



A life in the eyes of Cole .. Cole Middler



Year 6 – a year of reds and ambers for me. I was only just noticing my supposed behaviour as being a problem that I could not handle. Each and every day of school was a barrage of unhappy teachers – well, what else is new?

Finally, year 7 and a new school. A new start (so I thought!) and time to show I can put work and effort into what I know I'm capable of. But, unfortunately a school who refuses to support a child who is unable to open up about their feelings and emotions. How are they expected to talk about their thoughts even though they can hardly understand themselves?

Well, why should they care? It's not them.

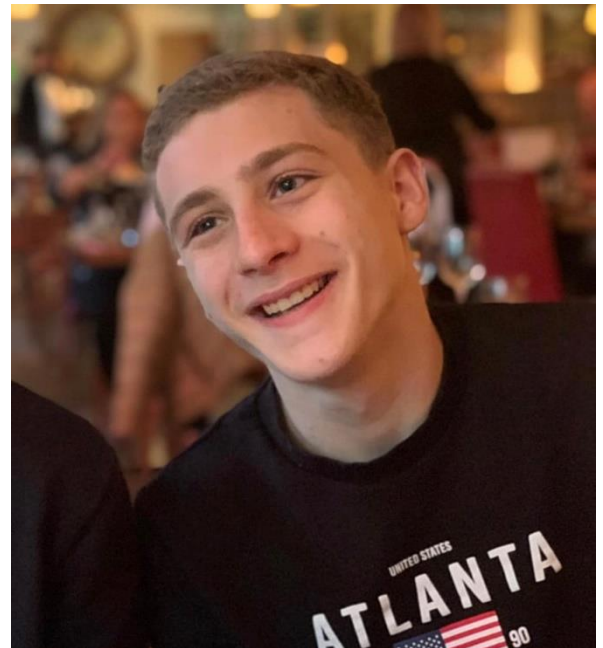
I got excluded too many times to count. Sent to isolation with nobody to talk to or notice my pain. Doors locked as if I was a criminal. A million thoughts running through my head and impulses I couldn't control. A world that seemed simple to everybody else, but painted in different colours for me. A language I couldn't speak. Watching myself have panic attacks as if I was a robot observing a body that was an alien.

When they told me, I was going to a PRU, it felt like a prison sentence. Like my life and future had been snuffed out.

But after support off great teachers who freed up time to help and understand me, and a loving mother who would do anything for her offspring, the child who was just labelled 'naughty' has gone on to get great exam results and can now write like Shakespeare.

This, coming from a boy who was thrown out of mainstream due to a lack of support and a Head Teacher who told him he would "never amount to anything" and would fail his GCSE's.

I have now come to accept myself for what I have. I use negative comments from other to motivate myself to thrive. Recently, I won an award for overcoming adversity and some of the teachers who wrote me off were there to see what I have become.



Whenever you may feel like giving up, just remember: you can achieve anything you want if you put your mind to it. Prove the doubters wrong. Don't let mental health get in your way! ADHD, anxiety, Tourette's, OCD, Hyperkinesia and ASD is who I am. Labels do not limit me.

ABANDONED

ABANDONED, ADRIFT, ALONE.
SOUNDS OVERWHELMED ME. DOORS SLAMMING. FOOTSTEPS DOWN THE CORRIDOR
ECHOED LIKE THUNDER. MY HEAD BURROWED IN MY KNEES, SHAKING LIKE A LEAF.

I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WHAT I HAD BEEN SENT OUT FOR "PROBABLY BREATHING".
THEY TOLD ME TO LISTEN. HOW CAN YOU DO THAT WHEN A MILLION THOUGHTS
ARE RUNNING THROUGH YOUR HEAD? THOSE WERE THE DAYS WHEN PEOPLE
DIDN'T BELIEVE MY ADHD EXISTED.

THEY DIDN'T TRY TO UNDERSTAND.
I WAS IN A BOAT FLOATING IN A VAST OCEAN.
EVERY TIME I GOT ON THE RIGHT COURSE, ANOTHER TSUNAMI THREATENED TO
CAPSIZE. I WOULD COMPLETE ONE TASK THEN THEY WOULD GIVE ME THREE MORE.

ANGER ROSE IN ME LIKE A VOLCANO. RED MIST CAME OVER ME AND I KNEW
THE VOLCANO WOULD ERUPT. LAVA BOILING THROUGH MY VEINS. I BELLOWED AT
THE TOP OF MY LUNGS BEGGING THEM TO NOTICE ANGUISH THAT TOOK OVER ME.

I PICKED UP THE CHAIR AS IF IT WAS MADE OF PAPER AND FIRED IT ACROSS THE
ROOM LIKE A CANNON. THEY JUMPED ASIDE IN SHOCK.

THEY SHOULD HAVE SEEN IT COMING. THEY KNEW MY TRIGGERS.
I BURST THROUGH THE DOOR AND GULPED IN THE FRESH AIR,
SATISFYING AS WATER IN THE DESERT.

ABANDONED, ALONE, ADRIFT.

- COLE MIDDLE
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