February 2016

Front Matter

Ethos Magazine

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Recommended Citation

Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/ethos/vol2016/iss3/1

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You get home after a long day of classes and you look around your room. In the corner, under a pile of clothes, there are gym shoes, collecting dust from lack of use. Stacked textbooks remind you about the assignments you have due tomorrow, and your phone keeps lighting up with emails from professors and the club whose meetings you know you should be attending. You take it all in, and it’s clear what you have to do: take a nap.

Maybe that’s not exactly the advice you’d find in a self-help book, but it’s realistic, and probably the choice we’ve made more than a few times. It’s easy to talk about making positive changes like being healthier or putting more effort into school, but putting it into action is another story. Not just because of laziness, but also because we’re busy college students who have a lot of different things on our plate — literally and figuratively — and we’ve grown accustomed to a routine that allows us to manage it all. Changes to that routine are hard to implement, especially when it’s something that’s “good for you,” a phrase that often translates to “sucks so much.”

We get comfortable with our lives and become cautious of taking the next step in our self-improvement plans. It’s not easy to adjust to a new lifestyle — it takes me about two months to get used to a new Twitter update — but change is an exciting part of life that allows us to continue growing and learning. Without it, we get wrapped up in routines, or trapped in unhealthy lifestyles that make us lose sight of who we really are.

Although taking the initiative to make a change in your life can be scary, it can also be a positive decision that makes your life better and more fulfilling. As you’ll see in this issue of Ethos, the catalyst for making life changes comes in different forms. Sometimes, it’s the 9–5 grind of an unsatisfying job that pushes you to go to college at an older age. Other times, it’s the stress of being a type-A person in college that leads you to try out yoga, or the passion for a sport that fuels a dedication to intense daily training. The new choices you make can be smaller, like updating your wardrobe or shopping at a fair trade store — but they can also be more difficult and complex, like seeking help with an eating disorder. Regardless of what problems hold you down, it’s never too late to make a commitment to bettering yourself.

You never know what could happen when you take that leap. You could discover that you were wrong and rue the day you ever decided to forego a nap, but you could also learn something new about yourself and become a stronger person. After reading the wide range of stories in this issue, I hope you’re inspired by people in the Iowa State community who made (sometimes difficult) choices to better themselves in some way. Maybe it’ll even push you to make a change in your own life.

We can’t make it happen — we’re just a magazine, not a life coach — but we’ll be happy to write about you when you do something awesome.

Tracer Scher