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Misunderstood Girls

"What happened to your smile?" is a question that I have been getting lately. My answer is that I do not know. To grow up and become a teenage girl starts the developing factors of how you become your person. The idea of looking for acceptance modifies putting pressure on someone so young; they are only trying to find guidance in their way of life. When adults bring up teenage girl stereotypes most talk about how moody or rebellious they can be. They tend to expect mature expectations from their kids, without giving them the freedom to learn from their mistakes. Furthermore, as teenagers get to the age of wanting to make their own decisions, it turns into the idea of becoming rebellious from the adults. That stereotype of being moody as a teenage girl can also be misunderstood. It leaves out the part about how the girls are trying to explore emotions in life or learning how to cope with new insecurities. A girl's emotions also tend to affect many aspects of their life; it is not always from hormones acting out but from triggers around her. We girls are all misunderstood in our ways. Adults do have the right to judge us based on our emotions without knowing the basis of our feelings; but even without knowing the reason, I wish that they wouldn't consider putting us under one category. Many aspects come into being a teenage girl that some might look past, like the feeling that I am not enough for others, only focusing on our insecurities, the objective of staying up late, and the reason why I don't like birthdays.

These insecurities that stem from our so-called “hormonal mood swings” come from the feeling of not being enough. It creates these emotions that make us feel as if we failed to meet the expectations that were set by our loved ones. As a young adult, I should not have these feelings or expectations at an early age that I set because I want to live up to be my best self. As a result of overworking myself, I started to lose control of my emotions. The basic idea of how a girl becomes less confident is by being told that she shouldn't be, or that she isn't worthy. To get personal, being a high school student is all about rejection. Being rejected by a friend group, a sports team, or a guy you like. With being rejected comes the thought, “Why are you not good enough?” Things I've thought about many times and sometimes it has been answered with faults of your physical appearance. At the time, it was a popular thing for people to take pictures of people's foreheads with an awful angle, to enhance how big one's forehead would appear. This little trend created my biggest insecurity, the size of my forehead. The words that once were said tore my confidence down and made me think little of myself for no reason. It made me see only my faults and not what made me, me. In addition, I've been told why you are built like a man, you've got a big five head, or you're too ugly. All these things have altered how I perceive myself and altered my thought process of why I'm not good enough for anyone. It can lower my mood just by looking at an insecurity of mine, and these things have become a trigger thought for me.

In addition, humans are biologically wired to better themselves; and to seek to improve, that is the definition of humanistic psychology. Teenage girls specifically, not only take opinions literally but subjective opinions like appearance, skill, or personality to heart. This is why girls always remember the worst of what people say compared to the best thing someone can say about them. When going to high school you have these unspoken standards. You don't want to

look bad because then you're ugly, but you don't want to get too dressed up cause then you're trying too hard. You want to do something to show yourself off to guys, but you don't want to be a showoff. You must be thin but not too thin, or you must eat but you can't be too fat. Many girls have all these feelings and one wrong sentence out of someone's mouth can create a new insecurity that lingers with them. I take all of this to heart; these are my thoughts all the time. I feel the need that I'm only comfortable in hoodies at school, and this isn't because of my body image. It's because of the judgmental eyes and opinions that go into play. I am a school athlete, so on occasions, it is known to dress up as a gameday theme. This one time, a teacher came up to me and proceeded to explain that I was exposing my body too much. As a normal hoodie-wearing student, I wore a tank top that covered my chest and a skirt. As the day went on, I felt so self-conscious, knowing that others might be thinking the same thing, that I left school early that day. I am a person that likes my body, but it's the side comments of looking "slutty" or "trying hard" that I've gotten that tear my confidence down.

For a lot of adults, they wonder why bedtime isn't a thing we do but a thing that comes with argument. As a teenager, I've learned that the most fun things happen at night. Even when lying in bed social media continues to go off. It stems from the need to find acceptance from finding people who keep life interesting. At night true emotions come out either with insecurities or exploring the rebellious stage. You tend to learn to gather all your emotions up until you're alone at night to let them out, so people can't see that you've been suffering during the day. During one of my hard breakups, I always told everyone "It was fine", I wanted to seem like it wasn't a big deal to me. In weeks after the breakup, I would continue to scroll through memories of the two of us at night, so I could cry without anyone finding out. I made myself think I was okay so others would believe me. Furthermore, at night either I distress myself or I listen to

music and try to solve my problems. This isn't a healthy option for mental health, but it's a very common one. I also have the most fun at night when I'm with my friends. This leads to many fights with my parents, which happens to be the rebellious characteristic that comes into play. Although, if I release the tension of my problems and have fun, it seems to be worth it. Either way, night is a time that you either are secretly withholding or liberating your emotions; it is a battle that many adults don't seem to understand.

Throughout my life, I've liked my birthday less and less every year. This isn't from the lack of celebration but more from the feeling of growing up and still not feeling accomplished. Almost the idea that I've wasted the last year not living it out. So how would that change this year? This also reflects the pressure that I've received from my parents; to be as careless as I was when I was younger. To have that same smile and thought process when I didn't worry about my life. So, every year the question always pops up, "Are you excited to be turning ...", so I try to end up not telling people that my birthday is coming up. I have always hated that question; I always think that it's another year that something can go wrong, or the idea that I'm growing up without a plan for my life. Every year I become more and more anxious to start college, only from not knowing what I want to major in. I feel as if I am failing myself and my loved ones because times are running out and my future is unknown. I also have never always liked the attention; it is nice to feel appreciated but not in terms of having all eyes on me. Feeling like everyone's eyes have shifted to me makes me feel more insecure about my appearance because I can't hide it. Your mind turns to worrying about how you look, compared to having fun and celebrating.

Briefly, many find it harmless to place teenagers under a certain category, but many things come with being a teenager. The worry of not being enough to others, resorting to the bad

things in life over the good, the need to hide your feelings away until the night, or even not wanting to celebrate yourself. I have realized that people can continue to place me under the snarky stereotype that correlates to being a teenage girl without knowing the challenges of my life, so it is fair for them only to be opinionated about what they see of me. I only wish to have them see their opinions past and wonder if that's the only reason behind their emotions because it usually isn't. For adults who have lost the idea of how their teenage experience was, just remember that teenage girls have outbursts when they can no longer keep silent about their problems. It isn't always possible to keep your smile, but with help, it can come back!