

WEBVTT

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How about that? Okay. I wanted to put the caption on so we've got that and record to the cloud.

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Got that

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Okay.

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Okay, welcome everybody. We have with us today Ryan Berg from Landmark College on a way high.

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Hello.

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Okay, so we're gonna be talking to Ryan today. And the first question we have for you, Ryan, is can you tell us just a little bit about yourself?

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Your college. Great levels a little weird, but great level at college, hobbies, things you like in school, things you don't like.

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Anything.

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Yeah, well, I'm, my name is Ryan Burt. Is it obviously you've heard?

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My colleges landmark and I am a freshman there it's my first year. My hobbies include video games just exploring nature a little bit, you know, walk out there, especially since where I'm at is sort of a nice remote area in Vermont.

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I also enjoy, I also just enjoy playing board games being with friends. The most interesting subject for me most of the time are usually the more like factual ones, let's say psychology, history, sometimes a life science.

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Okay.

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Very cool.

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I'm very interested sort of in the psychology of house or the brain works. And, I like, there's a lot of parts I like out school. There's also some parts of dislike.

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I mean, obviously doing work, I don't, you know, laziness always, you know, doing work is not fun, but also the transition, I think, from being at home to going to college was a big tough because of how sort of How different it is comparatively.

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And. How much how high school goes like at high school, you clock in 9 to o'clock in it's basically a 9 to 5 job.

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I clock in and then I clock out. There's no, there's no like, I do something else after with college just like you it's not really 9 to 5 it's more like 10 to 110 and then make you got another it you also I worked 5 to 6 or something it's like it's just for that on off schedule which I'm not totally used to and sort of being like always on that

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sort of work schedule of. There's always something there or high school you clock in, you clock out.

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It's very different.

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Good. Cool. If you had a free day, what would you do?

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Probably relaxed play with my dog maybe play some new games talk to friends it really depends on my mood

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Great. Thank you. So much. It's been great to get to know you and share with everybody a little bit about you, Ryan.

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So we're going to go to our first question and. I know your mom and she's talked a lot about how over the last year or 2 she started letting you make some of your own choices or advocating.

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So what made you want to start to make your own choices or advocate for what your needs are?

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I think definitely it was when sort of I got out of middle school and into high school and my teacher who's very good.

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It's very good at sort of that, the, special teacher is very good at making like that known to you, you have to advocate for yourself.

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And sort of I've always wanted to do it and mom has always been teaching me over the years that I have to advocate myself in order to get.

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Know where to where I am. And it very much is was like just something that sort of changed my perspective about it.

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Cause I finally understand what I need to succeed rather than my parents give me this preset list. And I'm like, okay, I guess.

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I mean, I don't really have an option in this. I just check the box, you know.

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Where as if I have a key for myself, I know exactly what I need and I can tell them exactly.

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Why I need it and such. And I think it was very beneficial over the long run. Just definitely.

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Great. Thank you, Ryan.

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So how did you get started and making those choices?

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As you heard, as you heard before, it was definitely high school, but I think. It was the choices were definitely just being made sort of like.

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As I matured, understood where I was, definitely. And and I was making sure that the choices were like sort of stuff I needed.

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Like if I notice, I always seem to do bad on this one test because there's a timer or I don't have enough time or I'm always doing spelling wrong.

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And it's like been consistent. Like I will try to advocate for what I need. Or sometimes if I'm like overwhelmed by something I will advocate my parents like saying, hey, I can't do this.

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I feel overwhelmed sort of. It's harder, it's definitely a lot easier to advocate for yourself in academics when compared to leave at home because at home you don't.

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Yeah, academics just sort of set like I can change this, this and this. We're at home.

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It's sort of free flowing.

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Okay, so you found the structure of school and academics a little bit easier.

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Yeah, definitely to advocate for myself. Yeah, you know, in social environments, could be a bit stressful, sort of advocate for yourself when your friends are saying one thing, you're trying to say something and then they just don't understand and it's like, oh.

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Great. Thank you.

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Yeah.

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Why do you think it's important for you to have choices and be heard when it relates to getting your needs met?

