



MAP ACADEMY

**Education Disruption Podcast / 1.12.23**

[Episode 39: Finding the Hope and Motivation to Succeed in High School \(and Life\)](#)

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**Nick:** Welcome back to *Education Disruption*. In this season, we're talking to soon-to-be graduates of Map Academy, a high school located in Plymouth, Massachusetts that does things differently. Part of doing things differently means that graduating looks slightly different at Map Academy. These graduates were given a capstone assignment. They were tasked with reflecting on their journey towards high school graduation, their successes and their struggles, and what ultimately led them to success in graduating. Today we'll hear from Zay.

**Zay:** Hi, my name is Zay. I'm a student at Map Academy. I'm **[00:00:30]** 19 years old and I'm about to graduate.

**Nick:** A quick content warning here. This episode contains profanity as well as talk of drug use and overdose.

**Zay:** In my life, I went through a lot of different troubles throughout my childhood going out of middle school and into high school by getting kicked out a lot, getting expelled from several different schools, and struggling with a bunch of different things. I was just hopeless.

I gave up for school. I got kicked out of this one school, then expelled from another, and then kicked out of another. At this point, I **[00:01:00]** really had no hope for graduating, but I was forced into school because I was still a minor at the time.

I didn't really do anything though. I ended up just slacking off and sitting in the back of the classroom sleeping or not even going into classes. I was seen as a delinquent struggling with depression and addiction. When I was younger, I was going through a bunch of bullshit. I was getting kicked out of the house a lot. I had overdosed when I was 17. I **[00:01:30]** found out that I was pronounced dead for seven minutes. The nurses or something only did the resuscitation because it was procedure. They didn't think I was going to make it.

I was like, "Damn." When I heard that, that shit made me nauseous. I went on some spiritual journey and shit. I was going on hikes and drinking protein shakes and doing push-ups and shit. I don't know what happened to that, but ever since then, I was on a different mentality. I didn't remember a lot. I had blocks in my mind so I had to **[00:02:00]** rebuild a bunch of memories. I felt like a different person.

I started dressing differently and I would look in the mirror, I wouldn't even recognize myself. I felt like a different person. It was weird.

[music]

**Zay:** In the end, getting help through Map Academy was exactly what I needed. As an adult, I can see that now. There was a time where I had no motivation or goals at all and Map helped me to fix that. I finally found a place where I can get help the way I need. Map Academy actually ended up making graduation from high school [00:02:30] possible, which I never thought that it would be. I feel like if I was still 16 or 17 and somebody were to tell me that they were dropping out of high school, I would be all for it.

Honestly, at this point, I feel like I actually see the benefits behind it and the actual responsibility in it. Not just the fact that you have to do it, but the fact that when you do it, it opens up a bunch of different doors and [00:03:00] introduces you to different people and really sets you up for the next step in your life.

**Nick:** For Zay, that next step is pursuing music.

**Zay:** I feel like when I'm making beats in general, I do a lot of stuff unconventionally. I feel like it's easier to be unique than to try and sound like somebody else. Once you have your own sound and you have an audience behind it, people will appreciate it more. Honestly, I never seen myself [00:03:30] being in the limelight or on some like superstar shit. I want to be successful in what I do. I want to be a leader in it, create a community out of this. I want to leave something behind because a lot of people would just make music.

They don't really do anything with it. It's just there. I want mine to be meaningful. I want to leave an impression. Map Academy gave me an outlet to be myself, introduced me to a bunch of brand-new people who I'm very close with now, and the teachers here [00:04:00] actually seem to care about you. On the first day of school here I was talking to this teacher. He just brought a bunch of other kids over and had them sit down next to me and started talking to me.

I was always forced to be outside of my comfort zone. Map introduced me to a bunch of people I definitely wouldn't have the friend group I have not without it, but they also helped me get a job and stuff. They helped me write my portfolio and get my applications made and stuff like that. They really helped me [00:04:30] with adulthood. It's help with not just school in general but life. Stuff you actually need. I needed the comfortable space to be able to get where I am in life and to get what I needed to get done finished.

If you really want to, you can accomplish anything you set your mind and heart to and there will always be others out there to support you on your journey in doing so.

**Nick:** We asked Zay: How does it feel to be graduating?

**Zay:** Feels good I guess. I feel like I should have been [00:05:00] graduated three years ago, but it's relieving. I feel like I can finally leave this state and not have anything to tie me back here. It feels like I got to weight off of my shoulders now. I feel like it's most important for me because on a responsible standpoint, music is a hard profession to make money off of, but it's still a fun thing to do. As a kid, I'm 19, I still have a [00:05:30] lot of time left, so I would rather just do what I want to do with my life for a while.

I'm about to move to Brooklyn with a couple friends of mine. I have a studio out there we go to. I have a manager now, so I'm probably just going to be doing shows and stuff. I still have this scholarship that I didn't even know that I could get until I went here. I have this scholarship to fall back on, like a plan [00:06:00] B. If music fails, I could always just come back here and go to

college, get a nine to five or some shit. I don't know. Thank you, Map. I appreciate you guys for helping me get on track.

**Nick:** We want to say thank you to Zay for sharing that story with us and wish you all the best of luck in your pursuit of music after your graduation. We also want to thank you for taking the time to listen to this episode. If you did enjoy this podcast, please subscribe **[00:06:30]** on your podcast platform of choice and leave a five-star rating. Also, tell a friend who's maybe a professional in education or just interested in doing education differently, spreading the word really helps.

You can find out more about Maps approach to education at [educationdisruption.org](http://educationdisruption.org). You can also find out more about the school at [themapacademy.org](http://themapacademy.org). My name is Nick Tetrault. Our editor is Susie Blair. Our executive producer is Kristen Hughes and this is a Hairpin production.