

## Don't believe the hype

### Parents, congratulate your children on their GCSE results and don't believe the headlines, says 18-year-old Annabel McLeod

It's been three years since I opened my GCSE results but the headlines are still the same - 'Exams get easier', 'School leavers can't read, write or count'.

So what are our parents thinking? In how many homes across the UK will success turn to 'failure'? How many parents will be left thinking their child is not as clever as they were?

Because lets face it, no matter what your results are, you can't win - if you get the highest grades possible, your achievements are undermined because everyone believes exams are getting easier and if you just scrape through, everyone thinks you're stupid.

I only hope that parents remember how hard their children have worked and don't fall into the trap of believing that they are failures.

Think of your child as one of the thousands of people who enter the London marathon every year. Just because they're not first over the finish line, they're still all winners.

The point of having exams is to highlight the student's personal level of attainment and not every child is capable of passing with A or B grades, no matter how much "easier" exams have got.

Whatever headlines read, your child needs your support and congratulations. You're probably thinking 'of course they will get my support and love' but no one is immune to what they read in the news.

If your child comes to you with their results and you feel a twinge of disappointment, maybe its because you had an unrealistic idea of how well your child could do, because you were hoping for too much. This kind of pressure will only make them feel bad about themselves.

I think parents see a child's results as a reflection of themselves, and young people see their results as a way to make parents proud.

Feeling a failure makes people either more determined or it totally de-motivates them. If at the GCSE stage you feel de-motivated, it's unlikely you will go on to A levels and do what you might otherwise have been capable of.

But for those that do go on to do A Levels you can bet that in two years time when you get your next lot of results, you'll be told again that you didn't do well enough. And you can bet the exams will be even easier than they are now.

No matter what the papers say, the jump from GCSE to A level is a big one. The next few months are a crucial time for parents, if they want to really support their children, because this is when they are most likely to fall.

So remember your child's GCSE exam results will not be the determining factor in whether your child succeeds in life, it's your reaction to them that will make all the difference.

### About this article

This story was produced by Annabel McLeod, 18. It was published by [The Guardian](#).

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