

Low Down on Shopping Small

In a world full of convenient online shopping, local businesses deserve a chance

When I started searching for jobs I knew I wanted to work somewhere that would match my personality. I quickly found My Best Friend's Closet, a small and local consignment store. I filled out an application and was hired about a week after. Flash forward to now and I love everything about working at a small business. Now that my job has opened my eyes, I really believe that we should shop local rather than commercial.

Big businesses get a lot of traffic and then tend to overshadow the small businesses around them. In the age of COVID-19, many have resorted to corporations like Amazon for all of their wants and needs. Supporting these larger corporations that are fast and convenient isn't necessarily a bad thing, but when we forget about smaller businesses. It really takes a toll on them.

When small businesses lose



+ by Ally Prunte
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customer foot traffic they lose everything. The smaller the business, the more they rely on our support. The United States Census posted a questionnaire for small businesses during COVID to gauge how they had been affected. According to their study, 44.9% of survey takers said their business had been negatively impacted in many ways. This number was much larger than those who said they weren't affected, which was only 18.2% of survey takers.

Now is a perfect time to support business owners, they need it more than large companies. Owning and creating a small business is an extremely challenging task. My dad had his own business for 16 years. I remember him putting in an extreme amount of effort and time. It was very interesting to watch him work so hard on something he created. Many people, just like my boss and my dad, start with very little and work extremely hard to turn it into something. From a simple human decency perspective we owe it to

others to support them best we can.

The PNAS (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences) ran a study during late March and early April of this year on small businesses and COVID-19. They concluded that 43% of businesses had temporarily closed due to COVID-19. Smaller companies took an extremely large economic and advertising toll when they closed. Now, big and small businesses are starting to re-open and take safety precautions. Whether you're a regular at a local shop or you've never tried it before now is the time to safely shop small.

Small businesses do a good job of creating familiar customers. At my job we have lots of regulars who know our staff and our store probably better than I do. It's all about community and helping other people. Small businesses, just like everything in life, aren't just about money. It's about helping and bonding with other people. Empathy and interaction are needed in our world right now. One way to really help is supporting those in our community and everywhere we go.

The High School Experience

High school is a time to try new things and make mistakes

Moving to a new school can be difficult, whether that be from middle school to high school or just from one school to another. High school is big, and compared to middle school, it's gigantic. Although you'll be moving up with your eighth-grade

class, there are also three other grades above you. You'll probably see or meet someone new everyday, and when you look at your yearbook you'll look back and say, "They went to Northwest with me? Since when?"

My brother graduated high school when I was in seventh grade, he always told me that I couldn't expect high school to be fun by itself, I had to make it fun. I did this by joining cheer, newspaper, Student Council, track and so many other things. That's the beauty of high school. You can try new things and if you don't like it, there's no pressure to keep doing it.

This year I decided to take a break from Student Council to focus on other things, but it's an activity I've really enjoyed and plan on continuing



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my senior year. I don't cheer or do track anymore, but newspaper really stuck with me. Explore your options, because who knows, you might end up really enjoying a certain activity.

Sometimes it's hard to adjust, because a big place with a lot of new people can be scary. Personally it wasn't for me, because I am a very extroverted person, but I know that some of my friends freshman year struggled with figuring out the ropes.

Making friends can be a bit difficult. Big developmental milestones and changes happen during ages 15-17. You become more independent, you're capable of having more intimate relationships, you spend more time with your friends in comparison to your family, etc. I came into my freshman year thinking that I would stay best friends with my middle school friends forever. While sometimes that works out, most times that's not the case. People change, grow up and take different paths. So you can't expect to be exactly the same as you were in middle school.

Don't worry too much about keeping the same friendships you

had in middle school or elementary school, because real friends will stick by you. Some of my best friends and I talk maybe once a week, but we know we've got each other's backs if any of us ever needed anything.

Making new friends and getting out of your comfort zone is one of the biggest parts of high school. But always stay true to yourself, and don't feel pressured to do things you don't want to do. I promise you, in a couple years, people won't care that you said no to going to a party your freshman year because it made you uncomfortable or that you said no to smoking when your friends wanted to try it. Don't plan on peaking in high school, plan on preparing yourself for whatever lies ahead.

You want to look back at high school and remember the fun times, not regret all those times you could've had fun and didn't. High school goes by so fast, don't waste your high school experience because you thought you were "too cool" to go to a school dance or because pep assemblies were "lame." This is a time to try new things and make mistakes, but most importantly to learn from those mistakes.

Fridays at the Club

Quarantine changes my relationship with my grandparents

Friday is one of my favorite days of the week. Mom comes home late from school and yells at me and Dad to get dressed, despite not being properly dressed herself.

And we all — Grumpy, my grandpa, Mom and me — get loaded up into the back seat of our black SUV and head to our local country club. Dad driving, Grandma riding shotgun.

We struggle to load them in and out of the car. Dad wrestles Grandma's wheelchair out of the trunk.

Grandma holds on to Dad and the car door as she is lowered into the wheelchair. Mom helps Grumpy out of the car. I run ahead and open up the door to the club. We all hobble slowly into the restaurant.

My grandparents are always the stars of this night. Grandma and Grumpy chat with the staff who know them — the hostess, waitress and even the manager of the country club.

Most of the night, I sit at the table and listen to my grandparents chatter about politics, the old days, old people gossip or whatever is on their minds.

But all of that's changing — because of quarantine.

For the first couple months, we drop off bags of groceries at Grandma and Grumpy's house.

We can't go inside, so I stand outside and wave at them — they wave back. I can't see them that often.

I hear Mom talk about how Grandma got scammed into giving her credit card number to get a "free" tablet, and how she's asking Mom to bring Max to the vet and how my Aunt Betsy didn't show up to when it was her turn to do Grandma's errands.

The most interaction I get is playing online checkers, reading my grandparents' horribly written "I-miss-you" texts or asking how to get Netflix up on Grandma's computer.

I sit in the silence of our home. School has started, but Mom isn't coming through that door to yell at me for not being dressed. Then, I realize how much I miss Fridays. Yes, there are downsides to being stuck at the table with all of my immediate family — getting in fights about almost anything, having to get up and grab Grandma's food and having to repeat every other sentence so Grumpy and Grandma can hear me.

But I miss getting dressed up in the same red dress and having them talk at me for an hour.

Grandma is a woman of structure. Before quarantine, she got her hair done every Thursday and played mahjong at the club on Friday.

It took my mom a long time to convince Grandma that she couldn't go about her day like normal.

But it didn't stay like that for long. Since quarantine started we've been able to have new family gatherings — errand running, group dinners outside etc.

And the family gathering when Mom tried to clean out their moldy basement.

A moldy basement that held Apple computer boxes of jeans, old family photos and 50-year-old wine in a Coca-Cola jug. Grumpy proceeded to drink the substance in the jug despite our pleas not to.

Still, the lack of almost any kind of structure unnerves me. Some weeks we work in one of our new "family gatherings."

But other weeks, we have almost no contact.

I miss the constant, regular contact I used to have with Grumpy and Grandma. I miss those Fridays at the club.



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