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Because otherwise it just won't work because in reality Well, I see it sort of as this solution as.

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You can be, is that you can, there's like, it's the difference between like a math teacher and a math, college, doing it for example.

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The math college student is gonna know a lot of things. He's been doing this for years. He's gonna know a lot of different things, but he's not gonna be as eloquent as the math teacher and knowing exactly what to do.

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You know, you can't just take this college level math student and expect them to teach a class even if you might know the same everything else the teacher knows because teacher knows what he's doing.

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Same thing with disabilities and people those your parents, your advisors, anyone, they may think they know what you want.

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And there's some like common ones like obviously if you have a HD you need to move around a lot like they know that but they don't know how your brain actually functions.

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Whereas if you advocate for yourself you will basically be able to say I function this way this way and this way and you can sort of tell them how you function rather than.

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You know, and forever it's not easy for everyone like for those who may be or less communicative have more severe disabilities that you know limits them from actually communicating then you have to take it over but taking over should be sort of like an option that you do when they're young and they can communicate as well.

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But I think that. In general you want to have the student advocate and communicate what they need as best as possible because otherwise what you're doing is basically you could all you what you could be doing is basically trying to fix a broken leg by giving them an arm splint.

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And for them, that might not be helpful at all and you think that's help.

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They try to advocate for something else ID. It can be sometimes downplayed because you like we already gave you a splint for your arm.

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Why you didn't tell us you like was hurting before. So. For that, you definitely need to advocate. You need the student to advocate.

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Otherwise, you just don't have the best. Best like just outcome for the student.

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You know, Ryan, one of the things you just said really struck with me is that, you know, the parents may know what the student or the child needs, right?

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But then sometimes you know because you know how your brain works in your brain functions and how that can be similar but also different sometimes.

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That's been an insight for me for my own child. So thank you.

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Yeah, definitely even for my mother. She was saying the same thing like she like she would use to have to do everything for me when I was younger and then when I say what I need my needs are she's very shocked it's like something she didn't know before or such.

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Oh great.

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Yes, the dog is having play time now.

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So what do you think was easy about advocating for your choices?

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What was easy just telling you what I need. I think that takes a, I have a certain personality where if I don't want some, if I don't get something like immediately, I will tell you, I last questions.

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Okay.

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I might be overbearing sometimes. You know, I try not to be, but sometimes, you know, I kind of.

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Okay.

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I need certain things to function. But

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But it's definitely, it's very sort of express yourself and who you are as a person, at least for me.

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For other people, probably is super difficult. For me, I've known over years to thanks to my mother and sort of the training she's given me and special ed stuff I've had.

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Okay.

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It's sort of expressing myself, definitely.

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Myself, what do you think is your mom did to teach you that? What were those things that she did to help you?

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I know I'm kinda throwing something different in there.

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I think definitely. Yeah. Oh, well, definitely she taught me ways of sort of how. How like socialization sort of works, how disabilities impact you and like that you're not different.

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They just because you're different doesn't mean you're worse. You may be different. You may think differently.

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You may act differently, but that doesn't make you worse. It's just it's like I've done this analogy before where you're you're or each person I assume is like a car.

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Each, a normal person, let's say a neurotypical person is a car with no modifications, under the hood modifications.

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It runs perfectly normal. It does exactly what you want it to do. Person with disabilities or in our diversion or whatever you would like to say they are like a modified car They may have, they may have like bigger tires which a lot of them do really good at certain things and not really good at others like.

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But they're still the same car. They're still the same carpet. They're just modified differently.

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Like maybe under the hood they have nitro boosters and they move faster but they waste more fuel or something.

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It's certain like that where just because these person has a baseline of being their own separate car, you know, nerd divergence I see is you could be different, yes, but like the same base car so there for people who are neurotypical the same base car may you still be there but there's drastic modifications that are done.

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And you have to work around them. Yeah.

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Oh. I love that analogy. Thank you. That is that's a really good and I have to use it with with some students.

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So then what? Oops. What was hard about advocating for your choices?

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Knowing what my choices were because A lot of the time when you're advocating for yourself, you know what you want, but sometimes you don't understand actually what you want.

