

People need to stop complaining about friend zone

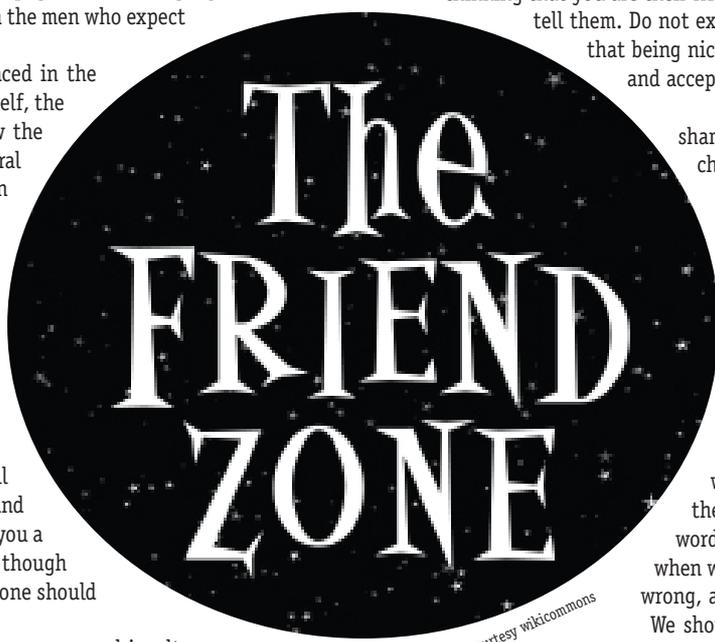
by Sean Clark
Humor Editor

The friendzone is described as the situation when a guy pursues a girl in hopes of a sexual relationship, but she rejects him because she only wants a platonic relationship. The term friendzone has gained tremendous hype amongst teenage boys looking for a scapegoat after being rejected. However, the fault is not with the women. The fault is with the men who expect woman to reward them for being "nice."

First and foremost, both men and women can be placed in the friendzone. However, the problem is not the friendzone itself, the problem is how men react to being friendzoned and how the term is used. Feeling "friendzoned" is problematic for several reasons. Realistically, the term is used to shame women for not liking a "nice" guy. Boys use this term to blame women for not liking their falsely-motivated kind traits. Most people would sympathize with a boy who has been friendzoned, but no one sympathizes with the girl who thinks she has found a friend, when it turns out that his motives are just sexual.

By simply being generous, even if you are doing it just to hook up, you do not deserve to be rewarded with another person. You are not entitled to another person's affection just for being nice. Expecting that everyone will fall at your feet just for being considerate is objectifying and unrealistic. Pretending to be kind does not actually make you a nice person. An actual benevolent person does not feel as though they deserve a reward for being kind. Why? Because everyone should be kind to other people anyway.

Blogger Kevin Beirne says, "The friendzone myth is dangerous and insulting because it perpetuates the idea of women as a prize or a reward for being 'nice'. It dehumanizes women in a way that is more subtle than cat-calling, and this is why so many people fall for it." The "friendzone" term contributes to rape culture because it is another way to blame women even when they are the victim.



"Nice guys finish last" is the cliché, but actual nice guys do not finish last. However, they should finish last if they feel as though women are vending machines for sex. This is relatable to the ridiculous idea that women only date jerks. People do not think, "Oh so and so is a great guy, but I'm not going to date him." Being nice just to have sex is not actually being nice; it's tricking another human being into thinking that you are their friend, then expecting them to have sex with you. If you actually like someone, tell them. Do not expect that they will catch on to your falsely motivated "nice" actions. Accept that being nice might not get you anywhere, accept that not everyone is attracted to you, and accept that you may be at fault.

Words like "slut" shame women for their saying yes, whereas "friendzone" shames a woman for her saying no. There is simply no way to win. If a woman chooses to pursue a man, she is a whore. If a woman says no to a man, she is considered rude for friendzoning him. We need to stop using terms such as "slut" and "friendzone" in order to prevent sexism. These words limit what is socially acceptable for a woman to do and enforce an unwritten code that women must live by. The casual usage of these words promote a world where rape and sexism are no big deal. "Friendzone" and "slut" are subtle ways to promote sexism. Speak up when you hear these words. These words are used to oppress women just as racial slurs are used to oppress minorities.

