

A COLLECTION OF THOUGHTS ON HIGH SCHOOL FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Thank you for reading and to all the people that contributed ideas and writing; Jason Nosaj, Natasha Shimp, Joshua Falcon, Athena Fuqua, Arana Wolin, Jennie Anne Rice, Ariana Marie, Leah Lilac, Layal Rabat, Ann Warner, Rosemarie Jeana, Mike Logan, Sean Seva Finkel, David Delgado, Jason Alexander, Astrid Guri Olafsen, Kas Sea, Michael Louis Berge, Adrianne Anderson Speas, Amy Ouzoonian, Bill Wanick, Ashley Harder, Jason Lalli, Frankie Angela, Sheila M. Krueger, Michael Cosentino Sr., Danielle Foushée, Lucretia Torva, Michael Cosentino Sr., JD Shazer, La Judia Errante, Cyndy Gaughan, Ezra Niesen, Paul Jones, Aiden Fishbein, Rahb-rt Dusenberry, Bill Bane Hemphill, Dusty Hickman, Aran Kelly, Joe Gonzalez, Ruben Gonzales, Kimber Lanning, Artie Woo, Killian Cinnamon, Lavina Singh, Jessie Victoria, Joey Bartoilet, Elle, Jeff Moses, Josie, Kiah, Phil, Carlos, Logan, Colin, Bianca, Cadence, Jeff Cochran, Jake, Eva, Leni, Jack, and more!



drawing by Larry Letscher

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I ASKED A BUNCH OF FRIENDS AND FRIENDS OF MY TEEN DAUGHTER TO SHARE 100 WORDS ON WHAT THEY WISHED THEY HAD LEARNED IN HIGH SCHOOL.

2000 Elle

in high school i wish i would have learned about EMPATHY. how to care about people and show people i care about them. how to support myself, friends and people i love through difficult times i feel like i was never taught about mental health and how fragile it can be how it is very necessary to HOLD SPACE for people's difficult emotions rather than expect them to stay quiet and go through things alone it isn't ok to expect teens to complete school work when their physical and emotional needs may not be met in the same way as their peers.

How to grow and process food for storing. Accurate history of slavery and modern systemic racism. Genocide of the Native American people. 'Rigged' systems that keep the wealthy and their kids wealthymore on the stock market and how it extracts wealth. Corporate welfare and the double standard of giving taxpayer money to corporations while others in need are told to'pull themselves up by their own bootstraps'. More on federal policy such as the lack of antitrust regulation or rigged securities laws that prohibit every day folks from investing in their own communities. I wish everyone had more financial literacy training.

1. The Glass–Steagall Act of 1933 describes four provisions of the United States Banking Act that separating commercial and investment banking. In 1999, this act was reversed, essentially clearing the path for US Corporations to invest their employees' retirement funds into the stock market, which in 2008 caused hundreds of thousands of families to lose their retirements funds and homes.

High school students should be made aware of policies that impact their future. This is just one policy that can unfairly rob someone's future and their community and siphon off wealth to the most wealthy.

2. For over 20 years, it was commonplace for cities to gather taxes and then spend those tax dollars to incentivize large corporate retailers to move into town. For example, Wal-Mart was paid \$25-\$35M per store on average for over 20 years. Part of their strategy was to secure a sales tax abatement, which means that if you purchase something in their store and pay your sales tax, they get to keep the tax to pay earnings to shareholders. Those taxes are supposed to be used to pay for libraries and parks, which most often serve lower-income families. So essentially they were taking money from lower-income family resources to pay wealthy shareholders of Wal-Mart stock. This effectively siphons money from communities and into the hands of the already rich.

Kimber, Executive Director, 50ish

I wish I had learned that I was NOT the center of the universe. I wish I had learned to take the time to know and appreciate those that were different than me. I wish I had learned that money doesn't buy happiness, and neither does physical beauty. I wish I had learned more about the "boy" arts (shop, computers, and mechanical things) that just weren't taught to girls when I was growing up. I wish I had learned to more quickly categorize my thoughts and feelings so that I could foster a good discussion with those who thought differently than I did. And I wish I could have learned to write a sentence without a dangling participle that didn't sound stilted and ridiculous.

