

Peer pressure's your friend

Forget what your mom told you—it's good to do things because everyone else is



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The educational system in this country is failing our children once again, and as a result, thousands of students in our universities are only getting a sub-par postsecondary experience.

I'm not referring to poor math classes in high schools or easily cheated university exams—I'm talking about the insidious campaign against peer pressure that has convinced all of us to denouncing a practice that we should be embracing.

Now, I'm not saying you should blindly follow the mob. Of course you shouldn't abandon your morals and self-respect to sleep with the hot guy/girl in your class, nor should you tie a cinder block to your cock/tits just to be cool. But to totally denounce a practice that is essentially an evolved form of truth or dare is lunacy.

Think back: you won't be able to recall anyone campaigning against truth or dare, and that's because it's so damn fun. This is the reputation that peer pressure should be enjoying as well.

Think about the last really awesome night you had—the one where you lied about where you were going,

got splashed, ended up seeing Snoop Dogg somehow, and still made it out of wherever you crashed early enough the next morning to make to your 8am class. Chances are, someone peer-pressured you into that one.

Before that, you were probably saying to yourself, "Damn, that Friday morning lecture is going to come real early—I better get a good night's sleep," and then your friends called you a lame-ass, and you thought better of that early bedtime.

Bringing out your inner partier isn't all that peer pressure is good for: a sense of camaraderie and brotherhood is born from it as well.

It was just the one decision—and perhaps a well-timed tequila shot or two—that kept you from missing the best night of partying you'd have all semester, and it's all thanks to peer pressure.

Bringing out your inner partier isn't all that peer pressure is good for: a sense of camaraderie and brotherhood is born from it as well. I'm willing to bet that your closest group of friends have dragged you away from the solitude of studying and taken you out to a K-Y wrestling match on

more than one occasion. And that's part of the reason you're all BFFs: you know when the others need to be pressured into having some fun, or just to distress. And besides, the next time around, you'll be the one getting them out of some sissy Saturday afternoon trip to Bed, Bath, and Beyond with their significant others and out to enjoy some beers with the group.

Finally, peer pressure can help make you a better person altogether. Sometimes, there are things that we want to do, but a mixture of fear and apprehension freezes us in our tracks. Sometimes, we need our peers around us, pressuring us into doing something we really want to do, so that we may grow as people and conquer our fears. It may be as significant as getting over a deep-seated phobia or as small as trying to master your very first beer bong, but whatever the case, you've got peer support to guide you through so that when you come out the other side, you can triumphantly proclaim, "Fill it up again! It's so good when it hits your lips!"

University students one and all, it's time to embrace peer pressure. It's time to cast off the implications that it'll ruin your life or result in you jumping off bridges. It's time for all of you to join me for some late-night streaking through the Quad—to show our support for affordable student housing, of course.

Come on, you know you *wanna*.

Microsoft's pushing hard to market it—but I just don't care about Master Chief



MIKE
KENDRICK

"Maybe this is why I could never consider myself a true *Halo* gamer. Microsoft has done such a good job of plastering Master Chief's image on every Burger King wrapper and Mountain Dew can consumed by the 20-something crowd that it's no longer about the game, but the circus surrounding it."

If you're reading this right now, chances are you fall into one of three categories: you haven't managed to get your hands on a copy of *Halo 3* yet, you've already finished *Halo 3*, or, like me, you simply don't care about *Halo 3*.

Don't get me wrong, I'm a gamer—which, in and of itself, makes me stand out in the third category more than a Nintendo fanboy at a *Halo 3* midnight launch party. In fact, not long ago, I dragged two fellow Gateway editors along with me to Best Buy to brave the harsh, cold, midnight weather of January in Edmonton, just so that I could be one of the first to overload Blizzard's servers for the launch of the *World of Warcraft* expansion. But no matter how many times I've tried, I just can't allow myself to fall victim to the cool, plasticky embrace of Microsoft's killer franchise.

My quandary may have started three years ago when 3's predecessor, the aptly entitled *Halo 2*, was released. Around this point, Microsoft was just starting to understand and appreciate the value of a title as popular as the one they'd created.

The original *Halo* was an unexpectedly great success. This isn't to say that its developers didn't anticipate

the game's popularity—rather, its success brought with it some unexpected side effects that sparked changes in the gaming industry and the way in which publishers do business.

The video games industry has gone to great lengths to legitimize itself in recent years. With yearly industry profits creeping ever closer to Hollywood's annual income, along with a new generation of console hardware caught in the midst of yet another battle for supremacy, video games are a mainstream form of entertainment now more than ever. What was once an activity reserved for adolescent boys and basement-dwelling troglodytes is now a full-fledged market, as an entire generation of gamers enters adulthood with adult tastes spending allowances.

As a result, big players in the industry have capitalized on these new opportunities. Technology giants like Microsoft—who only entered the gaming world in the last generation of console wars—have not only the manpower but the excess capital to invest in multi-million dollar projects, with millions more sunk into the marketing machines behind their games.

Not only have their expenditures

worked on the gamers, but they've also dragged in thousands of new casual players, from middle-aged businessmen to beer-swilling frat boys. I said I'm not a *Halo* fan, but even I've taken part in a night or two of bouts of swords-only Oddball in Midship.

Maybe this is why I could never consider myself a true *Halo* gamer. Microsoft has done such a good job of plastering Master Chief's image on every Burger King wrapper and Mountain Dew can consumed by the 20-something crowd that it's no longer about the game, but the circus surrounding it.

No offense, *Halo* players, but how many of you can honestly call yourselves true gamers? When was the last time you conquered the evil Xen aliens using only a crowbar and a handful of Snarks, rescued Zelda from the clutches of a lighting-spewing 16-bit Ganon, or collected your Blood Elf warlock's entire Tier 5 dungeon set?

Perhaps I'm just bitter for *Halo*'s lack of a mouse and keyboard, but I'll sleep soundly with my plush goomba any night before getting lost in the labyrinthine halls of the Covenant's symmetrical single-textured command centres.



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