

Mission

Aletheia (ah-LAY-thee-uh), which means “truth” in Greek, is a student outreach publication that strives to provide a voice for all students at Lynbrook High School. Inspired by Los Gatos High’s *Reality Check* and Monta Vista’s *Verdadera*, *Aletheia* was created to facilitate communication and overcome stigmas concerning prevalent and taboo issues within the Lynbrook community.

About

At the beginning of the school year, the *Aletheia* staff designates a list of monthly topics pertaining to the realities of high school. Each issue comprises of firsthand experiences submitted anonymously by Lynbrook students and alumni, professional articles relating to that month’s theme, and resources compiled by the student staff. Finalized newsletters are uploaded online and emailed to Lynbrook families. Back issues can be found on our website, www.lhsaletheia.org, under Archives.

The content in *Aletheia* is composed by the students of Lynbrook High School in San Jose, California. Ideas and opinions expressed within the publication are not necessarily reflected by members of the school administration or faculty.

This is the fourth issue of *Aletheia* for the 2014-15 school year.

Submissions

All Lynbrook students and alumni are eligible to submit stories. We publish all submissions that adhere to our guidelines, which are posted on the website. The Aletheia staff is committed to preserving the integrity of your content and will not make any changes, with exception to certain profanity (which are asterisked-out) and basic spelling errors. We do not edit stories for grammar or syntax.

Our next topic is Romance; submissions are due by March 7th. If you are interested in contributing, a submission box and a suggestion form for future topics are both available online.

*Expressing what
remains unspoken.*

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My parents are loving and kind, but that doesn't mean they don't have bad days. I've been verbally insulted a bit, and minorly physically hurt, but I know that my parents still love me. However, sometimes, I feel scared. I feel like i should day something to someone. But then my parents would get in trouble and where would i be then? I can't possible do that. Once my dad called me b**ch and i usually don't let words like that get to me at all. But when something so mean and resentful comes out of someone you love and respect so much it can really hurt. I don't even remember why now, but my dad once hit me hard, and I blocked with my wrist. I injured my wrist badly and had to go to the doctor and get a brace. But when they asked me how i got injured, i said i probably wrote too much because of an essay at school, or maybe i was holding my computer mouse wrong. I lied. I straight up lied to a doctor. I know I shouldn't have, but it's scary knowing that you could get your parents in trouble. I know that whatever abuse I have thought is nowhere close to people with actually abusive parents. I still know my parents love me. It's an odd feeling. Loving someone so much, so unconditionally and yet, at the same time, feeling so afraid of them. Sorry if this doesn't fit with perfectly your requirements, but it feels good taking this off my chest. Thank you.

"Childhood should be carefree, playing in the sun; not living a nightmare in the darkness of the soul."

-Dave Pelzer

For the first 10 years of my life, i didn't know that it wasn't normal to be genuinely afraid of my parents. I have no idea what a good relationship with parents is like, or what it feels like to not want to spend as little time in the presence of my parents as possible. When I am not good enough, I am "worthless," "unappreciative," and am threatened with being kicked out (by the way, does this happen to other people? do other people's parents do this?), but on the other hand, when I do something they deem praiseworthy, I am "such a good daughter," and "they love me so much and they're so lucky to have a daughter like me." I'm too scared/ uncomfortable to talk to them much, and then they yell at me for not speaking up. They often criticize my looks and body, tell me what a tremendous burden I am money and time wise, and have no problem

disregarding what I want for their preference (actually, my request of "could you please stop touching me" is seen as straight up disrespectful). The thing is, though, I have no idea if this is actually abuse, or if it's just Chinese parenting (you know, ala tiger mom) Am I just overreacting? And does that change anything? I'm still sad and stressed and think about killing myself too much. I mean, it's not that bad. It mostly means that I don't have or need anyone (other than google) to turn to when I need help or have questions or what the hell ever parental figures are supposed to do (remember, I don't have a clue) and that I've learned to brush off mean comments (also that I have horrible anxiety and cry in the shower a lot, but whatever. you win some, you lose some).

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I have been abused by my mother, both verbally and physically when I was still living with her. I wish I can forgive her, but it's so hard.

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My mom blames it on the way her parents treated her. My grandparents are divorced and my mom was at a boarding school for a majority of her childhood, but sometimes when I'm really feeling good about myself I can believe that no matter what there is no way to justify what she says or does. I remember one time late in my seventh grade year that I woke up one morning and felt like complete and utter sh*t. I'm one of those pathetic self-diagnosing losers and have identified myself as someone who had begun displaying traits of depression and borderline personality disorder at around 11-12 years old, and that morning the last thing on my mind was school. I can't even remember what the reason was, but I was hyperventilating and my face was basically covered in snot and tears lying on the bathroom floor. At first I was hating myself and the whole world, but by the time five minutes had passed all I wanted was for someone to sit down and comfort me. And of course, as many people with depression can probably relate to, I never actually directly asked anyone to give me help that I didn't deserve. It wasn't until I started banging my head against the bathroom wall that my mom came in to check things out. It actually went wonderfully.

