

CELEBRATING POSITIVE CHOICES

FEBRUARY 2008

list[®]

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PARSONS

Love That Hurts • Gangbangers Go High Tech



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Céleste Perrino-Walker

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Bill Kirstein

Editorial Coordinator
Heather Quintana

VP Periodicals
Richard Tooley

Sales Director
Nick Bejarano

EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS

Hans Diehl, Dr.H.Sc., M.B.H.
Winston Ferris, Ph.D.
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Editorial

Here's the thing...

When I pulled into a parking place outside a quick stop I noticed a bunch of posters on the windows. All of them were advertising cigarettes. One even claimed that the cigarette it was trying to get people to buy was "sensuous and luxurious" (yeah, right), but that's another story. The thing that really caught my attention was the price of the cigarettes. They were close to five dollars a pack! Ka-ching! Not only do they take a bite out of your health, but they leave your wallet pretty thin too.

I got to thinking about it and realized that even legal drugs are expensive. To get caffeinated you pay two to three dollars by the can or cup, depending on how you like to take your caffeine. To smoke you're looking at about five dollars for a pack of cigarettes. Some people smoke several packs a day. A six-

pack of beer will run you from four to eight dollars at my grocery store. The hard stuff, of course, is a lot more expensive. And that's just legal drugs. Illegal ones will not only eat your money but put you in debt—a debt you'd do anything to get out of so you can have more drugs.

My question is, why? Why pay money to ruin your health? Why pay money to embarrass yourself and have your "friends" laugh at you the next day? Why pay for the privilege of having your mouth taste like an ashtray?

If instead of telling you that a cigarette

Ka-ching!



was "sensuous and luxurious," the ad told you it would "make you cough like an old man in the morning, stain your teeth and nails brown, and make your breath and clothes smell like an ashtray" it would be a harder sell, wouldn't it?

Which is why we can't believe everything advertising tells us. They're in the business of making money. They're not in the business of helping us make good choices, stay healthy, or even live longer, better lives. All they care about is the bottom line. So the next time you read an advertisement about alcohol or tobacco, ask yourself what they're covering up. Don't be fooled. If you listen hard enough you can even hear it . . . listen . . . Ka-ching!

Until next time, have fun, be cool, and make good choices,



Céleste Perrino-Walker
Editor

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“If that’s
what love
is, I’ll
pass.”

By Renae Brumbaugh



SLAP! I'll never forget that sound, or the sick feeling as I turned the corner and saw my best friend Amy crouched in a corner. Her boyfriend Rob was standing over her, his arm lifted to strike again.

"What's going on?" I yelled, dropping my purse and rushing to Amy's side. "Leave her alone!"

"It's OK, Beth. It's not what you think." I couldn't believe what I was hearing—levelheaded Amy saying everything was fine.

"But, I . . ."

"It's OK. Just leave us alone."

I walked to my purse. Feeling Rob's glare, I turned to face him. "I

won't forget this. If you hurt her again, you'll be sorry."

He laughed sarcastically. "Oooh, I'm scared!"

Without responding, I walked away. Amy didn't want me there.

I didn't sleep that night. I'd waited by the phone, but Amy didn't call. I didn't push the issue by calling her. My stomach was in knots, and I knew they wouldn't disappear until Amy was safe.

I never trusted Rob. Sure, he was handsome, polite, the very picture of a Southern gentleman. But something about him just seemed . . . fake.

"Don't be silly. He's a dream!"

Amy replied when I shared my opinion. "You're just jealous because he didn't ask you out."

I ignored her comment. I also didn't tell her that he had asked me out. I had turned him down.

Now they'd been dating for three months, and Amy was different. At first I thought she was just in love. But it didn't take long to see she wasn't happy. Instead of the bouncy brunette I'd grown up with, she was sullen and withdrawn. She walked around with her head down, looking only at the floor.

"What's going on?" I asked one day after Rob had yelled at her in



Love That Hurts

front of everybody. Apparently, he didn't like the way she had looked at Bryan.

"He loves me; he's afraid of losing me."

"He has a funny way of showing it."

"You don't understand, Beth. You've never had a serious boyfriend. Don't worry. Mr. Right will come along."

"If that's what love is, I'll pass." After that, we didn't talk about Rob, but my stomach knots remained. I knew Rob wasn't good for Amy, but I never dreamed he'd hit her . . .

The next day, Amy avoided me. I wanted to approach her, but didn't

know what to say.

The standoff lasted for weeks. When she saw me, she ducked. I tried to respect her privacy, until I saw her with a black eye. She had tried to hide it, but it was too obvious. She saw me and turned, but I didn't let her get away.

"What is that?" I asked.

"Oh . . . it's the silliest thing . . ." she attempted a laugh. "I walked into my bedroom door!"

"Amy, get rid of him!"

"You don't know what you're talking about! Just leave us alone."

"You're wrong. I understand perfectly. I may be killing our friendship, but I can't let him do

this. You're not even the same person anymore!" I turned to go.

"Beth, no! Please don't tell anyone. You don't know Rob! He's always sorry. He just . . . loves me, and he's afraid . . ." Her tears were flowing. "Beth, don't tell."

It was the hardest thing I've ever done, but I walked away.

"Beth, please . . ." I heard her, but I kept walking. I didn't have a destination in mind, but I ended up in the counselor's office. I must have been crying pretty hard, because Mrs. Johnson dropped what she was doing and saw me immediately.

I told her everything. She didn't say a word, just listened. When I finished, she handed me a box of tissues.

"You've done the right thing, Beth. You're a good friend."

Weeks have passed, and Amy and I still haven't spoken. I thought I saw her smile today, though. I've been watching her; she hasn't had any more black eyes.

I heard through Rachel that Amy and Rob broke up. Her parents wouldn't allow her to see him alone anymore. So he dumped her.

I've seen Rob leaving Mrs. Johnson's office a couple of times. I hope he's getting help.

I don't know if Amy and I will ever be the same. She won't be, that's for sure. But at least she's not black-and-blue. When I look at her now, I see a hint of the old Amy. Her chin is higher, and she smiles more.

Even if she never forgives me, I can live with that. I couldn't have lived with myself if I'd kept quiet. I had to make a decision about our friendship and just how far I would go. I know I made the right choice.

By Kate Ocypok

who are used to carry the drugs they take for “fun.” It’s easy to see the “glamour” of a drug used by celebrities and other glittery people. Maybe if they could see the cost in human suffering, not just to people addicted to cocaine, but also to those forced like Sonia to carry it, cocaine wouldn’t be the second most commonly used illegal drug in the U.S.

CRUEL COCAINE

AT FIRST THE MEN HELPED SONIA JOSEPH*, A SINGLE MOTHER OF SIX FROM TRINIDAD, BY BRINGING HER CHILDREN TO SCHOOL AND BRINGING FOOD WHEN SHE WAS BETWEEN JOBS. THEN THEY “OFFERED” HER A JOB—BEING A DRUG MULE (SOMEONE WHO CARRIES DRUGS, OFTEN INSIDE THEIR BODIES, TO OTHER COUNTRIES).



Sonia refused, but the men threatened her family. She was forced to swallow 100 thumb-sized pellets of cocaine and was put on a flight to London. But Sonia was caught and confessed everything. She’s in jail now, separated from her children, waiting for her sentence to be up so she can go home to them. And when she does, she wants to warn other single mothers about her experience.

Cocaine users don’t often think about the suffering of the people

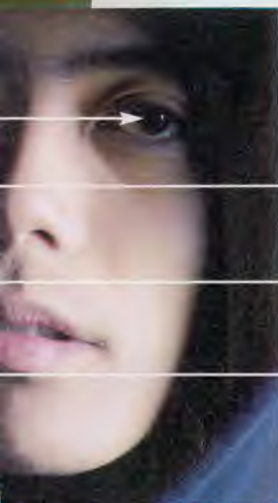
Cocaine is a central nervous system stimulant. When users inject, snort, sniff, or smoke the drug, they feel happy, alert, energetic, and able to do anything. This is followed by depression, anxiety, paranoia (feeling like everyone is out to get you), and loss of appetite. Cocaine is powerfully addictive, and once someone tries it they can’t control its hold on them.

