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Help Me! • Heads, I Win • Snitch • Paintball







# PLEASE HELP ME!

By Deborah T. Kinnebrew

**L**issette! Where have you been, girl? I haven't seen you in weeks! You keep on skipping classes, and you won't graduate."

Lissette laughed. "Calm down, Chrissy; you sound just like my mom. Don't you remember what I told you before spring break?"

Chrissy frowned. "About that older guy?"

"I'm in love, Chrissy. I'm in love. I love the way he walks, the way he talks. I even love the way he looks when he gets angry." Lissette let out a long sigh and smiled. "I just can't believe he's mine. He is sooo sexy."

"I guess being in love made you forget you have friends."

Lissette giggled. "I didn't forget; it's just that Dan doesn't want to share me with anyone."

"Well, just forget him for tonight and go to the JV game with me. We'd better hurry, because it starts in 15 minutes. The varsity game starts at 7:00. In case you haven't heard, we're up for the championship, so everyone will be there."

"If I go, I have to be home by 7:00." Lissette sounded serious.

"Why? Is your mom pulling back on you for missing school?"

"No, Dan wants me home when he calls."

"Tell him to call your cell."

"Can't. He took it. Said I don't need it now that I have him."

"Who does he think he is? Your dad?" Chrissy shook her head. "I couldn't stand to have a boyfriend like that."

"I know it sounds crazy,

Chrissy, but it makes me feel good to have someone who really cares about me. Sometimes he does get a little jealous if a guy just looks at me, but that's because he doesn't want to lose me."

"All right, just come to the JV game. You can leave before it's over and get home in time for his call."

"OK. But if I start having too much fun, remind me about the time. The last thing I want to do is make Dan angry."

By the time the two friends reached the high school gym, the seats were already filling up. The excitement in the air was contagious. Students were walking around, laughing, talking, and generally enjoying themselves.

"Chrissy, let's sit down in the front row so that when I get ready to leave I won't have to climb over a lot of people."

"Oh, come on. Everybody we know is sitting on the top bleachers. When you sit up high you can see the game and everybody who walks in. Come on."

Lissette thought about that rationale for a moment and decided that it really wasn't a bad idea, since she never knew when or if Dan would show up.

When the JV game ended, Chrissy looked over at her friend and said, "It's 7:00, Lissette. I thought you had to go home."

"I do, but I want to see the beginning of the championship game. I'd forgotten how much fun I had with you guys. Dan never likes to go out or do anything. He just wants to be with me."



While someone played music on a CD player, Chrissy and Lissette along with the other fans began singing and clapping their hands. They were all having a great time, but suddenly Chrissy noticed that the expression on Lissette's face had changed.

"What's wrong, Lissette?"

But she didn't answer. Chrissy looked at the entrance to the bleachers and saw an unfamiliar face. The guy, who appeared to be older than the rest of the students, was wearing a black leather coat. His arms were folded across his chest, and as he looked up in their direction, he motioned with his head for Lissette to come to him.

"Is that him?" Chrissy asked.

Lissette nodded.

"Tell him to come up. He can sit with us. There's enough room."

"I can't, Chrissy. I gotta go," Lissette mumbled as she quickly grabbed her coat.

"Wait, Lissette, I'll go with you."

"No, that would make it worse."

"Worse?" Before Lissette took another step, Chrissy gently grabbed her arm and whispered into her ear, "Has he ever put his hands on you?"

Without looking up, Lissette replied softly, "He only did it once. He'd had a few beers, and I argued with him. It was really all my fault. He was sorry about it later. He even cried; we both did. I really have to go, Chrissy. I'll call you tomorrow."

Chrissy watched as Lissette hurried down the steps and over to Dan. But she noticed that as soon as Dan walked past the security guard, he took Lissette's arm and twisted it behind her back. Chrissy thought she saw him kick Lissette with his knee, but since there were so many people moving about, it was difficult to be sure.

Two months went by before Chrissy heard from Lissette again. Answering the phone one evening, she barely recognized the desperate voice on the other end. It didn't sound at all like her friend.

"Chrissy?"

"Yes. Is that you, Lissette? It's been a long time. Are you still with that crazy guy?"

Lissette began to cry, "Chrissy, please help me. I'm so scared. He won't even let

me see any of my family or friends."

Chrissy paused, then asked, "Where is he now?"

"He went out with his friends. But sometimes when he says he's going out, he comes back in five minutes. I'm sure he's checking on me. He's told me that if I try to leave him, he'll really hurt me."

"Lissette, listen to me. Grab what you can and in 30 seconds I want you out of that apartment. Get on a bus, take a cab, or run. Just get to my house, now!"

"But what if he . . ."

"If I don't see you in an hour, I'm calling the police. And I mean it! So you'd better hurry."

Although it wasn't an easy decision for Lissette to make, she took her friend's advice. And with the help and support of her family and friends, she's recovering from the traumatic relationship.

Lissette is happy with her life now, and she is very aware of the telltale signs of an abuser. Now when she meets a guy who wants to date her, she listens to her intuition. She has learned that by trusting and respecting herself, she is less likely to find herself in a situation in which she'll be disrespected or abused by others. ■

## I.D. It ABUSE

**National Domestic Violence  
Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE**

In a healthy relationship there is mutual respect and trust. You communicate, have fun together, and allow each other room to grow. If you find yourself in a situation in which there is physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse and you are afraid of your partner or what they might do, help is available. You can call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE. However, if you are in immediate danger, call 9-1-1.



# My Boyfriend HITS ME When He's Drunk

Sometimes when my boyfriend downs a few beers, he turns ugly and has a tendency to hit me out of anger. Is this normal for those who drink? We are both 17. Tasha

Alcohol has been known to change a person's behavior and attitude from good to bad in a split second. There are literally thousands of people in prison who have committed crimes, including assault, while under the influence of alcohol and other mood-altering drugs. Since your boyfriend is underage, he has no business consuming alcohol. He also has no business abusing you. My advice is to lose this guy and find someone who will treat you the way you deserve—with dignity and respect. Someone who understands the importance of a healthy relationship. Someone who doesn't drink or do drugs.

I'm 14, and think I might have a drug problem. What are the telltale signs? Anderia

There are several signs and symptoms that can identify a drug problem. You can almost bet you definitely have a problem if substances are causing one or more of the following: poor grades or

school absenteeism; family, social, or legal impairment; health problems; anxiety or depression; drastic change in friends or activities; loss of values and morals; change in weight, sleep patterns, eating habits, etc. Keep in mind that even if you aren't experiencing any of these symptoms now, you can look forward to them in the near future if you continue using drugs. Save yourself a world of misery and stop now.

Ever since I can remember, both my parents have had an alcohol problem. I'd be willing to bet that they're alcoholics. Growing up in this household has been a nightmare. Is this a problem for other kids, too, or am I the only one? Ramone  
No, Ramone, you are not alone. According to the National Association for Children of Alcoholics, we know that there are about 11 million children in the U.S. with alcoholic parents. The most rewarding way to deal with this problem is to find a support group of peers whom you can identify with. Check the phone book for Alateen meetings or contact your school or church to see if they offer support groups.

Most of all, talk to someone you trust about how you feel about this issue. For more information about assistance, check out the Web site of the National Association for Children of Alcoholics at [www.nacoa.org](http://www.nacoa.org). You might not be able to change your parents and how they live their lives, but you can change yours for the better.

School stresses me out so often that I want to get high just to relax. Any suggestions? Joe  
I can understand school being tough enough to cause stress, but is it really worth it to use substances that can bring on more problems and stresses? Using drugs to relax is a temporary fix. The long-term effects are what hurt the most. There are many healthy, inexpensive, and safe ways to take the edge off a busy school schedule, such as walk, work out, listen to music, read, and journal. 📖

**G**o ahead, ask Gary his advice on some of those big questions. Gary Somdahl is a dad who puts his skills as a licensed youth chemical dependency counselor to the real-world test all the time. His latest book is *Drugs and Kids*.

Send your questions to:

**ASK GARY**

Listen magazine  
55 West Oak Ridge Drive  
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740.



# HEADS, I WIN

"... and tails, you lose," Michael called as he flipped the shiny silver coin high in the air. The stakes were higher than usual—a date for one of them with a special girl.

The circle of onlookers tightened. All eyes followed the flight of the quarter till it hit the ground. Steve and Mark, two of Michael's best friends and closest to the toss, jumped ahead of him while Steve covered it. As he slowly removed his hand a loud chorus of moans sounded from the crowd.

"Aah, man!"

"Not again!"

"How does he do it?"

One by one the amazed bystanders drifted away shaking their heads. Steve and Mark remained.

With a wide grin Michael said, "I told you guys—there's an angel on my shoulder—I can't lose. And remember, Steve, our Madalyn agreed to attend the prom with one of us—I won the date fair and square. Hey, I'm starved! Let's go! We've got just enough time to grab a bite before the game."

Steve, resigned to his loss, shrugged his shoulders and followed.

Mark asked, "Who's driving?"

"I guess I am." Steve waved his keys in the air and said, "You drove last... the last time Mike took us. That time it was a game of blackjack."

Mark nodded.

"No, guys. I've been totally lucky. Why don't I drive and treat

you to a pizza?" And Mike confidently added, "When I win big on the game tonight, I'm good for a dinner at a restaurant of your choice—after all, aren't we best friends?"

