

The lyrics in Billy Joel's *Vienna* speak to me, as they have done to countless others for decades. This song can make me sob in the shower, but it also validates the hard work that I have put in to reach my goals. It's a song that's able to make the listener feel so many emotions at once. It makes me really sad when I think about how fast life is moving, but in a way the song is also comforting. The lyrics tell me that I'm still young, so even if I slow down I can still realize my goals and dreams, and be happier in the process.

The competitive atmosphere at my high school put a lot of pressure on me to be as "smart" as the other students, in terms of GPA and SAT scores. It's easy to fall into the trap of working harder and harder to reach goals that are constantly moving farther away, while my expectations of myself increase. When I listen to *Vienna*, I'm reminded that all of my hard work won't mean anything if I make myself miserable. It's hard to hear, especially accompanied by a dramatic piano, that the present is slipping away because you are moving too fast towards dreams of the future.

Even in middle school I was already wishing I could go to college. I spent too much energy planning my life in the future and I missed many moments that I would have fully enjoyed if I had been paying attention, rather than yearning for what's to come. This is not to say that I regret striving for academic success, but if I got to do high school over again, I would stay in the moment and celebrate my growth rather than wishing I had done more or gotten a higher grade.

I plan to enjoy the last six months of high school and promise myself that I will be fully present for all of the opportunities that college has in store. I want to enjoy this brief moment of my life because it'll be over before I know it. I still have a lot of dreams and goals for the future

and that's important, but I won't let the future prevent me from embracing the present. Success means nothing if you aren't present in the moment to enjoy it.