Some negative effects can be noticed immediately. These are

called short-term effects and include insomnia (the inability to sleep), vomiting, high anxiety, irritability, nasal infections, nosebleeds, rapid breathing, violent behavior, hallucinations (seeing things that aren't there), and chest pain. Over time these effects worsen, and users experience long-term effects like depression, violent mood swings, and high agitation. After a while, snorting cocaine causes sores inside the nose and eats away at the barrier that separates the nostrils. It's not uncommon for cocaine and crack (a

do anything and always wanted to sit around the house. Once she found out he did cocaine, you guessed it, she dumped him. In college, when Dave* saw cocaine at parties he promptly left the scene. Jamie,* from Pittsburgh, remembers kids from his high school who used blow (a popular street name for cocaine). "I never got into it and I don't keep in touch with them now, as you can imagine," he says.

Cocaine lowers your inhibitions, or those feelings that you sometimes have when you're around new people and are a little nervous. If your inhibitions are lowered, you are more prone to sexual activity. You



type of cocaine that is smoked) users to have heart and respiratory problems.

Cocaine is also becoming a problem at schools in Canada. Kids in Ontario took an anonymous drug survey in 2004. The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, the organization that conducted the survey, said cocaine is the only drug that increased.

Joey Longo, a Grade 11 student, has witnessed the trend. "Not in my grade but in Grade 12 more kids do cocaine. It's pretty expensive, like around 60 or 70 dollars. That's how much it costs. Most kids in my grade can't afford to do it as much," explained Longo, a student at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School in London. "There's not a whole lot of people who do cocaine more than once a week."

Even though the celebrity culture glamorizes cocaine, using it to help them cope with social situations, it won't make you cooler. In fact, it drives people away. Erin,* a New York high school student I know, dated a boy who used. He never had the money to

could end up pregnant or with an STD†.

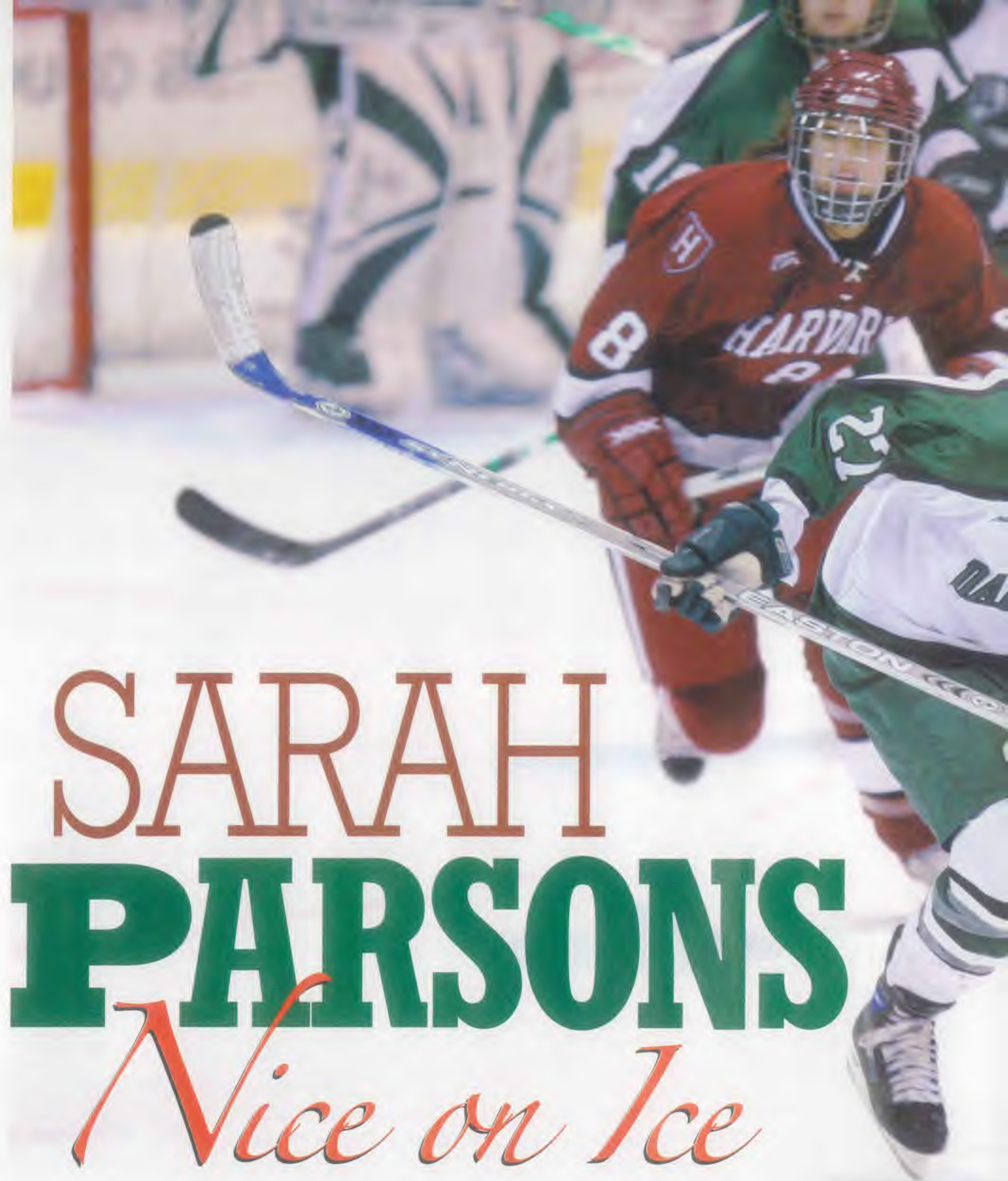
Cocaine use is much like smoking a cigarette—it's just not attractive. You can seriously damage the lining of your nose and some heavy users develop an intense itch which is commonly referred to as "cocaine bugs." And users "chase the high" trying to get the same feeling they had when they first used cocaine. But it's a high they'll never catch again.

There is good news. Most teens know that cocaine is dangerous. Approximately 64 percent of eighth graders, 71.3 percent of tenth graders, and 61.9 percent of 12th graders surveyed in 2006 reported that taking powder cocaine occasionally was a "great risk."

If you find yourself feeling sad or unhappy with how things in your life are going, it's important to realize that cocaine will not solve your problems. It's a temporary fix that just leads to more dangerously depressing feelings. Seek out help and remember that your friends and family are there for you.

*Names have been changed.

†STD—Sexually Transmitted Disease



SARAH PARSONS

Nice on Ice

Cover and interior photos for this article provided by Dartmouth College Athletic Department

By Mark N. Lardas



Sarah Parsons started playing hockey when she was five years old. She tells *Listen* magazine, "There was a pond near my home. Kids would play ice hockey there. I thought it looked fun, so I joined in. I don't have older brothers or sisters who got me into it. I just started playing." She began skating a course that would lead her to the 2006 Winter Olympics. At age 17, she became the youngest member, ever, of the American Women's Hockey Team.

Once she started playing, she never stopped. At 5 she played in the Needham Youth Hockey Association in Massachusetts. At 8, she switched to the Boston Junior Terriers. It was primarily a boys team. There were not enough girls her age interested in hockey for a girls league. She wanted to play, so she played with the boys.

Were there any adverse reactions? "There was a little criticism, but not much. About once a year a parent did not like it and said so, but my coaches and parents were always supportive. The coaches always took time to help me." The coaches may have been so supportive because she was so good.

She could handle a puck like nobody's business.

By her early teens she was on the girls hockey team at the Noble and Greenough School, a private school in Dedham, Massachusetts for grades 7 through 12. She spent five years there, setting school records for her performance on the ice. While at Nobles she scored 222 goals and 406 assists.

From there it was a short jump to the U.S. Women's National Team. She helped Team USA

win its first-ever gold medal at the 2005 International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) Women's World Championship.