With that, the three guys walked to Michael's gleaming Firebird. Steve said, "Yeah, remember when we met in the second grade? We nearly drove Miss Haskell crazy, like a few of our other teachers." They roared with laughter and piled into the car.

Mark, still mulling over Michael's lucky streak, said, "Whadda you mean, if you win big on the game? Don't tell me you've got a bet on the big NCAA championship tournament. What's your connection?"

Michael cranked up the music, sidestepping further questions. Ditching all the cares of the day, they sang along with Generation J, beating out the music's rhythm on the dashboard and doors. The crisp weather and effects of the basketball hoopla energized them. It would be a big evening at Michael's house watching the basketball tournament opener on Michael's giant-screen TV.

He never got around to telling his friends about how much he won that evening. Nor did he tell them gambling had become an intriguing, even profitable, sideline. Since he maintained straight A's and a berth on the tennis and debate teams, no one ever noticed or complained.

The real payoff, however, was more than cash. There was a strong physical response, kind of like that first kiss, or getting his first set of car keys.

The immediate experience of heightened excitement acted as reinforcement, and drew him back for one more "rush."

Finally it was prom night, and Michael's coveted date with Madalyn. She was radiant.

Michael had big plans, a gambling boat excursion with other couples. "It's all set. I found out we have to be only 18 to gamble on the boat." Madalyn was excited.

Michael was a little disappointed when Steve and Mark decided to take their dates to the big all-night party. He had always envisioned they would spend that evening together, but he was hepped up over the prospect of introducing Madalyn to the world of "gaming."

Since Michael had previously visited a casino, he told Madalyn what they could expect. "When I was 11, my folks took me to Las Vegas."

"Your folks took you to Las Vegas?" Madalyn echoed. "Cool." Obviously she was in awe.

"Yep, we went for a family vacation. There were video arcades for children just like the ones at the big people's casino. Slot machines looked and worked like the real thing, but offered prizes instead of money."

"I never heard of parents doing anything like that with their kids," said Madalyn's closest friend, Beth. "My folks would crater if I even mentioned such a thing."

"Well, we went, and it was just harmless entertainment, but I have to tell you I really got a charge out of the slots. They kind of get under your skin."

It was just as Michael had promised and much more. The boat's glitz and glamour were breathtaking. And dice were rolled to satisfy a pulsating, greedy desire for a "big win." More often that big win turned sour.

For Michael, the magic of this and other such evenings would





By Jan Tickner

ultimately become a nightmare. Things began falling apart when he got into college.

At homecoming Michael stood eyeing Steve and Mark. "Man, is it good to see you two. It's been too long. I want to hear how it's going with you both."

He didn't tell them of his life at Indiana University now enhanced by beepers, cell phones, the latest Vegas spreadsheets, and four bookies. Nor did he want them to know that he was a round-the-clock gambling junkie with a major addiction to beating the odds.

"Have either of you seen Madalyn lately? She and I have lost touch."

Steve said, "I saw her one weekend when I was home. She's still good-looking, but kinda flaky—not like her old sweet self. She talked a lot about prom night, and said that the venture on the 'floating casino' was memorable—that she lost money but was hooked!"

"When I teased and asked if that was her port of entry into the gray world of gambling she cut me off and left."

"I'm sorry to hear that. I'll have to call her sometime, but I stay pretty busy." Michael knew he and Madalyn had a lot in common.

"Yeah. We want to hear all about you."

Michael realized they expected some glowing report. After all, wasn't he named as "the one most likely to succeed"? His friends would never believe his \$100,000 "wild winter week," trying to live up to that title.

His attempts to recoup a brutal string of losses ended when he dodged a bookie and faced his distraught parents. Remorseful, he promised to attend Gamblers Anonymous. But it was a short stint.

Soon back into betting, he went to Vegas, where he used student loan money to chase \$30,000 in losses, then his entire gambling stake—another \$13,000.

That was it! There was only one answer. He bought a quart of vodka and a bottle of aspirin, ready to place his final bet—suicide! It was all or nothing! Go for broke. Three days later he woke up in a rundown Vegas dump. Sick and desperate, he managed to call his parents.

That miserable awakening brought him back to the faith of his childhood.

Today, working in a rehab center, Michael counsels others like himself on the addictive, pervasive life of gambling. He tells his story, cautioning them about the ever-present threat of relapse. "It's a compulsion . . . it's an illness that can kill you."

"If you and I don't sound that warning, especially to teens, who will?" Michael asks.

Somehow that message must be conveyed to all the Michaels and Madalyns of the world. ■





**SHE LOVES me;  
SHE LOVES me NOT**



**D**id you ever ask a daisy for advice on love and romance? Remember removing the petals of a daisy to determine whether or not the “love” of that moment in your life truly cared for you? Not a very accurate way to find out the truth, is it? Wouldn't it be nice if life stayed that simple? Are there any easy answers? Sometimes it's easier to tell what love isn't than what it is. Consider the following examples. Any true love found here?

Eric swears that his insane jealousy proves he passionately loves Robin. He goes into a tirade whenever she merely talks with another guy. When Clint spends too much time away from Erin, she pouts and fumes for days until he apologizes. Cheri belittles Sam for his own good, but she vows that she loves him. Isaac slaps Ingrid around to get her to “shape up.”

Love is patient and kind; it protects, not abuses the other person; it builds up and never tears down. Whether verbal or physical, abuse is never love. Abuse is a form of violence against the other person. It is a need to control someone.

Studies show that 1 in 10 teens will be in a harmful, abusive relationship. If any of these situations sound all too familiar, maybe you're in an abusive relationship now, or you know someone who is. To find out for yourself, answer the following questions:


- Are you sometimes afraid of the person you are dating?
- Do they call you names, or make you feel stupid, or tell you that you can't do anything right?
- Do they say no one else would go out with you?
- Do they tell you what you can and can't do or whom you can or can't talk with?
- Do you feel cut off from family or friends?
- Do you feel that if you disagree you will get into trouble?
- Does the person say it's your fault when they hurt you?
- Does the person shove, grab, hit, pinch, hold you down, or kick you?
- Do you feel you are being pushed into sexual activities against your will?

- Is the person you're seeing really nice one time and really mean another?
- Does the person make frequent promises to change?
- Do they pretend they never hurt you?
- Do they tell you that you're making too big a deal out of it?

**If you answer yes to any of these questions, your partner is being abusive toward you. You do have choices. You can:**

- call your local crisis line to get information and help.
- attend a domestic violence support group (they're free).
- go to a domestic violence shelter if need be.
- talk to a teacher, counselor, or some other adult who may be able to help you.
- take a self-defense course.
- take legal action against your abuser if necessary.

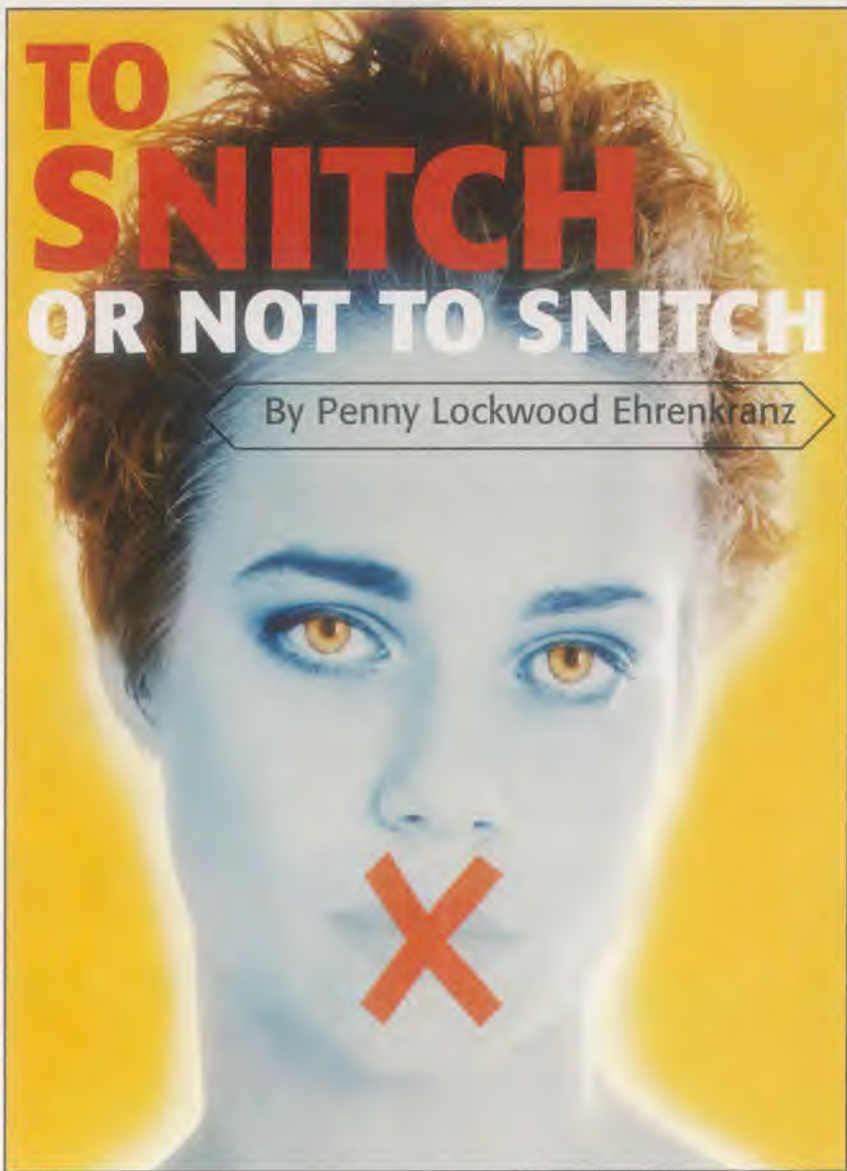
**If a friend of yours is in such a relationship, you can:**

- remind them that it's not their fault. They don't deserve to be treated that way.
- believe them.
- keep it to yourself. Gossip could put them in serious physical danger.
- refrain from rushing them to do anything they aren't ready to do.
- encourage them to build a wide support with family and friends.
- tell them you understand why they find it hard to leave such a relationship.
- encourage them to get medical help if they've been injured. Often a serious injury is worse than they might at first think.
- encourage them to take a self-defense course.
- give them information about abuse from the local crisis line, school counselor, or the National Domestic Violence Hotline Web site [www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org). 



