

MEET THE TEEN GIVING MICHELE BACHMANN A RUN FOR HER MONEY

FOR THE DO-SOMETHING GENERATION

# diversity *PREP*

**Brook  
Peters**

**The 14-Year-Old  
Director Of A  
New 9/11 Film**

**Test-Taking  
Secrets  
From  
The Pros**

**10**

**Tips For A  
School Year  
You'll Love  
(Seriously!)**



**Making The  
Cut At FIT**



**Golf's Game  
Changer Mariah  
Stackhouse**

**Help Turn Your  
High School Into A  
Bully-Free Zone**

- 10 Publisher's Letter
- 12 Education Matters
- 15 Editor's Letter

## FEATURES

- 34 **10 Ways to Make This Your Best School Year Yet** Expert advice to help you shine bright
- 36 **I Was 4 When the Towers Fell** Teenage film director Brook Peters on his new 9/11 documentary, *The Second Day*

## DEPARTMENTS

### TRENDING TOPICS

- 17 **What We're Talking About** Albert Einstein, civil rights activist; a new multiculti superhero; helping teen drivers stay safe on the road; young adults and race
- 18 **Yes, They Did** Whether they're putting politicians in check or teeing off on the golf course, these teens are making their mark
- 20 **5 Things You Should Know About...** Candice Wiggins. Get to know the rising WNBA star who's speaking out about HIV/AIDS

### YOUR LIFE, YOUR WORLD

- 23 **Get Involved** What you can do to take a stand against bullies who target LGBT students; a school administrator explains why the old adage about sticks and stones is completely wrong
- 31 **Upgrade You** How social media blunders could hurt you during the college application process
- 32 **Help Desk** Dealing with embarrassing moments; why hookahs are just as bad as cigarettes

### YOUR STORIES, YOUR VOICES

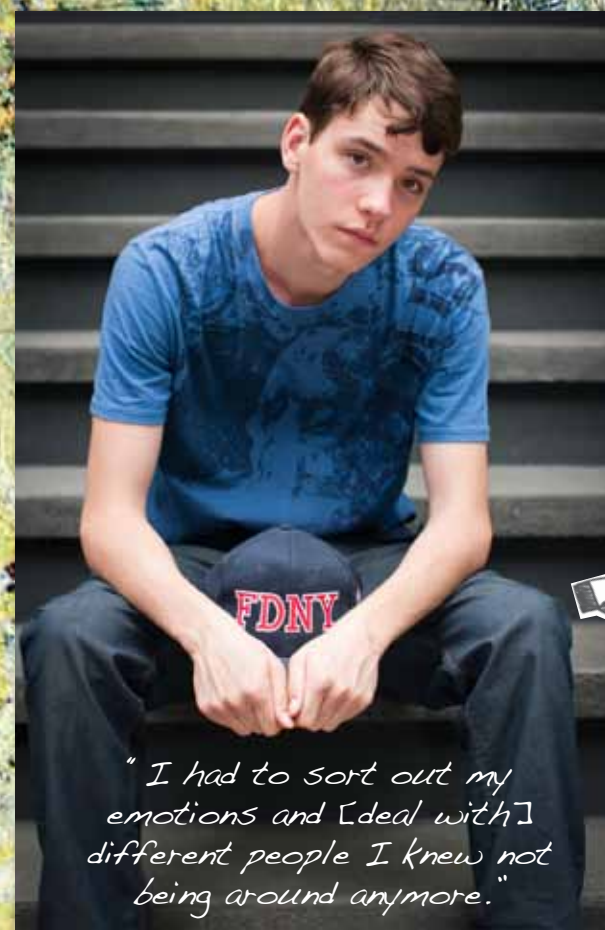
- 41 **A Change in Perspective** One student shares the important life lessons she learned in her photography class
- 45 **The "D" Word** Why those who hope to promote diversity should consider what it really means
- 47 **My Two Moms** Rethinking "traditional" families

### HIGHER LEARNING

- 51 **Spotlight** Five facts worth knowing about FIT
- 55 **Getting There** Test-taking tips from the pros; smart college prep programs to consider

### EXTRACURRICULARS

- 56 **Tech Club** Student-friendly gadgets; apps and sites to check out
- 58 **Culture Club** Cool things to add to your to-do list this fall



*"I had to sort out my emotions and [deal with] different people I knew not being around anymore."*



# contents



**Be Different.  
Make a Difference.**

Graduates of Teachers College, Columbia University are revolutionizing the fields of health, technology, policy, psychology, behavioral sciences, art administration, communications, and international education.

It's your turn. [www.tc.edu/discover](http://www.tc.edu/discover)

**TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**  
GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

*Preparing the next generation of leaders*



# 10

# ways to make this your best school year yet

**The bad news? Summer's over. The good news? A new school year means a clean slate—and a chance to do all the things you really want to do** By Tia Frasier

Whether your last school year was good, bad, or ugly, here's an irrefutable fact: It's finished. In ESPN terms, 2011–2012 is a whole new ball game, and it's up to you to create the playbook. You really can do anything you put your mind to, especially with enough soul-searching and a great support system. Here are 10 strategies to get you on your way.