She gave me a huge hug and let me drip all my gross facial fluids onto her sweater and told me everything was going to be okay. She stayed with me for the rest of the day, only leaving to call the school and tell them I was sick. She told me that I needed to talk to someone and that she understood if that person wasn't her and offered to look for a therapist. That was probably the first and last time I've ever felt 100% comfortable telling her anything about myself. It's been two years and she's still actively denying that ever happened whenever I bring it up, since I guess now that I'm not actively being dramatic and letting people know I'm trying to slit my own throat she can comfortably return to her stand on depression being the product of selfishness and letting the devil into your heart. On that topic I was referred to a Christian therapist shortly after the seventh grade incident. Although the very term "Christian therapist", as in a therapist whose main selling point is their religious beliefs, should've sent off warning alarms in my brain I was dumb enough to stay for a whole month's worth of sessions. Every week I would be reminded that I was probably Satan himself for rejecting the faith and that going to church again would magically solve all my problems, assuming that the therapist was actually listening to what I had to say. It's really hard to come to the conclusion that you're being emotionally abused. You never really hear much about it anywhere and it's just so f***ing hard to tell exactly what it is you're experiencing. I don't think I will ever be able to confront my parents about what they've done to me. Mostly my mom, but I'm blaming my dad as well because he has never done anything to help my situation despite having the full ability to, and even joining in on the yellfest itself given the opportunity. I can't tell you how many times I've played that scenario over and over again in my head when I'm lying in bed at night, where I am confident and clear in what I say and my mom and dad are forced to understand the effects of their actions. However I know that will never be possible in the near future. For anything I could every possibly say against them they have ten more points and threats to bury me down. They've never hit me. From what I know, they don't treat my older sister (well, I guess that makes sense considering she's an incredible athlete and student and I'm not exactly on par) like they do me. They give me food and shelter and clothing and there are so many kids who have it worse. I am sensitive. I cry easily. I spend too much time on the Internet. I talk to too many boys. I need to be reminded to clean my room and do my chores.

I blow things out of proportion. It's terrifying how easy it is for me to convince myself that my abuse is justified (or nonexistent) and that I deserve it because of all the flaws I am constantly reminded of. The first time I start panicking when my mom walks by the door of my room is enough evidence for me to prove that there's something wrong, but by the fourth or fifth time I'm convinced that I'm just over dramatic and trying to compensate for my own lacking in being a good f***ing person. It's not always awful. Sometimes I wish it were so that it would be easier for me to believe, but unfortunately it isn't. Things always seem to start out well and I can maybe pull off a whole week without messing up, but at that point they're just waiting for me to trip over the unreasonably high number of possible triggers that will most definitely result in me feeling less strong, or less intelligent, less beautiful, less confident, less safe, and generally just less sane. She'll take me out shopping and lecture me about the exaggerated ratio of the amount of chores I do compared to the amount of her money I've spent buying a bunch of slutty clothes that'll probably just end up unworn on the floor of the room I never clean. The worst part is definitely the constant doubt of whether or not what you experience is actually real or not. Even now I still feel like everything was my fault all along. Maybe it is. LIFE IS HARD LMAO....,

"First I had to recognize it as abuse, which was very difficult for me. From there, it became easier to overcome. I needed to understand what happened, view it realistically, and forgive myself."
-Domestic Abuse Survivor

I guess this isn't the typical kind of abuse you'd hear about.. or maybe some people don't even categorize this as abuse. But I feel like I was the one abusing myself. I was in a really negative state in my life, and was hardly able to focus in class at all. Even when I tried to ask for help, it seemed like no one was able to get to me. I was disconnected at school, at home, and I had just recently quit 2-3 of my main extra-curriculars due to high amounts of stress. I'd go home after school and think. Think about everything- my relationships, my friendships, the point of living, the color of the sky, or plastic surgery. Whatever comes to mind, basically. No homework would be done, at all. My parents are