# TO SNITCH OR NOT TO SNITCH

By Penny Lockwood Ehrenkranz



Getty Images

Recently at an Oregon high school, a student brought a BB gun to a basketball game. Several of his friends encouraged him to shoot them in the foot, "just to see what it feels like." He obliged. The next day he brought the gun to school and shot a few more friends in the foot.

Because his friends didn't want to "get him in trouble," they decided not to snitch. Only after one of the students told his parents, who contacted the school, was the student's backpack and locker searched. The gun and a knife were found. Later he was charged

with two felony counts of possession of a weapon at school.

Was this a school where kids were afraid to talk to their teachers? The teachers didn't think so. In fact, the day before, Tom Wells, a teacher, had said, "We have a very large school. We do our best to break the school down into smaller chunks to provide students as many opportunities as possible to find one teacher they can connect with and feel comfortable enough to confide in." Although Mr. Wells believed the students felt safe talking with the staff, clearly they feared reprisals and opted not

to tell what was happening.

School violence has been occurring at an alarming rate. In 1999 there were five separate incidents of targeted school violence in which one or more students or staff were injured or killed. Because of the rise in school violence, the U.S. Secret Service and Department of Education did a "Safe School Initiative" study. But they found no simple solution as to why the attacks occurred. What they did find was that when students feel safe and know to whom to turn in times of crisis, school violence is less likely to occur.

In the 37 attacks studied between 1974 and 2000, 75 percent of the attackers were White, and 25 percent came from other racial and ethnic backgrounds. Forty-one percent of the attackers did well with their studies. Many of them socialized with mainstream students. Only one quarter of those studied were considered part of the fringe element in school. Although one third thought of themselves as loners, almost half were involved in school activities such as sports and clubs. The one thing these kids did have in common was that they felt "bullied, persecuted, or injured by others."

What can you as a teen do to help prevent school violence in your school?

Ariel, a Westview high school student, spearheaded a gay-straight alliance at her school. She says, "I felt like there was a large amount of homophobia in our high school, and it bothered me that this population of students might be targeted for bullying and abuse more than others. We started a small campaign to get teachers to put up 'Safe Zone' posters. Just putting up the posters really helped, because



it got people talking about the issue." Ariel's initiative at her school is making Westview a safer place for at least one segment of the school population.

Steve Hanamura, president of Hanamura Consulting, Inc., of Aloha, Oregon, conducts workshops in schools to promote diversity and eliminate hate and prejudice. His article, "Warning Signs on the Road to Destruction," published by Diversity Central ([www.diversitycentral.com](http://www.diversitycentral.com)), lists a series of emotions students may go through before conducting acts of violence. Steve calls them "Seven Steps to Hate": irritation, frustration, anger, rage, agitation, numbness, and hate.

Steve also believes that one of the best ways to control violence in schools is through diversity clubs in which students are "shown a vision of a safe school environment."

He says, "Students would commit to stop any and all disrespect-

ful language" at school and would develop a process for addressing hate problems. Ideally, students in these clubs would recruit other students who would then recruit other students, until a safe school exists. As a group, these students could plan activities to keep the safe atmosphere idea in motion.

Sho Shigeoka, a youth project coordinator, works with at-risk minority students at his school. In his classroom he has ongoing discussions about "conflicts, especially in terms of race and ethnicity." Sho thinks issues of safety should be addressed in classes, clubs, and other activities. When asked what students could do to create a safe school environment, Sho replied, "They need to assume leadership roles in creating activities school-wide, and talk to counselors and teachers about developing a curriculum to address these issues."

This is what Ariel did at her school—took a leadership role.

What other things can kids do in their schools?

Ariel suggests, "I think a peer mediation session is a great idea, if it seems that the environment is seriously risky or needs work for kids to feel safe. Students need to have their own motivation to keep the peace at their schools. I think it's great to see kids get out there and start something. To make noise that serves as a wake-up call for students to be noticed and helped. But that has to come with a comfortable, beneficial, and healthy environment in the first place."

According to Safe School Initiative findings, in a school setting in which there is respect, and kids have at least one adult with whom they have a positive rapport, students can develop open relationships in which they aren't afraid to share their concerns, and problems

can be addressed before they become serious. In some schools, such as the first example cited, there is a sense among students that telling grown-ups is snitching and breaks an unwritten code of silence. This needs to be addressed before a student can feel safe in their school.

Eloise Poole teaches at a small rural Oregon school of 1,000 students. She had several in-service days in which experts spoke about bullying. A positive aspect available at this school is the number of alternative programs available for students who do not fit in the regular classroom. Mrs. Poole says, "This is a positive for the entire campus, for kids who are angry or unhappy with traditional schools can be given options." In the "Threat Assessment Guide," the U.S. Secret Service and Department of Education agree. Suspending a student who poses a potential threat may leave the student feeling that they have no other options. Alternative schools can give the student a new start. If your school has access to an alternative school and you feel you have a friend who would benefit, encourage them to talk to their counselor.

Students can help other students by being good listeners. If a friend is talking about death, suicide, or shooting someone, pay attention. Sure, they might just be fantasizing, but they might also be seriously considering a violent act. Don't be afraid to tell someone. Even if your friend might get in trouble with the school administrators, isn't that better than seeing them in jail or possibly dead?

Ana Quinn, a Portland middle school teacher, says it best, "Go to your counselor, or discuss it with student government, or your teachers." Stay connected. Sometimes snitching can save lives. ■

### **For more information on this topic check out these resources:**

- "The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative," U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C., May 2002.
- "Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates," U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C., May 2002.
- "Warning Signs on the Road to Destruction," Steve Hanamura, published by Diversity Central. [www.diversitycentral.com](http://www.diversitycentral.com).





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# WHY DON'T WE DO SOMETHING?

BY MICHELE DEPPE

Got a cause?

I know. That sounds like a marketing slogan worthy of a T-shirt. Seriously, though, think about it for a minute. Is there an issue that you care about? Does it seem as though no one else is doing anything about it?

Cameron Dary, from Waupun, Wisconsin, had a cause. But no one else seemed to care. At least it seemed that way until he spoke up.

"There was this railroad track that I thought was unsafe," Cameron explained. "The railroad was close to a high school, so there were a lot of people walking by the track before and after school. Trees grew so thick around there that you couldn't see if a train was even coming. Plus there were automobiles driving over the tracks that didn't come to a stop before crossing the tracks because there was just a stop sign jammed into a

cement bucket. And it kept falling over."

Cameron recognized that pedestrians in a hurry, quick-appearing trains, and speeding cars all sharing a small, wooded area was a dangerous mix. So he decided to do something.

"A bunch of kids and I from my school, who are all part of the Do Something group, wrote a letter to the Commissioner of Railroads, and then we went to talk to City Hall," Cameron recalls. "I couldn't believe what happened. The city really listened to us and totally improved the area. The trees are now cleared away so that you can see up and down the track; there are real stop signs now on both sides of the tracks, and a sidewalk for students to walk on. Plus, a police officer patrols the area now.

"I really thought that the city would tell us that they weren't interested in the problem, and to just



go away, because I figured that they didn't care. But they did care, and they fixed it. It was so cool!"

Cameron says, "It made me feel that I *could* do something to change the world, because I tried something, and it worked."

Actor Andrew Shue, cofounder of Do Something, says that quality education isn't just about promoting being a good student; it should also emphasize the importance of being a good citizen.

Do Something inspires young people to identify problems, take action, and celebrate their successes. An annual awards celebration is held in New York City, and it is there that winners receive recognition and a \$5,000 grant to continue their school-based community work. "The Do Something award recognizes outstanding students who are taking action to change the world around them," says Shue. "We want to give young people a voice in their community and help them take positive action."

One recipient of this year's award was 13-year-old Audrianna Galvin, of Chatsworth, California. She was concerned because a local school was short on funds and didn't have proper supplies.

"I really wanted to help them so that the students could do well in school," says Audrianna. She and her friends in the Do Something group at Sierra Canyon Middle School came up with a plan and launched a drive to collect supplies. They were able to provide computers, sports equipment, and books to 250 disadvantaged students in the Los Angeles area.

