

Be willing to embrace your inner child



Lesley Reno

Let's face it, we all hate being treated like kids, so it is an exciting milestone when you finally leave for college. It is during this time that you feel like you have reached adulthood — that is, until you're alone and things start to fall apart. Things start to go off-course and you finally figure out, hey, maybe I am not an adult yet and maybe I don't actually want to be one, either. In fact, one could say a college student basically is an overgrown infant, but that is not necessarily a bad thing.

One of the main similarities between college kids and actual children is the fact that naps are a must. Last semester, I had a 7 a.m. class and I knew that if I did not nap during the day I was going to be a cranky mess. I also perfected the art of power napping, and you can bet that if I have 15 minutes between classes, I will take advantage of my newfound skill. Also, just like infants, college students can fall asleep just about anywhere. I have seen students sleeping on The Quad, in the library, in hallways and on the steps of some buildings. If we are tired enough, any surface looks like a king-size bed.

I thought when I left for college I would be independent and would no longer need my mom for everything. I soon found out that was not the case. I call my mom at least once a week, though usually it's more like three or four times a week. During these calls, I ask her questions about how to get a stain out of my shirt or what to use to clean the toilet. One time I even called her to ask how to make macaroni and cheese. If I have even the slightest problem, I call my mom. She still reminds me about important upcoming events like if I have a test soon or if I have a paper due.

Another way college students are like infants is we snack a lot. I know my day is hectic, and I usually don't have time to actually sit down and eat until dinner, and sometimes not even then. Snack-

ing is a necessity for college students, and I know I am not the only one who keeps their backpack full of Cheez-It crackers and animal crackers. You never know when you are going to have time to eat and you're always on the run, so it is essential to have some kind of snack on hand. Not only do we snack like infants, we also have the same eating preferences as them. A child never worries about what they're supposed to be eating — they just want whatever sounds good to them. For example, on many occasions I have eaten Easy Mac for breakfast and cereal for dinner. Health is not my top concern when it comes to food — I go for what is easy to make and what tastes good to me.

As college students, we are in that awkward inbetween area where we are not quite adults, but we are not children either. We still are trying to figure out how to stand on our own two feet and how to navigate the rocky waters of adulthood. So yes, we still rely on our parents for some things and sometimes we have the mentality of a 3-year-old, but that is ok. This time is for us to discover who we are and what we want out of life. While I do think college students should have some level of maturity, I don't think we have to be full-fledged adults yet either. We are still young, and I think we should hold on to our freedom as long as we can before the reality of adulthood comes crashing down around us.

Lesley Reno is a freshman communication major from Renick, Mo.



When have you embraced your inner child while at college?



Kayleen Green
Senior

I would definitely say taking an afternoon nap when I can.



Ronnie Wingbermuehle
Senior

Well, I nap very often, like all the time, and I snack all the time, so I eat a lot of fruit snacks and Cheez-Its, because it's just faster and I have more time to get things done.



Mallory Hooyman
Freshman

I recently just got Play-Doh and a coloring book, and I've already colored four pages and played with the Play-Doh a lot.



Jamie D'Agostino
English professor

Constantly. I feel like I have constantly. Teaching creative writing, the experience of play and discovery is so much at the heart of that or a JINS class that I teach on creativity. We experiment with those kinds of things. I feel like on this campus we're invited to do that constantly, and have that be an important part of our thinking.



Blake Miller
Senior

I think I embrace my inner child a lot when I'm at K-Life Ministries, because we have a lot of fun there, play a lot of games, you know, a lot of random games, fun games that we just made up, a lot of imagination goes on. Since I'm a small group leader, I'm with seventh graders a lot. My childhood was a lot of activity and fun, and when I'm up there, that's when I try to embrace it and have fun myself.



Raquel Rhoades
Senior

I would say everyday. I will sometimes walk through campus and pretend I'm on an adventure. If I'm feeling super adventurous I'll walk along the wall by the SUB lot, but on Truman's campus, singing, dancing on the way to class. I don't think my inner child left.

UmmeKulsoom Arif is a senior justice systems major from St. Louis, Mo.

Attend more cultural events



UmmeKulsoom Arif
Opinions Editor

When I checked my inbox Monday, an email from the Multicultural Affairs Center caught my eye. It was about Asian-American Heritage Month, which usually is during the month of May, but had been moved to April because campus would be virtually empty during May. "Oh, nice," I thought to myself, "Truman celebrates Asian-American heritage. I wonder what events we will have this year."

There is only one event, and it focuses primarily on the East Asian experience with the model minority myth.

I admit, I was pretty angry. Being South Asian, I've gotten a little frustrated by every person who either insists I'm not Asian — as if India wasn't part of Asia — or completely ignores the South Asian experience when talking about Asia. So I took a trip over to Adair House — where the MAC is located — and spoke to Carol Bennett, the assistant dean of multicultural affairs, mostly because she was standing right there and willing to talk to me.

I asked her about the Asian American Heritage events — ready, honestly, to grill her about why Asian American Heritage Month seemed only to focus on East Asians. Instead, I learned something much more chilling.

The MAC often has tried to host diverse events — it partners with organizations like Namaste Nepal and tries to reach out to Asian students all over campus for events like Asian-American Heritage Month — but has seen depressingly low turnout rates. Students just don't seem interested.

Now, as a graduating senior, that worries me. I have to admit, I often live under a very stressed out and overworked rock, but I'd love to attend more cultural and heritage events. It's difficult to balance my schedule with all the events happening on campus, but I still try to make time to see speakers I think are interesting.

Here's the thing — if no one is interested, then there's no reason for the MAC to host any sort of event. And that's a problem.

In her October 2009 TED Talk "The danger of a single story," Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie talks about the dangers of only knowing one side of an experience. For Adichie, it was the single story that Africa was a poor continent. That Africa is an uneducated continent. That Africans are people who should be pitied.

"The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete," Adiche said in that TED Talk. "They make one story become the only story."

MAC events — speakers, International Idol and Heritage Months — exist to tell the other side of the story. And if you're not going, you're not hearing the other side. And if you're not hearing the other side, you're feeding right into that single story.

By the time this article is published, the Asian-American Heritage Month's one event — "Asian American Experience and the (Un)Making of the Model Minority Myth" — will have ended. How many people were there to hear about the model minority myth and how it negatively affects Asians as a whole? How many people will be there to talk about mental health stigma and its association with the model minority myth?

I started my day angry because I was tired of people ignoring my Asian-American heritage simply because my country of origin isn't in East Asia. I'm still angry about that. South Asians and Southeast Asians living in the United States are also subject to the model minority myth, and they also deal with a lot of untreated mental health issues because of the stress of conforming to the myth just to survive in a society that expects them to be the best.

I remember walking around campus a few weeks ago, conducting field interviews for the Around The Quad section of the Index — part of my job as the Opinions editor — and feeling incredibly proud as so many of my fellow students seemed to be focused on diversity in the student body and creating a more inclusive campus. But guess what? Inclusivity doesn't mean a thing if you're not making an active effort to attend events. The MAC exists to raise awareness about other cultures — to teach students about cultures other than their own — but if no one takes advantage of the resources it offers, then what's the point?

Lately, the MAC has begun sending out regular emails informing students about upcoming events. Regrettably, I will be graduating this semester, but this is my final challenge to you, fellow students — attend more campus events. Learn more about the diversity on this campus. If you're really focused on diversity and inclusivity, then MAC events are just the resource for you. The more interest you show, the more events the MAC is likely to host, and the more inclusive campus will become.