



Is Everyone Really
Doing It? ■ 6



Most Likely to . . . ■ 20



Move Over,
Thomas Edison ■ 24

CELEBRATING POSITIVE CHOICES

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NOVEMBER 2008



Suren
Ozan

Featured performer at the
Native American Music Awards
in 2001

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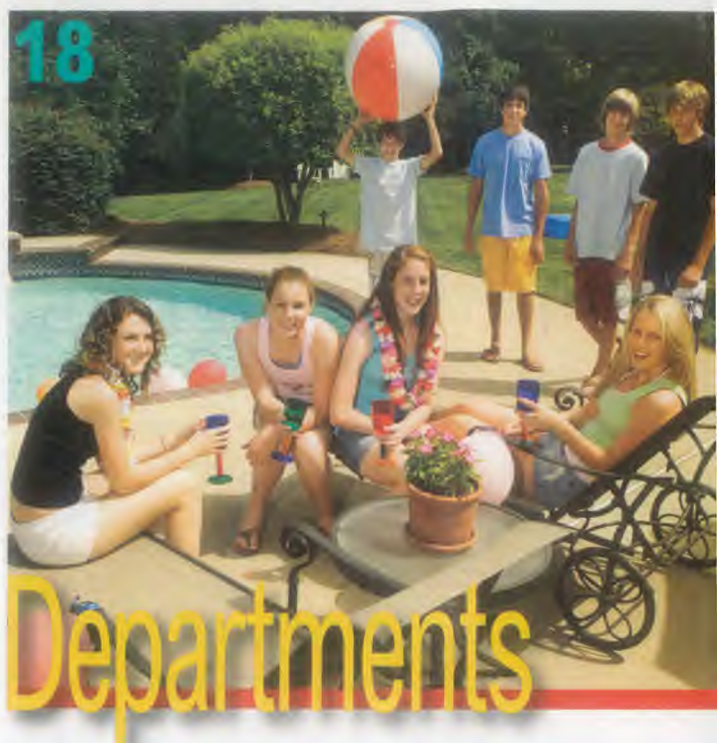
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I'm Just Saying...

Julio Diaz was on his way home and planned to make the usual stop at his favorite diner. When he stepped off onto the nearly empty New York City subway platform, he was held up by a teen at knifepoint. The teen wanted his wallet, so Julio gave it to him. Just like that.

And then he did something really odd.

As the teen was walking away from him, Julio said, "Hey, wait a minute. You forgot something. If you're going to be robbing people for the rest of the night, you might as well take my coat to keep you warm."

The teen looked at him like he was nuts and asked him why he would do such a thing. Julio told him that he must really need the money if he was willing to risk his freedom for a few bucks. Then he invited the teen to join him for dinner.

While they were at the diner, the manager, the waitresses, and even the dishwasher came by their table to say hi to Julio. The teen was impressed and wanted to know if Julio owned the place. He didn't; he just ate there a lot. The teen said, "But you're even nice to the dishwasher!"

Julio replied, "Well, haven't you been taught you should be nice to everybody?"

"Yeah, but I didn't think people actually behaved that way," the teen said.

In the end the teen gave Julio back his wallet so he could pay for dinner, and Julio gave the teen \$20. In return Julio asked for the teen's knife, and the teen gave it to him.

A few days later Julio recorded his story for NPR's StoryCorps. He says, "I figure, you know, if you treat people right, you can only hope that they treat you right. It's as simple as it gets in this complicated world."

Way to go, Mr. Diaz!

I would love to know what happened to that teen. I would love to know if he turned around and committed a kind act because someone showed him kindness. I'd like to know if he just went on his way or if he stopped to pay it forward. What if everyone treated people right, with kindness and respect? Wouldn't you rather live in a world like that? Well, it all starts with one person. First Julio Diaz, next maybe the teen he helped, and now you. If we all become the change we want to see in the world, then the world can't help but change. Remember, to the world you may be just one person, but to one person you may be the world.

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



Céleste Perrino-Walker
Editor

If you want to read the rest of the story or listen to Julio talk about it, visit:
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=89164759>.

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RED IN THE FACE

By Scott Neuffer

*At the start of my junior year,
my face exploded with pimples.*

No one is more concerned about the way they look than a teenager. As you play catch-up with your own body, trying to get used to how you'll look as an adult, the media bombards you with images of perfect people—movie stars, rock stars, television personalities, all seeming to say, "Hey, look like me!" And oftentimes, when you compare yourself with celebrities, you notice significant differences: Britney Spears has blond hair and you have red hair; or you notice that Brad Pitt doesn't wear glasses and you do. As someone who had terrible acne as a teenager, I know how it feels to think you're ugly or don't fit the standard society sets for you.

I grew up in a middle-class town in northern Nevada called Gardnerville. Although it was rural, our town rested right on the border of California, and all the glamorous culture of California heavily influenced us kids. I remember when I was 13, and my friends telling me to stop dressing so "geeky." With their help I was able to replace my wardrobe with cool clothes from California: expensive khaki shorts, brand-name T-shirts, shiny skate shoes. Soon, I had the look of the cool surfer crowd. But my coolness didn't last long.

During my first two years of high school, I was considered cool; girls liked the way I looked. But at the age of 16—at the start of my junior year—my face exploded with pimples.

They weren't your typical little, pesky pimples either. They were bright-red, cystic lumps, spread all over my face, and I tried desperately to kill them. I bought expensive cleansers and creams. I even tried prescription antibiotics, but the little armies of zits were ruthless.

Within months, my social



Illustration by Ralph Butler

standing went from super cool and desirable to ugly, freakish, and pitiful. Girls stopped dating me. Guys who I thought were my friends began making fun of me behind my back and eventually stopped hanging out with me. Only my best friends, those who really cared about me, stood by me as I tried to rid the redness from my face.

So what does a once-popular teenager do when he suddenly becomes unpopular because of the way he looks? I'm not going to lie. It was difficult to deal with. I felt shipwrecked, alone, and ashamed of myself. I felt the world had played a cruel joke on me, and it wasn't fair that other kids could go on living normal lives.

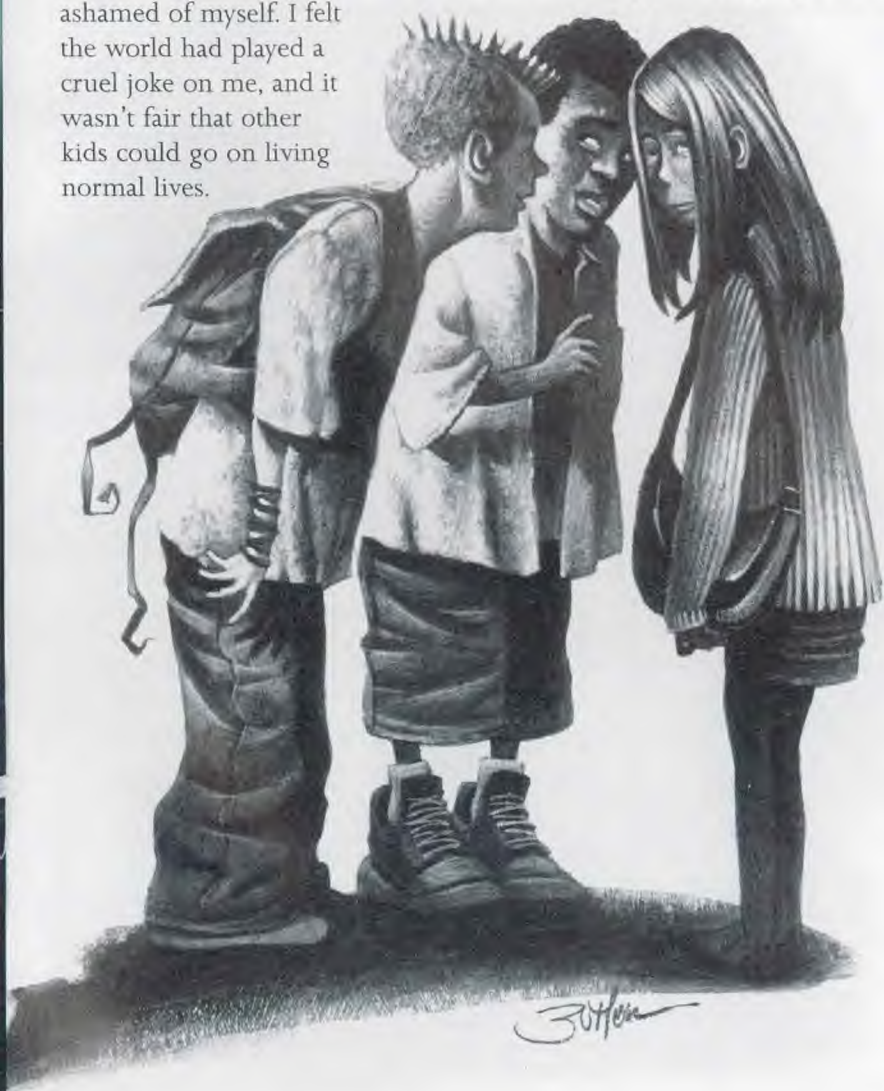
But I could sink only so deep into self-pity. Eventually, I had to grow up. I had to realize that only I could define my own worth. I had to learn to see myself through my own eyes, not the eyes of my peers.

