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Age: 16 years old.

As children age, they are expected to mature both physically and mentally. A school is the cradle of education where part of such maturation occurs. A common aspect of school is writing down new information given to us and expressing ourselves on paper making various individuals look over such a trite activity. Yet it is more than that. Through it our minds can convey its prowess to the world through words, symbols and pictures. That is why I believe that we all have an important connection to the thing that allows us to write on paper. It's a means of expression in which through it we can show our maturation and thought.

There are two primary tools that allow us to write on paper: pens and pencils. People usually start of with pencils then switch to pens as they age. Yet, little does one realize the significance of switching from pencils to pens as one graduate from kindergarten. It's seen as a normal a rite of passage every student passes through. I still distinctly remember my first time being introduced to a pen. My eyes lit up in excitement the moment my teacher announced that we're required to bring in pens for class. I was trembling of pent-up excitement for the rest of the day. After school, I went to my parents and proudly announced that I needed to acquire a pen of my own. They were thrilled to witness a step in my education and gladly granted me my simple request.

The naive little girl would have never guessed the horrors she was destined to face. She was merely contented with the thought of handling an 'adult' object and taking a step in the direction towards maturity. Ignorance is bliss. Thus, a child would never understand why adults would try to shield them from the world until they finally realize why. Then, it would be too late for them to return to their carefree ways. Ecstasy coursed through my veins the moment I first drew a line of ink on the paper with my new pen. I swelled up in pride at my achievement with such a pristine tool in my possession.

A pencil is a forgiving tool. It leaves gentle carbon trails on sheets. Thus, it is a perfect beginner's tool to teach one about stationery mastery. Mistakes could be eradicated with a few strokes from a soft eraser.

Oops.

Rubs.

Gone.

Leaving behind no trace of a past mistake, errors are seen as reversible. And that is a powerful yet inaccurate message to send forth. Though it puts less stress on the wielder to strive for perfection, it creates a false sense of safety in reliance on the power to remove mistakes. An inaccurate illusion of the truth puts a beginner at ease yet lacks the ability to train them for the real world making it a flawed way to educate students on a long term. Thus, once a child reaches a certain level of proficiency they are introduced to pens.

A pen is a wild monstrosity. Being wielded by adults has induced children's fascination in them. It is a creation that is difficult for a novice to master, a true beast of the literary wilderness. The graphic truth about pens is its marks are irreversible, every mark it makes is a mark of permanence. Each stroke, each dot, each line once etched upon a piece of paper is to stay. Having far from perfect penmanship definitely made this experience far worse for me. Despite all the handwriting exercises I completed as a child, my penmanship could be compared to those of a kindergartener. Swirly, illegible, migraine-inducing. The three words that couldn't be more suited to describe the letters I mark with every pen stroke.

There was a sickening lump in my throat. My eyes were brimming with tears as they gazed upon the crudely crossed out mistakes. The perfectionist side of me screamed in agony as I gazed over each mistake blaming the clumsy excuse of fingers I have. It won't matter how much effort I poured into my resolute to print perfect letters. The truth is literally written out clear as day on the piece of paper in front of me. Every single movement of my pen is shown on my work even if I did not intend to make such marks appear on my final product. I grieved over the fact

that I would have to start over to attempt a flawless work. That was the moment I decided that pens are soon to be the bane of my life.

To my utter surprise, I did learn more and more as I got accustomed to pens. The realization hit me hard that sometimes I could turn my mistake into something presentable instead of wasting time trying to eradicate the permanent marks. It will be impossible for me to complete my assignments should I dwell on my errors. Thus, I came to a conclusion to learn from my mistakes and look forward towards my goal.

A pen represents the path we forge ahead in life. On contrary to the pencil, a watered-down, sugar-coated version of stationary which represents the ideal journey forward: one without obstacles and flaws; a pen represents the path we face as we thread through life. We must learn to accept that some mistakes are irreversible and that we must learn to live with it and make the best out of each situation. Also, it is starkly true that each error leaves a noticeable reminder. A reminder of the Irreversible. A reminder of misconduct brought about by ignorance. A reminder to take caution as we thread through life. No matter if the mistake was crossed out or covered in white-out, it is still apparent that a mistake had been made underneath the virtuous front. Whatever is done is done, a pen mark and an action are marks of permanence.

Every decision we make in life is irreversible. There's no turning back time to completely eradicate one's actions. Like modifying a misshapen pen stroke, we must learn to live with unpleasant mistakes and make the best of our decisions. There is no way to turn back in time to rectify our wrongdoings or undo the mark of a pen. The suitable way to deal with these situations are not to completely ignore the mistake while preventing fear and regret from dappling one's resilience. One shall fail to succeed should they become subjugates to the weight of their past errors; yet lessons can be learnt for mistakes and utilized in avoiding future slip ups. Pains of failure should be channeled into positive outputs. Forgiving oneself to set aside negative feelings impeding one's potential is a necessity to proceed steadily. Self-apologies would be made as a way of healing from mistakes to develop into a better

person.

A rite of passage, a transition is a common element of life we shall endure. For that is how we advance forward. For that is how we progress towards success. For that is how we transform into butterflies, ready to spread our wings and take on life. Taking up a challenging new task or head-butting a new obstacle in life should be done without the fear and burden of past mistakes hindering one from exceeding their presumed limit. Thus, we move on in life without gazing back in regrets as I push my pen forwards without fear or hesitation.