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Okay.

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Especially with like describing words, you know, maybe it's like used and then someone tells you, oh, that's actually what I need.

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Like if I don't have the choices or options for anyone like you could advocate for yourself to get something.

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But if you don't know it's an option, you can't do it. Like you have they have students have to educate people like to be educated that they have the right to advocate for themselves because otherwise they're stuck like Cause then like a lot of people don't wanna feel like they're demanding something.

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You know, and they could be outright rejected because they don't know that like they have these rights, you know.

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And it definitely was hard for me if I don't know I have these rights like if I didn't have my parents.

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Telling me I can, I can ban these rights. Certainly there is plenty of aspects where I wouldn't be able to advocate for myself, you know?

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Plenty things were, I wouldn't know it. Like, you know, a normal parent might not know that their son is protected by this and this and this.

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Or the kid might not know this, like. You know, what are you gonna, what are you gonna do?

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And that was definitely hard for me to trying to interpret how to advocate for myself and it's definitely harder for others to advocate for themselves if they don't know what exactly to advocate for.

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Great. I like that. That's a really good piece of advice. You know how to advocate, but if you don't know what your choices are, how do you know what to advocate for?

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Thank you.

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Yeah, it's like, it's like going to an all, but not knowing what the options are and only liking pizza or something and there's no pizza.

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Okay. Love it. What are some things that you need help from others to have your choices heard?

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And how did you get that support?

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Some things I need, I think definitely needing help from others. And like what way, let's say, because that can mean different many different ways.

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The way I'm thinking is that you is that I need help from like I would need support. So like how do I like social interactions?

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Okay.

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I may not be the best at them. I'm learning, but I need support of how to do that, how to ask for help, how to sort of like figure out, and would I really make the wrong move?

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Did I? Did I? Did I embarrass myself in front of a girl? Did I do something that said the wrong signal, you know?

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You could send a wrong signal to someone even though you didn't mean it. Like maybe you send a text message that says, Hey, blah, blah, blah.

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You're telling someone. Something that you think is not really a threat and they think it's a threat and you don't know what you did and that's why you need to help.

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You in this and definitely things that would help you know you get the support from your parents from peers just And I think the best way to get help is to have an active understanding with either your friends, your parents or others that.

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Hmm.

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I will make these mistakes. You, I'm trying to work on them. But you're gonna have to accept the fact that I'm going to make mistakes.

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Like it's Like, I can't do much about it. And that's how you solve the problem because if they can't accept that for who you are, it's not gonna work because You're not just gonna make the mistakes and they're gonna be mad at you and even though you don't know what you did wrong.

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You just thinking you're just acting like you would normally And sometimes maybe you do know what you do wrong.

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Some, sometimes, then that's different. But if you don't know, you're actually making social mistakes and someone's like, you did this to me?

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Yadda yadda yadda and they get mad at you and you're just stressed down.

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You don't know what's going on. Like you can, yeah, and you just, I think that it's definitely hard.

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For people to sort of even like the application in groups, frame groups that it's not really talked about, it's not really talked about, especially, you know, advocating for who you are like in a friend group.

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I'm not saying like, you don't have to be disability active, but you could talk to your friend saying, hey, I'm gonna make these mistakes.

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These are gonna happen. If I do that, I apologize. But I might make these mistakes not realizing it.

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I'm not trying to do something.

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That's very insightful, Ryan. I think we can all use that advice as well to have those agreements.

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With family and friend members because I think everybody does that. So that's some great advice. I really appreciate it.

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Yeah, I've done that so many times that it's probably best I tell my friends ahead of time because you know It's like that way they don't think you're doing something bad or creepy.

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They just know that you don't, you this actively what you do. This just how you act is how you behave.

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No.

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It doesn't excuse yourself from like punishment. From punishment like if you're doing actively wrong but like you know just telling them hey I may

have texted you too much because I'm just ADHD brain is going off saying I want to do this this this and this.

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Or you're overly sided. Yeah, it's like.

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Yeah.

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But I think, but you're also asking for that feedback from them, you know, which is nice too, is saying, Hey, just let me know if I make that mistake and then you're learning from it.