And what did I see? I saw someone who could be successful and happy if he tried. I saw someone who already had a lot to be thankful for: two parents, a solid best friend, and a world open with possibilities. I found incredible amounts of strength and independence in myself that I never knew I had. I stopped worrying about

being popular and instead focused on my schoolwork, raising my cumulative grade point average (which had long suffered from being so cool).

By the start of my senior year my face had cleared up. I resumed normal social activities—dating girls, going out with big groups of friends—but I looked at the world in a much different way. I no longer judged people by their physical appearance. Rather, I judged people by their character, their capacity to be kind and true to themselves. I ignored superficial social distinctions, such as those made between “popular” and “unpopular” people. I treated everyone equally, with the same amount of respect I myself wanted.

I also learned not to invest too much in the way you look. Today, if I find myself fretting about my image, I only have to look in the mirror and find the little scars on my cheeks, the small indentations where acne once made a hideous home of my face. Then I'm reminded of how an image can change, how the body is subject to the whims of the natural world and therefore difficult to control. I remember those things I can control: my mind, my attitude, my relationships with others, things that really matter and in the end determine success. When I remember this, I can relax and appreciate who I am. I can love how I look, because I look like me and there is no other me.



Is Everyone Really Doing It?

Sex

can lead to emotional issues you may not be prepared to deal with.

By Jessica Burkhart

In the 2004 movie *Mean Girls*, Coach Carr tells his sex ed class, "If you have sex, you'll get pregnant. And die." Obviously, that's a little extreme, but what if you had sex and got one of the many STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) or HIV/AIDS? Coach Carr is right. You could die from complications of having sex. So, want to know who's doing it, who isn't, and what the risks are?



Sex Stats from the Kaiser Family Foundation: In 2005—

- less than half of students in grades nine through 12 had sex.
- the percentage of teens ages 15–19 who had sex before the age of 14 has decreased.
- one in four teens who had sex contracted an STD.
- it's estimated that half of all new AIDS cases are in people under 25.

Drawbacks of Teen Sex

If you're having sex as a teen, you may be putting yourself at risk—emotionally and physically. Sex can lead to unplanned pregnancy, STDs, HIV/AIDS, and emotional issues you may not be prepared to deal with. Among other things, if you're a girl having sex and you catch an STD, it may increase your risk for cervical cancer. If you're a guy and you get certain STDs, you're risking infertility. Some of the most serious risks are:

- Losing your good reputation
- Irreversible STDs
- HIV/AIDS
- Sexual abuse

Consider whether having sex will help you reach your goals. If it won't, then isn't waiting something to consider? Stay focused

on yourself, your social life, your academic goals, and see if thoughts about having sex lose their importance. Remember, sex doesn't always equal love. You never have to prove yourself by having sex. If your boyfriend or girlfriend truly cares about you, they will wait.

Positives of Abstinence

- It's totally free.

- You can start anytime.
- It might make you feel better about yourself.

"I couldn't be happier with my decision to wait to have sex," Kieran, 21, of Illinois says. "My boyfriend and I have been dating for three years, and with much self-control have vowed to be abstinent. If you are thinking of having sex, I'd strongly urge you to wait until you're married. I believe waiting to have sex until marriage shows true commitment."

Abstinence is the only form of birth control that is 100 percent safe. People choose abstinence for many reasons; it is possible to have relationships without having sex! "A lot of teenagers these days think it's cool to have sex and they're more mature for doing it," says Cecily, 16, of Ohio. "But the way they give up their bodies is just sad, and it leaves a lot of emotional baggage. I've seen teenage girls get pregnant, girls being called names, girls being used. And none of them are happy. I think being abstinent is important for your emotional well-being."

Tammy Gold, founder of Gold Parent Coaching, adds that thinking as an individual and not using group mentality is one of the best ways to make such a powerful decision as deciding to be abstinent. Gold says she thinks it's, "wonderful if the teen makes a decision for his or her best interest and how he or she can still be tight with friends even if he or she differs from the group's beliefs."

Get Support

Many cities have sexual abstinence support groups for teens. If one doesn't exist in your town, search online for abstinence message boards and Internet clubs. If you've got a MySpace page, there's even a space for Dobson High School's Abstinence Club from Mesa, Arizona. "A teen should find support wherever he or she feels supported and safe," says Gold. "If



he or she feels this way at home, then the teen should share their thoughts with family. If it's with friends, then talk with friends. If the teen does not feel comfortable with friends or family, than a support group could provide a wonderful opportunity for them to feel connected to people with similar views."

Groups like Abstinence Between Strong Teens International, Inc., live by the slogan "It's Great to Wait." Their Web site offers support for teens and their parents about abstinence. Online groups offer support through interactive Web sites, videos, photo galleries, field trips, and places to chat. With the Internet you're able to chat with members no matter where you live.

Don't let anyone pressure you into something that doesn't feel right. Arming yourself with information is the smartest choice.



WHEN EVREN OZAN'S FAMILY MOVED FROM MASSACHUSETTS TO CALIFORNIA, HIS LIFE CHANGED—AND NOT JUST BECAUSE HE WAS LIVING ON THE WEST COAST INSTEAD OF THE EAST.

During the Ozan family's cross-country drive they stopped to visit the Grand Canyon. In the gift shop Evren (pronounced EH-vren) spotted a cedar flute—a Native American instrument—that he wanted so much, he used his entire allowance for the trip to buy it. (Part of Evren's heritage is Osage Indian, though his name is Turkish—his heritage from his dad's side of the family.)

He began playing the six-holed flute immediately. In his new hometown in Orange County, California, he played the flute anywhere and everywhere—at home, in parks. He was just enjoying himself, but it captured people's attention! When they heard him playing, they came closer to listen.

Then Evren started getting to know other flute players—including Guillermo Martinez, a Native American musician and instrument maker.

"He's kind of been my mentor," says Evren, now 15.

Martinez taught Evren about the Native American flute tradition, and about the instrument itself and how to make one (Evren has made two so far). Martinez introduced Evren to other Native flute players, and the teen is now part of a "flute circle" that Martinez hosts so instrumentalists can gather to talk with and perform for each other.

By Elisabeth Deffner

The Accident Musician

His latest album, *ALLUVIA*, was released shortly before his thirteenth birthday—and it won Best Instrumental Recording at the Native American Music Awards.

From the start, Evren has been comfortable performing for other people. He was a featured performer at the Native American Music Awards in 2001—and he's released three albums.

Focus on the Music

When Evren made his first album, he didn't even realize that was what he was doing!

It happened on another cross-country trip. The Ozan family headed back to Massachusetts, and while they were there they visited a world music shop in New Hampshire. The Ozans showed the proprietors some of Martinez's flutes that they'd brought along with them,

and then Evren started to play.

"It turned out that the people who had the store also had a recording studio," Evren recalls. "They asked us to come see it. I just started playing [music] with them. I didn't know he was recording! We were just playing—and then a few months later [the producer] sent the disc."

That disc turned into Evren's first album, *Images of Winter*. It was released when he was 7 years old, and won him the title of "Rising Star" at the Native American Music Awards.