The next stop was the 2006 Winter Olympics, in Torino, Italy. There, she helped the American Women's Hockey Team win a bronze medal. "It was great," she says of the experience. "People, especially my teammates were so nice. They made me feel welcome."

Did she feel any pressure? After all, the Olympics are as big as it gets—and she was just 17. Sarah insists she did not. "What was really great about being the youngest member of the team was that there were no big expectations. I could just go out there and play. If I did great? Awesome. If not? People just said, 'Oh, well.'"

So what do you do once you have reached the pinnacle of achievement in a sport and become a big celebrity? For Sarah, the answer was obvious:

go back to school and finish up her education.

"Education was always important to me. Education was always emphasized by my mom and dad. It always came first, before sports,

before hockey."

That attitude goes a long way toward illustrating why she won the 2004-2005





**“Be
yourself
and work
hard.”**

use detracts from sports. “It takes away from the purity of the sport. It may be fun to watch a baseball player hit longer distances, because they are on steroids, but what does that do to sports records? Steroids hurt sports.”

Steroids are also dangerous to those who use them. States Sarah, “They are not worth it. They are not

worth the risk.”

Sarah’s views on recreational drug use are just as strong. “Using drugs is not a good idea, in any way, shape, or form.”

What is the secret of her success? “A lot of hard work,” Sarah says. “That, and being at the right place at the right time. A lot of people gave me help when I needed it.”

What should someone in high school do to succeed? “Be yourself and work hard,” she says. “Also, remember that lots of things change between the start of your freshman year and when you graduate. Don’t get too concerned about little things.”

What does the future hold for Sarah Parsons? “I hope to graduate from college with an advanced degree. After grad school? Get a life I like, get a job that is fun, and have a family.”

Sounds like a game plan.

women’s John Carlton Memorial Trophy, given annually to a male and female high school senior in eastern Massachusetts. The award is given to the senior “who combines both exceptional hockey skills and academic excellence.” It was more than winning a gold medal at the Women’s World Championship. It was excelling in her schoolwork.

Sarah views education as an investment in the future. “I need a life when I get done with hockey. An education will give me something afterward. Right now I am studying economics. It is fun.”

As for that celebrity thing? “I don’t think of myself that way. I am a hockey player. I am part of a team. I don’t think I am a public figure.”

Who does Sarah admire and emulate? “As far as hockey goes, Bobby Orr. I would listen to my dad talk about him. He was a great hockey player, but what really impressed me was what a humble person he was.”

“When I was on the Junior Terriers, we used to go to the BU [Boston University] games.” (They were the Terriers—the team the Junior Terriers were junior to.) “Chris Drury was playing for them then. I always wanted to play and look like Chris Drury [on the ice].”

What has been the biggest thrill for her so far? Sarah states, “It is a toss-up between being in the Olympics and helping to win the Women’s World Championship.” Sarah says her biggest memories of the Olympics were, “The first game, stepping out on the ice for the first time. And the opening ceremony was so impressive.”

Did she see any evidence of steroid use during the 2006 Olympics? It may have hit some of the other teams, but Sarah did not see any use of it in her corner of the games. “I did not see any steroid use when I was on the Women’s Olympic Hockey Team. It never came up.”

Sarah thinks that steroid

Good For

HEART CANDY

Chocolate! The very word makes your mouth water, your stomach rumble, and your mind fill with images of heart-shaped boxes brimming with decadent delights. But what about all that fat and sugar? How can something that tastes so good be bad for you? Well, cheer up! You may not have to give up your favorite treat after all. It turns out chocolate, in moderation, may actually be good for you. Let's check out the facts.

Cocoa is the bean from which chocolate is derived. It was first grown by the Mayans in the Yucatan region of Mexico around 600 A.D. They and the Aztecs prized the cocoa bean so much they used it as money. From the cocoa bean, the Aztecs made a fermented drink called "xocolatl". They believed it to be the drink of the gods.

The Aztec emperor Montezuma II, is reported to have drunk up to 50 cups of xocolatl a day from a golden goblet. He called it, "The divine drink, which builds up resistance and fights fatigue. A cup of this precious drink permits a man to walk for a whole day without food."

Turns out Montezuma might have been on to something. Not only is eating chocolate a great stress reliever, but it actually can lower blood pressure. Dark chocolate improves blood vessel flow and function, so the heart doesn't have to pump as hard.

The cocoa bean, from which chocolate is derived, is loaded with flavonoids, a class of compounds that decrease a person's risk of heart disease and cancer. Flavonoids also minimize cell damage, decrease clot formation in

blood vessels, and can lower blood sugar levels. Eating chocolate may help prevent damage to our DNA that could lead to cancer.

When it comes to chocolate, dark is beautiful. Dark chocolate has more flavonoids than milk chocolate, and white chocolate has no flavonoids at all. Dark chocolate lowers blood pressure better than green tea, and three quarters of an ounce of chocolate helps protect the heart.

Unfortunately, in addition to its health-protective effects, chocolate can also be loaded with sugar and fat. But there is good news! The fat found in chocolate is stearic acid, a kind of saturated fat that won't raise cholesterol levels.

Remember chocolate is a treat, not a food group. About two squares of a chocolate bar are all you need to get its health benefits.

One last word to the wise: although chocolate is a fun way to get your daily dose of heart-protective flavonoids, it's not necessarily the best way. Vegetables, fruits, and whole grains are also loaded with flavonoids, and you don't need to worry about all that fat and sugar.

Chocolate—delicious, creamy, and heart-healthy to boot! What a great way to say, "I love you." So, go ahead. Delight the ones you love with a dark chocolate treat this Valentine's Day. They'll love you for it and so will their hearts.



By Richard G. Edison,
PA-C (Physician Assistant-
Nationally Certified)

By Anneke L. Ingram



STRESS

Handle Your Stress! Simple Steps to a Happier Life

So Much to Do, So Little Time

Valeria has a problem. She is a junior in high school, loves kicking it with her friends, playing sports, and really wants to do well in school. The one hang-up preventing her from being happy is this: she is way too busy.

Valeria runs around all day going to classes, then Spanish Club meeting, and finally basketball practice. After all this hullabaloo, her mom picks her up at around 7:00 p.m. By this time, Valeria feels completely drained.

When she gets home, she'll have to help her Mom with dinner prep, help her brother with his homework, and then tackle her own stud-

ies. To top it all off, this crazy girl has to get up at 6:30 a.m. to catch the bus! Sound familiar?

AHHHH!!

Do you ever feel like you're going to blow up inside? Sometimes passing classes, looking good, maintaining friendships, and keeping peace at home can cause stress.

What is Stress?

Dictionary.com defines stress as: physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension.

Am I Stressed?

According to the Mayo Clinic staff, the following items are signs that you might be stressed:

- anxiety
- worrying
- depression
- mood swings
- feelings of insecurity
- sleep problems
- muscle aches
- fatigue
- overeating
- under eating
- forgetfulness
- inability to concentrate

What Can I Do About It?

Good news! There are steps you can take to reduce stress. Here are some ideas:

Stop and Write

Sit down and make a list of all the things in your life that are causing you stress. It could be a research paper for your English class, an issue with your best friend, or a conflict with a crush. Whatever your stressors are, get them down on paper.

Start Some Change

Take time to think about each cause of stress in your life. Is there anything you can do to relieve one or two stressors? It might take sitting down and starting on that paper or asking your friend if you two can talk about what's going on. Make an effort to change situations in your life that are draining you, even if it's a small step.

Make Your Choice

Is what you're worried and stressed about worth your time? If not, this is your chance to stand up and make your choice. If you are stressing about something that is completely out of your control, DO NOT let yourself be dominated by it. Whenever fretful ideas enter your mind, make the conscious decision that you will NOT be controlled by worries or feelings. The more you practice this, the easier it will get.

