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Freaking

November 2013

The Verdadera staff encourages you to discuss and explore the issues and stories, as the publication aims not only to offer an outlet for expression, but to improve our lives. Keep in mind that the emotions that flow through the text and the feelings behind the words could be those of your child, your classmate, or your best friend.

Things to Consider:

- How does freaking affect the dynamics between students?
- What role, if any, does the administration play deciding freaking policies?
- What are your personal limitations, and how can you assert them?

STUDENT SUBMISSIONS

To parents and admin and other people I get in trouble with:

So here's the thing I never understand. Why did the freaking policies change? I mean think about it. Kids don't have a problem with it. And if they do, THEY JUST DON'T DO IT. That's all there is to it, really. If adults have a problem because its degrading and morally wrong and sinful and all that, and if it's against their religion or something then that's THEIR problem. Its like when my parents tell me my room isn't clean and try to punish me for it. And im just like, that YOUR problem. Not mine. I don't have a problem with my room, you do. So you come to terms with it. And this is the same thing. Freaking? You hate it? You think it's disgusting because that's not what YOU did as a kid? Well, that your problem. Not ours.

You might as well just start a My-kids-freak-and-i-don't-like-it-because-im-in-denial-about-my-kids-sexuality support group. Why don't you just talk to kids, like actually talk to them. Saying NO DON'T DO THAT is just a pretty damn lazy way to address an issue that doesn't even exist. This "controversy?" Yeah.

You invented it.

Don't just go around abusing your power and ripping apart couples at dances because you just can't deal with it. Just because you have default power over us doesn't mean that you don't have to listen to us. Are you the effing monarch now? I get that you know better, you're wiser, blah blah, but you're acting pretty ignorant now: do you even know what freaking REALLY is? Have you even been to a dance? How long has it been since you're been a teenager? C'mon,

do you think we're all just sitting there weeping about how terrible freaking is? No. you wouldn't know. You don't even say freaking. You say "freak dancing" which isn't even what its called. Do you know what it does for kids? How it helps us release all of that stress you put on us? The last time adults said they knew what kids needed, they banned books. And science.

Think about it this way: if you're vegetarian, are you gonna complain and whine until meat is banned? Heck no. Because it's pretty darn unfair. If kids don't want to freak, they won't. Who's forcing them? If someone asks you to dance, say no. Nobody's holding a gun. If somebody is peer pressuring you, they're just a jerk and you should stop talking to them. And banning freaking is not going to fix peer pressure. Because if it's not peer pressure about freaking itsgonna be peer pressure about drinking and sex and all that stuff, and honestly

I'd rather be pressured into grinding for a few minutes if imgonna succumb to peer pressure at all. And peer pressure isn't a problem attached to freaking, it's a problem attached to classes and grades. Are you gonna ban grades now? If you have any semblance of intelligence you know that banning things always backfires. Abstinence-only messages? Backfire. (yay!

Now we have the highest teen pregnancy rates! All because of that NO DON'T DO THAT mentality that adults just love! Who needs education and communication when you can just put on your crown and say NO) Book banning? Backfire. No freaking? What do you think. Because if you really want "safety and welfare" and all that stuff for your kids, then you might as well just go and lock them in a concrete box without human contact. There's no real reason to just get rid of freaking; you just keep making them up. Some people like it, some people don't. some people do it, some don't. so get over yourselves. Deal with it. Because it's not our problem, it's yours. Just wear a damn eyemask or something. And for gods sake let's be a democracy.

"Dance is the hidden language of the soul."

– Martha Graham

I hate freaking. I really really do. I hate it with a passion....but I still think the new dance policies are stupid. I don't freak, I never freak, I don't even like seeing people freak. But I'm not just going to rain all over their parade and slam my foot down and say no, even though im a feminist and I guess it looks pretty

bad to me. But let's be honest, freaking has no bad intentions and its not actually sexist, its just taking advantage of anatomy so that both people are like the most comfortable, so it's not making any weird misogynistic statement. (people's bodies are built in a certain way so that the females are almost always in a submissive position, I learned that in class so blame evolution) It's good for teenagers to release all of that weird sexual energy because then otherwise we'd be one of those school where guys slap you in the-you-know-where when you're walking down the hall. andat least its in a controlled environment, and it's safe and nobody who's freaking doesn't want to be freaking.

You want kids doing that stuff in supervised areas ok, and elbowing through them or something is a complete invasion of privacy. It's messed up, it's like going to a concert and then breaking up the band because you don't like how short their skirts are or something...you cant do that! You cant just invite kids to a dance and then stalk them like you're a cheetah and they're lunch.