Two years later, Evren returned to Possum Hall Studios to record another album—this time, on purpose! *As Things Could Be* garnered

al





"I wouldn't want anything to jeopardize me playing the flute and my music."

in marching bands and orchestras. Native flutes are often made of wood, but can also be made of bamboo, gourds, or clay. A musician holds his flute so the end of the flute points at the ground—and the mouthpiece is at the very tip.

Though orchestra flutes may be made of wood, they are often made of metal. Performers hold the instrument perpendicular to their bodies—

Evren another "Rising Star" and was nominated for Best Instrumental and Best Album by the Native American Music Awards.

His latest album, *Alluvia*, was released shortly before his thirteenth birthday, and it won Best Instrumental Recording at the Native American Music Awards the same year Evren was nominated for Flutist of the Year.

"I just enjoy playing the music," he says. But when he receives awards, he adds, "I'm really honored."

The recording process is an interesting one. It starts out with a melody or idea in Evren's head, which he expresses to the producer while in preproduction. Evren suggests different accompanying instruments and a rhythm bed for each piece. When recording begins, Evren and the producer have already established a starting point to work from. "If we want to change key or change something, we'll go from there," says Evren.

Besides recording and releasing albums, Evren also performs in concert. He's played across the United States and in Belgium, England, and Germany. After a performance at an academic conference in the U.N. Plaza in New York City—the Turkish

consulate was exploring the similarities between Turks and Native

Americans—Evren was even featured on Turkish television!

Sharing His Joy

Native American flutes are built very differently from silver flutes—the kind you see musicians playing



parallel to their shoulders—and the mouthpiece is a short distance away from the flute's tip.

Native flutes don't

have any keys for performers to press, as silver flutes do. They just have holes for players' fingers to cover. Each Native flute is tuned to a pentatonic scale—which sounds like the black keys on a piano—and it will have a more limited range than a silver flute.

Evren doesn't take lessons for the Native flute, but he does for the silver flute. But music and schoolwork aren't the only items on his agenda! He also likes to skateboard, fly radio-controlled airplanes, and hang out with his friends. Substances like drugs, alcohol, and tobacco are not part of his world—for a lot of good reasons.

Most important, he says, "I would rather play the flute. I wouldn't want anything to jeopardize me playing the flute and my music."

Is there music in Evren's future? "Absolutely," he says. But he isn't sure he will pursue it professionally. "I just enjoy playing the flute. I [just] hope [people] enjoy the music," he says. "If I can play the flute—which I enjoy doing—and people enjoy listening, then I'm happy to continue."



**YOU CAN LISTEN
TO EVREN'S MUSIC AT
WWW.OZANMUSIC.COM.**

Discography
Images of Winter—2001
As Things Could Be—2003
Alluvia—2006



"What are you thankful for this year?" You'll probably hear that question a lot this month, what with Thanksgiving just around the corner. Seems everywhere you turn somebody's talking about being thankful for something. What's with all this "thanks" business anyway? And what does our attitude have to do with our health? Turns out quite a bit:



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

Recent research indicates that people with positive attitudes may have decreased risk of heart disease, handle stress better, and have stronger immune systems.

Grateful people tend to take better care of themselves. They exercise more, eat better, and get regular checkups at their doctor's office.

Want to avoid that yearly cold? Being thankful for your blessings might make all the difference. In one study at the University of Utah, students with optimistic, thankful attitudes had stronger immune systems than more pessimistic students, making them better able to resist those nasty cold bugs.

AIDS patients with positive attitudes tend to do better at fighting the virus and tolerate treatment better.

Writing down your blessings every night has been shown to help you sleep better, feel more refreshed in the morning, and get along better with others.

Consciously practicing being thankful can decrease the severity of depression. It's hard to be depressed when you're looking up and not down.

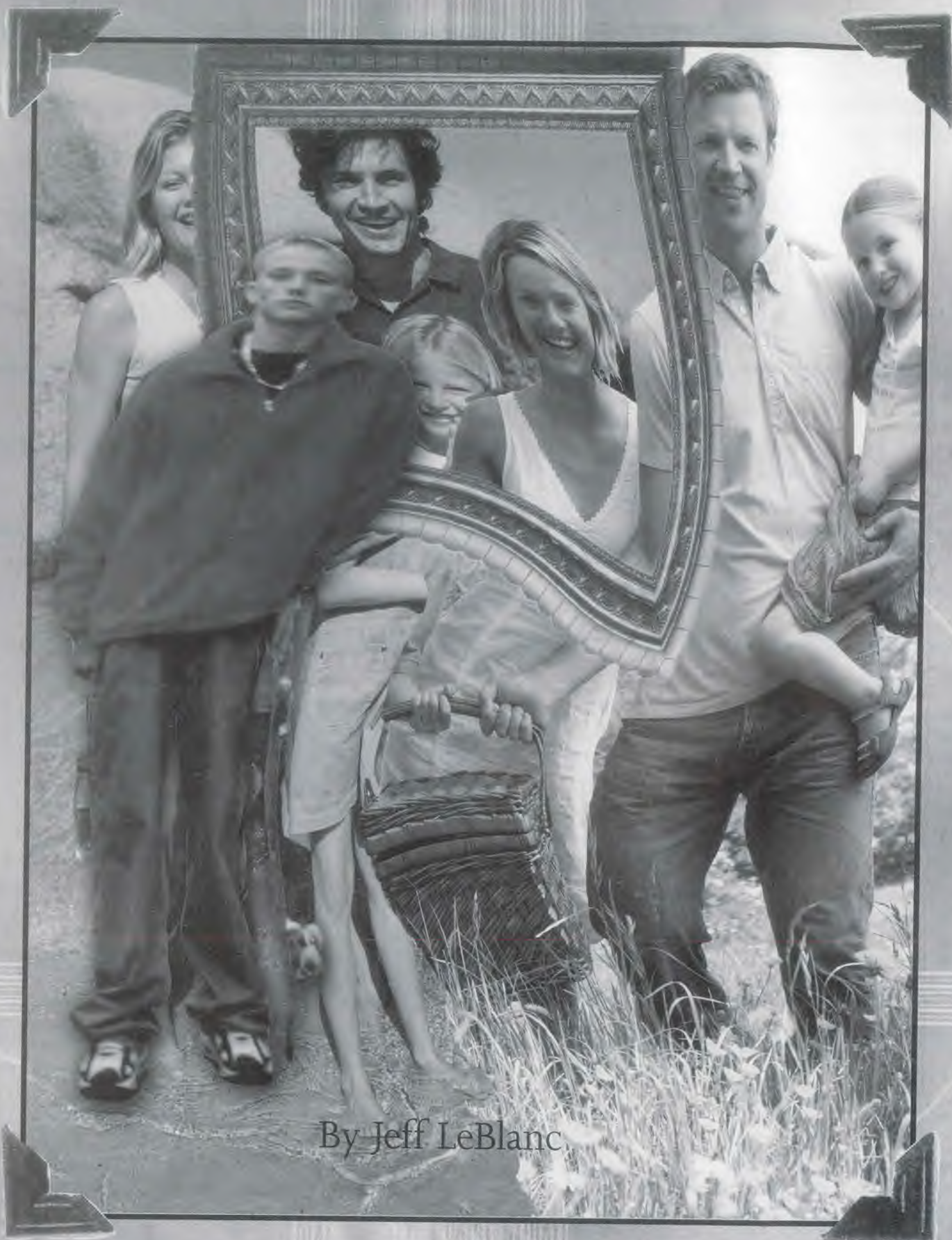
Chronic stress—whether physical or mental—breaks down the body's ability to fight disease, slows wound healing, and even make vaccines less effective. People with a thankful attitude do a better job handling the stresses of life and recover more quickly from illness.

When tragedy comes your way, such as the death of a loved one or other traumatic events, having a grateful attitude significantly improves your ability to handle the stress and make good decisions.

Struggling at school? Maybe you need to check your attitude. Students with positive attitudes tend to do much better in school and get along better with teachers and other students.

Keeping a journal of all the things you are thankful for can be very helpful. People who do this get sick less often, exercise more, and tend to feel better about life in general.

Winston Churchill once said, "Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference." As you can see, he was right. So this Thanksgiving, before you sit down to dinner, take a moment to check your attitude. Make a list of all the good things in your life. You'll find you've got a lot more to be thankful for than you may have realized. And before you dig into that feast, turn to someone you care about and say, "I'm thankful—for you." The grin on their face will make it all worthwhile.



