget, allow time to relax, as much as exams matter so do you!

## 3. Reduce your phone usage

As much as we love our phones, they won't give you the answers in the exam. Perhaps try studying with it in another room, or turning off all your notifications, that way you won't be distracted by your friends sending you corny cat memes.



And if neither of these things help, download the app 'Forest' plant a seed and see how it grows in half an hour while you're studying. But if you get

distracted and leave the app, your tree will wither and die, terrible!

## 4. Eat dark chocolate

Perhaps a more appealing option on this list, it is scientifically proven that eating a small amount of dark chocolate each day reduces stress hormone levels, as well as changing your brain wave frequency, also providing benefits in memory improvement.

## 5. Focus on Progress

Many of us are just too hard on ourselves, to stop this you should set realistic goals, perhaps a few marks or subgrades improvement per test. This not only allows improvement, but also celebrations over both small and big successes, and who doesn't enjoy that? Always practise self-compassion.



For your next test use these tips and watch your stress deplete and your grades fly. You've got this!

By Emmeline Gonzalez 10T

### Einstein: The Mad Scientist

This story is a fictionalised account of a great and unusual mind, but the lessons it teaches us about the role of passion in developing self-confidence are nonetheless valuable.

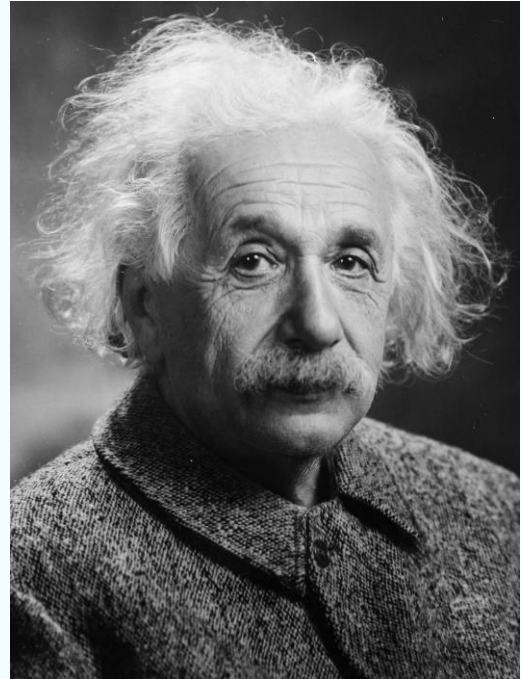
Amongst the young boys at Luitpold school in Germany in 1880, it was a well-established opinion that the one who sat often in solitude at the back of the classroom was somewhat of a question mark.

Despite being asked on multiple occasions to participate in games with the others, he preferred to focus on his own activities. While this may have made him an outsider, he possessed, as noted by his classmates, a curiosity for the world around him that was so strong, it became impossible to do anything but be fascinated by his passion. Regardless of the judgemental people around him or the pressures he seemed to face, this boy remained content, and despite the giggles and mumblings that slipped from the mouths of his fellow students, he walked around with an air of conviction.

As years passed, it seemed as if nothing intimidated nor fazed this young boy. His determination to reach the finish line in the pursuit of his passion fuelled him.

Bow “Nothing great in the world would exist without passion.” - Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

Lavinia Massa 11T



## Cameron's peace

Cameron stares out of his window as clouds begin to appear on the sky's morning canvas, passing each other harmoniously as if swaying to the rhythm of fine classical music.

Flocks of birds draw themselves near the bunch of marshmallows in the sky.

He holds his brush reluctantly, before taking a deep breath and creating contact with his art book's last sun-tanned page.

He pauses momentarily and exhales imagining himself one with the birds, clouds, and sky.

With his brush in hand, he is able to fly like a bird, and with his paint, he is soft like the clouds, he is now the creator of his own sky.

He continues closer towards his goal, transforming the page into nature.

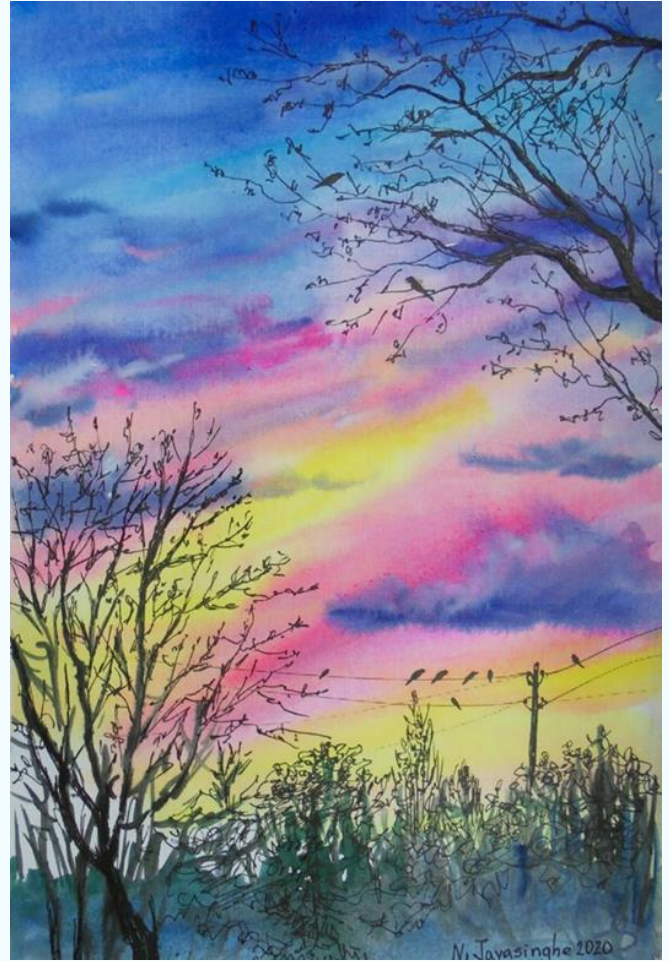
Once more he peaks out his window, staring off into the far distance, analysing the birds before...

He rips the page out of his notebook and leaves it to dry under the sun.

He spares the sheet from being crumpled up and tossed onto his mountain of "failed" artwork.

Instead convincing himself, though barely, that the drawing is good enough.

**By: Yara AL-Raheme 11R**







a week later,

