

Megan C.  
February 14, 2007  
Writing Lab

### **“Cleanliness Is Next to Awesome-ness”**

High school is a tough time for anyone, and that’s especially true for girls. There are always so many questions running through our minds at all times...

*“What did I get on my Civics test? Does my hair look okay? What are they saying behind my back? Will my parents let me go to the concert next weekend? Does Alex like me too?”*

So many problems, that all *need* solutions right away... So, my question to you, my fellow girls, is:

“Why make littering another one of those problems?”

Many problems in a girl’s life can be helped by avoiding something as simple as littering. For example, say you’re trying to impress that cute guy from your Psychology class, but you don’t know anything about him, aside from the fact that he likes a socially conscious girl. Problem solved. Just throw away your trash, and maybe make it a point to toss the other garbage on the table into the trashcan. Next thing you know, you’ll be catching his eye, and also helping to keep your campus clean.

But what if boys aren’t your main concern? No problem, avoiding littering can help you in other ways too. Just think about those cute shoes you got recently, now, you want them to stay cute right? And it would really suck to have gum stuck on the bottom of them right? Or what about the inevitable act of stepping on an already-opened ketchup packet, only to have the remainder of the ketchup all over not only your cute shoes, but your pants too? Not really how I’d want my shopping spree to end. But now you’re wondering, “How does *my* littering end up getting *my* stuff all gross?” Easy answer. If your peers see you littering all the time, then they’ll get the message that it’s okay, and that you don’t mind getting your stuff dirty. But, if you always throw your trash away, and remind people to throw theirs away too, soon enough there won’t be any gum or ketchup to step on or sit on, and your clothes and accessories will stay cute and clean.

While on the topic of buying cute things, if you litter, you might not be able to buy these things in the first place. Just think of the fines you’ll have to pay if you’re caught littering. By California law, if you’re caught throwing garbage out of a moving car, you can be fined \$1000, as well as getting a misdemeanor for tossing that stupid candy wrapper out of the window, when you just could’ve waited to throw it away. Think of what you could’ve bought with that money. While you’re at it, think about the fact that in Virginia, nearly six million dollars is spent each year just in picking up litter along their roads. Also think about that at Marshall University they have maintenance employees that spend all day just picking up litter from the campus, and the salary of just one of these workers adds up to about \$27,000. Just think of all of the things that could be done with that money instead.

Think of all the dances and events that our school could have if the administration didn't have to pay for the litter that covers the campus to be cleaned up. Think about all the extra programs our school could have, think about the money that could be spent on tastier cafeteria food, or on field trips, or so many other, better things.

But maybe you don't care about the dances, or new clothes. Maybe you don't care about boys, or anything like that. But just think about the respect that you'll gain from not only your friends, but your teachers too. Think about how well it reflects your character to your teachers if, instead of seeing your tossing your garbage on the ground, they see you picking up not only your garbage, but your friends' too. Think of how willing they'll be to write you your letters of recommendation, or how they'll be willing to help you with your questions, simply because they know that you actually care about the campus, and environment around you. Think about how good you'll feel, knowing that you're helping your community, your school, and your environment. Think about this:

*“Litter can find its way into storm drains and pollute waterways and the environment. Untreated storm drain water can soak into groundwater, flow into canals and streams, and into recreational areas such as lakes, rivers and the ocean.”(DTC)*

Think about how many plants and animals you might be saving just by walking those few extra feet to throw your garbage away. But maybe saving the environment sounds a bit too, “flower power” for you, how does staying in shape sound? According to Keep America Beautiful, another anti-littering campaign, you can burn roughly 171 calories just picking up litter for 30 minutes. But maybe you're feeling productive, collecting recyclables, can help you burn 216 calories. And helping to clean out an illegal dumpsite, that's another 225 calories. Just think about how that prom dress is going to fit you after you help your community out. Not only will you look great but you'll feel great, knowing you helped a good cause.

High school is a tough time in any teen's life, but think about how much easier it will be if you just keep from littering, and if you encourage others not to litter either. You can keep your clothes and other things clean, you can save your money, as well as make sure that your school keeps providing you with events and activities. And most important of all, you can keep your campus, community, and environment clean. You can make sure that you live in a place that you're proud to call home.

**Citations:**

**-Keep America Beautiful-**

<http://www.kab.org/aboutus2.asp?id=642>

**-Ecorecycle-**

[http://www.ecorecycle.sustainability.vic.gov.au/resources/documents/051017\\_Litter\\_Statistics.pdf](http://www.ecorecycle.sustainability.vic.gov.au/resources/documents/051017_Litter_Statistics.pdf).

**-Caltrans Storm Water Management Program-**

[http://72.14.203.104/search?q=cache:dOUAfwMwTywJ:www.dontrashcalifornia.info/pdf/Frequently\\_Asked\\_Questions.pdf+california+littering+fines&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=3&gl=us&client=firefox-a](http://72.14.203.104/search?q=cache:dOUAfwMwTywJ:www.dontrashcalifornia.info/pdf/Frequently_Asked_Questions.pdf+california+littering+fines&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=3&gl=us&client=firefox-a)

**-Longwood University-**

<http://www.longwood.edu/cleanva/cigbuttimpacts.htm>