By Jeff LeBlanc

My "Normal"

I stood in the kitchen knowing my life had changed forever. My dad just walked out the door with suitcases in hand, but he wasn't going on a vacation. I was just 8, but I had an idea of what normal was, and this wasn't it.

A couple years ago I heard a great description of that feeling in the film *Garden State* when the character Largeman said, "You know that point in your life when you realize that the house that you grew up in isn't really your home anymore? All of a sudden even though you have some place where you can put your stuff—that idea of home is gone."

I never really got back to a "normal" life after that day when I was 8. It seemed that every event made my life more and more abnormal. Little did I know that was "normal" for me.

In the next year each parent had a new spouse, which meant my cozy family of four became a family of eight. My mom was the first to remarry. Her husband had two kids of his own, but they were a few years older than my sister and me, and already out on their own. For the first couple years everything my sister and I did was compared to what his kids had done. Eventually, this drove my sister and me out of their house and into our dad's. My stepmom was new to parenting, and just her luck she had to start with my teenage sister and me. We had a lot of tough stretches.

I liked the way my family had been—my mom, my dad, my sister, and me. Yeah, my parents argued, but I assumed that was normal. I didn't want new parents or siblings, and I

made sure they knew it. Whether it was through blasting music or arguing for no real reason, I seemed to search for ways to show my stepfamily they were not welcome. In a way I had been following in my sister's footsteps—she was six years older than me and had just entered her teenage years when my parents divorced. Their split brought us closer than we had been, which occasionally created a greater divide in our house.

For me it was great having my sister around, because she was someone I could go to for help. She was going through the same issues I was and could offer me a slightly different perspective. However, one of the hardest things to remember—but perhaps one of the most important—is that it's a new situation for the whole family. That means that you all have questions and could turn to each other for some help.

One of the greatest assets I found was a support group at my school for children of divorced parents. The group not only allowed me to see that I wasn't alone, but it let me talk out my issues with other people my age. The group was led by the school counselor and offered us time to talk, journal, and just ask questions. If there isn't a group like this available at your school, ask your school

counselor if they would be willing to start one, or if they know of any other groups in the area. A school counselor can be very helpful to get you through the rough patches of your life.

It's important to remember that you aren't the first to go through this, and you

won't be the last. There is always someone you can turn to for help, and they are usually easier to find than you might think.

I've learned that I've lived much of my life allowing a single thought to define me. I thought that I was someone that my parents decided to trade in for a newer, better version. I wish I would have been able to see then what I can now, but instead I've had to step outside to see that I wasn't being traded in.

All the times I thought my stepmom or stepdad were trying to force me to be a certain way wasn't because they didn't like me or didn't want me around. It was because they were the new variable, and they were trying to find their place among the constants. That type of situation creates stress that makes people act differently than they ordinarily would—and occasionally even change who they really are. New people always create new experiences, and since you're the one who's been there all along, the end result is really up to you.



I'm Listening

By Greg Woodburn



This year we're proud to introduce you to a new columnist, Greg Woodburn. Some of you might remember Greg as the founder of S.O.S., an organization that donates used running shoes to underprivileged youth, which we featured in our Spotlight column. Greg is a senior at Ventura High School in Southern California, where he runs cross-country and track. He also enjoys studio art and playing with his boxer dog, Murray. Send your questions to Greg at imlistening@listenmagazine.org.

Dear Greg,

All my friends are into IM and text messaging—they e-mail and chat online with each other when they aren't in school. It's like they're in contact 24/7! Personally, I think it's a waste of time. Am I weird or are they spending way too much time "communicating"?

—Tired of Tech-Talk

Dear Tired,

You are not weird. I used to have Instant Messenger on my computer, but I recently uninstalled it because I felt like I was too dependent on being connected to my friends all the time, day and night. E-mail, text messaging, and online chatting are great tools to stay in touch with people, but too much of a good thing can be a bad thing. If you feel like it is not a productive use of your spare time, don't let your friends pressure you into joining in. There are plenty of other fun things to do: sports, drama, art, music—not to mention keeping up with your schoolwork! You can visit with your friends at school and hang out on weekends without feeling you need to be in constant contact. In fact, you will build stronger friendships if you have diverse interests and lives apart from your friendships. That way, when you do meet up, you can grow and learn from each other.

Dear Regretful,

Cheating is an awful thing to do, which is why your conscience is tormenting you. That's actually a good sign. The first thing you must now do is promise to yourself that you will NEVER again lower yourself to cheating. My advice is to confess. I think this is the only way you will feel like you can move on from the situation. Tell your teacher what you just told me. It is clear how genuinely sorry you are and how bad you feel. You will surely get in trouble, but that is still better than the self-punishment you are going through right now.

Dear Greg,

I cheated on a test two months ago, but I haven't been able to forget about it. I still feel terrible and keep thinking about it, wishing I could go back and change it. Should I confess at this late date, or let it slide?

—Regretful Cheater

**It's
your turn to
give advice.**

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

Dear Greg,

I'm so mad! My friend Louisa borrowed a CD from me and never returned it. When I asked her about it, she said she had never borrowed it. What should I do?

—Unlucky Loaner

Should Unlucky Loaner:

- a. Let it go, but don't let Louisa borrow anything again?
- b. Demand that Louisa pay her for the CD?
- c. Make up an excuse to go through Louisa's stuff and try to find the CD?

Test Your CELL PHONE Manners

By April Aragam

Having a cell phone is a great convenience. It means not having to look for a pay phone and change. You can pretty much reach anyone at any time. Great, right? Well, sometimes not so great. Some people lack proper cell phone manners. Take this quiz to find out if your cell phone manners make the grade:

- 1. You are talking on your cell phone while standing in line to pay for your items. When your turn comes up, you:**
 - a. smile at the cashier, but continue talking.
 - b. tell your friend you'll call her back later, and turn your attention to the cashier.
- 2. You are sitting in the theater waiting for the movie to begin when on the screen an announcement to turn off all cell phones comes up. You:**
 - a. change your ring to vibrate. You can't miss your boyfriend's/girlfriend's call.
 - b. turn off your cell immediately. You hate it when people's phones go off during movies.
- 3. You have a cell phone because:**
 - a. everyone else has one. How else can I keep in touch?
 - b. I have so many activities and am always on the go. Mostly it's so my parents always know where I am.
- 4. You are on the bus talking quietly on your cell phone to a friend when she says she can't hear you well anymore. What do you do? You:**
 - a. talk louder.
 - b. tell her you'll call her back later.
- 5. You are on your home phone talking to your best friend when your cell phone rings. You:**
 - a. ask your friend to wait while you answer it.
 - b. turn off the cell. You can call back whoever it is later.
- 6. The rule at your school is "no cell phones". You can't bear the thought of being without your cell. What do you do? You:**
 - a. take the phone, but hide it.
 - b. leave the cell at home and remember to take plenty of quarters to school.