Most of all, I wish I had learned to realize that my talents were of value, regardless of the value placed by others. That self-esteem and ego are not bad things. That it's not so much right/wrong, that it's more about working/not working behaviors that will help guide your life. That knowing your values and living by them is what makes you the best person, not hair, makeup, handbags, money, cars, or any material possession. And I wish I'd learned much earlier how to UNLEARN the things that have kept me from being a better person as I grow older. Sheila Kruger

Native history/genocide. Pre-european history where I lived, how to grow food, mandatory backpacking adventures to grad demonstrating survival skills, budgeting, self care, that your traumas are not your fault, basic auto and home mechanics, healthy relationships and friendships, history of hip hop, everyone should work at a factory, as a farmworker and volunteer with the homeless to grad, how eurocentric our textbooks were, how to let shit go, wilderness first aid, identifying local flora and fauna, stencil a and screen printing, how to swim, drive stick and ride a horse, self defense....does high school really teach you anything lol? I'm grateful for my shop classes and creative writing and drawing more than pretty much anything else I learned from class. Paul Jones

I wish schools taught EQ. Social skills and effective interpersonal communication are just as important to success in professional relationships as quantifiable knowledge. Also key in personal relationships. Open and honest communication seems to be the remedy to most issues, but so many come from dysfunctional families and don't learn appropriate or effective communication skills. Having this as a basic part of high school would enable more people to be more effective communicators, and increase productivity in all industries. And decrease frustrations in so many areas.

Arana, 45, data management.

How to fucking study effectively. I learned a way in my college psych class that had me (a ritual procrasti-

I learned a way in my college psych class that had me (a ritual procrastinator whose never studied before in my life) studying well and retaining the info for tests. I got the highest grade on both exams.

"I just wanted to talk about how underrated studying is and how so many teachers tell you to study without showing you what that looks like. I figured out how to study well with the help of my college psych professor. We learned about how to study most effectively and then I put that knowledge into effect for our major exams with top notch results. The main idea that I took away was to write down notes in your own words and ideas as you're reading. This made it easier for me to write in little quips about how I personally felt about the subject matter, especially in psychology, like "oh, yeah! this is how I respond to stressors, makes sense!" or just comments like "duh" on very obvious points made in the text. Taking notes helped me connect to the material. I also think that there are some people who need to study in a structured way and some folks who can read material once and retain it and it helps to know which one you are.

When I was in high school I could get away with reading something once and more or less knowing it, but now I need the extra help in retaining info, and I deal with this by note taking. It takes longer but its worth it. Taking notes by hand helps your brain retain that information more especially if you are not prone to studying before an exam. If you need the extra help before a test, the method that worked well for me was to: 1) ask for a study guide from your teacher- this is important and I think teachers should always have study guides readily available to students so you don't waste time on irrelevant subject matter. 2) answer all of the questions on the said study guide, again, in your own words. 3) split this process up into a few days so you're only studying for about and hour a day 4) make this study hour one hour before you go to sleep. This helps your brain take that last bit of information you learned and file it away into long term memory while you sleep. Which leads to 5) get a full night of sleep before any test. Sleep solidifies information in your mind and can help you retrieve that information that you've retained during a test. I think we should learn about the mind first before learning, especially in high school, before college, because when done correctly, it can make a huge difference in how easy it is to learn and pass classes, at least in my experience. "

Ariana Marie

## SMALL ENGINE MAINTENANCE

Self defense is something you can learn but it costs lots of money to take separate classes. If you would learn them in highschool you wouldnot have to pay. This would not have to be crazy hardcore stuff just enough so if you are gonna get mugged, it's a fair fight.

I think everyone knows the basics of basic hygiene but a lot of people don't know more detailed hygiene. It is very important to learn ALL about hygiene.

Like 206% of adults are all schmucks to each other sooooo I think it would be important to learn to not be a schmuck to other people.

Josie 11









One school for all people: Instead of individual schools we will have just one school that covers all interests. You write out what you want to do and then your assignment is to figure out how to do that with your own resources. For instance: converting a school bus into a house. It would teach

me how to be self responsible and use my own resources both mental and material.

Kiah 14

The history of suffrage and the ERA, Stanton and Douglass and Paul and Steinem. Rosemarie Jeana Real life experience ....clickwrap agreement "terms and conditions" which is really an "agreement" including a "forum selection clause" which triggers a whole lot of time and money in "court" and case law.