"Dancing is a vertical expression of a horizontal desire."

– Robert Frost

I stopped going to all dances after my first dance at MV- the infamous welcome back dance, aka freshman rape. Do you know why? One word-freaking.

When I first saw freaking, i was speechless. Everyone was doing it-even some of my friends, who i least expected to participate in an activity like this. Senior girls were literally dressed up like sluts and pressured guys to freak with them. I'll admit-although i most definitely knew that freaking was wrong, I actually did contemplate on whether i should do it or not. Everyone else was, so why would it matter if i did?

Also, what if I don't do it-would people start to harass me for not freaking? I'm glad that i decided not to start freaking since that day, and now I never go to any dances anymore just to avoid it. I did hear about the last welcome back dance, AKA summer never ends dance, and how the leadership committee were going to end freaking and implement more appropriate activities to do, but i still did not budge because i just knew that freaking would still happen. And I was right- Even though the number of people freaking really lowered(which is good), there were still a significant amount who were still doing it.

Well, clearly, i don't think freaking is ever going end at MV, regardless of how many times people

tell us not to do it. I guess im not going to a MV dance again.

“Live your truth. Express your love. Share your enthusiasm. Take action towards your dreams. Walk your talk. Dance.”

– Steve Maraboli

As a devout christian, I believe that freaking is plain WRONG. It's disgusting, it completely violates people's personal space, and it is definitely inappropriate. How is it even fun anyway? isn't it actually really uncomfortable and really repetitive? When I went to my first dance as a freshman, i was, at first, really looking forward to it. I remember hearing from some sophomores in math class talking about how it was really “fun” and so much better than middle school dances; therefore, I decided to give it a try. To my disgust, all i saw were people literally humping each other. What surprised me even more were the MV staff who were just standing there and watching all this happen. Wasn't this “freaking” obviously against the rules?

I remember hearing a lot of freshman guys talking about how great that dance was on the following monday. A lot of them even started talking about how many girls they got, and now freaking even became a contest. Anyways, I'm really glad that leadership attempted to end freaking at the summer never ends dance. It's going to really encourage me to start going to dances that are ACTUALLY school-appropriate and fun!

“Dance like there's nobody watching. Or filming. Never mind that creepy guy in the corner with the camcorder. Just keep dancing.”

– Jared Kintz

SPEAKING from personal experience, I actually like freaking. It is a good way for me to release my sexual frustrations after focusing on school for hours on end. At Monta Vista I always get excited when someone I never thought I had a chance with asks me to dance with them. I feel like freaking is an opportunity to embrace being single and dress up and take your mind off of normal every day struggles. However, there is a certain point where freaking becomes uncomfortable, but the level of comfort, I think depends on the people.

I feel like the new freaking policy is a lot more

strict. During homecoming I got yelled at three times for something that was completely acceptable last year. The admin were going into freak circles and telling people to stop. The freaking policy, in my opinion, discourages people from even attending dances. The school is going to lose a lot of money. I think that they should loosen up a little and maybe host more dances specifically for people who do not enjoy freaking (like blue pearl). the people who like to freak can go to the normal dances and those that do not can go to the non freaking themed dances.

“To dance is to be out of yourself. Larger, more beautiful, more powerful.”

– Agnes de Mille

TO ME, freaking is a twisted but effective way to de-stress and be a teenager. We are, of course, teenagers with "uncontrollable hormones", but I don't think that is what freaking is about. Freaking is about being young and a high schooler. Especially in the midst of stress from school or extracurriculars and pressures to grow up or mature, we need some way to feel young and free, and freaking is one way to achieve that. Just because I freak doesn't mean I'm a bad person or agree with the levels of sexuality that some couples reach in high school, it just means that I find it an effective coping strategy for the amount of stress that I deal with every day. Of course, not all freaking is good, and there is a limit, in my opinion, as to how far couples should go, but is it a bad thing? I don't think so.

“Kids: they dance before they learn there is anything that isn't music.”

– William Edgar Stafford

As a person who has always enjoyed dancing crazy, I can honestly say these new school rules really bother me. Not sure who started it (different stories from who's being strict), but really admin or leadership or principal or whoever, LAY OFF. I've been to nearly a hundred other mixers and other school dances, and MV isn't even close to anything on the scale of dirty.