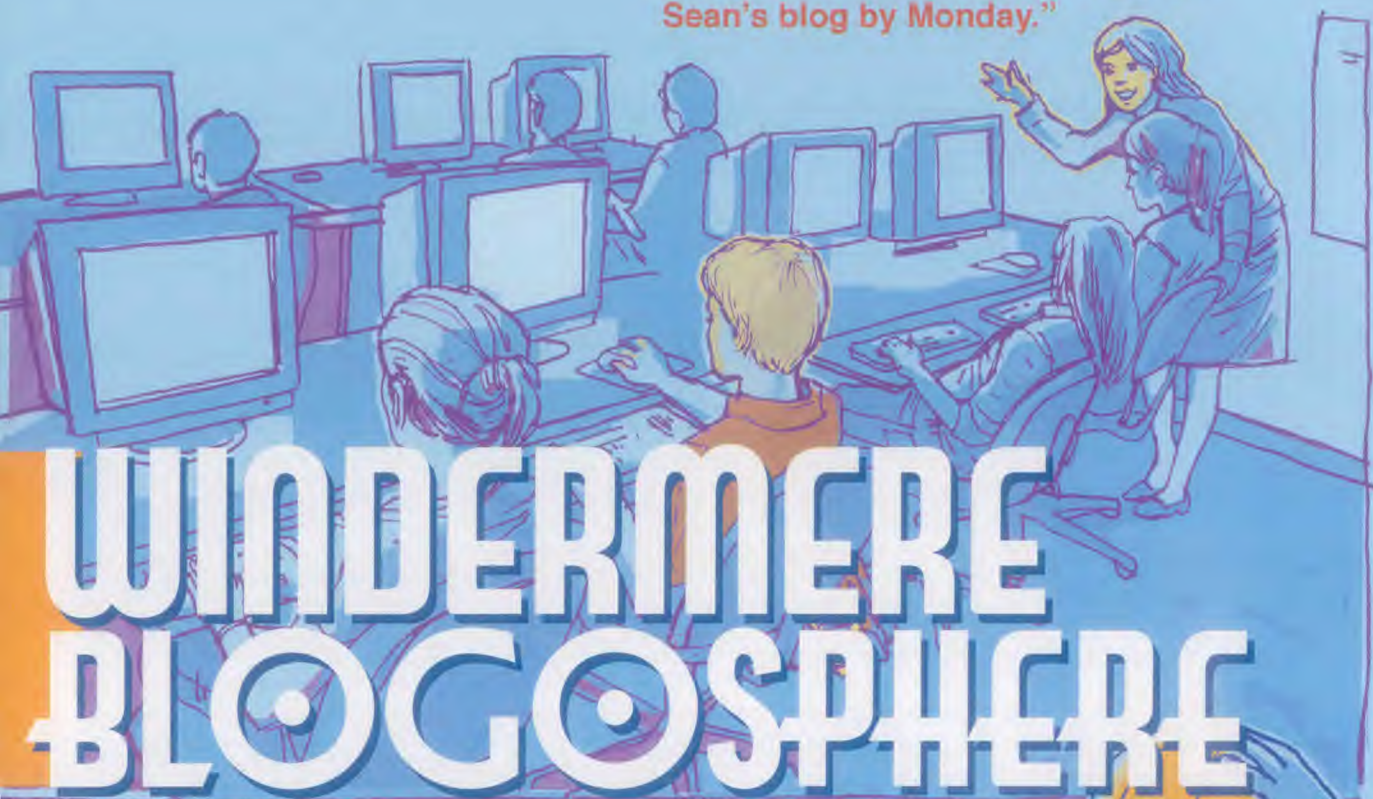
If you answered mostly a's, you could use a lesson in cell phone manners. Remember, you might think your calls are important, but others probably won't. So try to talk quietly, turn your phone off during quiet public moments, and don't talk on the cell when you should be interacting with someone else.

If you answered mostly b's, you know how to handle yourself with a cell phone. You are polite and considerate. As a matter of fact, people are probably shocked to find out you have a cell phone. You use it for important things, not just for idle chatter.

Having a cell phone doesn't have to mean that we are free to be obnoxious and inconsiderate of others. Make sure to keep the ringer volume as low as possible or on vibrate if you can feel it. When you are in the theater, having a meal, or sitting in class, turn the cell phone off. Stop talking when you come to a cashier or other person you should be interacting with. And never talk while you drive.

Written by Dallas Woodburn
Illustration by Jeremy Shires

"This week it is Sean's turn to write on our class blog. As you know, the assignment is to blog about a personal experience in the past year that has affected you. I want everyone to read and comment on Sean's blog by Monday."



WINDERMERE BLOGOSPHERE



At my old school we had a big basketball game against our bitter rival, the Foothill High Dragons . . .



We were down by two points with seven seconds left on the clock. I should have dribbled in closer to the basket or passed to an open teammate with an easier shot to tie the game. But I was greedy—I wanted to sink a three-pointer to win the game so I'd be the hero!

"Good game."

"Are you kidding? We lost, and it's all my fault. I shouldn't even be playing this stupid game!"

"Stupid game? I'd give anything to be out there playing with you! I was supposed to try out for the basketball team my freshman year, but I got in a terrible car accident and now I'm stuck in this chair. Hopefully I can compete in the Paralympics someday. Never forget that each game you play is a gift, just like I'm grateful each day to be alive."

"Wow! I'm really sorry. You are so right."

Sam:
Sean, what a powerful story.

Nadine:
My older brother volunteers at the Paralympics every year—so many kids compete.

Marcos:
You may have lost the game, but we all won a new perspective. You are a hero after all!

Nothing to



Rave About

By Joy Choquette

GH B is nicknamed “Grievous Bodily Harm” for a reason. It is a drug that is highly addictive—some say more than cocaine. It causes all sorts of nasty side effects, like delusions, unconsciousness, nausea, tremors, breathing problems, and extremely high body temperatures. GHB also contributes to violent behavior. Users have been known to smash their heads through plate glass, into walls, and other solid objects. “They think they’re on fire. They’re moving, thrashing, screaming,” said Karen Miotto, a University of California-Los Angeles addiction psychiatrist.

GHB is often found at raves, parties, and concerts. It’s sometimes called Liquid Ecstasy, Liquid X, or Georgia Home Boy. It is colorless and odorless, rarely showing up in drug screenings. Because of its ability to make users pass out, GHB is also a popular date rape drug. Rapists often use GHB because it is hard to detect in the user’s system, and the fact that it’s basically tasteless makes it easy to sneak into their unsuspecting victim’s drink. GHB can completely immobilize the person taking it, leaving them aware of what is going on, but unable to move their body in response. It can also knock someone completely unconscious.

GHB is becoming increasingly popular among teens and young adults, especially among athletes and ravers. Athletes often take GHB because it supposedly makes them

lose weight and perform better. In the long run, however, it can ruin not only their athletic career, but their lives. “I think GHB is probably harder to get addicted to than some other drugs,” says Karen, “but once people get addicted, it is far harder to get off than any drug I’ve seen.”

Nicole, a 17-year-old former GHB user, knows this is true. “I tried to get my life back together. It was hard. I had gone from partying with groups of people every weekend, to sitting home every night by myself, crying. It wasn’t easy to give up my addiction, but it seemed nearly impossible to give up the lifestyle, the “friends.” Once I stopped using, they wanted nothing to do with me.” Some of these same friends, who had been at a party with Nicole, had left her passed out in the bathroom for hours. “They thought I just ‘G’ed out,” says Nicole (e.g. passed out from taking too much GHB). When the homeowner found her there, unconscious and barely breathing, he and another man dumped her off at the local hospital after giving her mouth-to-mouth resuscitation several times. She flatlined twice in the ER and was in a coma for three hours, barely breathing.

Nicole had started taking drugs—first Ecstasy and later cocaine, ketamine, and mushrooms—after going to raves with friends. At first she wasn’t interested in drugs and thought raves were “weird.” But more and more people she knew told her how great they were and encouraged her to go with them. “The more people I knew who went to raves, the more I believed it couldn’t be that bad,” says Nicole. The night Nicole was rushed to the hospital, she had taken approximately 10 times the amount of GHB

normally used recreationally. Experts say, however, that no amount of GHB is safe. Freevibe.com says, “GHB is not always what it seems. Because club drugs, like GHB, are illegal and often produced in makeshift laboratories, it is impossible to know exactly what chemicals were used to produce them and where they came from. How strong or dangerous any illegal drug is varies from time to time.”

Will, a 20-year-old from Florida, didn’t realize how serious the effects of GHB were until it was too late. Will was an athlete, a wrestler and a runner, who was training to be a world-class athlete. He began taking GHB as part of his training regimen. Later he began showing strange symptoms: seeing things that weren’t there, hearing voices, having terrifying nightmares. His parents tried to get him the help he needed for three years. He was physically violent toward himself, and even though he tried to kick his addiction to GHB he was unable to. Will killed himself before he was able to break free of the death grip GHB had on him.

Nicole was lucky. She has been clean for more than a year, though she says she still feels the effects of the GHB. “I have recovered, but not fully. I still struggle with both short- and long-term memory loss.” After getting clean, Nicole entered and won the Miss Utah Teen contest. She now works to educate kids about drugs. “I speak at elementary [schools], middle schools, high schools, and on college campuses. I want kids and teens to know what can happen when you choose the wrong path. I have seen both sides, lived both lives. Believe me, I know now how lucky I am to be alive.”

