

STRONG MEN & WOMEN



IN VIRGINIA HISTORY

2014 STUDENT WRITING CONTEST

Central Region Essay Winner

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Anyone can be a winner. But it's your state of mind that will take you across the finish line. Many young people run through life without goals; others have no desire to better themselves. Living life in a pessimistic manner leaves us stuck in an endless mirage of failure over and over again.

If I'm so closed-minded that I lack the ability to seek out an opportunity to visualize where I want to be, then I will never get anywhere. It's unfortunate to witness the many young lives of today's children being raised without guidance or purpose. There's so much wasted potential being flushed down the drain due to bad influence and lack of effort.

I used to hate living in the projects, and, honestly, I still do, but for different reasons now. It's embarrassing to tell people where I live at times. I can never get off the bus from school without thinking about what the other kids thought about me and where I live. It used to make me feel so much lesser than anyone else. I'd wake up and look around my environment and remember feeling so down about my situation. I'd mope around all day feeling like a frown had been permanently tattooed to my face. It hadn't occurred to me that I was just like anybody else. Sitting around with my head down waiting for a ticket out wasn't going to get me anywhere, and that's when I learned to think optimistically.

I began to plan out my escape with goals. The same thing that made me feel so depressed, staring at cinder-block walls, was now my motivation. There was nothing that could stop me from my goals; I had potential and I had optimism. And with those are endless possibilities.

So I'm urging anyone and everyone out there to take a look at where you are now and when you find that one thing—that obstacle in your way—face it. Try turning it into an opportunity to move up in the world; improve. Because not only are you learning some of the most valuable skills for success, you're being where you want to be, and with that, you've just become a winner.

