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**It’s Okay If Your Teen Years Aren’t The Best Years Of Your Life**

Monday, September 23, 2013 by [Ashley Reese](http://www.gurl.com/author/ashley-reese/)

How do we determine how great our teen years are?

I’m going to be honest: For the most part, **I enjoyed high school.** It had plenty of ups and downs and sometimes there were a lot more downs than ups, but looking back on my high school years, there isn’t too much that I genuinely hate about it. Even the friendship drama that I encountered wasn’t enough for me to truly **hate** the experience. I had some amazing teachers, great friends and funny memories.

**But were they the best years of my 22-going-on-23-year-old life? No.** And that’s okay. They don’t have to be the best years of yours either.

It’s almost funny how much pressure there is to make your high school years–and ultimately your teen years–as **memorable** as possible in such a specific way. Even now, I still find myself looking back at my high school years with a faint twinge of regret. Sometimes I wish that I was a little more **carefree**, that I went to more parties, that I participated in the same sort of aesthetically pleasing adolescent wanderings that I see in Rookie Mag or an episode of *Skins*. But that usually wasn’t my life. When I wasn’t being a weirdo with my friends during lunch, I was at home talking about *Harry Potter* with strangers [on LiveJournal](http://www.gurl.com/2013/08/15/internet-trends-stuff-from-early-2000s-1990s/" \t "_blank). The **most exciting things** that I did were attend concerts, but beyond that my high school days were pretty tame.

And I’m okay with that, so why do I still wonder if I made the most of it?

How do we even measure how great our teen years are? I know that they can’t be measured by how **wild** they were. That’s hard to believe given how many coming of age stories focus on the “beauty” of excess and parties and torrid teen love affairs and doing as much as you possibly can as if there is some sort of **ticking time bomb of fun**.

Frankly, **that’s a load of crap**.

Your **accomplishments** don’t determine the *success* of your teen years, either. Some people are juggling student government with sports practice and violin recitals.  Some are doing the bare minimum when it comes to extra-curricular activities. One path isn’t necessarily better than the other; one isn’t necessarily going to trigger little memories of pleasant nostalgia over the other.

Whether you’re **loving** your teen years, **hating** them or you’re looking back at them with an **apathetic shrug**, it’s important to know that that time of your life isn’t validated by some idea of what it means to indulge in the **“best years of your life.”**

In a weird way, despite my handful of regrets–missing out on that *one* party that would have, at most, made for a good story–I look back on my high school years pretty happily because of how little I cared about making those years look like the climax of a teen movie. Your teen years might be fun and your teen years might suck, but no matter what you should live them the way you want, not the way you’re expected to.

Your teen years are too darn short to live them living up to some vague expectations of how to be a teen.

1. **What do you think of the opinion expressed in this article? Explain what you agree and disagree with.**
2. **How are your teen years? What do you think about the idea of your teen years being the best years of your life?**
3. **What do you want or need to accomplish in your teen years?**