*Are you a bully?
a target? a bystander?
or all of these?*

Most Likely to ...

By Keri Collins Lewis

Are you most likely to succeed? be a class clown? have the most school spirit? be shoved into a locker? trash someone online? How will your classmates remember you? Do people avoid you, afraid you'll humiliate them to entertain your friends? Or are you avoided because you're "Social Poison," the person excluded from the group? Maybe you watch in silence while your friends turn on one of their own, suddenly wondering what they did to deserve such mean treatment from their "friends." Are you a bully? a target? a bystander? or all of these?

Most Likely to Lash Out

She looks perfect, the teacher's pet, and everyone's best friend. But she spreads vicious rumors about anyone she feels is a threat to her position at the top of the social ladder. She publicly embarrasses her target and slams her on Facebook. Is she a bully? Yes.

What about the boy who posts rage-filled rants on the Internet, describing how he can't wait to injure and kill as many students as he can? Sounds like a physically aggressive bully, right? One such bully was a vengeful outsider, tormented by the popular kids. "Finally, on April 20, 1999 . . . he [carried] out his most gruesome fantasy. And what better place than the school, where everyone, from the parents and teachers on down, has all the power, and he doesn't? What better place than in the high school cafeteria, where students once surrounded Eric and Dylan and squirted ketchup packets all over them, laughing at them and calling them [homosexuals] while teachers watched and did nothing?" wrote one author. That bully, who was also a victim, was one of the Columbine killers.

Part of the problem is that bullies are often targets of abuse in other settings. To regain a sense of power, the victim becomes the bully, picking on



Professional Comedian



Businesswoman



President



Future Olympian

someone who's smaller, weaker, or simply different. So, there aren't just bullies and victims, there are people who are both, which complicates the situation. Some bullies are motivated

enough to silence most girls." People side with bullies because their fear of becoming a target is stronger than their determination to stand up for someone else. It's understandable, but that doesn't make it right.

Best-selling author Frank Peretti writes in his book *The Wounded Spirit*: "The strong are strong to protect the weak; those with abundance are blessed so they can help the needy; the smart and the wise are gifted to help the befuddled and foolish. The measure of a man is not his strength; it is the depth of his nobility. The measure of any person is how he or she treats those who are less gifted, less intelligent, and less able."



by low self-esteem, a fear of being bullied (so he or she will take the role of the "tough kid" in hopes of scaring off any aggressors), and peer pressure. Fear. Anger. Poor self-image. Abuse. Shame. Control. These are parts of the equation for the bully, for the victim, and for the person who is both.

Most Likely to Do Nothing

Maybe you aren't a bully or a victim (or either), and you're breathing a relieved sigh. You're on the life raft floating in shark-infested waters, and one wrong move will turn you into bully bait, dumping you into the ocean of unpopularity. So you put up with stuff you know is wrong. Rosalind Wiseman, the author of *Queen Bees and Wannabes*, writes to parents: "Imagine your daughter is in the popular group. One of the girls in her group teases another girl for being overweight. Your daughter may feel bad, but what would happen if she stood up to the teaser? Any challenge to the powers that be is seen as an act of disloyalty; she might be thrown out. Even the threat of being thrown out is

Most Likely to Lead

Being a leader isn't an easy job. That's why there are so many followers! It's easier to put your conscience on cruise control and go along with the crowd. But to stop bullying, someone has to take a stand.

1. Choose respect. Treat everyone the way you want to be treated.
2. Be accountable. Control your anger, fear, and impulsiveness.
3. Open your mind. Everyone is a human being with something to contribute.
4. Engage in "peer support." Refuse to be part of the bully's audience.
5. Be strong. Confidence discourages bullies.
6. Involve others. Talk to someone trustworthy if you are being abused or harassed. Bring together students and school officials if you want to help change your school's attitude toward peer harassment.
7. Make positive choices, regardless of what everyone else is doing.



DRIVING DEMOCRACY

WITHOUT CASTING A BALLOT,
ONE TENNESSEE TEEN HELPED SHAPE THE OUTCOME
OF A NATIONAL ELECTION.



At 17, Ruth Dike can't vote, but she asked a local congressional campaign, "How can I help?" As a volunteer, she discovered a message she is passionate about sharing. She learned how it feels to make a positive difference. And she had fun.

To begin with, Ruth wasn't enthusiastic. "It was a government class requirement. We had to work five hours," she said. She chose an option that would also earn her credit for volunteer hours.

Ruth changed her attitude in the midst of getting people fired up to vote. She discovered she was happy to be involved. "I think there is something to be learned from participating in the process," Ruth said. "Everyone should do it to maintain our democ-

racy. It was fun!" She described her favorite part: "I really liked standing outside on the curb holding signs, waving, and shouting at people to vote. . . . People were honking their car horns in support."

How many times have you walked away from an opportunity? Like many of us, Ruth needed a little push to get her to do something she ultimately is happy to have experienced. Volunteering to work for a local political campaign is a great way to learn about this system that decides how our country is run. It's a great way to get involved that doesn't require you to be old enough to vote or have any special knowledge before you get there.

Choices, Choices

How do you choose which campaign to volunteer for? Find out about the candidate. Ask people you know. If you can, talk to someone who has volunteered there before. Every candidate should have a Web site where you can learn the candidate's positions on issues important to you, get information about volunteering, and sign up.

Ruth chose to work for this campaign because she could support the candidate. "Before," she said, "I knew I liked the party platform. And a friend I usually agree with on issues liked him." With just a little research, Ruth learned, "He started the state lottery college scholarship my sister is benefiting from right now."

Two other things made this campaign a good choice: a friend wanted to volunteer there, and it was not a huge campaign. "Lots of folks I know went to another, more high-profile campaign," Ruth said. "Since this was a smaller campaign, lots of people introduced themselves to me."

Taking a friend and choosing a smaller campaign can make you feel more comfortable. Take advantage of that by talking to people you don't know, and you may learn valuable information.

By Ann Rosenstein

Picture of Ruth Dike
provided by the author

Because she talked to people she didn't know, Ruth learned firsthand what students think about one of her top college choices—information you can't get from admissions people, Web sites, or brochures. "There were a few students there from a college I'm interested in attending," Ruth said. "We talked about their school. They said positive things. I am seriously considering that school."

At the campaign rally, she talked to the candidate himself. "He was nice," Ruth said, "I had a tough issue question in mind . . . but I chickened out."

Be My Voice: Vote.

Her voice was scratchy from yelling at drivers and, later, screaming with the rally crowd. She was obviously tired, but Ruth's eyes lit up when she talked about the experience. "I really liked that our signs said, 'Be My Voice, Vote Tuesday.' Since we're not old enough to vote ourselves just yet," Ruth said. "Even if they don't vote for my candidate, they

should still vote. We're supposed to be this big democratic nation, but not enough people vote."

Official statistics for that election show fewer than half of those registered to vote actually voted. That doesn't even count people who are eligible to vote who aren't registered. That's another great volunteer opportunity: getting people registered to vote. Ruth would definitely recommend volunteering in local campaigns. "We have a responsibility to participate in the system our country is based on," she said. "I think it's good our teacher had us go. Even if you don't like politics, you should still try things you haven't done before . . . but not drugs—something positive like this."

For the last year, Ruth's focus has been on



learning to drive. Now that she has her license, she can focus on just where she'd like to go to college. Wherever she ends up going, she'll take with her a new passion for getting others involved in the political process. Ruth said, "I will get to vote in the next presidential election!"

If you want to know how good it feels to help make a positive difference, the next time you see political signs starting to sprout up, grab a friend and ask, "How can we help?"