"I couldn't believe what we were able to do, and how people wanted to help us! We just needed to get things started," says Audrianna.

"It was really exciting to travel to New York City to receive the award," she says. "My mom went with me, and we met my grandmother and great-grandmother there. It was a special time." The event was sponsored by *Rolling Stone* magazine, and the winners were selected from 11,000 schools nationwide. Audrianna was recognized along with four other students, as well as singer-songwriter Jewel, hip-hop icon Russell Simmons, and U.S. senator Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) for their efforts to improve communities.

Cameron and Audrianna have really made a difference by belonging to a Do Something club. You could get the same kind of support, and be on your way to making the world a better place. Check to see if Do Something has a program at your school, and if not, start one. The Do Something Web site hosts information about how to begin a program in your

school, and you can chat with other participants about their experiences.

Not sure what your cause is? Do Something's Web site is also bursting with ideas that can help you uncover what is most important to you . . . whether it is speaking out about racism, addressing hunger and homelessness in your community, or helping to coach and care for little kids who need a big sister or big brother.

Want to stand up for positive change and be a star? Then do something! Christina Aguilera and her mom helped domestic violence victims by volunteering at their local shelter. Soul diva Mary J. Blige lends her talents to raise money for AIDS. James Van Der Beek, actor and star of *Dawson's Creek*, works with Do Something to speak out against school violence.

Still wonder if you can make a difference? Audrianna Galvin wasn't sure, but she decided to try. "I never thought that our efforts would help so much. I have learned that anything is possible if you believe in yourself. Before I joined Do Something, I didn't have the self-confidence that I do now. Do Something has given me the courage to speak up. I have learned to be a leader."

Start believing that you can make a difference. Because you can. You *can* do something!

**HOT LINK:** [www.dosomething.org](http://www.dosomething.org)

## FACT ATTACK

There are seven violent attacks played on television in one hour, and more than 80 percent of TV programs have some form of violence. What would Philo T. Farnsworth, who got the idea for the television picture tube when he was a 14-year-old farm boy, think if he knew that children watching violent programs on television are more prone to grow up being aggressive? See [www.philo75.com](http://www.philo75.com).

Since 1995, more television stations are making an effort to limit violent programs, and since 1999, you can see more nonviolent programs on television. The good news is violent crimes have decreased 1.4 percent during 2002. [www.alllands.com/Kids/childtelevision\\_twd\\_gn.htm](http://www.alllands.com/Kids/childtelevision_twd_gn.htm)



**C**lub drugs is a general term for a number of illicit drugs most commonly found at nightclubs or raves. They are popular usually because of the erroneous idea that they are not as addicting or as damaging as some other drugs. On the list of club drugs are LSD and PCP, which experienced a great deal of popularity during the 1960s and 1970s.

Since club drug users usually do not have a regular "dealer," they are more at risk for getting drugs that are not what they are supposed to be or that may have some other drug added that can cause serious mental and/or physical complications.

## LSD

Albert Hofmann first produced LSD in a laboratory in 1938.

The ergot fungus on rye, from which LSD was produced, was known to cause problems as far back as the Middle Ages. It wasn't until the seventeenth century, however, that the cause of these problems was discovered.

Some street names for LSD are acid, hits, microdots, tabs, and trips.

Like other psychoactive drugs, how LSD affects a particular user depends on a variety of things. But needless to say, LSD's effects are very unpredictable. For instance, more than one emotion may occur at the same time and feelings become greatly exaggerated. In addition, the situation may become life-threatening, as there is a loss of decision-making ability and a loss of common sense.

Many reactions associated with the LSD experience make it extremely hazardous to combine LSD use and driving. For one thing, the slowing of time, one of the effects of the drug, can radically alter the user's perception of speed.

Physical effects include dilated pupils, higher body temperature, and increased heart rate and blood pressure. Sweating, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, dry mouth, and tremors can also occur.

Another problem is that LSD may be stored in the body for a long time and then unexpectedly released into the system days, weeks, or even months later. In

1950s as a human anesthetic. However, it was not long before its medical use was stopped because it produced postoperative thought disturbances and agitation in some patients. Presently its only legal use is in veterinary medicine as an immobilizing agent for very large animals, such as elephants.

PCP is illicitly marketed under a number of other names, includ-

# DRUGS— DELIGHT OR DEATH?

By Loma G. Davies Silcott

fact, flashbacks, spontaneous recurrences of an LSD experience when off the drug, have been reported up to 20 months after LSD was last taken.

One user who has had ongoing problems from using LSD is Joan. She was a very bright student who had experimented several times with LSD. Joan states that she feels her ability to remember and learn has decreased. She now has a problem putting thoughts together, and her friends have noticed a distinct lessening in the size of her vocabulary.

Although the prospect of an LSD "trip" may be intriguing, it is not worth the risk. Often it does not deliver what is promised and can leave users wishing they had not tried it. But it's too late; the substance is already in their body.

## PCP

PCP was developed in the

ing angel dust, supergrass, and killer weed. In its pure form PCP is a white powder that readily dissolves in water. However, on the street its color may vary as other ingredients are added. Often other drugs are misrepresented as PCP and, conversely, PCP may be added to marijuana and other drugs without the consumer's knowledge.

"Most people using PCP have no idea they're using it," warns Dr. Barry Spiegel of Rosecrance Treatment Center, Rockford, Illinois.

Mike, 16, was just such an unsuspecting user, according to an article in the July 22, 2002, issue of *Newsweek*. In fact, when he bought some marijuana at his high school he had no idea what it was supposed to smell like. And it gave off such a strong chemical odor that he hid it in the attic insulation at home.

But when he smoked it, he



thought that the pot seemed more potent than he'd expected.

The next day he was still having trouble walking. It was some time later that he learned that the pot had been "wet-laced" with PCP and embalming fluid. He states, "It made me feel as though I wanted to hurt people. I felt as though everybody was after me."

Mike was shocked to learn he had smoked marijuana laced with PCP. He is now in treatment and has sworn off smoking any more mysterious substances. Mike says, "I never want to do PCP again." A lesson learned the hard way—it's just not worth the risk.

Even small doses can affect a normal individual. For instance, pain and touch perception are

reduced significantly and communication is hindered. The person may also run aimlessly, do bizarre things, or even strike bystanders. In addition, disorientation of time, place, and even the person can occur. Or the user may suddenly become cataleptic (unable to move, speak, or sense). Furthermore, thought processes are slowed, and the user's attention span is disrupted.

Since many of today's PCP users are too young to remember the havoc the drug caused the last time around, they may not realize the dangers connected with its use. However, in Houston, Texas, at the Ben Taub Hospital, in an extremely busy emergency room, Dr. Janice Zimmerman knows

about these dangers, as she treats up to five PCP patients every day—most of them between the ages of 17 and 25.

And then there's Cynthia Hepler, administration manager at a Houston drug-treatment center, who estimates that 40 percent of her admissions are young PCP users. "It started being used in the inner city, but it is hitting the suburbs," says Hepler. "PCP can make users so delusional that they become like a hand grenade with the pin

missing," says Jim Parker of the Do It Now Foundation, a drug-education group. "Any increase [in use] is cause for alarm."

Another serious danger is driving a car under the influence of PCP. Users' arms and legs will not respond the way their minds tell them to. And police report erratic driving and inappropriate behavior by PCP users involved in car accidents.

PCP use can also be dangerous to others who are not using it. In April 2002 aspiring rapper Antron Singleton was arrested after the Los Angeles police found him standing in the street, naked, and covered in blood. Prosecutors say he had brutally murdered his 21-year-old roommate—she had bite marks on her face, a slashed cheek, and a lung that appeared to have been gnawed on. Singleton's defense? He was smoking PCP the morning before the killing.

And in Phoenix, Arizona, a man bit off and swallowed the thumb of his 2-year-old son in a bizarre attempt to mix their DNA. Later, while telling police he'd taken several hits of PCP, he regurgitated the thumb.