Get Up and Work Out

Basketball, volleyball, running,

weightlifting, hiking, football, or any other physical activity to someone who is stressed is like taking vitamin C when you're sick. Exercising 20-30 minutes a day is wonderful for reducing stress. Try out for varsity, join an intramural's team, join a gym, or just start jogging before or after school. At the beginning it's tough, but if you stick to it you will definitely feel results. In fact, according to Allina.com (a not-for-profit hospital network), exercise can reduce stress by relaxing your muscles, helping you sleep better, and sending out "feel good" good chemicals within your body.

Eat "Food Supporters"!

Psychology Today reported on a study by "The Food and Mood Project," a nutrition research group in the U.K., that shared the importance of knowing the difference between "food stressors" and "food supporters." Put simply, "food stressors" were shown to aggravate feelings of stress and "food supporters" were shown to help people under stress.

Food stressors: sugar, caffeine, alcohol, and chocolate.

Food supporters: water, vegetables, fruit, and oil-rich fish.

"B" is your friend

Also according to the study, vitamin B is said to maintain nerves and brain cells and is especially important when feeling stressed. Some

examples of foods with Vitamin B that are great to eat when you are feeling burnt out are: bananas, fish, baked potatoes, avocados, chicken, and dark green leafy veggies.

Take Time to Kick Back

Everyone, and I mean everyone, needs breaks. If you are tired, take a nap. If you are brain dead, take a bath. If you have been working hard, take time to relax and laugh with friends. Find ways that work for you to give your body a breather. You will find that the nicer you treat yourself the better you will feel and perform!

The Not-So-Crazy Valeria

Poor Valeria. It took her three years to figure out she had the power to control her stress issues. Thanks to some reading and good advice, she is currently doing better. In fact, she is happier and healthier than ever before because she has learned to make wise choices that reduce, instead of increase, her stress levels.

Wrap it Up

Making all these changes at once is too much for anyone! Take baby steps. Try focusing on one a week. Remember, if you are overwhelmed with feelings of anxiety, worry, or depression, don't hesitate to talk to a parent, teacher, or counselor and let them help you get on the road to feeling good again!

RESOURCES:

<http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=37232>

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/stress>

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/stress/SR99999nv>

http://www.allina.com/ac/transcript.nsf/alltopics/Exercise_to_reduce_stress

By
Dallas
Woodburn



Dear Dallas,

My older sister moved out of the house to attend college this semester all the way across the country. When she was home, we weren't the type to "hang out" together. Sometimes we fought about stupid stuff like borrowing clothes, chores, and whose night it was to have the car. But now that she's gone, I really miss her. The house is so quiet with just Mom, Dad, and me. Advice?

—Missing my Sis

Dear Missing,

The adage is so often true—we don't appreciate what we have until

it's gone. Indeed, I know many siblings who have grown closer after one of them moves out of the house. I'm willing to bet your sister misses you, too! My advice? Simple: make an effort to stay in touch. Call her on the phone, write her e-mails, and zip her text messages. Ask her about her new life; tell her about yours. Relive funny stories about your parents. Share news from your hometown. The move to college is filled with so much that is new: a new living environment, new classes, new friends. It's exciting, but also overwhelming, and your sister is probably a bit homesick as well. She might even think she has to prove her new independence by not being the one to reach out first, so you call her. I'm sure she will be very grateful to hear from you. And when she comes home for holidays and the summer you two will be closer than ever!

Dear Dallas,

My school is having a Valentine's party and I really DON'T want to go. I've never been to a school party because I'm shy. All my friends are going, but why does that mean I have to? My mom is forcing me to go because she says she doesn't want me to look back twenty years from now and regret it. How can I convince her to just let me stay home?

—Party Pooper

Dear Party Pooper,

I think your mom is wrong—you might regret it much sooner than twenty years from now! People tend to look back on their lives and sigh about things they didn't do but now wish they had. But if you go to the party with your current bah-humbug attitude, of course you won't have a good time. My advice? Try to look at the positives: you get to hang out with your friends and classmates and listen to some great music. Look at it as a chance to overcome a challenge and gain confidence. If you're self-conscious and are afraid you might spend the night alone in a corner being bored, ask a friend to stick with you. Heading into a group of people who are all talking and having a great time is less intimidating when you're with someone else. Before you know it you might be having a really fun time. Go for it!

Dear Dallas,

I want to get my best friend a nice gift for her birthday because she always splurges on my birthday presents. There's this necklace I know she would love, but I'm quite a few dollars short. My brother has a ton of money and I know where he keeps it in his room. It's just sitting there in his drawer. What do you think?

—Short on Cash

It's
Your Turn

Make your opinion heard at www.listenmagazine.org/imlistening. Then check back next month when the results are posted!



READERS, NOW IT'S YOUR TURN TO GIVE ADVICE. SHOULD SHORT ON CASH:

- a. Take a few dollars from her brother and leave an I.O.U. note?
- b. Ask her brother if she can borrow the money?
- c. Get her friend a different birthday present?

FEAR-FACTOR

By Angela Thomas

WHAT DO YOU FEAR THE MOST?

Not fitting in? Looking stupid? Or are you afraid that people won't really like you? Take this quiz to find out which worries hold you back the most. Read each statement in all five categories. Think about how you would feel in each situation. Score each one with a 0-3 based on this scale:

0= I don't really worry too much about this.

1= I sometimes worry about this.

2= I worry about this a lot.

3= This is one of my biggest fears.

SCORING: Add your score for each section separately. The group with the highest number is your biggest fear. Read the explanations below to find out what this means for you.

A. It sounds like you're really concerned about fitting in. Being consumed with it can make a person more likely to cave in to peer pressure in order to be liked. Try to learn ways to be more confident in your uniqueness and independence. Get some advice from a parent or mentor.

B. Wondering how you measure up to others is a big fear for you. You struggle with feeling like you have to do all the right things or have all the right stuff to be liked. But when you're so focused on your own situation, it's hard to see reality. Step back and evaluate what you do have, what you are good at, and relax!

C. Who doesn't worry about looking stupid or being caught in an embarrassing situation? Next time you flub your speech or trip up the steps, laugh it off and move on. Chances are, people will remember your sense of humor and grace more than your mistake. They'll think, Wow! She's/he's so confident and relaxed!

D. Does "looking for love in all the wrong places" sound familiar? Maybe you feel insecure with some of your relationships, or you are overly sensitive to criticism. These attitudes can lead you to make some big mistakes when you try too hard to get approval.

E. It sounds as if you really fear messing up your life. It's great that you care so much about important things like family, friends, and being successful. This desire, if you focus it in the right way, can take you far in life. But no human is perfect! Putting so much pressure on yourself only makes you feel worse, right? You can be so focused on not making mistakes that you end up with a messed up perspective on life.

A. Fitting In

- ☐ My first day at a new school
- ☐ Being in a situation where I don't know anyone
- ☐ Not being included in what my friends are doing
- ☐ Feeling different from everyone else
- ☐ Wanting to be part of the popular crowd
- ☐ **TOTAL**

B. Not Measuring Up

- ☐ Making good grades
- ☐ Feeling like I don't have the same privileges as my friends
- ☐ Being good at whatever I do (sports, work, hobbies)
- ☐ Not having as much money as my friends
- ☐ Having the right clothes, car, cell phone, etc.
- ☐ **TOTAL**

C. Looking Stupid

- ☐ Speaking or performing in front of an audience
- ☐ Tripping in the hall at school
- ☐ Having people laugh at me
- ☐ Being caught wearing something others would make fun of
- ☐ A teacher calling on me when I don't know the answer
- ☐ **TOTAL**

D. Not Being Loved

- ☐ Getting dumped by my boyfriend/girlfriend
- ☐ Having a fight with my best friend and not making up
- ☐ Being criticized by people
- ☐ Never finding my "soul mate"
- ☐ Getting my feelings hurt by someone I care about
- ☐ **TOTAL**