By Elisabeth Deffner

CREATE

TEEN INVENTORS



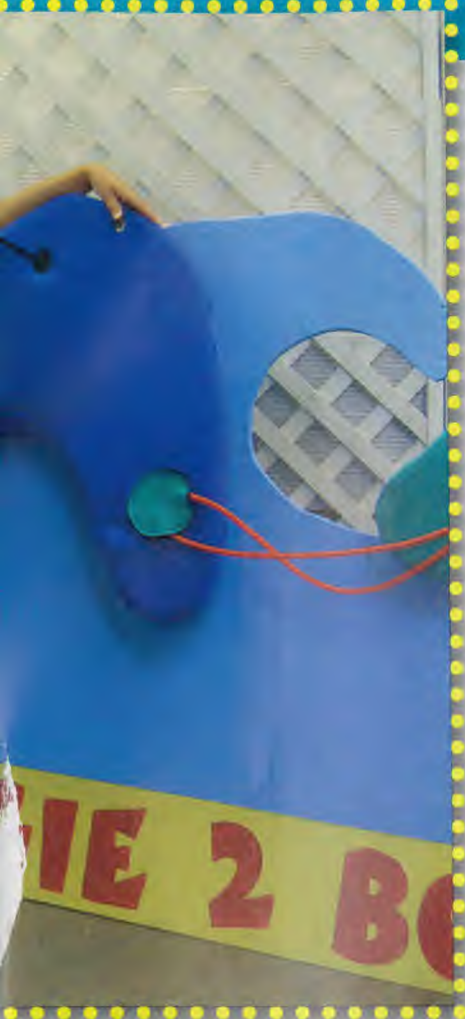
Move Over, Thomas Edison!



Andrew Sutherland

AMAZING PRODUCTS

TOYchallenge



"I wanted to keep riding it over and over again," says Kaycee, 13. The judges at the second annual TOYchallenge thought the Boogie 2 Boogie was pretty cool, too. The Wave Riders won first place.

The team had so much fun inventing this toy that they decided to join forces with four more kids to become the California Aquatics. Together the team came up with a new toy to enter in the next year's TOYchallenge: the Underwater XTreme pool toy.

They won first place in the TOYchallenge again.

Now they're working with a company that's helping them get their inventions mass-produced and into the marketplace so other kids can enjoy playing with them, too.

Inspirational Homework

Kids and teens across the country are developing amazing inventions to win contests, to compete in science fairs, and to create new products to sell in the marketplace. But when Andrew Sutherland designed Quizlet, he just wanted a better way to study French.

Andrew, who lives near Berkeley, California, was 15 when he started Quizlet—an interactive vocabulary-learning computer program that kids around the world can access for free at www.Quizlet.com.

Andrew needed a system to learn French vocabulary—so he decided to build it. "That's the kind of thing you can be passionate about and come up with ideas for," says Andrew, now 18. "You're not just inventing something for the sake of invention—you're trying to invent your own life."

Team Wave Riders had a quest. The four friends wanted to create a cool new toy and win the annual TOYchallenge, a toy design competition for kids in fifth through eighth grades. Alyssa and Amy Hansen, and Kaycee and Nicholas Johnsen met more than 50 times over nine months to work on their invention, the Boogie 2 Boogie—twin boogie boards that allow friends to play side by side in the waves.

"We did a lot of drawing, a lot of talking," says Amy, 14. Working on the Boogie 2 Boogie was fun—but so was testing it in the ocean.



**Vibrating
Wristbands**

**Boogie 2
Boogie**

**Underwater
XTreme**

Quizlet

At first Andrew just wanted a way to make vocab learning fun. Now he runs a small company, and advertising revenue covers Quizlet's expenses and makes him a small profit. Weekdays, Quizlet often gets as many as 1000 new registrants—and there are nearly 130,000 registrants total.

Though Andrew will head to college in the fall, he plans to keep Quizlet going—not only because he knows there are middle and high school students relying on it, but because it's still fun for him to work on.



"One of the fun things I'm looking forward to is that in college, there will be a whole new set of things I'll be interested in adding to it," he says. "Maybe I'll take a biology class that requires me to memorize molecular structures, and [for a test] I'll need

to do an image of the molecular structure; then I'll build a feature to do images" on Quizlet.

Aiming to Win

Ameen Abdulrasool is in college now, but he's still thinking about the inventions that got him top honors at the International Science and Engineering Fair. Ameen loved the challenge of his school science fairs when he was a kid—and he was always pleased when he placed first or second (in eighth grade, he advanced to the state competition!). But his freshman year of high school, his project didn't rank that well. In fact, Ameen—now 20—doesn't remember what it was!

"I really had to find my field that I had a passion for," he says.

A sophomore year electronics class gave him a basic understanding of circuitry design, and his father's vision problems—he had cataracts and a detached retina in one eye—gave Ameen an idea to create a navigational tool for blind people.

He visited a facility for blind people and observed the way they maneuvered, and also spoke to them about their difficulty getting around. He researched the types of tools already available to people with vision impairments and got help from his teachers as well as from professors at a nearby university. The project that resulted was a tool that uses GPS technology to provide users with verbal cues that tell them when to turn and how far to walk. Vibrating wristbands provide additional cues to the user.

Now a junior at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Ameen believes he may have to wait until he graduates from college to continue refining the navigational tool and, ultimately, take it to market. "I'm definitely thinking about going back to work on it," he says.

TIPS TO GET STARTED

Computer programs, tools for the blind, awesome toys—kids are creating amazing inventions! Could you be a teen inventor too? Try following these tips to get started.

- **Think of something you're passionate about!** Inventing is a process of trial and error—and that can be wearying. If you have passion for the project, though, you will want to keep working on it. "I really loved what I was doing—that was the only thing that made me want to do the project even when I was struggling," says Ameen.
- **Give yourself a target.** Find out about your school science fair, a local invention competition, or some other contest that you can enter. Deadlines are great motivators!
- **Learn new things.** The Hansens and the Johnsens learned how to heat plastic and build electronic circuits to create their toys.
- **Look at every part of the process as an opportunity to try something new.** "As long as I have a new project to work on, I can always stay interested and stay on top of it," Andrew says. "The reason I do it is because of the challenge."
- **Hold on to your vision.** "I knew what my ultimate goal was," Ameen says. "I just had to find the right materials to take me there."

WHAT'S UP WITH THAT?



Rachel Bishop
Curt VanderWaal



My friend went to a big drinking party and posted some pics of herself getting drunk on her Facebook page. She thought it was pretty funny, but I'm not so sure. What do you think?

—Shanna, age 17

You're right, Shanna—definitely not a good idea. It's just not smart to show the world pictures of behaviors you might later regret. A lot of potential employers are going online to search for internet information about those they interview. Although it may seem harmless at the time, posting pictures that show poor judgment causes employers to think twice before offering jobs to young interviewees. Personal reputations among friends and acquaintances can also be damaged when people show they are willing to attend parties where crude behaviors and questionable choices are put on display for the world to see. We think that you should tell your friend to cut the wild parties and drop those pics off her Web site before too many people discover her less-flattering side.

I hear about all of the baseball stars who are being investigated for steroid use. Is it really that big a deal?

—Josh, age 14

It's a pretty big deal for two reasons, Josh. First, although it seems cool since a lot of stars are using steroids to beef up their performance, it can actually be very harmful—especially in younger people. Not only can steroid use affect bone growth and the balance of chemicals in the body—it can also cause body odor, shaking, aggressiveness, and a bad attitude. To make matters worse, when steroids are used without medical supervision, the cause of these side effects are often hard to recognize and can cause even more damage over the long run. Second, using steroids to get an edge is just plain cheating—it gives players an advantage that other honest players don't have and makes their accomplishments and achievements less important. So even though it seems like it's no big deal, steroid use is both risky and wrong. We recommend that you play the old-fashioned way—by practicing hard and doing your best.



Some old musicians like the Beatles and the Grateful Dead were famous for using drugs like LSD. What did it do for them?

—Serena, age 16

Well, Serena, some musicians thought that drugs like LSD offered a shortcut to making more creative music. There's certainly some truth to that claim, since psychedelics (drugs that change the way you experience reality) really do change how your brain "sees" and "hears." For example, people on LSD "trips" often report that they "see" colors when music is playing. While this might seem like a very cool experience, such drugs can also create confusing and even terrifying images, causing people to do dangerous things while on drug trips. There are thousands of famous musicians and artists who have created great works of music and art without drugs to help them. Keeping a clear mind is the best way to keep your creativity uncluttered by false sensations.

Disappear Ink

Just as practice ended,
the rain began to
pour down.



By Danielle Daigle

Hey, Crisp! What's that thing in your belt loop?" Seth asked me.