From a young age, men are told that women are the guaranteed reward for nice actions. This idea is taught through comics, TV shows, movies, and books, where the male main character is rewarded at the end of the story with an attractive female. The word "friendzone" is used by men to maintain the idea that women are prizes, even when the woman rejects the man. This word excuses the reality that women are human beings and not prizes. So even when women break this stereotype, and refuse to be prizes, they are doing something wrong, and not the men.

We should not shame women for saying no to men, we should shame men for not accepting this answer. We should shame men when they trick women into fake friendships, and then get upset when she only wants a platonic relationship. We should shame people for complaining about the friendzone, instead of shaming the true victims of the friendzone. We should sympathize with the women, who are being treated as sex objects, instead of sympathizing with the men who are treating women as sex objects.

Letter to the Editor: Skateboarding on LGHS Campus

To El Gato Staff:

With all due respect to recent and past severe injuries suffered because of skateboards, I feel compelled to speak up in defense of the sport. I was a skateboarder throughout my teenage years, and though the teaching staff is my current peer group, I feel a lingering affinity for the "tribe" of skateboarders. Skateboarding was a topic for some at a recent staff meeting (though the topic for my table's discussion was dress code and academic integrity), and it has become increasingly clear to me that skateboarding is often misunderstood or understood only through the one-sided lens of possible danger.

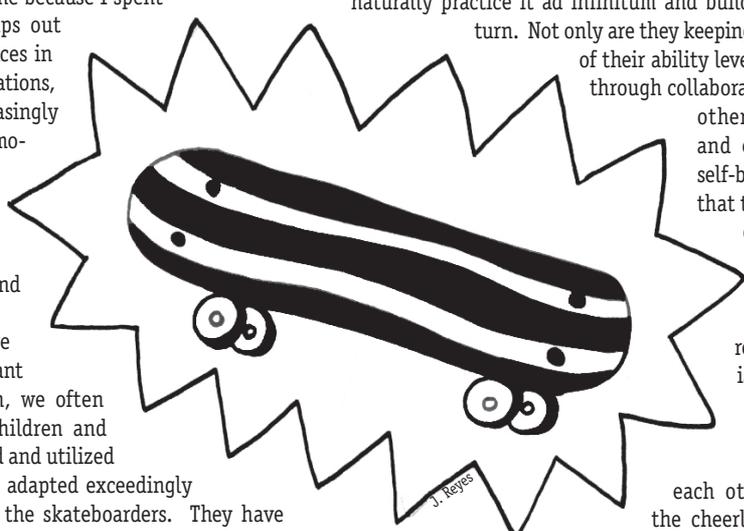
Skateboarding needs to be understood in a historical context. As recently as the lifetimes of our grandparents, there was still some easily-accessible wild space to explore and play in. Trees to climb on, streams to wade in, fields to run in, places to make rope swings, logs to push around, and places to run without fear of traffic. I don't idealize or romanticize this wildness; I know these spaces were real and what they can do for the psyche because I spent my twenties taking student groups out to some of the remaining wild places in California. Over the past few generations, our natural spaces have been increasingly paved over, and the hazard of automobile traffic has kept us from using the roads to play on. Though some of this wild space still can be found in the Santa Cruz Mountains, it has become harder and harder to find.

As we pave over more and more of the remaining hillsides and vacant lots in the interest of capitalism, we often provide no alternative for the children and teenagers who would have explored and utilized these spaces. One group that has adapted exceedingly well to the changed landscape is the skateboarders. They have said, in essence, "We will adapt to the desolate urban environment and use it to our advantage as a playground." They have ingeniously found beauty in a smoothly paved surface, kindness in the gentle slopes of a parking lot, thrills in the edge of a curb, and peace in the whirring sound of wheels smoothly sliding over the asphalt. From the adult perspective, why would we deny teenagers this productive outlet? Through skating, they can release an incredible amount of pent-up emotional, hormonal, and physical frustration. They can

tire themselves out, and come home or to class with the mental clarity and readiness that comes of having been extremely physically active. And then there is the transportation issue to which I have to ask... would we really rather have more cars (driven by novice, thrill-seeking drivers) on the road? Hands down, skateboarding (along with walking and bike riding) is exponentially better for the individual who gets some exercise, better for the environment, and better for traffic and road safety in general.