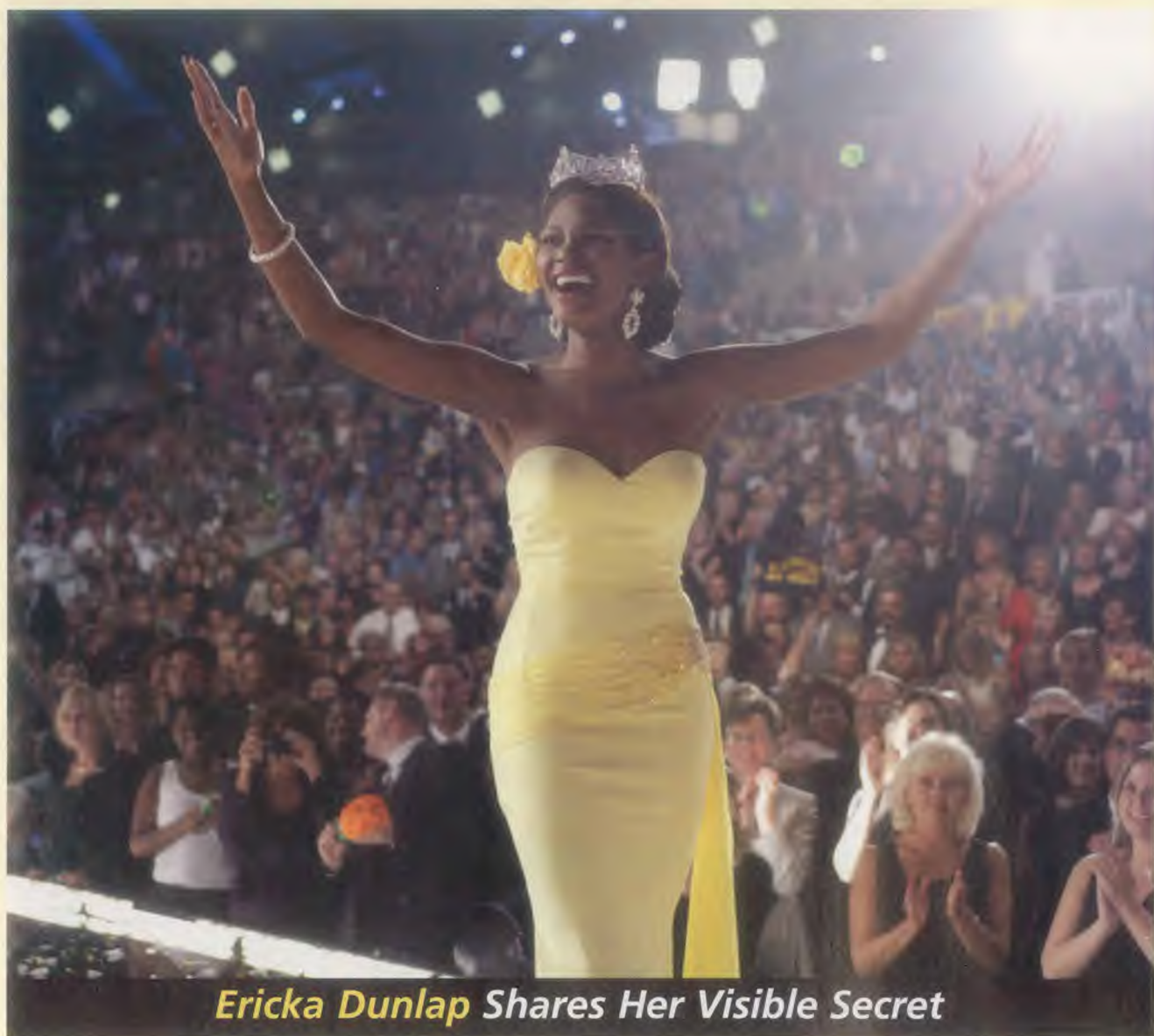
While LSD and PCP are not the only drugs that can cause users serious problems, they certainly rank high on the list. The question each person must decide for themselves is whether a possible few hours of "fun" is worth the possibility of a lifetime of regrets—or even premature death. It may seem like harmless fun, but the consequences can be devastating.

So the next time someone tells you how much fun you are missing by not trying drugs, just smile and say, "Thanks, but I want to be here to enjoy the rest of my life." ■



Getty Images





**Ericka Dunlap** Shares Her Visible Secret

# Miss America

# 2004

By MICHELE DEPPE / Photos supplied by Miss America Organization



Ericka Dunlap, Miss America 2004, is armed with a visible but somewhat secret weapon: she knows the power of sharing a smile. "I think a good tip for daily success is just to smile at someone every day," she says. "I learned at a young age that if you display a cheerful countenance, you will brighten someone's day. And who knows, it might even save a life."

The brainy Miss America, who is law-school bound and studying communications as a senior at the University of Central Florida, isn't just pushing a tired beauty tip. Research proves that you can put other people at ease with a friendly smile, and even improve your own mood. One expert even compared smiling to "free therapy."

Ericka Dunlap didn't really grasp the magical value of her smile until recently when she was forced to wear a sour face.

"Last year I had the misfortune of not being able to smile for about two weeks," she says. "I had an abscess, and looked like someone just stuffed a tennis ball in my mouth. It even made me cry, really hard. I realized that I wasn't crying from physical pain, or because I had to take medication, but because it actually hurt me, emotionally, that I wasn't able to smile or laugh."

A wise monk once said, "Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy." The best part of Ericka's secret is that her smile is sincere, even when she may not feel like smiling. "Giving the gift of a smile immediately lifts your spirits, and other people's, too," she says, noting that if you smile once with effort, you'll soon be smiling with ease.

But there is more to it than just a facial expression. Ericka's heartfelt message is that we should make everyone feel valued and included. Miss America says, "I want to tell teens to learn to embrace people who are different from you. Don't be afraid of other cultures, religions, or races. Even though people may seem very different, you usually have more things in common than you think." Friendships are key. "View everyone as a potential friend," Ericka advises. "And avoid cliques."

So is this bogus advice, passed down from the most popular girl in school?

Surprisingly, no. Miss America sets the record straight. "Actually, there have been a lot of times when I've felt left out. I didn't have even one date to a dance the whole time I was in high school!" she exclaims.

"But I was determined to be friendly with lots of different people," she adds. "I guess I was popular in the sense that everyone knew who I was, because I won pageants and got written up in the newspaper or whatever. But that doesn't mean I automatically had lots of close friends from the in crowd. In fact, it was hard in the beginning. I got a lot stronger in my junior and senior years. I learned to open myself up to people, and enjoyed having a variety of friends, especially the people who were considered outsiders. There is something special about every single person."

On occasion, Ericka's sweet, courteous nature causes negative people to be suspicious of her. "When I go to work or school, I try to leave my problems at home," she says. "I don't want to bring personal issues into public settings. And I try to always be nice. Interestingly, some people at college didn't think I was 'real,' because I always try to be pleasant." She has learned that everyone has problems, and it is







selfish to always make other people pay attention to yours. With the integrity that secured her crown, Ericka adds, "If everyone doesn't like me, that's OK. But I think it's important to have a positive attitude and build up other people."

The flip side of Ericka's growth in gaining friends has been knowing when to walk away. "You have

to treasure yourself first. You need to respect your body, and not harm yourself just to be popular. Some people think they'll gain friends through alcohol, smoking, or using drugs. But that is a very short-term solution, and will just ruin your health," she says.

Ericka's hero, Dr. Ben Carson, was an inspiration to her during lonely times. "Ben Carson was known as the dumbest kid in the third grade. But his mom believed in him. She made him read a book every week, and write a report about it. Then she increased it to two books. By the time Ben Carson got to the seventh grade, he was the smartest kid in class. He grew up to become a doctor, and was the first neurologist in the United States to separate twins joined at the head. His story was really encouraging to me, to just keep doing my best and going after my goals, whether people at school saw my potential or not."

Getting to know people outside of school has been helpful, too. "I think it's so important for teens to volunteer. It can be something very simple, such as taking time to play and talk with someone who is younger than you. It can really make a difference to them," she says.

Ericka suggests that most teens don't know that their community would like to give back to them. "You should be genuine in wanting to help people, but you also need to know that many organizations are looking to donate their scholarship dollars to young people who excel in their community, as well as in the classroom." Ericka confides, "I ended up getting about \$30,000 in college money in response to my volunteering efforts, before I was even eligible for Miss America. You may have to search out those opportunities, but it provides another incentive to volunteer, along with the personal enrichment that you gain from serving others."

Her schedule as Miss America will take Ericka to many new communities. "I haven't been to all of the states, and I will visit at least 40 of them this year," she says. "It's really going to be a lot of fun."

Borrowing a famous interview question from Oprah Winfrey, I asked Ericka, "What one thing do you know for sure?" Equipped with her bright smile, wisdom, and upbeat outlook, she replied, "I know for sure that I've been given a great opportunity, . . . and I am going to live every single day as though it were my last." ■



**For more information about Ericka Dunlap, visit <http://www.missamerica.org>.**



## Why Do YOU Drink?



In a recent study at a major university, teens across the country stated that they drink for a variety of reasons. Was it because (a) it feels good, (b) it helps me forget my problems, (c) I feel pressure from my friends, or (d) I'm bored and there's nothing else to do?

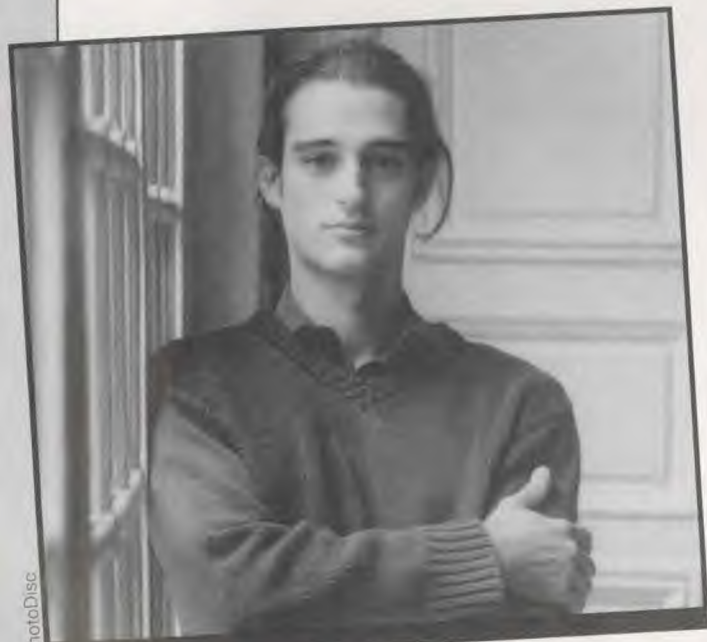
The answer is surprising. It was *a*. They wanted to feel good. Sixty-seven percent said that they drink because it helps them to forget. Sixty-six percent say that they drink because others do it. And 47 percent drink because there's nothing else to do.