## The importance of emotional intelligence and boundaries and how to advocate them.

**Layal Rabat** 

What i wish i learned in High School (over summer break)

OK kids, summer's over, now write about it (i wish i had learned how to learn) why aren't you writing Mr. Murray? sorry, i was thinking about not being here you know, like summer

Natasha Shimp

At the least, by 9th grade i understood what i liked a little better trombone, jazz, band, pit orchestras, thespians

And dislikes rules, tests, GPA's and f'n physical education (ugh)

What have i learned since then? pretty much everything so maybe what, if anything, should i have learned? i had a lot to unlearn some call me phil, i'm kinda old, job pending

My high school years were filled with inspiring teachers, profound increase in knowledge, an abundance of truly memorable experiences, and my own collection of internal and circumstantial ups and downs. These years are for many a time of great confusion, transformation, and drastic changes both worldly and of the self as our place in the world transitions from children into young adults with an increase in responsibilities, extended range of emotions and desires, as well as new types of decisions to make and much more advanced material to learn. Even though I learned and experienced more than I can explain there are things I wish I would have been taught in that incredibly important phase of my journey.

I wish that my peers and I had been taught how to farm, or even just how compost works and the importance of that knowledge. We could have benefited from more lessons focused on how to be involved in local government. I would have been able to decide against the many choices I carelessly made that later proved to be unreasonably detrimental to my health had I been taught more about how directly what we consume influences our biological and mental well being. I also wish I had learned more about the human ability to transform mental reality and create balance, positivity, and strength from the storms of life, from any internal confusion, regret, self hate or pain through meditation, deep breathing and by simply believing wholeheartedly that mental reality is a choice influenced and not controlled by patterns, inconvenience, emotion, thought or event. There are many things I wish had been more so incorporated into my high school learning.

Additionally I don't at all think that the curriculums, standards and basic structure of our present educational system is one that we should be satisfied with. I don't know how a more effective, adaptable and truly preparing and empowering educational system would be, or what the next step in finding out would be, but we as a people should constantly be improving and editing any and all of our current systems until they truly accomplish what they are intended to naturally, effectively and for each and every individual involved with no exception. Which is actually a very unreasonable if not completely impossible aspiration however a very real devotion to striving to reach it is the only way we will see any of the radical societal improvement, adaptation, and transformation that is very clearly needed. Too many youth slip through the cracks, too many leave high school with minds full of bits and pieces of memorized information and far less knowledge of the real world, or the vast significance and potential of their place in world, too much of what our current educational system aims to achieve is not truly successful, at least not enough to justify our ignorance to the many complications, imbalances and misunderstandings that have risen and shall persist until we deny stagnation and embrace new ways of structuring our societal foundation education of the youth being at the core of that foundation.

# BEHAVIORAL EGONOMICS. HUMAN RIGHTS. GODS LAW VS MANS LAW.

How to study. It was too frikking easy, and I made straight A's just winging it in homeroom and 1/2 hour. And I had calculus, physics, chemistry, etc. When I hit college I was up shit creek. Took me 6 years to be ready to be discipline myself.

Astrid Guri Olafsen

In introduction, I went to a private high school that was for people with disabilities. This high school was attached to a mental hospital; Therefore, it was presumably more focused on behavior management, rather than preparing students for college and independent living.

There are many things I wanted and wished I had learned in high school. I wanted to learn life skills, and how to live independently. That would have saved me a lot of future troubles.

I wished I learned how to make a budget and stick to it, and how to pay bills. Also, how to do paperwork. I wished I learned how to keep a schedule, manage my time, and other basic independent living skills. I also wish they would have prepared me for college. For example: how to write papers, understanding math, and studying skills. I also wished i had more physical education, which they wouldn't teach me, because of my vision impairment. I also wished I learned about nutrition and how to have a well balanced diet. Home ec is also one of the things i wish i learned Peach Cinnamon



### Do whatever you want.

Just get my GED. No big deal.

financial planning/personal finance. DBT skills (dialectical behavioral therapy) also.

That we seek grace and beauty more than we seek goals

Herbalism

How money really works

Skateboard Videography



**Taxation is theft** 

Comprehensive sexual health and relationships

# Critical thinking skills, how to practice self-care, everything is temporary, and the value of questioning beliefs and my own perception of reality.