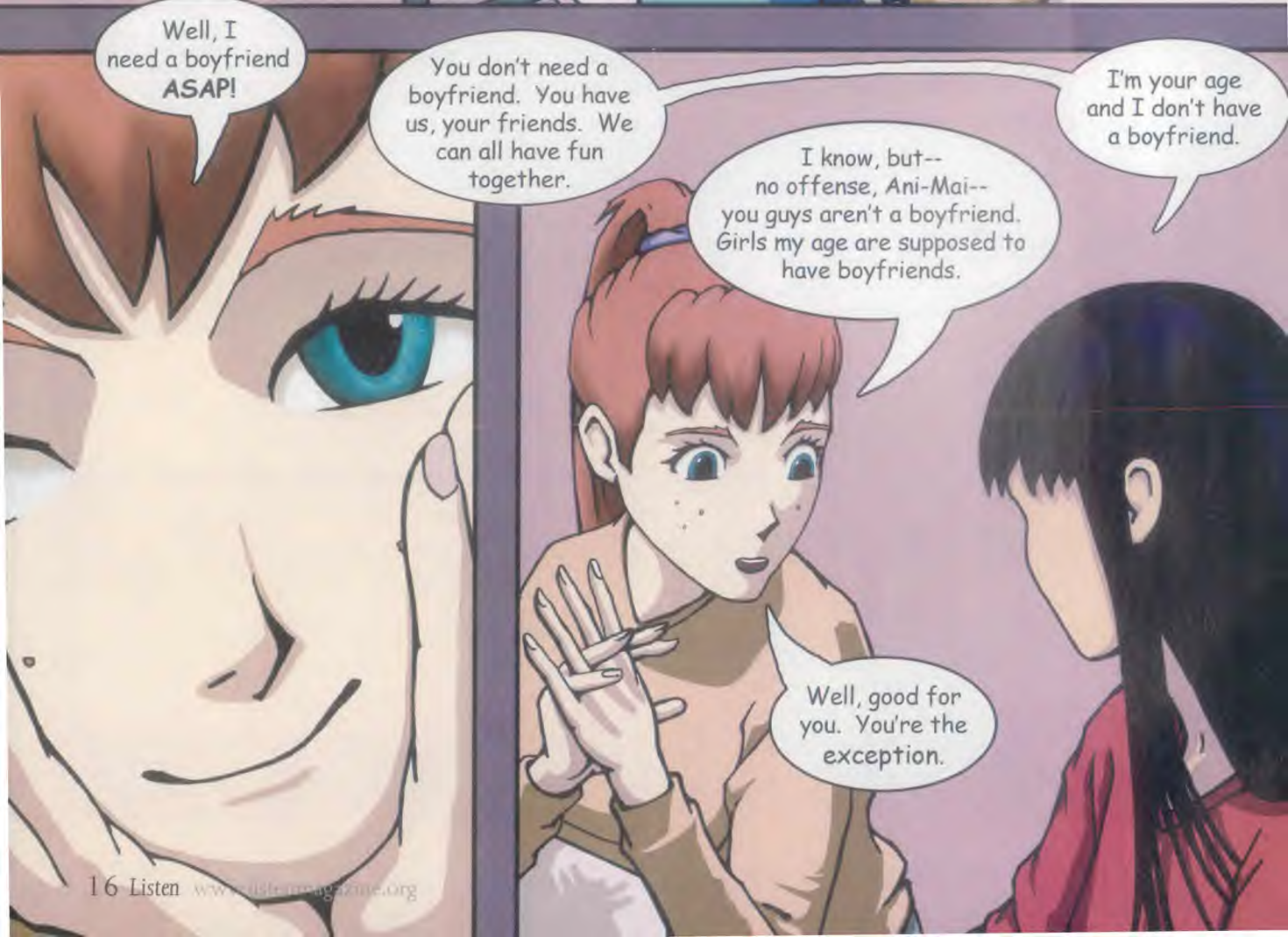
E. Messing Up My Life

- ☐ Not getting into the right college
- ☐ Failing an important test or class
- ☐ Coming in second place in anything
- ☐ Disappointing my friends or family in a big way
- ☐ Getting into trouble and not knowing a way out
- ☐ **TOTAL**

Eban & Ani-Mai

By Dallas Woodburn

Illustration by Jason Cole



A week later...

I met this guy named Brett and he's taking me out for Valentine's Day!

That's exciting! What's he like? Do you like him?

Well, to be honest, we don't have that much in common. And he has this really annoying habit of cracking his knuckles.

Then why are you dating him?!

I dunno. He really seems to like me. A lot. And I want a boyfriend for Valentine's Day.

But that's not fair to him. Or to you, either.

Just having a boyfriend won't make you happy. You have to wait for the right guy to come along. Someone you actually like.



See, this is a fun way to spend Valentine's Day--with friends you care about!

You guys are right. Now Brett's free to find a girl who actually likes him. And I'll meet my **Mr. Right** when I'm meant to. Until then, I don't need a boyfriend to have fun! Thanks for being such good friends!

By James Bryant

Gangbangers Go High- Tech

GANGS HAVE GONE HIGH-TECH. Court TV recently reported that gang members are using the Internet to discuss their criminal activities in chat rooms and offer prospective gangbangers a chance to become one of them by posting membership applications online. In the past, gangs have always displayed their public messages in forms of graffiti on build-

INTERNET GANG ACTIVITIES HAVE BECOME WIDESPREAD THROUGHOUT MANY COMMUNITIES IN THE UNITED STATES.

ing walls, fences, subway cars, signs, sidewalks, and even railway freight cars, but with the advent of computer Web sites they now have a much larger audience in the world of cyberspace.

Teens join gangs for a variety of reasons. Some are seeking excitement; others are looking for prestige, protection, a chance to make money, or a sense of belonging. Teens are not often forced to join gangs; in many cases teens can refuse to join without fear of retaliation.

Although once thought to be an inner-city problem, gang violence has spread to communities throughout the United States. At last count there were more than 24,500 different youth gangs around the country, and more than 772,500 teens and young adults were members of gangs. According to a special report of the National Gang Crime Research Center, "many (44.8 percent) have tried to quit

gang life and most (79.6 percent) would quit gang life given the right circumstances of being given a 'second chance in life.'"

Most youth gang members are between the ages of 12 and 24; the average is 17 to 18. About half are 18 or older, and they are much more likely to be involved in serious and violent crimes than are younger gang members. Only about one in four are 15 to 17.

Internet gang activities have become widespread throughout many communities in the United States. A nationwide task force, the National Gang Crime Research Center (NGCRC), is being assisted by school administrators, principals, and Web site owners in reducing the spread of gang violence. Using the information received from MySpace, the NGCRC has been instrumental in the capture of three gang members responsible for unlawful activities in Chicago and Northern California. MySpace has helped by releasing confidential membership records to NGCRC so they can nab the gang members and reduce gang violence. (MySpace has a privacy policy and does not disclose members' personal information except in cases where illegal activity exists and permitted by law.)

Web sites, chat rooms, and message boards catering to the gang culture are popping up on the Internet at an alarming rate. Most gang sites offer a chat room where members glorify their gang or challenge rivals. One Midwest Crip site features a graphic in which blood drips down the screen. Some of the other sites display an assortment of gang tattoos, and memorabilia. In the past few years the number of gang-related Web sites has grown to tens of thousands, with about 20 to 30 percent run by actual gang members (according to the Los Angeles Police Department's Career Criminal Apprehension Section).

Police in Chicago, Miami, and Long Beach, California, have started programs in which officers routinely monitor Web sites to gather information about gang meeting places, times, and activities.

Police officers like Eugene Williams of the Chicago Police Department, commander of narcotics and gang investigations, have discovered the Internet is a whole new ballgame when it comes to information gathering, and is much different than tapping into a telephone line like they have done in the past. Police have little or no hesitation about using information they get from chat rooms, because the evidence is admissible in court and not challenged by laws that govern telephone taps.

Internet Safety

The Internet is an increasingly important place for kids to learn, work, and play. But it also presents danger because it hides the true identities of the people using it.

Parents and teachers can help you avoid online encounters with gangbangers, predators, hackers, and other people who don't have your best interest at heart. Obeying the rules they establish helps keep you safe.