Most students in grades 5 to 12 say that alcohol advertising (a) has no effect on their drinking, (b) can be funny and entertaining, (c) encourages them to drink, (d) is good for sports teams but not for us.

This answer is amazing! Fifty-six percent, more than half of teens your age, said that it encourages them to drink! This is true based on one false reason. And that reason is that television shows only one side of drinking and having fun—the party side. It shows the twins, the frogs, and the loud music and lights! I wonder why it never shows things such as my friend who was a professional football player. He tells how his dad would come home after drinking and having fun with all of his buddies and then beat his mom and him. One time, however, his dad beat his mom so bad that she died right in front of my friend. Why don't the TV commercials ever show the real side of drinking? I guess the answer is that then it wouldn't sell beer! Remember that you don't need to be fooled or lied to just so the alcohol companies can make money off of you.

**Is it possible to overdose on beer or wine? Even if I have a high tolerance?**

Yes! There are 26 million people your age who don't realize that no matter their size, color, or gender, they can die from an overdose of alcohol. Once they get started drinking, they lose sight of their goals. They don't seem to care as much as they did about how much is too much. And they could drink themselves to death. You don't want to cut your life short just because of alcohol. And don't forget that there is about the same amount of alcohol in beer and wine as there is in gin, vodka, or Scotch. It's the amount of alcohol that matters—not the type of alcohol. ■





# Unlocking the Secret



## of Eating Disorders

By Michele Deppe

Did you ever want to be a doctor, or want to play one on TV? Well, you may just get your opportunity to assist someone in getting proper medical attention, if you're willing to learn a little about eating disorders. Research indicates that most physicians aren't always in the know when it comes to people who are silently agonizing over what's for dinner. There is a lot of fibbing involved when a person tries to hide an unhealthy attitude toward food, and that can leave the health professionals in the dark. The

body with all its mysterious duties seems to be able to temporarily adapt to abuse, and will cover up several indicators. A physician almost has to be suspicious of an eating disorder in its early stages in order to catch it during a routine exam.

With 8 million reported cases, the chances are good that you might cross their path.

Everyone knows, of course, that it's White, middle-class, really skinny girls who are overly concerned about their looks who are the ones with eat-



ing disorders, right? No way. One case in every 10 is a male, and because eating disorders are viewed as a female problem a guy may fear that he will be perceived to be really mental or homosexual if he requests help. Eating disorders mask the pain of many different people, from all walks of life, including all races. Age is not always a deterrent. While doing my internship at a local Catholic nursing home, I was stunned to learn that several of the nuns in the over-70 club had been diagnosed with eating disorders. The sisters wanted to give away their food, or felt bad that they were no longer able to serve others or control their lives. People have many different motivations for adopting abusive eating patterns.

How does this abusive behavior get started? Sometimes it can seem that diet is the only way to control at least a portion of your life. It can be a reaction to a trauma or ongoing negative circumstance, a way to deal with stress, or a means of trying to gain love or acceptance by being good enough (thin enough). Though persons with eating disorders may be perceived as self-absorbed and interested only in themselves, they are often lonely, miserable, very aware of others, and have incredibly low self-esteem. Probably no one with an eating disorder would advise you to copy their behavior as a way to deal with problems.

The three most common types of eating disorders are anorexia, bulimia, and compulsive overeating. Anorexia utilizes obsessive control of food intake that can lead to starvation, producing the human skeleton appearance in its advanced stage. Bulimia is characterized by binge eating, which is consuming enormous amounts of food and then seeking to remove it from the body by purging with self-induced vomiting and abusing laxatives "before it makes one fat." Anorexia and bulimia behaviors can overlap.

Physical damage from eating disorders can be extensive. Anorexia and bulimia precipitate risk from malnutrition, dehydration, and electrolyte imbalances that can result in death. It is common for persons with these disorders to feel cold a lot, because of the loss of insulating body fat, lowered blood pressure, and slowed metabolism. The individual with anorexia or bulimia may be weak and become fatigued quickly, yet they can have difficulty sleeping. Or they may have a sore throat or dental problem from the exposure to stomach acids present during their vomiting episodes. Often induced vomiting is done with the fingers, and the teeth may leave tell-tale marks on the hands that may be covered up with rings. Abuse of laxatives and diuretics causes food to rush through the system, depriving the body of nutrients and causing serious health issues.

People with compulsive overeating disorder can experience changes in blood pressure, energy level, sleep patterns, and nutritional imbalances as mentioned above; however, they may experience some additional, contrasting problems such as high cholesterol, joint pain, and restricted circulation from excess weight. An overweight person who has consumed too many energy-producing calories has the tendency to feel too warm.

All of these eating disorders share the devastating effects of depression and alienation. They are likened to being an addict, but food is necessary so you can't just abstain.

What can you do to help?

Offer a listening ear. Resist the temptation to help the person go on a special healthy diet. These problems are less about nutrition and more about deep-rooted issues. Avoid labeling people. No one wants to be called an anorexic. Also, eating disorders come with a mountainload of guilt, so it would not

# One case in every 10 is a male.

Compulsive overeating is stuffing oneself with food, as though attempting to keep one's problems hidden beneath their heavy diet. As soon as a problem surfaces, it's time to eat again, as a means of distraction, comfort, and expressing frustration. Overeating is generally accepted in our culture. Although we don't view it as particularly healthy, it is somehow "normal."

be helpful to suggest that their problem is no big deal in a world full of so much sadness. Those who purge feel that they must do so to make life bearable. And those who overeat are not undisciplined, but are trying to fulfill the void in their life with food. Seek professional help, alert parents, counselors, or a trusted adult to your observations. You could save a life! ■



Shelley knew where her uncle kept his guns. Squaring her shoulders, she determined that she wouldn't chicken out this time, and silently crossed the shadowy room. The huge gun case stared back at her, a floodlight from the barn reflecting off the glass like an eerie white eye. She'd already decided which one it would be.

Gingerly twisting the knob to the cabinet, Shelley desperately hoped that the door wouldn't creak. A small gasp of relief escaped her when it opened without a sound. She surveyed all five of the guns; her breath was shallow and her knees unsteady. Removing the 12-gauge shotgun from the case, she gripped the double barrel so tight that she could feel her heart pulsing in her fingers. Carefully she slid open the bottom drawer of her uncle's desk and lifted a shell from the cardboard box tucked under the envelopes.

All at once the sound of someone's boots stomping in the hall caused a wave of adrenaline to shoot through Shelley's body. In one swift movement the gun was back in its place and the case door latched tightly.

"Hey, kid," a voice called from the hall. "Is that you?" It was Shelley's 23-year-old cousin Brynn, who popped through the door and flicked on the overhead light. She wore tan coveralls over a blue flannel shirt, and the tall leather boots she always wore during calving season were laced with bright-red laces. "What are you doing?" she asked as Shelley pretended to be looking for something on the cluttered desktop.

"Nothing."

Brynn smiled at her. "Yeah, right. It's 2:00 in the morning; you're standing in a pitch-black study doing nothing?"

Shelley slipped the shell into her jeans. "It's none of your business," she snapped.

Brynn smiled at her again, and Shelley wished that she hadn't answered with so much spite. "I thought you were coming with me tonight," Brynn said. "We've gotta check on those cows. Numbers 43 and 112 should calve within the hour."

"I don't feel like it now, Brynn. It's too cold," Shelley said as she brushed past Brynn and headed up the stairs to the guest room that was hers whenever she visited the ranch. She seemed to be showing up more often these days. Her mom was traveling again and wouldn't leave Shelley home alone, even though she was 17. But lately, instead of visiting with Brynn and her family, she'd spent most of her time cloistered in the guest room listening to CDs.

"Come on, kid," Brynn said, nudging Shelley's arm

before she reached the second step. "I'd really like the company."

"All right," Shelley agreed with a sigh and reached for her parka on the coatrack by the door.

Together the two girls stepped out into the snowy night and headed for the rusted green pickup. Brynn got behind the wheel and started the motor. All at once Shelley's mind flashed back to playing cowboys and Indians in the old truck with Brynn and her two older brothers. The truck was their fort, and Shelley had always been an Indian attacking the fort from the rear.

Shivering against the vinyl upholstery, Shelley watched the snowflakes swirl before the glaring headlights. The air in the cab wasn't much warmer than outside, but at least they were sheltered from the wind.

With a groan and a lurch the truck turned into the front pasture. "Keep your eyes peeled for new calves," Brynn said, swinging her handheld spotlight along the fencerow where some cows had gathered. The pickup rattled across the bumpy terrain as Shelley clung to the door handle to keep from being thrown about. She could still feel the shell in her pocket and hoped it didn't bulge too much. She wished again that she hadn't agreed to come.

# CALF WATCH

By Carrie Darlington

"Well, look at this!" Brynn exclaimed, laughing and pointing toward a stand of cottonwood trees. One of the Herefords stood hunched over a steaming calf, methodically licking off the sticky blood and afterbirth.