Cyndy Gaughan

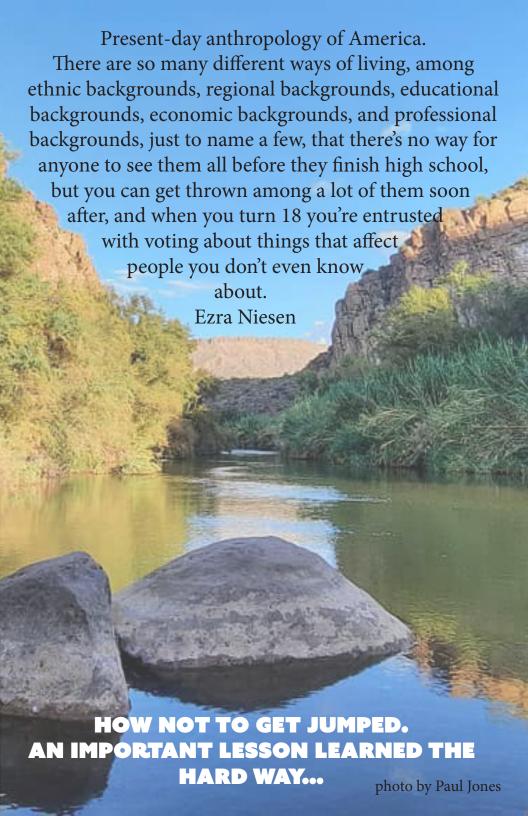
Always regretting missing out on debate class. It'd be great to know some other techniques to muffle an ignoramus-especially these days.

A class for kids who didnt grow up

Rahb-rt Dusenberry
with a dad. How to tie a tie, change a flat fire,
shave right. All those little things you realised you never learned
until you got to do them lol.

Joe Gonzales

Health-physical/mental and food/environment impact on well being. Topics would include growing your own food, taking care of the planet, soil, water, air. Ways to nourish your body through clean food and water herbs, etc. Ways to nourish your mental well being through meditation, breathing, mindfulness. How self love leads to loving others and contibuting to your community. Many kids experience dysfunction at home so it would be so helpful to learn how to bring peace and calm to yourself from classes at school. Then bring it back home to the family and change generational dynamics . Wholelistic Health. This really needs to start much earlier than highschool! Lots to say but keeping it short. Lavina



I believe that a lot of people would benefit from learning about

COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT.

I feel like in grade school and high school we learned a ton about US history, repeats of the same lessons every hear not even in depth. However, I don't believe the average US graduate has a good grasp on how the rest of the world operates. I hear a lot of arguments about socialism this and fascism that that are completely inaccurate. Not to mention that each of the democratic nations are structured way differently. Comparative government is important to recognize the systems in place and also how they work, why they fail. Why did France have multiple failures in democracy? What kind of democracy are we? Comparative government can give us more appreciation for other countries, as well as tools to improve our government. It's not reaching to say that our country as a whole has xenophobic and ethnocentric tendencies when we discuss other countries. Let's change those attitudes using early and thorough education. Maria Kaiser

## FINANCIAL SKILLS. BASIC LESSONS IN CREDIT CARDS, HOW TO EARN POINTS WITH CREDIT CARDS, AND MONTHLY BUDGETS.

How to Sell Your Art and Not Your Soul: There is a coming of age that most young artists go through, and it usually happens in high school. It usually sounds like "I want to be an artists when I grow up, but all the adults around me are saying I'll starve if I try, and all my friend are saying I'll be a sell out if I succeed." Oof...a rock and a hard place indeed; caught between a drive to prove the elders wrong and a pressure from the peers to tread carefully and stay cool. Showing kids it is possible to launch a sustainable creative career, and what it looks like (stripped of pomp and celebrity) would be super important.

Aiden Fishbein

Personal empowerment: how to grow inner strength and inner peace. Introduction to daily meditation, yoga and breath work. Learning to not take things personally and that whatever someone else says is more about them than you. Learning that happiness comes from the inside and it is possible to take responsibility for our own happiness as well as that it does not come from "things". Our thoughts make our reality and learning how not to see oneself as a victim. Basic household crafts and skills such as sewing, cooking, mechanical and woodworking. Understanding multiple ways of organizing economies and societies.

