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## Overcoming Fear

By Hannah Li

The night before my SAT, I remember sitting on the kitchen floor looking up at my mom: "What if I get every single question wrong?" I was being sarcastic to an extent, but at that moment I was genuinely overcome by a claustrophobic fear of failing the SAT. Mom's next few words changed my perspective - not only on the SAT, but approaching fear in general:

"We always assume that the worst is more likely to happen. We rarely give ourselves enough credit for the possibility of success." And as much as I hate to admit it, she was right.

As teens, we're living in the sort of "crossroads" of our lives. True childhood is in hazy retrospect, but our futures are uncertain. The ideas of college, grad school, a job, and family are realities just out of reach, yet we are constantly reminded of these incoming benchmarks. Instead of thinking positively about the outcome of our futures, we instead revert to this almost instinctive nature of pessimism. Current juniors at Miramonte High School tried to explain this pattern:

"I don't purposely try to feel anxious..." says Abby. B, "it's just the idea of me failing seems so much more natural than the idea of success. I know that sounds depressing, but it's true."

Alyssa H. expressed a similar notion: "There's just so much pressure to succeed. Yet all I see is the probability of failure. Fear is definitely helpful in getting me to study, but I think generally my life would be less stressful if fear didn't play such a big role."

Both juniors reassured me that they were emotionally stable, yet it's a distinct pattern that it is human nature - for teens, at least - to be overcome by fear. So at last I did some heavy introspection and realized the importance of

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fear. At times, and in small doses, fear is an excellent motivator; yet, in heavy doses it leads to paralyzing anxiety and stress. We must instead strive to find a balance between fear and confidence. We must find a way to avoid another round of pre-SAT breakdowns. But as far as solutions, I'm in the same boat as every other junior.

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