"Looks like Mama Cow didn't wait for us," Brynn said as she jumped from the truck, leaving the headlights pointing toward the animals. Shelley climbed out of the truck and followed. In a few moments the calf was trying out his wobbly feet. With stubborn determination he planted one shaky hoof and then another on the snow-covered ground. The two girls stared at him as he tottered a few times, then triumphantly steadied himself enough to nuzzle up to his mother's udder.

"I never get tired of watching that," Brynn said, a big smile on her face. The snow was coming down heavier now, whipping onto the girls' cheeks. "It's kind





Laurie Hicklin

of amazing, isn't it?" Brynn went on. Then slowly she reached into the front pocket of her down coat and pulled out a crinkled piece of paper. "I found this in your room," she said as she handed the paper to Shelley. "Were you really gonna do it, kid?"

Shelley stared at the note that she'd written only a few hours before. They were supposed to find it after she was gone. "I explained it all," she said. Not looking at Brynn, she crumpled the paper into a tiny wad and threw it at her feet.

Gently Brynn rested a gloved hand on Shelley's arm. "I wish you'd told us."

"Mom won't even speak to me," Shelley said, her eyes stinging with tears. She'd told her mom about her pregnancy the week before, and she'd reacted even worse than Shelley'd expected. How could Brynn understand? She had the perfect family. No fighting, no yelling, no loneliness.

"But why would you want to kill yourself?" Brynn asked softly. Shelley could feel Brynn's hand heavy on her parka. "I mean, without even letting us help you?"

"I don't know," Shelley said as she pulled away and turned toward the truck. Climbing into the cab, she slammed the door so hard that the whole frame vi-

brated. She wiped her runny nose on her sleeve and stared at the floorboards. Even when she'd held that gun in her hands, she'd known it was wrong. Somewhere inside she'd been screaming for help, but she just couldn't face another day alone or with the shame she'd felt every time her mother looked at her.

"What am I going to do?" Shelley asked as Brynn got in and turned up the heater.

"When your mom gets back from Denver, we can all sit down and talk this through. And if it's OK with her, you know that you can stay with us. I'm sure it won't be easy, but you'll make it." Brynn gave Shelley a comforting squeeze on the shoulder. "I know that you will."

Shelley wiped a tear as she mumbled a quiet "Thanks." Brynn stomped on the accelerator and turned the steering wheel toward the next pasture. As Shelley leaned back in her seat she remembered the shell, and her stomach turned at the thought. Reaching into her pocket, she pulled the shell loose, fingering it for one last time. "Could you put this back for me?" she asked Brynn.

Brynn took it and smiled. "Sure, kid," she said. "Sure." 🐾





# to the EXTREME

By Tim Morgan / Photos by Paintball.com

**Y**ou're in the woods with some of your friends. You spy your objective through the trees: a bright-orange flag blowing in the breeze. Taking a deep breath, you charge for the flag with everything you've got.

As you grab the flag, the other team appears out of nowhere. Someone shouts "Out!" You don't know who it is, but it doesn't really matter. All you know is you've got the flag, and you've got to keep running to the other side of the field.

This is what you can look forward to when playing paintball. Never heard of it? Paintball is a game that is a cross between capture the flag and tag, with a lot more action. Players use gas-powered markers to try to tag their opponents with little balls of

water-based paint. When someone is hit by a paintball, they're out of that game, but games last only about 20 minutes, so eliminated players don't have to wait too long before they can get back into the action again.

Paintball packs the thrills of an action movie, the exercise of a day hiking and running in the woods, and it's very safe to boot. On a professionally staffed field, paintball has the lowest injury rate of any extreme sport. You're much more likely to be hurt playing tackle football, skiing, or mountain biking than playing paintball.

"Hold on a minute," you say. "Doesn't this hurt when you get hit?" Yes, it smarts a little to get tagged, and at close ranges paintballs may leave small bruises. But most of the time you're so pumped

up that you don't even notice that you've been tagged. For nervous players, plastic "paintball-proof vests" are available. If you're on a tight budget, an extra shirt or pair of sweat pants will work almost as well.

If you decide to give it a shot, wear old clothes that you don't mind getting dirty to your first game. You'll be running through mud, dirt, and leaves, and you'll probably get tagged a couple of times. The paint should wash out of most fabrics.

Once you've played a couple of times and got yourself hooked, you'll probably want to wear something that doesn't scream "newbie." What you decide to wear on the field will depend on how you like to play.

The traditional paintball game



is played outdoors, usually in the woods. This gives players lots of places to hide, with enough room to move around before the paint starts flying. If sneaking around the woods trying to outsmart your opponents is your game, then camouflage is a must. "Cammies" come in a variety of colors and patterns, and which one you choose depends on where you'll be playing.

There are a lot of different ways to play paintball—some fields host games at night or indoors, but "speedball" is by far the most popular variation. Speedball, a short, intense, and extremely fast-paced game, lasts about five minutes. The goal is to grab the flag from the center of the field or totally eliminate the other team. Both teams begin within sight of one another, and obstacles are spread across the field for players to hide behind.

To win at speedball, you need to be smart and fast. The action starts at the get-go and doesn't let up until the end of the game, so forget about stealth. In fact, many speedball players like to wear

bright-colored jerseys.

Keep in mind that there's no dress code for paintball. Some speedball players wear camouflage, and some people run around the woods wearing shirts in bright colors.

Once you have your clothes selected, you'll probably want to go out and buy a marker, right? Wrong! The most important thing a new player can purchase is a good face mask. The only way to be seriously hurt by a paintball is to be hit in the eye. Eye injuries are extremely rare, but are also preventable. Always wear a face mask when playing paintball.

Face masks start at \$20 for a basic model, \$40 for a thermal lens, and top out at \$75 for masks with built-in fans. Under certain conditions, such as when it's very humid outside, face masks may fog up during a game. Thermal lenses, fans, and antifog sprays can help reduce the

amount of fog that accumulates in your mask.

Now you can think about buying a marker. Laws governing paintball markers vary widely from state to state, so you should contact your local police department to check if any special permits are needed before buying any.

Markers come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and colors. Prices vary widely, depending on features and options, from \$20 for a basic pump marker to \$1,000 or more for a tournament-grade marker with an onboard computer and motorized ball hopper. Unless you plan on jumping right into tournament play, plan on spending between \$100 and \$200 for your first marker. If you're online,



Paintball.com



Paintball.com

good used markers occasionally pop up on eBay for around \$80. Some fields and discount stores sell markers in sets that include a marker, hopper, and face mask.

With the marker, you'll need a hopper that sits on top of your marker and holds your paintballs. A hopper costs about \$10. Models can come with battery-operated motors, claim to feed paintballs faster, and cost \$65 to \$75 and up.





Paintball.com

To power your marker, you need an air tank. All markers use one of two gases—either carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) or compressed air—to launch paintballs. CO<sub>2</sub> has been around since the sport began in the 1980s and starts at about \$15 for a

and you can launch 200 to 300 paintballs before needing a refill. You can spend between \$6 for 100 paintballs to \$100 for a case of 2,000 paintballs. If you have friends with you, it's usually cheaper to go together and buy a case of paint.

Once you have the basics, you'll save big money when you play. Renting gear can cost you \$35 a day. If you have your own gear, the price to get in and play drops to about \$10 to \$15 to play.

Paintball is fun and an all-around good time. Nothing compares to the thrill of grabbing the other team's flag, then making a mad dash back across the field with your friends close by.

Things to remember when you play: Don't remove your goggles while you're playing for any reason. Not only will you be risking eye injury, if caught, you may be ejected from the game without a refund.

Don't just show up at a field with your own paint. Some fields allow players to bring their own paintballs, some don't. Call the field or check their Web site to see if off-field paint is allowed.

Listen to the safety briefing and pregame briefings. Referees will go over any hazards and special rules for each game. If you have any questions, ask.

Give opponents the opportunity to surrender if you get close to them. Treat other players the way you want them to treat you.

Wear good hiking boots or shoes while playing. Your feet will thank you for it.

If you're eliminated, remember that it's only a game, and you'll be back in the action within 20 minutes. Above all, have fun! 🎯



Paintball.com

small tank. Compressed air tanks are much more expensive, costing upwards of \$200. With most paintball starter models CO<sub>2</sub> will be fine.

Once you get on the field, you'll need to keep your hopper full of paintballs and your tank full of gas. Filling a CO<sub>2</sub> tank costs about \$3,



Paintball.com



## Seasons of Life

Life is like summer:

The hot rays of sun on your back,  
Long walks on the beach,  
The feeling of freedom as you run up and down the street.  
Summer is like the blissful days of life.

Life is like fall:

The colorful leaves falling, crunching under your feet.  
The chill runs up your spine when you feel the first frigid day.  
Fall is like the dreary days of life.

Life is like winter:

The snowflakes falling.  
Sitting by the fire telling stories of winters before.  
The icy feel when you walk outside into the frosty night.  
Winter is like the joyful days of life.

Life is like spring:

Flowers bloom, animals run around, glad that winter's gone.  
The dew on the ground makes your feet tingle with delight.  
Spring is like the enchanted days of life.

Life is like the seasons, always changing,  
Filled with twists and turns along the journey.

Jennifer Callahan, 14  
Louisville, Kentucky

## Where I'm From

I'm from an era that knows no limit.  
I'm from a place where appearance is all;  
Where you're judged on clothes and hair.