## 1. Assess the Previous Year

First ask yourself, *What did I love about the prior school semesters?* and *What would I have done differently?* Think of this as an opportunity to air out what happened instead of getting caught up in what went wrong. The point of the exercise isn't to beat yourself up but to take the good and bad together and build on it, says **Melissa Kahn, a teen life-coach in Los Angeles**. Whether you do this by recording yourself with your cell phone's video camera or simply jotting down some ideas in a journal, this kind of reflection helps you think about skills you still need to learn, activities you want to do and ways to avoid negative situations in the future, adds Sandra Dupont, M.A., a Santa Monica, California–based therapist who specializes in adolescent psychology and family counseling.

## 2. Set Your Own Goals and Say Them Out Loud

Make sure that your list of what you want to accomplish comes from you and not someone else. For example, are you trying out for the debate team because you find it interesting or because your parents are dead set on you being a lawyer? It's important to be open-minded and hear out people who have your best interest at heart, **Kahn says**, but it's also important to remain true to yourself and what you actually want. Likewise, consider what might be missing from your list because you're worried about what others will say. Once you've made your list, share it with an older sibling, mentor, or teacher—you'll

benefit from hearing the perspective and wisdom of someone who's been on the planet longer. Plus, saying your intentions aloud will make you accountable. That's important, **Kahn says**, “because as the game changes throughout the semester and things come up, you can get derailed.”

## 3. Study Smarter

Is an A in AP biology on your list, or do you just want to improve your overall record to better your chances for college? You'll need concrete steps to make it happen. Start the year off by making sure you participate in your classes (maybe even sit in the

## 4. Create a Vision Board

front if you don't already) and take great notes. Have an organized study area that's distraction-free (no TV, video games, etc.) and equipped with the tools to help you do your homework (See our Tech Club story for suggestions). Last, if you decide that you need some assistance with your coursework, let your teacher know. That way your instructor will see that you are making an effort and he or she can help you find a tutor. In the meantime, team up with a study partner or group that is well versed in the particular subject you're having difficulty with.



It might be a little too Dr. Phil for your tastes, but therapists swear that it works.

A vision board visually represents whatever it is you want to be, do or have—think of it as a collage with a deeper purpose. For example, if you want to try out for the school play this year, you might put a picture of your favorite actor on your board or a scene from your favorite movie. You should have a visible reminder of your goals that you'll encounter every day, **Kahn says**. Most people make a vision board using cardboard or poster board, but you could even make it the wallpaper for your laptop.

## 5. Learn to Dump and Sort

Whenever you're feeling overwhelmed, list all the things weighing you down on paper. For example: *I have a math test; I have chores at home; my physics report is due; I want to see my girlfriend.* “When everything is disorganized in your head, go ahead and dump it in any order it comes out, and then sort and prioritize,” **Kahn says**. It might also help to dump and sort items in your backpack and maybe your room if they get too messy.



## 6. Eat Your Dessert as Well as Your Veggies

Your schedule should feature at least one activity you're 100 percent excited about, **Kahn says**. How can you tell what that activity would be? If you wholeheartedly answer yes to an invite or request—say if someone asks you to play tennis—then it fits the bill. The aim is to balance out the things you have to do with the things you really want to do and to work those “desserts” into your life. Helpful hint: Scheduling your hobby for the middle of the week instead of the weekend might work well as a stress buster, **Kahn says**.

## 7. Pay Attention to Your Thoughts

You might not be able to control the situations—much less the people—that make you want to tear your hair out this year, but you can control how you react to them. And a lot of that has to do with your outlook. If your mind-set is negative, notes Gina M. Biegel in *The Stress Reduction Workbook for Teens*, you'll probably end up feeling more crazed. Now, you can't always stop a bad thought from popping up in your head, but you can refuse to give it power. The best thing to do when

that happens is to notice it and remember that it's just a thought and nothing more, instead of adding to it.

## 8. Think Win-Win

Your classmates' light doesn't have to be dimmed in order for you to shine brightly. As Sean Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful Teens* reminds us, there's enough success to go around. That means letting go of comparisons and rooting for your peers to win just as much as you would want yourself to do well. Just think of the sportsmanship your coaches encouraged in your basketball games or Little League practices, and apply it to other areas of your life.

## 9. Be Open to Making New Friends

Friendships are what most teens look forward to in the school year, **Kahn notes**. And if you'd like to widen your social circle this year, there are easy ways to do it. Dupont suggests picking at least five people you think might make a good friend, saying hello to them every day for a week and seeing how they respond. That, she says, will indicate who's interested in getting to know you. It might also help to get out of your comfort zone. For example, choose to sit at a different lunch table or find a new lab partner.

## 10. Don't Sleep on Sleep

None of your plans will matter if you're too tired to see them through! Although some teens can get by with 8½ hours, experts say most should get about 9 hours of sleep each night to be at the top of their game. Try to establish a regular shut-eye schedule and stick to it—consistency is key in getting your body in sync. And turn off the computer, TV and cell phone so you're not too keyed up to drift off.