TIPS FOR STAYING SAFE IN CYBERSPACE:

- ✓ **Don't give out personal information such as your name, age, address, telephone number, parent/guardian's name, or school name/address.**
- ✓ **Don't respond to mean, offensive, threatening, or unwanted e-mail or instant messaging.**
- ✓ **Choose a screen name that doesn't identify you as a young boy or girl.**
- ✓ **Don't share your password with anyone (except a parent/guardian)—not even your best friend.**
- ✓ **Never agree to meet with someone you don't know. Remember, people online may or may not be the person they say they are.**
- ✓ **Tell your parents, a teacher, or trusted adult if you read or see something online that makes you uncomfortable, or if someone threatens you or suggests you meet them somewhere.**

Love Me

By **Jennifer Dickinson**



**I'LL NEVER FORGET
THE REACTION WHEN I
ANNOUNCED THAT I'D BE
ORDERING THE APPLE
CRISP FOR DESSERT.** My

mother stammered a moment and my father cleared his throat. "We've noticed that you're looking a little chunky lately. You shouldn't be ordering dessert."

Their admission shocked me. I was a junior and in my opinion never looked or felt better. I had the most self-confidence of all of my high school years and concerns about zits, lack of dates, and weight were not even on my radar. I was just having a blast enjoying my final school years with longtime friends.

"We'll tell you when you look perfect," echoed in my ears. I was always a people pleaser, so I jumped through hoops when instructed. Although concerned parents can be right many times, sometimes even they can have momentary lapses of good judgment, especially when critiquing an easily influenced young woman about her outward appearance.

I thought weight loss would be my key to much more. I had plenty of everything already but was provided with a mistaken message that this would bring me more friends, attention from guys, and confidence.

At first it seemed to work. My phone was ringing for dates, even from boys who looked me up after spotting me in the halls at school. I should have stopped there, but I felt that it could only get better. My weight plateaued a bit when I returned to school for my final year. I figured that with my busy schedule, including dance club, the elevated activity level would help me to achieve my goal weight.

Eight months after our initial conversation, my parents gasped one day as they reassessed the look of

my frame. They realized they had forgotten to engage my "off" switch. I had descended from 118 to 96 pounds. My clothes sagged on my body. My hair was dry and brittle. My skin looked a mess. I had little energy but still proceeded like the Energizer Bunny. And there were other signs that my body was shutting down.

I was afraid I'd be plucked from school like a number of girls I knew who had been hospitalized for eating disorders. I agreed to do what was necessary to correct it but feared the world knowing my secret. When

I had to start from scratch and learn to love and appreciate myself again.

it came to this, it was one area that I did not want to attract attention. In fact, there are friends of mine today who still have no idea about my past ordeal.

What I discovered is that I really had "it" all along. I was well liked, pretty, intelligent, and a kindhearted person. I hadn't needed to overhaul something that was great to begin with. Now I had to start from scratch and learn to love and appreciate myself again.

Never forget to look within yourself because that is where the "real" person is, and if you love that individual then everything else will eventually fall into place. If you don't love yourself, here's one exercise to help you start. Write down every positive thing about yourself that comes to mind. Review your list daily or more often if necessary. In no time you'll internalize and reaffirm how special

you truly are.

If you do have genuine weight concerns, please speak to your doctor. Don't take it into your own hands. A doctor will guide you in the correct direction if any further follow-up is needed.

As time progressed, my weight did return slowly but surely. It came down to me not wanting to die; the path I was on was self-destructive and death could eventually result. I knew I had so much to live for and a reason to be here. Through outpatient counseling, as well as sessions with a nutritionist, I regained

my footing in all areas. I isolated myself a bit during this time, assessing what went wrong and how I could move forward and not repeat my mistake. Although I knew I had to gain weight, I worried about gaining too much. Day by day I did eventually become comfortable with proper food intake again, and I no longer worried about my weight or the scale.

Three years into my recovery I realized a positive aspect of my eating disorder. One of my best friends in college confided in me that she was anorexic and bulimic. I was able to help her through her darkest hours and even talked her out of suicide. I felt grateful to have overcome my own eating challenges and have had the chance to give the greatest gift back—using my own understanding to help and save another valuable life.



PRIME
REAL PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE
TIMES

Making Their
Voices Heard:

Youth Empowerment Summit

By Keri Collins

Photos © 2007 Laura Reinhardt/World Vision

Above: Samuel Everett, of the Tacoma delegation, discusses his team's recommendations with Sen. Maria Cantwell's assistant. The team wants the youth of Tacoma to be more involved in the city's lawmaking process. They proposed the creation of a Youth Advisory Board to be involved in such decisions.

When you've watched people you love die at the hands of gang members or waste their lives on drugs and alcohol, you can either allow bitterness to poison your heart, or work to prevent the same tragedy from breaking someone else's. In cities across America urban youth face many challenges: poverty, racism, drugs, gangs, and violence. To help them meet these challenges, World Vision, a Christian humanitarian organization, used funds from a Department of Justice grant to sponsor the Youth Empowerment Summit (YES) in the summer of 2007.

Before YES

"World Vision is about advocacy, and in the U.S. we realized that empowering youth to advocate for themselves was a good opportunity, and the training for the summit would take already-engaged kids to the next level of leadership and development," explained Deanna Martinez Neidlinger, who led a group from Tacoma,

Washington. Her team, made up of 10 youths from across the city, met for a two-hour session every week for 15 weeks. "The training included understanding of self and the personal story each individual has, personal assets, discovery of community, community assessment, and learning how to survey peers on how they are perceived in Tacoma and what issues they are facing. My team went beyond the requirements to survey local businesses about their perceptions of youth and the emerging downtown areas. These kids went through rigorous civic-engagement training, and then put together specific, location-based recommendations," Neidlinger said.

Two prominent community leaders in Tacoma met with the YES participants, and "a lot of anxiety diminished as the kids were able to sit down with them and ask them questions and relate to them as real people instead of unapproachable politicians. As they perceived that they were val-

YES, YES, YES!

After learning to unite for a common purpose with youth from their own city, the Tacoma team flew to Washington, D.C., for a three-day meeting to discuss their community's issues with their peers from New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Seattle, Georgia, West Virginia, and the host city. Even though each team had recommendations specific to their locations, there were many commonalities focused on creating a stronger voice for youth within each city, the importance of education and opportunities for at-risk youth in urban environments, and concerns about safety, weapons, and violence.

"They want a voice at the table, and ownership of that voice," Neidlinger said of the young people she met. "Kids felt they needed to join gangs when they didn't have any other options or ownership of the city. You won't destroy some-

D.C., allowed experienced staff members to train the YES teams in what to expect when they took their community recommendations to the ultimate level: meetings with their congressional senators and representatives. "Our meeting with Senator Maria Cantwell went exactly as our trainer said it would, so our young people came out feeling very confident." Neidlinger went on to explain that their next meeting was quite different. "Representative Norm Dicks was very challenging. He forced them to defend their positions, was highly engaged, and really wanted them to bring out what they knew. They did a fantastic job with witty banter, keeping the facts flowing, and keeping it fun—they won him over in the end. They came out of his office feeling like they had fought and won. He told them, 'I work for you, and any time you want to come in here, I want to talk to you because you are my boss.' The kids felt very empowered by that."

After YES

Once they returned to Tacoma, the individuals who participated in YES approached Neidlinger about staying involved. "One advantage of being in a smaller city is that we can act on the recommendations—we can get a voice at the table right now," she said.

The team is still meeting, staying engaged with issues, and developing projects in conjunction with local businesses. "Several kids have made decisions to pursue a career in politics because they now see it's possible to make a difference," she said.

World Vision plans to sponsor future summits, and each city hopes to expand the number of participants. "We're not looking for valedictorians. We want kids with an untapped passion to make their community better."



One of the Tacoma Youth Empowerment team leaders, Diana Young, left, goes over the week's lesson with the Tacoma team. From left: Andrey Smith, Ebony Patton, Natalie Hite, Maya Pisel, and Samuel Everett.

ued, you could watch the fear melt away and realize that this is a realistic endeavor," Neidlinger added.