As teachers, we can look to skateboarders for models of what to do in our classrooms. One concept that is often mentioned in education programs is keeping students at the Zone of Proximal Development, which translates to keeping students at the edge of their ability level, where the work is hard enough that they have to think about it, but conceptually builds on foundations they have already mastered. Skateboarders are always pushing themselves into this zone; when they've figured out how to do a 180 turn, they will naturally practice it ad infinitum and build it up to a 360 degree turn. Not only are they keeping themselves at the edge of their ability levels, they're also learning through collaboration, and teaching each other through observation and experimentation, in a self-built pedagogical ecology that teachers can only dream of reconstructing.

Is it dangerous? I think that question needs to be rephrased to ask, "What is an acceptable level of risk?" We don't deny the football players the concussions they give each other during tackles, or the cheerleaders the broken and sprained limbs they inflict on each while being tossed in the air. We don't begrudge the lacross players injuries sustained from flying balls, or bicyclists the scrapes from an accident. When it comes to skateboards though, our perceived danger quotient goes through the roof, and we see a vastly magnified perception of danger. This might be because skateboards get used outside a traditional sports facility, and therefore have the potential to harm others. If that were the only factor though, we'd be much



more worried about bicycles and cars; proportionately, these must be causing a tremendous amount more injury than skateboards. Yet because most everyone knows how to ride a bicycle or drive a car, and therefore has an embodied understanding of the actual risk, we do not blow the risks of bicycles or cars out of proportion.

I believe that the bigger reason skateboards are feared is their association with a certain "kind" of teenage boy, and of an association with "illegal" behavior. Skateboarders themselves embrace this semi-outlaw image, and can get a kick out of defying the authorities by jumping fences to go skating in posted "no trespassing" areas, abandoned swimming pools, and school parking lots. Given the natural urge of many teenagers to rebel, wouldn't we rather that they rebel through healthy, centering, collaborative skateboarding than through other activities more destructive to themselves and the community?

From their perspective, the powers-that-be (adults who don't skateboard) are being ridiculous by outlawing fast, cheap, and healthy transportation and physical exercise. By creating restrictions that seem arbitrary and unfair, the adults delegitimize themselves in the eyes of the skaters. After all, skaters don't want to criminalize using cars or going to the gym; they just want to be left in peace to do their thing. When we criminalize skateboarding, we actively socialize these youth to resent authority figures. As adults who want the best for the youth in our community, it might be worthwhile to examine our fears and restrictions and see if they are more helpful or harmful.

Nobody can say that skateboarding during the school day on campus would be a good idea. There are just too many people walking around, and too much potential for an accident. And given the impulse-control required to not use a skateboard when it's being carried, it's probably a good idea to keep them in classrooms or locked to bike racks during the day. But rather than focusing on what we can do to control skateboarding, and what consequences we can have for skateboarders, I think we ought to be looking at what we can do to help skateboarders enjoy their chosen form of exercise and transportation. Could we loan out some orange cones, caution tape and hurdles to partition off an area of asphalt after school? Could we raise funds for some wooden ramps to put in a corner of the parking lot? Could we encourage and mentor a skateboard club? In the spirit of Project Cornerstone, and of supporting all of our youth, let's help kids skate.

Sincerely,
Philip Roseblum
LGHS Teacher

EL GATO

Los Gatos High School • 20 High School Court
Los Gatos, CA 95030 • (408) 354-2730 ext 285
Editors-in-Chief Advisor
Quincey Klein Doug Garrett
Haley Wade dgarrett@lgsuhsd.org
Hana Beach
lghselgatochiefs@gmail.com

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