You go anywhere else, and there's people outrightly making out and going to 3rd base while dancing. Here, touching the floor is considered the worst. And another thing, even if it was so dirty, who says you're the one to control us? I hate the fact that MV, where we're already pushed over by the amount of

academics, is now taking over our social lives! Well listen up, banning me here isn't going to stop me. I'm just going to take myself to another city, dance "dirty" there, and what difference does that make? Right, you just made me waste my gas money.

“Dance for yourself. If someone understands, good. If not, no matter. Go right on doing what interests you, and do it until it stops interesting you.”

– Louis Horst

I never did and never will understand high school dances. Out of the many perplexing choices that high schoolers make, freaking is one of the strangest. I went to one dance, the Welcome Back dance during my freshman year and got to see all of my friends and classmates grind all over each other for hours against the backdrop of abysmal music, claiming they enjoyed it and bragging to me about how many girls or guys they got to dance with. I stood around for a while, bored and feeling out of place, until I decided to leave and go home. While I don't really see the point of "freaking," I do think that students should be allowed to "freak" if they really want to and if there is no set rule against it.

The school keeps confusing its students by having assemblies where they say they don't want us to freak, but they tell us that this isn't a rule, just a suggestion. Then, I hear from my friends about admins shining flashlights at students, taking pictures of students, and making students uncomfortable at dances just because they choose to "freak."

If the school was just clear about what they wanted, I'm sure more students would either stop freaking or just not go to dances at all, instead of going to dances and then getting in trouble. I think the school needs to be more clear, but I really don't care if they allow freaking or not.

“Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.”

– Hellen Keller

“FREAKING” is the new, trendy topic of discussion at Monta Vista. The subject of an hour long assembly in which the administration asks us how we

would feel if our parents accompanied us on a school dance, explaining to us how disgusting and inappropriate it is.

Then he goes on to tell us that there's no rule against freaking. Then, when I do go to a dance, admins keep telling me to stop. Which one is it? I like dances, I like freaking, and I don't see what the big issue is. Every generation has their own "freaking" that their parents and supervisors freak out about and try to stop. Once freaking is banned, something new will pop up. There's no point in fighting it. Its inevitable that kids will find something to rebel with and piss off their parents. Everyone just needs to calm down.

“In a society that worships love, freedom and beauty, dance is sacred.”

– Amelia Atwater-Rhodes

More stories found at www.mvhsverdadera.org

A WORD FROM THE PROFESSIONAL

Beth Proudfoot, LMFT

For Parents:

Freaking is an extremely sexualized dance form, essentially stylized sexual intercourse, fully clothed, standing up, in a crowd on the dance floor. I should emphasize that it's a dance. Dance partners often don't know each other and won't see each other again after the music ends. It's not sex. In fact, it's often performed with no touching at all. It is enough like sex, however, to make it daring, exciting, confusing, shocking, or disgusting...or all of the above...for participants and observers.

A very small percentage of Monta Vista students participate in freaking. However, it is present at every school dance, with the exception of special dances, like Blue Pearl, so most students have had an opportunity to observe it and have been faced with the choice of participating or not. The editorial staff has chosen freaking as a topic for this magazine because it's clear to them that it's a "hot-button issue" for the whole community. There are three parts to the issue that need to be addressed:

1. Although the Administration has expressed its dislike of freaking and has encouraged students not to freak, the rules are unclear. Is freaking allowed, or not? Are some moves okay and others not so much? Will everyone who freaks suffer consequences, or only some? What are those consequences?
2. I get the sense that most students would welcome a clear rule, consistently applied. However, many do feel that there should be some open dialogue, with student participation, before establishing the boundaries...which they're well aware will be difficult both to define and to enforce.
3. As you'll read in the essays in this issue, many students have been really struggling with whether to participate in freaking, whether to watch, and whether to come to school dances at all if freaking is going to be present. Most students are currently choosing not to freak. Many have chosen not to go to school dances because of it. Some are very happy with their choice to go ahead and freak away, and others are doing it at the same time they are very uncomfortable with their choice.

This third part is where parents come in. Today's youth are faced with a lot of choices like whether or not to freak. Opening up a dialogue with your teen about this could be the beginning of several meaningful conversations about other, and much more potentially dangerous, topics. What makes it tricky is that you may have some strong opinions about freaking, just from my description, or from a brief tour of Youtube dance videos. Your judgment about it, however, will not be productive in creating a meaningful conversation. Wait until your blood pressure goes down. Remember that it is really just a dance, and that your conversation should be more about how to make decisions when one is feeling the push-pull of one's uncomfortable gut reaction vs. potential approval of one's peers than about whether your child should freak or not. You may notice the defiant tone of the pro-freaking articles, here. This is one of the "cool" things about freaking: kids KNOW their parents wouldn't approve. So, unless you want to chaperone all the school dances and mixers, you can be sure that your strong disapproval will only add to the allure.