Lucretia, Artist, 60's

### I wish I had been taught how to take care of

myself. I wish I knew how taxes work, how to become a home-owner, or how to be financially responsible before I am living on my own. This is information that I could seek out; I'm sure I could find it somewhere. But why should I have to look farther than my place of education? I wish I had been taught how to use my passion to make a living. I have no idea what life will be like after school, or what I should do to find success. However, I do know calculus.

Logan student 17



That service to others is a path to what we call happiness

I wish I known that it's okay to not know what you want to do next and that you do things to learn from them, not commit to them forever. Also, colonization of the western world as part of US history.

I wish I learned how to get ready for adulthood without parents... how to focus on surviving a toxic family.

> I wish I had learned ANYTHING about mental health

a class on recycling, reusing and repurposing for gardening, home and everyday life.

**CONFIDENCE IN MY INSTINCTS** 





financial literacy,
SUStainability, wildlife
Conservation, food
SOURCING/NUTRITION,
emotional intelligence,
computer literacy.
bonus round would
be radical culture &
critical theory

I wish high school equipped me with a deeper understanding of race relations in America. I feel as though my education as it pertained to that specific topic was stifled by an all important narrative that the United States of America is a land of opportunity for everyone and the greatest country on the planet. Whenever the truth of the USA's atrocious approach to matters of race rubbed up against the all important lie we as Americans are forced to tell ourselves the lie always seemed to blot out the horror. I wish they taught me to do better.

**Jeff Moses** 

## I wish I'd learned about psychological health, and how to access care for it.

Starting a business, how credit really works, hands on engineering and building, a whole class on how to motivate yourself without caffeine. How to build houses, solar panels, farm. In high school I often passed on my art and extra curriculars because I loved Math so much but couldn't do both as extra classes. Because I switched schools so much, my senior year I had two take two years of PE (while pregnant) and drivers ed even though I had been driving for two years. I had to bus across town to take a Calculus class, only to not have the teacher show to give me my tests. If I was allowed to pick and choose my classes, they would have all been science, art, health, life skills, and math.

Jessie Victoria

Adulthood transition and finding YOUR calling in a changing world.



What I wish I had learned in high school would have been more realistic applications to address the whole me to be a better decision maker and more prepared for adulthood. To include specific items: All 6 aspects of social emotional learning (self management, self awareness, responsible decision making, social awareness, positive climate and culture, and relationship skills), communication skills, positive coping skills and practical financial guidance.

Jason, Motivational Speaker, 37.

I wish I learnt
more about other
cultures and the history of other
countries and continents back in highschool. We
learnt so much about the history of Canada and America
but I have never learnt a single thing about African, Asian,
middle eastern or South American history, geography,
culture religion etc. We would be so much more open to
other cultures and traditions if we were exposed to them
and learnt about them. People are scared of the word Islam
and Muslim because they haven't learnt about the true
beliefs and traditions and everything to do with these
religions. We are really missing out on the rest of the world
because of this self-centered view of the world.
Colin, 18, mcdonalds and golf course employee

Personally, I wish I had learned how money works. Why we need it, how it's created, as well as the best ways to use it wisely in life. How to invest it, so that you don't have to keep working for it all your life. And why it's important to pay some of it back to the state.

Another thing that would've been amazingly helpful to learn is sex education. I know that this is standard practice in many parts of the world, but sadly not in all. I wish I didn't have to hear about it from friends and could instead learn about sexual and gender identity right there in the classroom. If I did, maybe it would've been easier to transition and I wouldn't have to wait til my 20s.

Bianca, 21, graphic designer

Peoria which was a very
STEM-heavy charter school
which made AP Calculus AB & BC
mandatory, as well as many AP Science
courses. While I now have a solid foundation
for any STEM career, I lack skills that would benefit
me (or anyone) in any career. I wish I had learned
universally applicable skills such as car maintenance,
cooking, dietary planning, filing taxes, job application
etiquette, and home repairs. None of these topics were
covered in school, despite being useful for any career
path. I also wish I had been given more liberty in choosing
the direction of my studies, rather than being forced down
a set path.