the chill kind, so they didn't push me or anything, but I could feel the weight of disappointment every time they were home. It's kind of like, "Oh... When will this girl get her sh*t together? When will she wake up and make something of herself?" So when it was finally 12, and a lot of people were starting to go to bed, I shifted back into reality and tried to begin homework. I'd doze off and wake myself up between 12 and 4 am every single damn day, and partially finish my homework. Then my performance at school the next day would obviously be terrible, but I'd blame it on my lack of sleep. People asked why I got a lack of sleep, I said I had personal problems and I felt like I was going through such "tough times." Basically, my self abuse was subconsciously forcing myself not to sleep so that that could become my excuse for everything. My lack of motivation, energy, and purpose. I abused my own mental health, my physical health, and sacrificed my relationships with others. I could never be myself, because half the time I was focused on staying awake. I suppose a lot of Lynbrook students go through the same sleep-deprivation problem, but mine was dumb. There was no particular reason for me to sleep so late, and as a constant habit for 2 and a half years. Kind of insane, I'd say.

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I am not someone who is abused. I am the one that abuses. I see that I do it, but by the time I find it time to stop, the damage is already done. I think I have some kind of mental disease, because I am not normal, and I don't feel bad about it. What the hell is wrong with me?

"One's dignity may be assaulted, vandalized and cruelly mocked, but it can never be taken away unless it is surrendered."

-Michael J. Fox

Abuse. I've been through it, you've probably been through it. Especially online. It saddens me that online communities have exceptionally large amounts of verbal abuse. Full of flamers, trolls, and even just normal people like you and me, we hurt others without even realizing it. Slightly going off topic here. I've had an online boyfriend. Do I regret it? I tell

myself yes, but deep inside the answer is probably no. But this is for sure- I've verbally abused him several times, which I definitely regret, knowing I will never be able to take back my words. Being human, we will always be paying more attention to the bad things in life. But think before you talk- words are powerful, and there are things in this world that just can never be undone. Look towards an optimistic future, but never ignore your past mistakes. One does not simply forget without initiating more to regret.

~ ~ ~

I don't get abused by anyone, but I feel that I indirectly abuse my parents. I abuse them emotionally. I am a pretty smart kid, and they know that. I always got good grades, but when i came to high school i don't know what happened to me. I stopped getting as good grades. I think that it really impacted them, because they had so much hope that I would do good in school. Also it doesn't help that allot of family/ family friends get into great colleges. I feel that im letting my parents down, and it really is affecting them. My mom is always unable to sleep at night because she worries so much. The fact that i dont try my best really kills them the most. I really hope i can clean up my act and do something usefull with myself

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I've been emotionally abused (mostly over grades) since around 6th grade and I'm absolutely appalled that Aletheia would stoop to the level of making it a topic. You are literally feeding your resumes with the suffering that abuse survivors go through, ESPECIALLY grade-abuse people at Lynbrook. We are all trapped in violent, unsafe homes, and your first thought is "boy this will make a good magazine".

~ ~ ~

I've only been physically abused once, but i don't count that as actual abuse since it happened a really long time ago. the abuse that i deal with every single day is verbal abuse from my parents, constantly. my parents aren't really the type who harp on my grades 24/7 like most parents at lynbrook, but they're the ones

who will make my life a living hell. in 8th grade i felt such insane hate and despair because of my parents that i cut myself. with my parents it's always so bipolar. one day it'll be good and happy and the next it'll all be bad and they'll yell at me again. i don't really love my parents anymore and i'm tired of always fighting with them. it's honestly my biggest problem with life and i don't know how to change it.

~ ~ ~

Lynbrook High is abuse. nuff said

"Screaming at children over their grades, especially to the point of the child's tears, is child abuse, pure and simple. It's not funny and it's not good parenting. It is a crushing, scarring, disastrous experience for the child. It isn't the least bit funny."
-Ben Stein

To the Lynbrook alum that used to rape me on a daily basis: f*** you. You stole my sanity.

~ ~ ~

When I first transferred to Lynbrook, my family decided to live separately in order to save money, with my father living in our old house while my mother, brother, and I lived in a one-bedroom condo. My relationship with my dad had been rocky for the past couple years, and this only worsened our distance. On the other hand, my relationship with my mother and brother was one of constant argument due to the cramped space of the condo. I grew up extremely sheltered, and in coming to Lynbrook, I found myself struggling to fit in the competitive atmosphere while balancing a new social life. As a result, my grades dropped, and I gave up on myself as they worsened. My mom started comparing me to other students more often, and continuously asked why I had lost the drive I had for learning prior to transferring. Overwhelmed, I started spending more time procrastinating and sleeping late, and my mom's words and questions progressed into verbal abuse. Name-calling became a