Here are some neutral conversation starters:

“Tell me what you think about freaking.”

“What do you think the rules should be about it?”

“Oftentimes, our gut says one thing and our head says another. What’s your gut telling you about freaking? Your head?”

Do your very best to have this whole conversation without expressing your own opinion, telling any of your own stories, or laying down any rules. You’ll be rewarded, I promise, with a rich conversation and more in the future. Your child is dying to talk about these issues. They are talking about them with their friends or in their diaries. Wouldn’t it be better if they talked to someone who deeply cares about how they make choices? That would be you.

For Students:

Some of you have already decided that reaking is great and you’re going to continue to do it regardless of what anybody says or does. Others of you are clear that freaking is gross and you’re not going to participate or even be around it. I’m well aware that I’m not going to change any of these strong opinions, so I thought I’d address this editorial to those who are conflicted about whether to participate in freaking, whether there should be clearer rules about it, and what those rules should be.

Several of the essays here described the very real dilemma of a young student attending the Welcome Back Dance. Freaking is pretty “freaky” the first time you see it. So, there you are, all dressed up and excited about your first high school dance, shocked out of your socks by what’s happening on the dance floor...and then you’re asked to dance! Or, you’re encouraged by your friends to ask some one to dance. Should you try it? Will you make a fool out of yourself? Will your friends be impressed? Or will they be disgusted? You don’t get a lot of time to make this decision. Yes, or no?

In the “Yes” column is...fitting in. It looks like a lot of popular people are out there freaking. A good-looking boy just asked you to dance, and it’s a lot easier to say yes than to say no. The people who are doing it are smiling and having fun. It’s not dangerous.

In the “No” column is your gut reaction (“Ew! Gross! No way!”). This is a pretty short list.

So, what ends up happening is that some people listen to their gut and say no, and then regret it later. Others listen to their head and go ahead and dance, then regret it later. Others make a choice they still like after the fact. Lucky them.

Here’s what we know about how the brain works: when you’re feeling strongly about something, the parts of your left brain and prefrontal cortex that you use to think things through logically go off-line. This surely had some survival value when we were cavemen. (You wouldn’t want to spend any time deliberating about HOW to run from the lion...you just want your feet to MOVE.) It’s not so helpful when you’re faced with a fast decision on the dance floor.

Obviously, the best time to make decisions is when you’re calm and have all of your rational brain on-line and working hard. As the school community moves forward with discussing this issue, hopefully you’ll have a chance to add many items to your Yes and No columns in order to come up with a decision about what’s right for you.

What's the best thing to do, though, in the moment, when you feel like you have to MOVE but don't know what to do? My best advice is to postpone. Actually you don't HAVE to move right now. If your whole body and mind is not in accord about something, it is possible, in fact, it's preferable, to wait. Go to the bathroom or outside to take a deep breath of air. There'll be another opportunity to make a different decision later (another dance next quarter, another party next Saturday night), after you've had a chance to think it all through. Yeses feel easier, but are more likely to lead to things you'll regret. No's are harder, but safer. "Maybe later" is almost always a good alternative.

I'm aware that it's much easier to say "wait" than to do it. Your body is, after all, hard-wired to MOVE. What I've found helpful, for my clients and for myself, is to practice with small decisions and in situations that aren't very stressful. I can't tell you how many bad decisions I've avoided when I've practiced saying, "Let me think about that and get back to you."

For the whole community:

The Monta Vista community has some choices to make. The best solution might be to have some dialogue about the issue, which is what this edition of Verdadera is all about. School is supposed to be a place where students feel safe. What are rules that will accomplish this goal?

Here are a few proposed solutions, to get the ball rolling:

1. Ban freaking at the Welcome Back dance, which is attended by a lot of Freshman, who seem to be the people most negatively affected by it.
2. Ban freaking at all school dances.
3. Have more dances like Blue Pearl, where there was food, tables to sit at, and everyone learned how to swing dance. This was sold out and really fun.
4. Los Gatos High has designated student members of the Leadership Team as the Freaking Police. They attend dances with tee shirts that say, "Freaking Police" and break up partners whose moves cross the line. This could be something to try at Monta Vista.
5. Have more discussion about this issue and what to do about it, perhaps at a PTSA meeting.
6. Encourage parents and kids to talk to each other about this issue and others.

About the Professional



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