

Keep it Up

The average human head weighs approximately 10-11 pounds. This is around the size and weight of your average bowling ball. Due to our infinite access to technology and information our heads are constantly looking down at our phones, computers, and tablets. The more we have our heads down, the more weight and strain it puts upon our necks and eventually our spinal cords. But we do not only hang our heads when using technology.

I will always hate the Juab High soccer field. I was a shy, nerdy, sophomore feeling very out of place as Maeser's varsity left back. The only reason I was on the varsity team, was because our stopper, Danni Chesler, had torn her ACL, and they needed another defensive player. I had played very few full-fledged varsity games, and I did not know what I was doing, or how I could possibly help fill the hole that Danni had left in our defensive line. My heart and mind were racing as I tried to keep up with the confident, fast, and physical girls that seemed to fly past me in Juab's black and gold uniforms. I remember their wing coming down the left side of the field and crossing it to the center of our 18 yard box. As the ball was flying through the air, all I knew was that it was my responsibility to reach that ball first. My excitement of intercepting the pass with a seemingly perfect chest trap turned to utter horror, as the ball bounced off of my chest directly towards the goal I was supposed to be defending. Time seemed to almost stop as I watched the ball fly directly through our keeper Savannah's hands and hit the back of the net. Everything was a blur except for the look of disappointment on my teammates faces, and the stream of hot tears mixing with the sweat on my face. I had failed everyone, my coach, my friends, my team. I hated myself for thinking that I could ever be good enough to be

on this team or to play this sport. I lost all confidence in myself, and I hung my head as the final whistle blew. We lost that game terribly.

The next summer at soccer tryouts, I was determined to be a better asset to the team. I was working hard, but still making a lot of mistakes. After one particularly bad pass I put my head down to hide the tears trying to burst from my eyes. I heard Becca Linford, our team captain, call my name. “Emma”, she said, “I don’t care what mistake you make you are not allowed to put your head down.” And with a quick love tap on the shoulder, she went back to the drill. I was caught off guard, but I continued on with tryouts as best I could. My ankle flopped as I attempted a cross to mid-field, and the ball crawled to a stop yards before its destination. Instantly my eyes dropped to the grass in humiliation. “Emma!” Becca called, and immediately I snapped my head up, and ran to the next position forcing myself to focus on keeping my eyes up.

I had not realized that I even had this habit, and I did not only do it on the soccer field. My head would hang if I did not understand the concept being explained in math class, and I would fall further behind as I beat myself up for not being smart enough. The floor became my only comfort after stuttering through hastily memorized monologues for Shakespeare auditions. I walked through the hallways with my head down so I would not have to meet the eyes of people I so desperately wanted to impress. I believed that keeping my eyes on the ground would somehow hide my flaws, but in reality it only drove me further away from the goals that I was striving to reach.

Our generation already spends copious amounts of time with our heads down. We are not only consumed by technology, but by our own mistakes and fear of imperfection. Friends: You have the ability to make a difference in the lives of everyone around you, but you will never

reach your full potential if your head is kept down by your weaknesses. It may feel like you're balancing a bowling ball on a blade of grass, but keep your head up. One simple change in posture can change everything.