For participants such as Samuel, a 20-year-old volunteer at Club Friday (a drug and alcohol-free hip-hop night club for teens in Tacoma), being involved in YES meant "youth being more active in the community overall . . . and to be able to advocate for things I believe should happen."



Members of the Tacoma delegation listen to Congressman Norm Dicks.

thing with gangs, violence, and drugs when you feel like it's yours."

World Vision's active involvement in advocacy in Washington,

If you think
you aren't
an artist or
that art is
scary and
hard, think
again.



Alter
Your

Art

By Joy Choquette

Photos provided by the author

When you think of art what
first comes to mind?

Stuffy museums full of
“Don’t Touch” paintings? Frantic,
starving artists sweating over
their canvases? Long hours of
practice to get a painting or a
drawing “just right”?

If you think you aren’t an
artist or that art is scary and
hard, think again. Art isn’t just
about making perfect brush
strokes, learning composition, or
memorizing the color wheel. Art
can be messy, outrageous, and
incredibly fun. Sound interesting?
Read on and find out more about
a completely nontraditional type
of art: altered art.



Altered art combines many different mediums, or types of art, into one. Altered art could be a combination of painting, ink drawing, and collage. It can be little or big, realistic or abstract, fun or serious. And best of all? It can be done on nearly any surface you can think of: stretched canvas, books (old, yucky ones, *not*

from the free pile at the library.

"But art supplies are expensive!" you might be thinking. Supplies for traditional art can be a little pricey, but altered art? Cheap! In fact, many supplies can be found right in your junk drawer or closet.

First, let's look at the basics. You will probably want paint of some type, glue, and paper.

reduce the amount of paint that seeps into the fabric you are creating with, and help keep colors bolder and brighter.

Now, on to the glue. There are a *ton* of different adhesives out there: glue sticks, spray adhesives, hot glue, cold glue, rubber cement, white tacky glue, craft glue, super-deluxe glue—the list goes on and on. It's helpful just to wander down the glue aisle, pick up a few different kinds of glue and figure out what will work best for your project. If you are going to be working mostly with paper, a simple glue stick should work just fine. If you are making something a little more three dimensional try one of the industrial strength liquid glues and follow the manufacturer's instructions for use.

Paper is probably the easiest product you can find for making your altered art. Of course, you could choose one out of the thousand different types at your local craft stores: mulberry, vellum, cotton, with patterns or



Altered Book

your textbooks!), fabric, boxes, tins, even clothes. The possible combinations of surfaces and materials you could use in your altered art creations are endless. "It's fun! You can use all sorts of things," says Caroline Hogan, 18, of Vermont. "You can look at what someone else does [for inspiration]. You don't have to draw, just randomly put things together in a way that pleases. Have fun with it!" Make a necklace out of old typewriter keys and ribbon, an altered clock out of an old CD, or an original altered yearbook for you and your friends with a book

Oftentimes these things can be found around the house, but if you do need some supplies use cheap items from the local craft store. Small bottles of acrylic paint usually range in price from \$.79 to \$1.99 and come in nearly every color you can think of. There are also fun texturizing agents you can add to the paint to give it more body and *oomph* on your page or canvas.

Another fun thing to add to paint is textile medium. This will



Mail Art

without, construction, corrugated, and many more. These papers are all great, but look around and you'll see a whole bunch of free paper begging to be made into something new and brilliant: newspapers, old magazines, comics, cereal boxes, old wrapping paper, tinfoil, notebook

paper, old envelopes or used stationery, waxed paper, bits of shopping bags, or even tea envelopes. Once you start looking around you'll have no trouble finding free paper for your projects.

A few other tools will be useful as well. Scissors, markers, a ruler, a sturdy table for a work surface, paint brushes, and embellishments. Embellishments are *fun* and really give altered art a lot of personality and flavor. Once again, free embellishments are usually the best, most



with frilly lace and soft pastels, or create something with a tougher edge using lots of dark colors and metal accents.

Katelynn Townson-Mancuso, 17, of New York City, likes to use bold, bright colors in her artwork and likes the freedom that altered art gives her. "I like altered art. It can be colorful and more crazy than other art . . . when you love to draw or paint, it makes you happy!" Katelynn's whole family likes to get in on the art action. Her mother is an artist and author, and siblings Jamie and Justin also like to



interesting ones. You can use old watches (tear apart or leave whole), old game pieces and playing cards, old screws or other hardware, wire, buttons, ribbon, silk flowers; there really is no end to what you can use to embellish your piece. One note of caution: what is junk to you might be special to someone else in your house. **Always ask before using someone else's stuff to make your art!**

Now comes the fun part. Playtime! Look through magazines or at Web sites for cre-

ative ideas. Get together with friends and do some creative brainstorming, and have a big group playtime. Use a subject you are interested in like skateboarding or beading or a favorite TV show and build a piece of art around that theme. Go online and do a search on altered art and mixed media. You will find a ton of great information and also some really cool photos of other people's altered creations. You could go all girlie

NOT SURE WHERE TO START?
Check out these cool altered art Web sites and blogs for more information, photos, and inspiration:

CRAFTSTER:

<http://www.craftster.org>

Ilka's Attic:

<http://ilkasattic.blogspot.com/>

ART JUNK GIRL:

<http://artjunk.typepad.com/>

For a cool project making a Band-aid Box and mini album visit:

http://www.pagesoftheheart.net/artman/publish/article_1024.shtml

get creative with art.

So what are you waiting for? Start scrounging up fun materials for your first altered art project. Bet it won't be your last!



Rachel
Bishop

Curt
VanderWaal

What's up with that?

I noticed that stores recently stopped selling Spykes, that fruit-flavored mixer that you can put in beer. I don't get what the big deal is—isn't it just like an energy drink?

—Tony, age 17

Well, Tony, many alcohol companies recently started promoting beer mixers (sometimes called "beertails," instead of cocktails). By putting in hot flavors like lime and mango, and then adding popular energy drink ingredients like guarana, ginseng, and caffeine, these companies are hoping to lure younger drinkers into trying their products. Because of the fruity tastes and the energy boost, many people drink more than normal. But when you add Spykes' 12 percent alcohol content to the alcohol that's already in beer, people get drunk almost without realizing it. Anheuser-Busch took Spykes off the market because of intense pressure from the public (a great example of how public protest can actually change things!), but there are many other similar drinks that are still being sold. This is just one more example of alcohol companies trying to cloak alcohol in a product that seems less dangerous than it really is.

I just love some of those hilarious beer ads on TV. My dad said it just makes it more likely that I'll want to drink, but I'm not convinced. Who's right?

—Justin, age 14

We're going to have to go with your dad on this one, Justin. Alcohol companies aren't going to flush their money down the toilet without being sure that people are more likely to buy their prod-

uct if they think the ads are funny. Researchers are now finding out what alcohol companies have known for a long time—advertising works. For example, one recent study found that kids living in areas with large numbers of alcohol ads on billboards, storefronts, bus stops, and other locations were more interested in drinking than kids living in neighborhoods with low amounts of advertising. You may not be able to avoid looking at the ads, but remember that alcohol companies aren't just creating ads for your entertainment—they want you to like and buy their products, too.

My friend was given a zombie pill by a guy who told her it would help her have fun with him all night, but she doesn't remember a big part of the night and is afraid she might have done something she will regret.

—Jasmine, age 16

It sounds like your friend may have been given Ambien, a sleeping pill that's not harmful when taken occasionally as prescribed by a doctor. A recent survey found that one in 14 high school seniors had taken sedatives, sometimes fighting off the effects of sleeping pills to get high. Some creeps like to use these pills, in combination with alcohol, as a kind of date-rape drug because girls often have trouble remembering the night's activities. If your friend thinks she might have been taken advantage of sexually, it would be good for her to get checked out by a doctor. She should also avoid taking any medications that aren't prescribed by a doctor.

Dazzle 'Em at Your Next

Interview



If you've prepared yourself properly you're bound to impress the employer and stand out in the group.