"It's my dog's leash," I replied, embarrassed. "I couldn't find my belt and you know how Mr. Leblanc is about uniform regulations." I watched as Seth snickered at the purple and black striped strip that held up my pants. "Carver Junior High is so different from Carver Middle. I can't seem to get used to

the change," I mumbled as we moved into math class.

"Oh, yeah. Did you hear about the assignment in Ms. Critchen's class? It's a three-page book report due Monday," mentioned Seth.

"Oh, brother. Give me your pen. I'm gonna write this one down." I moaned as I took the black pen and began scribbling notes on my arm. I can't lose these here, I thought.

"You might wanna write the address down for Sarah Jordan's party on Sunday, too. It ought to be a blast," advised Seth.

"Mr. Harris and Mr. Morgan, would either of you care to explain the last problem to the class?"

ing



requested a perturbed Mrs. Watkins. Fortunately the bell rang just then.

"Saved by the bell!" I exclaimed.

"Class, don't forget pages 10 through 13 are due tomorrow," Mrs. Watkins reminded us.

I jotted more notes on my arm. I couldn't help but notice the cute, red-headed girl taking notes in a small book. "Hi," I said as she smiled. Then I hurried down the hall to PE class. I couldn't afford to be late for another class.

PE led to more notes, due to the beginning of the health unit. By the end of the day, my arms were covered with a scrawl of black print. As I stuck Seth's pen in my pocket, I heard quick footsteps to my left.

"Hi, I'm Sarah. New tattoos?" asked the red-headed girl who had grinned at me before class.

"I'm an obsessive note taker," I replied with a slightly flushed face and bright grin. "And my friends call me Crisp."

"My planner works pretty well for me. Maybe I could show it to you sometime," she said handing me her phone number on a small slip of paper.

"Thanks. That'd be great!" I said. I slipped it into my pocket. "Could I call you later? If I'm late for soccer practice again, I'll be running laps," I explained.

"Sure," she replied, smiling.

"Yo, Seth, you still have that extra pair of cleats in your soccer bag? I forgot mine at home," I hollered, moving into the locker room. *That's tight*, I thought as I tied the laces of the size eight cleats onto my size nine feet. Passing drills during soccer wasn't so bad, but by the end of practice, I had blisters on both feet.

Just as practice ended, the rain began to pour down. The black ink on my arms quickly smudged and ran. I raced to the overhang, blotting my arms with the towel from my bag. "Oh, man," I said as I glanced at

the blurry mess. There's no way I could read any of this now. When was that book report due? I thought, shaking my head. Was it pages eight and nine or pages 10 through 13 for math? Oh, no! What about the health notes? Isn't the test in two days? My heart pounded, and my face felt hot as I tried hard to remember.

By the time I thought of getting notes from Seth, his mom was just pulling out of the parking lot. So much for getting the notes from him, I thought. I rode home, trying to decide what to do next, then remembered Sarah's number was in my pocket.

At home, I sped into my room, grabbed the phone, and dialed.

"Hello," replied a cheerful voice.

"Is this Sarah?" I asked, dragging my toe back and forth across the beige carpet.

"Yes. Who's this?"

"It's Crisp. We met at school today. I was wondering if you might have the assignments for reading and math and the notes from PE class today?"

"I thought you might be calling. Got caught in the rain, didn't you? Do you still have your planner from the first day of school? It's blue and about the size of a notebook," Sarah said.

I glanced around, scanning my bed, desk, and floor, spotting a sliver of blue peeking out from the foot of my bed. "Yeah, I found it," I replied. "You don't happen to know where the party is Sunday night, too, do you?"

"As a matter a fact, it's at my house," said Sarah, with a laugh.

I laughed too. "Maybe now I'll get organized and junior high won't be so overwhelming after all," I said.



By Mary Rahn
Photos provided by the author

INTERVIEW WITH Kelly Elizabeth Davis



While she doesn't own any pets of her own (her mom is allergic), Kelly Elizabeth Davis has always had compassion for animals. She is the founder of Maine Vest-a-Dog (MeVAD), a nonprofit organization with the mission of providing police dogs across the state of Maine with bulletproof/stabproof vests. To date, MeVAD has raised more than \$50,000 and vested all 61 current police dogs in Maine. To get involved, visit: www.mainevestadog.homestead.com.

Listen: Tell us about Maine Vest-a-Dog. How did the project come into being?

Kelly: When I started this project I never expected it to take off the way

it did! My parents encouraged me to become involved in community service, no matter how small my contribution. I took the challenge to heart. I knew the founder of the Massachusetts Vest-a-Dog program and decided to bring the program to Maine. After clearing my idea with the proper legal authorities, I set up a meeting with my local K-9 team in Bath, Maine, who were very excited about my idea. Vests cost \$650—I thought I would be raising money for decades just to achieve my goal of vesting one dog! Not long after starting fund-raising efforts, however, I received a check from a local couple for one entire vest. I couldn't believe it! I presented my first vest in front of newspaper reporters, journalists, and TV camera crews at the Bath City Hall at the age of 12. The press spread like wildfire, and before I knew it money was coming in from gracious animal lovers all over the country—even the world!

Listen: What lessons have you learned through your experiences?

Kelly: Three lessons in particular stick with me:

- 1. Smile!** A smile shows the world that you are happy and proud of your project. Standing tall, looking your best, and, most important, smiling are easy ways to win a crowd.
- 2. Never underestimate the power of one person.** Part of Maine Vest-a-Dog involved extensive work to change a law that prohibited soliciting public funds to benefit a law enforcement agency. Adults had tried to change this law three times, but had failed. I believe my young age played a role in my success, along with the hundreds of people who supported me. When you speak up, adults really do listen!

3. Goals, big or small, equal BIG payoff! Think about ways you can become involved with your community. Start small and work to accomplish that goal. Once you do, set one a little bigger. The next one, even bigger. This way goals don't seem impossible.

Listen: Do you have any advice for other young people?

Kelly: Any dream, big or small, can be accomplished with hard work and determination. Don't be satisfied with mediocrity; many people fall into a mediocrity "slump" and can't climb out. For example, how about instead of doing a community-related activity once, turn it into an annual or even a monthly event? Call some friends; make it fun; make it your own.

Another important factor in my success was my decision to live a healthy lifestyle free of drugs and alcohol. I never could have fought the Maine legislature, traveled to amazing places like Washington, D.C., or handled the press if I used intoxicants!





The spark of excellence

You can count on it: People with enthusiasm find life a lot more enjoyable and exciting. How do you get enthusiasm? Well, first, by deciding you want it.

Create enthusiasm within yourself by making the effort to get excited about everything you do. Yes, this is a choice. We see so many teens and young adults walking around in slow motion, talking in slow motion, and acting like they're sedated. The funny thing is when you separate them from their group of friends, they allow themselves to lighten up and show excitement for things they wouldn't dare show before.

Let's be blunt for a moment. It's not "cool" to be droopy and laid-back. Who even knows what the definition of "cool" is anyway? Regardless of what other people think "cool" is, if you live with passion and enthusiasm you'll get more done and have more fun in the process. How does that sound?

One of our friends, Dr. Richard Carlson, author of the *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff* series, said it best: "Enthusiasm is that spark of energy and sense of interest and inspiration that ignites effort, good ideas, intention, creativity, and hard work. I've found that while it's almost impossible to succeed without it, it's also quite difficult with enough enthusiasm to fail."

Did you read that last sentence carefully? Thank you, Dr. Carlson! Enthusiasm is contagious. Could

there be a better disease? Everyone loves to be around vibrant people—and bosses love to hire them. People like to help enthusiastic people, so make the decision to become one.

EACH OF US HAS A FIRE IN OUR HEARTS FOR SOMETHING. IT'S OUR GOAL IN LIFE TO FIND IT AND TO KEEP IT LIT.

—MARY LOU RETTON

Darrell, a friend of our dad, learned about the importance of being passionate at the company where he works. After years of trial and error the company found that when it came to hiring new employees, applications, achievements, etc., were not the most important criteria in determining an employee's future success. The most critical criterion was the ability to be passionate.

It didn't matter if an applicant's passion was a hobby outside of work, as long as they were excited about it. The company found that if a person could be enthusiastic about something, it would also spill into their work. The company grew to become very successful. Perhaps you've heard of it... a small company called Microsoft.

Dare to be different. Dare to live with passion and enthusiasm.



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