daily occurrence, and I was constantly being criticized and made fun of, whether it was for my grades, looks, or even my friends. Just about anything constituted for some judgment. By the end of my sophomore year, the combination of loss of self-esteem and motivation left me with a failed class, and my parents and I both completely lost hope in my future. As someone who has been a Christian for a good part of her life, I started turning to God and my church community as a means of escape from what I felt was complete hopelessness. Around this time, my dad also moved back in with us in order for our family to be together. However, the verbal abuse didn't stop, but rather became more intense. I thought that all I needed to do was get good grades in order to fix everything, but this proved to be untrue as things became more strained at home even as I earned an A in my makeup classes. At one point, my parents decided to cut off the internet at 10 p.m, and I cursed them out in frustration. My dad started pounding on the door of the bathroom (where I hid), threatening and yelling at me to come out and face him. For the rest of summer, I was always in fear of him, and increasingly bitter about both my him and my mom. Most of all, I felt angry at God for having seemingly failed me even though I had trusted Him. My family eventually moved into a house. Having more space improved things, but over time everything went back to as it was before. I became extremely attached to a friend that I made at the beginning of the school year, and I pushed my parents further away to get pity from this person whenever we talked. My mom, who is a devout, and sometimes extreme Christian, noticed how I had become more involved in church in the past year, and it inspired her to do the same. In an attempt to guide me, she started calling me out on anything that was "ungodly". One thing I had started doing often in order to combat my lack of sleep was daily naps, and this led to sudden bursts of rage from her as she believed that it was wrong to sleep during the day. It was terrifying, because sometimes she would try to cast demons out of me, or tell me I was possessed. Our relationship became my reason for everything I failed to do, and I blamed her for everything that went wrong in my life. I started seeing the school psychologist, but ended up unintentionally reporting my family for child abuse as the school is required to report physical violence, which had occurred with my dad on a few occasions. A social worker visited our house soon after, ironically worsening my relationship with my parents, and I stopped talking to my parents altogether by the

end of the second semester of junior year. Over summer break, I wanted to throw away my past and create positive memories, and threw myself into hanging out with people, even sneaking out in the middle of the night to do so. But instead of good memories, I found myself depressed and constantly lonely. I was completely broken at that point. I had nowhere and no one to depend on, my parents were my daily enemies, my friends couldn't understand me, and God was doing nothing to help me. In the last few weeks of summer I spent a couple weeks at a summer college camp, and during that time I finally reflected on everything that had happened. I started sleeping more and procrastinating less, and by the end of the experience, I felt ready to fix things with my parents, and had reconnected with God with the intent on trusting Him again. And things got...slightly better. I soon lost my enthusiasm as the bad habits and lack of sleep came back even worse, and ended up distancing myself from people who truly cared about me; eventually, even God. by the time winter break came around, and I found myself just as broken as I was over summer. It was during this time that I started talking to a friend who inspired me in just the way this person lived life. I was amazed- this person had gone through so much pain that I couldn't compare my life to, and was somehow thriving. I started reflecting again, and realized that I had completely lost sight of my goals for myself and my family. I had to change, and this time, I did, starting with changing the lifestyle I lived by. It's been about a month now, and while I can't say that things are easy, there has been improvement. I've learned to realize that my parents are only human, and have more stresses than I give them credit for. My mom and I now talk on friendly terms more often than we argue, and while my dad and I are still getting there, I truly believe we eventually will. What it has taken to get this far took three steps. First, grounding myself in my beliefs, because what you believe in is what will ultimately keep you going. The second step was much harder: forgiving and being honest with my parents. While their actions were not in any way excusable, that is not to say that I had no part in causing them. My actions and lack of communication was what drove them to do and say the things they did. Finally, I had to change my influences and lifestyle. Procrastinating and sleeping late had put me in a physical and mental state that left me without energy and time for anything; my biggest influences were people who didn't support my dreams and beliefs. By surrounding myself in all of this, I had trapped myself in a life of negativity. It was

hard to acknowledge these things, and even more so to change. But the result has been a broken family finally being put together again. A broken person, finally being

"You will find yourself again, a stronger, tougher version of yourself who your abuser wouldn't even recognize."

-Domestic Abuse Survivor

Ingrid Higgins

MFT

Ingrid Higgins has over 10 years of experience providing therapy for adolescents. She is skilled in assessing the situation, writing a treatment plan tailored to the individual family and child and helping her clients integrate what they discover in therapy into their lives. She has experience with adolescents who suffer from anxiety, depression, eating disorders, adjustment disorders, low self esteem, difficulty in relationships, failing school, and behavioral problems.