By Tina O'Reilly



You've filled out dozens of applications. A few weeks go by and still no call. You wonder if you missed something on your application or maybe your qualifications weren't right. Finally you get a call from the company you hoped to work for and now they want you to come in for an interview. The excitement starts to build. This is your big opportunity to land a job and earn some extra cash for all those fun things you want to do. Then fear sets in! What if I mess up? What if they don't like me? What am I going to say?

These are valid fears when facing an interview. There are tricks to impressing employers. Let these ideas guide you through your next interview.

Dress for Success

Even if you know there's no strict dress code for the employees, dress properly. I know this might seem obvious, but you'd be surprised how many people actually arrive at an interview dressed casually. Remember you aren't an employee yet. Dressing down will give the employer the impression you aren't serious about the job. First impressions really do matter in an employer's mind.

Body Piercings or Tattoos

If you have either, it's wise to cover them as best you can. Most employers will require you to do so when on the job, so

This is your **big opportunity** to land a job.

being professional in the interview will show the interviewer that you are serious about wanting the job.

Greeting

Always greet your interviewer with a handshake, whether a man or woman. It shows professionalism and respect.

Research the Company

Do your research before going into the interview. Learn everything you can about the company. Technology allows us to research just about anything or anyone. Check their Web site, read any articles (if there are any) written about the company. You don't have to know everything, but know enough so that if the employer asks you'll have a general idea about the company.

Relax

Take a deep breath and sit up straight in the chair. When speaking, you want to come across as relaxed, not stuttering or jittery.

Eye Contact

When listening to the interviewer speak, it's important you make eye contact with them. There's nothing more unprofessional than someone who is looking everywhere else except at the interviewer.

Ask Questions

This is where your research comes in handy. Interviewers like to know that their candidates are truly interested in not only the position, but the

company too. Knowing a few things about the company will show them you're not just looking for any old job. Feel passionate about the company; after all you might be representing them one day. So prepare a few questions to ask the interviewer.

Sell Yourself

Inevitably the interviewer will ask why they should hire you. This is your chance to shine. List all your strengths and qualifications, especially those that have something to do with the job you're applying for. Have you interned at a retirement home? Are you good with people? Are your math skills at the top of your class? Telling them you're hardworking and motivated isn't enough. Tell the interviewer about your unique qualities; show them why they should hire you.

Directions

Make sure you have good directions to the company. It's even a good idea to make a dry run to guarantee you have correct directions. This will help you

estimate the time it will take to get to the interview on time. Allow yourself a few extra minutes the day of the interview just in case there's a lot of traffic. You don't want to be late to the interview.

References

Bring a list of personal references or a letter of recommendation with you to the interview. This could be written by a teacher or leader where you interned. The only people who can't be your personal references are family members.

Contact Information

Do not leave the interview without follow-up information from the interviewer; e-mail, phone number, mailing address, etc. Even if you decide the job is not for you, it's important you contact the person who interviewed you and let them know. Always thank the interviewer for their time in giving you the opportunity to learn more about their company. Who knows what other opportunities may arise in the future. You may change your mind about working for the company.

Now comes the real waiting, especially if you are interested in pursuing the position. Keep in mind you aren't the only person interviewing for the position. There's likely a handful of candidates trying to get the same job. But if you've prepared yourself properly, you're bound to impress the employer and stand out in the group.





Spotlight

By Mary Rahn

INTERVIEW WITH

Chase Burton

Award-winning Filmmaker



Chase Burton has won several awards for his filmmaking, including Honorable Mention in the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA) competition for his short film "Something Wonderful"—a huge achievement considering only the top five percent in the nation were so honored. He also won a Gold Key in the National Scholastic Art Competition and Best Cinematography at the Conejo Film Festival. Now in college, Chase travels the world collecting stories and experiences to integrate into his films. He lived for 10 months in Brisbane, Australia, and also spent time in a jungle in Ecuador, South America, with the Waorani people who inspired him to learn more about various cultures and ways of life. "Filmmaking," he says, "is just another form of storytelling." Read on for more insights from this brilliant young man behind the camera.

Listen: How did you become interested in filmmaking?

Chase: I've become interested in different aspects of filmmaking over the course of my entire life. My father gave me one of those huge VHS video camcorders from the 80s when I was only 8 years old. It was so heavy I could barely carry it, but I still loved working with it. I began filming my friends and we would reenact our favorite scenes and characters from TV. My love for filmmaking eventually expanded to editing and screenwriting when my brother convinced my parents to buy a more advanced computer so I could edit films and he could record his

music. I got into screenwriting after I read several plays in middle school. High school was when I became interested in cinematography after watching several documentaries on the making of a film and seeing all the cameramen working on elaborate shots. It was the end of my senior year in high school when I decided that I wanted to become a cinematographer.

Listen: What challenges have you had to overcome in your filmmaking experiences?

Chase: I became profoundly deaf at nine months old. Growing up, I had to learn how to use my hearing aids and go to speech therapy sessions to learn how to talk. Over the years, I also learned how to lip read. My deafness has been a constant challenge as I've worked with hearing crews on several films. I work hard to show I can still have normal conversations with crew members and carry out my role on a film set.

Listen: Where do you find your inspiration and how do you stay motivated?

Chase: When I was growing up, my dad always brought home laser disc movies and I soon fell in love with movies. So I credit my dad for my love of watching movies. My brother, Terry Jr., inspired me to take more technical directions with film by teaching me how to use a Macintosh computer and helping me create music for my films. Now, I find inspiration from all my experiences and the people I meet. I want to experience other parts of the world and take in as much as I can from my surroundings and turn them into stories that I can tell. I stay motivated by watching films, and when I see a great movie I always tell myself that's the kind of movie I want to make.

Listen: What tips do you have for young people pursuing their dreams?

Chase: Learn how to turn your disappointments into motivation. I once let my disappointments get in the way of making films and I nearly gave up. I can say now that it won't happen again as I have truly learned from it. If you want something bad enough, you'll get it. Meet as many people as you can and create a strong and efficient network of friends who support and encourage you. Also, experience as much as you can. I once received this advice from a writer, and it has helped me in more ways than I can imagine. You grow so much from your experiences.

CAUSE or EFFECT?

CoolStuff



If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude. Don't complain.

—Maya Angelou



In most cases, the difference between an ordinary person and a successful person, or between a happy person and a depressed person, is attitude—and attitude is a choice.

Think about it. Your mind-set helps determine the outcome of most situations. This is how it works: each day is full of

different challenges; they can be good or they can be bad; you can't control your circumstances; it's how you deal with them that matters.

You may not be able to control the obstacles that come your way, but what's more important is that you can choose how to handle them. The bottom line is:

Life is 10 percent what happens to you, and 90 percent how you react to it.

Recently, we worked with a group of disabled people. Some were blind and some were in wheelchairs. Society had labeled them "handicapped"—even though they were far from it. Most people would understand if their attitude was negative and pessimistic. However, this group of individuals had more willpower and confidence than most of the people we have ever met.

Each person shared with us their story of how they became disabled. The interesting thing was they all made it clear that they had a choice: to be bitter about the tough hand they were dealt, or to play their hand the best they could with a smile on their face.

We all know it would have been much easier to be disappointed, angry, and depressed. However, each per-

son chose to take the high road. They didn't let their negative thoughts take over.

We're all given the same choice in life when we face challenges. We can get bitter or better. It's true. You may not be able to control the wind or change the weather, but you can always adjust the sails and change your attitude.

Simply put, it's not what happens to us that matters, it's how we react to what happens to us. Letting events determine the way we feel can be disastrous. You can take control of your life by choosing what you focus on.

One of the greatest gifts you possess is the ability to determine what each event in your life means to you. We can control our thoughts, so we are the maker and creator of our own destiny.

The Next Step . . .

One thing we can always expect in life is that problems will arise—or what we refer to as "surprise challenges." It's easy to respond automatically without thinking about our behavior. Since these challenges in life are inevitable, what matters most are two things: one, how we feel about the situation and what meaning we give to the event, and two, what we're going to do about it.

Take a few minutes to do the exercise online and start taking control of your life.



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and they will listen
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