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So that's a really good teaching opportunity.

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Yeah. Definitely. I think one of the best pieces of advice I could give to people is to instead of being mad when someone get if you mess up and do a mistake you ask okay.

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Tell me what I did so I can fix it. I feel like, you know, if you take the active feedback instead of taking criticism and taking seeing their mean or whatever, see what exactly they want you to change.

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And if it's something that is entirely like infeasible or something that you don't really see is important you understand but if you but if it's something that you can definitely see oh thank you for telling me it you'll understand it and just improve.

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It's sort of life is just about improving yourself socially beneficial,ially just in anything really.

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Some thank you, Ryan. Okay, so. Another question real quick. What advice would you give?

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To other high school and college students who want to make sure their choices have heard. So what would you teach them?

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Other other youth, your age.

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I. In what, let's start off with, which, the, now the academic aspect is not something where I don't, it's not the struggle of my life.

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Okay.

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Academics is always in the easier part, but I think the best advice to give to your students is talk to your teachers, tell them what's going on.

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If you if you have an issue, talk to them like be honest with them and say, I have this issue.

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I'm sorry, I don't understand the work. Can you please explain it to me? Like make that active effort.

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If you don't make the active effort, it's not going to do anything. You can't automatically assume that just because this teacher you know, says something that means it might not, it might not apply to you because you can't actively do it, you know?

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Maybe you need extra time for test. Maybe you need extra time to do something. You have to actively say it though, because otherwise if you say it like last minute.

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Teacher can't do anything. Even if they want to help you, they can't because you are pushing down the line, it could just be made up for all.

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You know, you know, it's like. Like saying I need an extension, but not explaining why.

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It's like they they're gonna be like, okay, and. Like everyone else is doing it, like they don't understand why you need it.

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And I think the, I think now this, and I think definitely learning about sort of how to advocate yourself in high school is super important.

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Hmm.

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Because otherwise in college you are completely by yourself. Your parents are there. They're still support you.

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Even if you go to someplace where you're struggling, structurally are supported like a landmark or any other disability type.

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Type focused area of school, you're still by yourself. You can have advisors, you can have these people, but mainly it's on you.

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It's on you to make these decisions. It's on you to decide whether or not to do something.

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And definitely I think that the most crucial advice is that you want to advocate yourself socially. Developmentally, just whatever you need to advocate yourself, talk about it first.

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Don't let it go inside of you. Be open to you are have sort of these things that you stand by.

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Have these things that you understand. I socially I would definitely assume socially I can understand that being harder.

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I struggle with that a lot more than academically. So that one the best advice I would say is just sort of understand where you are and when you make mistakes, fix them or at least try to just keep sort of keep an active note or something sort of like being like asking your friends like I was mentioning before asking people, hey, why did I mess up?

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Like, don't, I see is every failure is a learning opportunity where you keep learning from your failure, from your mistakes and improving on upon it.

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Maybe you want to be the anchor of your group, but then you realized. That's so stressful to me and I can't handle it.

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Hmm.

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Then you cut yourself off at that point. You have to just cut yourself off. And you know what?

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Sometimes I'm not the best listening my own advice, but. What are you gonna do? I do the best I can.

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But if you keep anchoring yourself, if you keep like sort of moving along the process, you know, think of going through life as as sort of on the train track keep moving forward sort of you can look behind but don't precipitate on it you know look forward and just don't and just keep moving you know there's a bump in the way you remove the bump and you take note of that bump if it happens

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Awesome.

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again. Just constant learning of life.

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Well, Ryan, I really enjoyed having you here today and I know we're going to share this at the conference and we appreciate your time.

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So much. I think you've given us a lot of life lessons for both. Youth that we may work with about advocating for their needs, but I also think you sort of gave some real good advice just in general that people could could take to heart.

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So thank you so much.

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You're welcome.

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And I've got to figure out how to stop recording.

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Oh boy.

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Yeah, it okay, let me do this. This part we're not going to show. Stop share.

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Let's hope.

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Why is it? Oh, there it is. The other screen popped up.

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YeahAre you