Ingrid Higgins is actively involved in the Campbell Community, she volunteers for the YMCA ABC Project Cornerstone at Easterbrook Discovery School, she is a member of Santa Clara CAMFT, she is a member of the South Bay Mentor Group and does volunteer childcare at a local church. She has worked for non-profit agencies including Future Families, CHAC (Community Health Awareness Counsel), has provided mental health counseling on a school campus and is now working in private practice and is the owner of Campbell Teen and Family Therapy.

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I want to thank Aletheia for asking me to write about the topic of abuse. I acknowledge that this is not an easy topic to write or talk about. I commend the courage it took to choose this topic and the courage it took for students to write responses.

The submissions on this topic included several different types of abuse: physical, emotional, self abuse, perpetrating abuse and rape. A common theme in the submissions is that it is hard to talk about it due to reporting laws and a desire to not get anyone in trouble. This leaves students to deal with the internal emotional turmoil abuse brings alone.

Lynbrook students are aware of the mandated reporting laws that requires school officials to report physical & sexual abuse and neglect. Emotional abuse is not included in this mandate although it is permissive to report emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse can hurt just as much as physical abuse if not more. It can lead to the same confusing emotions mixed with the question, is this abuse?

Physical abuse was mentioned several times by students whose parents hurt them. It is hard to be afraid of the person who is supposed to bring you comfort. There are two opposing drives at work in their brains. One says, I am scared and have to run away, the other says I need to run to my parents for help. If the parent is the abuser this can lead to a fragmented sense of self in a developing mind. Often teens will dissociate and may even cut off parts of their personality. It is very confusing the feelings don't always make sense. Loving and fearing someone is hard to do. Yet it is important to recognize that children who have been abused often do love the abuser.

Sexual abuse or rape can leave the victim confused. It is isolating and difficult. I encourage you to come forward if you have been the victim. The only way to stop sexual abuse or rape is to have a voice. Teens and children are often scared to report or blame themselves for the abuse. It is never the teen's fault!

One submission discussed self abuse. Often times we hurt ourselves more than others hurt us. Using negative self talk, not getting enough sleep, depriving our body of food, taking drugs can all be self abuse. Some self injure which is actually a coping mechanism. You are the only one who can stop self abuse.

A few of the submissions mentioned abusing others. If you recognize that you are abusive towards others help is out there. Don't be afraid to ask. It takes a huge amount of courage in order to admit that. That is just the first step. Explore what is going on inside of you that brings out these behaviors. Change is possible.

Cultural differences often bring confusion in families. The question was brought up of, is this abuse or Chinese parenting? It is very difficult to be a second or third generation immigrant. Asian culture and American culture are different. What is considered abuse in America is considered good parenting in some Asian cultures. I recommend that parents educate themselves on what is considered abuse in California. Teens, if you wonder if this is culture or abuse, talk to your parents. Let them know how their behavior affects you. Regardless of culture parents generally do not want to hurt their children. Parents will discipline the way they were raised. Some parents don't know other ways.

Abuse leaves teens feeling alone and desperate. Talking about it reduces the guilt and shame associated with it. There are resources for teens to talk, school counselors, therapists, social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists. If you need help ask for it. Most children do not get taken away from their parents.

If a report is made the result is often designed to help the family, to provide them with resources and education. Children are not removed unless the situation is extremely severe. In my 10 plus years working with teens, I only know of 3 children who were taken into foster care and only 1 who was not reunited with their family soon after. The system is meant to help, not tear families apart.

If you find yourself a victim of abuse, please talk it out with a safe person. Suicide is never the answer. If you are having suicidal thoughts. Please reach out. There are crisis lines, EMQ and the Suicide Hotline. You do not have to suffer and you do not have to suffer alone.

Parents, if you have made mistakes with your children, it is never too late to make amends. Adolescents can be very resilient and it is important for them to make sense of things. It is OK for parents to admit it if they make a mistake.

I commend the Aletheia staff for picking this topic as it gives students an opportunity to talk about abuse without the fear that it will be reported or that someone will get in trouble. I hope that those who wrote submissions and those that didn't write submission will take solace in the fact that they are not alone and that other students at Lynbrook have also been abused.

Lynbrook has therapists on campus. There are confidential crisis lines. Please do not feel as though there is no hope. Situations that seem hopeless may not be as hopeless when you are no longer dealing with it alone.

Additional Resources

For Parents:

www.Loveandlogic.com

www.Positivediscipline.org

www.drdansiegel.com/resources/video_clips/parenting/

For Teens: Suicide Hotline

1-800-784-2433 or 1800-273-8255

Child Protective Services
(408) 299-2071

**EMQ Crisis Line,
24 HOUR CRISIS LINE**

(408) 379-9085 or toll-free

(877) 41-CRISIS (412-7474)

On Campus Therapists

Dawn Bridges,

Jameko Gruenloh