Jake Quenon, 18, English and Physics Tutor at Glendale Community College

I WISH SOMEONE WOULD HAVE TAUGHT ME WHICH PLANTS CAN HANDLE A FROST AND WHICH ONES CAN NOT. IT IS SUCH A SIMPLE THING - YES OR NO. CAN CARROTS HANDLE A FROST? YES. CAN BEETS HANDLE A FROST? YES. CAN BEANS HANDLE A FROST? NO. IT IS SUCH A FUNDAMENTAL PART OF GARDENING AND IT OPENS UP THE WORLD OF SEASONS. IT IS ALSO SOMETHING, THAT AS AN ADULT, YOU LOOK STUPID NOT KNOWING WHICH PLANTS CAN HANDLE A FROST OR HARD FREEZE. IT IS SO BASE. EVERYONE EATS. IT IS A RULE THAT APPLIES TO ALL PEOPLE.

JEFF COCHRAN ARTIST AND GARDENER

Throughout high school we learned a lot about ourselves and the world, but THEY NEVER TEACH US ABOUT TAXES. When students leave high school and take on a job, they are required to pay taxes, some of us have either learned from our parents or did activities that teach students the works about taxes, credit, debit, etc. Unfortunately there are many students who have never had the chance or ability to learn about taxes and this sets them up for failure. Taxes should be a class because it will give them an advantage to succession in their lifetime. Any class that can offer a boost or a helping hand with certain life skills that are needed to help us students keep a sustainable life.

Cadence 16 Student

One of the things i wish i learned about in high school is how to run my own business, or even how to financially plan for a business. I have been lucky enough to have help from my dad on being an entrepreneur, but i wish there was a class i could have taken in high school that would have taught me about the ins and outs of running a business. I have been able to work around and learn how to be successful on my own, by things such as word of mouth and taking pride in what i do. I think that a business class in highschool would be beneficial to all students because a lot of students want to run their own businesses and could benefit greatly from having a class to educate them about it. A lot of young adults and students try to start a business and they end up failing because they don't know what they are doing or how to save their businesses when it starts to fail. If there was a class that would teach students about business it would allow for a lot more successful students.

Leni 18 Lash tech



Even though I haven't finished all of high school yet, there's so many things that I wish I knew already or that would be taught before I graduate. First of all, I feel like highschool students are deprived of real life skills that are needed. I wish that I had learned how to get a job or how to find jobs that fit your skill set. I wish that high school taught me more about the financial aspects of life. I think it's important to know how to effectively save and manage your money. Additionally, I think high school should teach more about current events and the world that we are entering. Some classes are able to bring in small amounts of current occurrences, but for the most part, students are left to their own devices to figure out what is currently going on-which doesn't usually happen.

Eva Pruitt 16 years old, Student

I am currently an accounting intern for a hotel management company, and majoring in Accounting and Finance at the Univeristy of Arizona. High school does not teach independence from group think... kids are conditioned to all think alike and all act the same like ants in a colony, but humans desire independence, uniqueness, and creativity; it's what we see most revered in pop culture today. The one thing I wish I learned in high school is how to think for yourself. Kids these days should look to alternative forms of expression and media. Too often, people's psyches are fogged because they try too hard to fit in and meet the status quo. This mindset will only lead to a mediocre life of working to pay debts.

Jack, Student & Intern 19 I wish high school would teach people that they are life long learners and that with patience and dedication they can learn anything they want. That theres an enormous amount of brilliant inspiring people out there.. artists, philosophers, creatives, rebels, change-makers, resisters, individuals that have produced so much content that we can draw inspiration from. Learn the ideas of people like Albert Camus, Aldous Huxley, Erich Fromm, Abbie Hoffman, Robert Anton Wilson, Ward Churchill, John Trudell, David Graeber, Perrick Jensen, Michael Parenti. Paulo Freire, Joseph Beuys, Ivan Illich... seek out their influences and peers. seek out the fringes of discourse and learn the anatomy of the human experience.

Celebrate passion or exploration through some artistic medium like music, art, fashion, dance, food, film, or any aspect of culture. Know that you have a voice and a mind and a body and that we are all struggling to bring forth a culture and lifestyle that manifests peace, freedom, independence, liberty, and autonomy for all peoples now and forever. That you too have been called to challenge empire and heirarchy and that it can be as simple as developing projects, networks, and businesses, within your community, or supporting those that are there. That you deserve to find your place in this world and that we all have faults and failings but we just get back up and try again and again and again.

Phil Freedom