I'm from sports, and lacrosse is number one.  
I'm from music. I play drums in the band.

I'm from strong, happy, and sad;  
My emotions rage high, built from school.  
I'm from technology that we use every day.

I'm from sitting around, having a good time.  
I'm from a culture—the best in the world.

I'm from grades. My rule says B or better.  
I'm from games that hit the world by storm.

I'm from a family that I love to death.  
I'm from pride at soldiers at war for the good  
ol' U.S. of A.

Jaron Davie, 13  
Camillus, New York

## WHY ALCOHOL AND DRUGS DESTROY

### Waiting

Outside I stand—  
Waiting.  
Waiting for the storm  
That may be coming.

Now it's very, very gray,  
So gray it's almost black.  
Now I know the storm  
Is almost here.

Now the storm is here;  
The wind is blowing  
So vigorously that  
The trees are ready to snap.

The rain is pounding  
So hard it's pelting.  
My face stings,  
Just like a bee.

Now the storm is over;  
The sky is back to blue.  
But I wonder if the storm  
Is yet through.

Amanda Cahalan, 12  
Camillus, New York

Dear Dad:

Today in school I'm studying about drugs and alcohol.

Sometimes I feel so angry that I don't even want to talk about "it." What is "it"? The problem . . . your problem. Because of that problem you've missed out on countless years of my life.

You left me when I was 2 and have not been there for me while I'm growing up. I've missed you at my soccer, basketball, and football games.

You'll be 60 and I'll be 24 before we see each other again. Our chance visits are only six hours long and involve a five-hour plane ride. A once-a-year or every-other-year visit doesn't make for good parenting or bonding. Besides, it is embarrassing to have to visit a parent in a federal penitentiary.

I feel angry because your choices have impacted my whole life. It's like dropping a rock into a pan of water. The water is affected whether it wants to be or not.

Mom says that I need to learn from your poor choices, but I have enough to learn in life without paying the price for my dad's mistakes.

Please behave so you can get out on good behavior. I would give anything to turn back the clock, but that isn't possible, because choices have consequences.

Some good things have come from your bad choices: you've stopped smoking and drinking. Without alcohol you now appreciate your family.

Well, thinking of you and wishing . . .

Daniel Perez, 13  
Idaho Falls, Idaho



Getty Images



# LUKE'S LEGACY

By Penny A. Zeller

In Luke Gibson's small town of Ranchester, Wyoming, drugs and alcohol were commonplace. Teens were complaining of having "nothing to do," and instead of doing something constructive, they would turn to drugs and alcohol. Enter Luke, a 23-year-old town councilman, who never tasted alcohol, smoked a cigarette, or tried drugs. And he has set out to change the mentality in his town.

For the past several years, Luke has been busy forming projects for youth in his community. In 1998 Luke formed a paintball league. As one of the most action-packed extreme sports of today, paintball has been a very positive thing for the teens. Their league, known as "Roguewolf," boasts red T-shirts, which they wear under camouflage jackets. Once a month, rain, snow, or shine, Luke invites the players to a game like no other. "It allows kids to be in a team environment," notes Luke of the paintball league. "They have to rely on each other in order to accomplish a mission or goal." Luke reinforces that the game is for fun, and no rudeness is allowed.

In 1999 Luke and a friend were shooting some hoops at a friend's house. Every evening they would play basketball, and before long more and more teens and adults came along to join them. Soon there were enough players showing up for a full-scale court. So they found a seldom-used side street and set up movable basketball nets at each end of their "court." Chairs were placed on the sidelines for spectators, and soon these games became a tradition.

In the year 2000, for safety reasons and weather, Luke was able to move basketball night indoors to the Tongue River Middle School gymnasium. At a recent basketball night nearly 40 teens from three



area towns showed up for an evening of fun and basketball competition.

Luke is pleased with this, noting that here are 40 teens who won't be drinking alcohol at parties that night. Most of the teens attending basketball night are high school sophomores and juniors. "It's a way to bring everyone together in a positive environment to have fun and to showcase their talent," Luke says.

During a recent town council meeting, parents in the community presented the idea to Luke of developing a BMX bike trail. Luke notes, "I was nominated as the best candidate to undertake this project because of my age and my proven ability to interact with kids." The bike trail is in the process of being completed.

Luke is also the vice president on the board of directors for the soon-to-be-built Tongue River Valley Community Center. The center will also accommodate four neighboring communities. It will include two gyms, a swimming pool, tennis courts, weights, aerobics, and after-school programs. Luke has played an important role in securing funds and setting this project in motion.

Luke is determined to provide the teenagers of his town positive activities that should help to lower alcohol and drug use in the process. Teens respect Luke and look to him for guidance that some would not receive at all if it wasn't for Luke.

Helping children is not foreign to Luke, as he began helping kids when he was a student at Big Horn High School in Big Horn, Wyoming. He worked as an aide to third- and fourth-grade classes, and saw how even the smallest compliment helped in a child's development. ■

**In high school Luke was never ridiculed for his stance on alcohol and drugs. Instead, he was respected because of his decision. Here are some suggestions from Luke to teens who are being pressured to drink, smoke, or try drugs. They are the same suggestions he himself took into consideration as a high school student.**

**1. Have goals** about what you want to do with your life, and then work toward achieving them. At age 23 Luke owns his own home, helps his parents run a business, and is a respected town councilman. He isn't about to let drugs and alcohol stop him from achieving his goals. He says, "The easiest way to achieve your dreams is to set goals and refrain from doing things that are going to bring you down."

**2. Make yourself busy**—still socialize, of course, but in healthy ways, such as community sports and projects.

**3. Don't waste your money and health** on alcohol and drugs. You have only one body; treat it with respect.

**4. No one can force you to do something you don't want to do.** Taking a stand is important and earns you respect. Luke earned respect from his peers, and they've told him many times that they wished they'd never tried drugs or alcohol.

**5. Don't give in to peer pressure.** Luke says, "There is so much more to life than smoking, drinking, and drugs."

"In addition," Luke continues, "alcohol, drugs, and cigarettes are not for me. I have better things to do, and so do you." He has also been known to say, "Come

on, let's go shoot some hoops instead." Luke believes that teens need to realize that they have an alternative to drinking parties and drug fests.

Luke likes to feel that he's made a difference in the lives of teens. "I've noticed that a lot of teens have stopped smoking, have cleaned up their language, have more confidence in themselves, and socially interact with others better. I feel that alcohol and drug use has been lessened because of my efforts."

When asked why it was so important to him to help teens, Luke responds, "Because they're our future." As the uncle of two nieces and two nephews, the matter of the safety of today's kids is especially important to him.

Luke continues his legacy of helping teens to avoid the dangers of alcohol and drugs. He is optimistic for the future of the young people in his town. He wants to continue developing programs and sports activities that can involve those who may be at risk. With his easygoing smile and upbeat nature, Luke is sure to continue to receive the much-earned respect of those who want to travel a better road in life: a road without alcohol and drugs. And they look to Luke to lead them down that better road.



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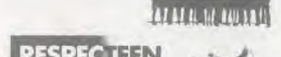
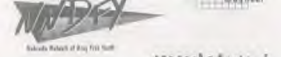
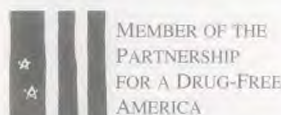
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## GET INVOLVED

"Anita, the mosquito; always in the way.  
"Slap her good, and she'll go away to stay."

That was the rhyme they would chant to me on the playground. Just a silly little song, making fun of my name (a name my parents thought was a great name, by the way). But it did nothing for my self-image. It did nothing to make me feel good about my peers or myself.

It didn't make me want to lash out and hurt someone, but I didn't like it. Unfortunately, too many teens who are harassed because they're too short, they're too tall, they're too thin, they're too heavy, they're too shy, they're too outgoing, their clothes not exactly right, their shoes aren't the right brand, their car's not new enough, etc., do lash out to hurt someone because they are hurting.

A report from the National Crime Prevention Council states, "It is bullying, not terrorist attacks, that are the biggest threat seen by U.S. teens. Young people are far less concerned about external terrorist attacks on their schools and communities than they are about the bully terrorizing them and their classmates in the hallways and classrooms."

TeensHealth.org\* offers these tips for teens who are being bullied:

- **Put your safety first.** Safety first is a smart rule in any situation. If you think you're in physical danger, it's time to seek help from a parent, teacher, or other adult you trust.

- **Talk about what's been happening.** Whether it's with your best friend or your parent, it can help to vent about how you're feeling. Parents, friends, and other adults can offer advice and support and can intervene if you are in danger.

- **Be confident—and use your body language to show it.** Because bullies generally have low self-esteem, they often target people who appear vulnerable. Practice walking tall with your head held high to ward off bullies.

- **Stay with a friend or group of friends as much as possible.** For example, a bully who taunts you as you walk home from school will be more likely to back off if you're with a friend or two.

- **Ignore the bullying.** Bullies are looking for attention, and they thrive on the reactions they get. The more you walk away and ignore a bully, the more likely they'll be to become bored and leave you alone.

Check out the anti-bullying and anti-violence programs in your school or community. Become involved. You'll not only help yourself to feel better, but you may help to save someone else from the effects of bullying.

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**Anita Jacobs**



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