

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 in San Jose, California. 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

About

At the beginning of each month, the *Aletheia* staff chooses a topic that pertains 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 www.lhsaletheia.org, under Archives.

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

This is the first issue of *Aletheia* for the 2015-16 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). We do not edit stories for grammar or syntax.

Our next topic is Dreams; submissions are due by October 31. 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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I feel i am separated from my friends. It sounds ironic. But in nowadays, how do people even define friendship? I feel at Lynbrook, most of the time, for most of the people, friends are tools. Tools that help you to get information, to make you look popular, and get you all the “likes” on your Facebook profile. I started to be separated from my friends since my junior year. We are all into the things that we enjoy. We pretend that we are always together when we are in class. But that’s all actings. However, i felt the separation is somehow needed, because that’s how I got to see who is my real friend and who isn’t.

“For when two beings who are not friends are near each other there is no meeting, and when friends are far apart there is no separation.”

- Simone Weil

I usually feel separated when my friends do not include me in their conversations. They talk about something which I cannot take a part in because it is not relevant in my life. So in situations like that I’m an outsider and feel totally separated from my best friends. It gets me mad when they do that but then again I cannot expect them to include me in every single conversation but when it does happen, I tend to just walk away and say I have something to do so I’m not invading in their conversations. It hurts a lot sometimes but I just have to believe that it is not intentional and move on.

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I feel separated from all the people in my life. With my friends, I don’t connect with them. I don’t talk with them as often as I used to because I feel like I don’t fit in. Sometimes it feels like there’s a physical barrier between us. With my family I also fee like I don’t belong. I find myself disappearing into my room everyday after school because I don’t want to see them. Dinner together is difficult for me. My dad makes me feel like I’m worthless, like I’ll never be a good enough daughter for him. I always feel as if he disapproves of everything I do. And my mom doesn’t understand me. I can’t talk with her about my feelings because I don’t want her to know. My older brothers

are gone at college, and my younger brother hates me. This separation from my family kills me. It makes me feel like I can’t do anything anymore. If my own family doesn’t love me, how can anyone?

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I was felt the most separated and isolated during my Isophomore year at Lynbrook (I am now a freshman in college). That was when everything hit me the hardest. Here’s some background info: I am Asian, but I do not have the “typical Asian parents” that pushed me academically. They wanted me to grow mostly on my own with their guidance, so if I fell, I’d have to get back up again on my own. I was a straight-A student in middle school, I was extremely invested in my extra-curriculars and I loved everything that I was doing, and I was generally a very outgoing and optimistic person. When high school started, the true competition began. I felt how everyone was very focused on doing well in school, they forgot about making real friendships and relationships with other people. When I started not doing so well in school because I was struggling, I felt like no one was ever there to give me a hand. Even teachers assumed that all of us had tutors and “hard-core parents” that would find us the solution we needed. That wasn’t true for me, and no one really believed me when I told them I was struggling. I put a mask up, and started to back away from help. The minimal times I did get offers from people who wanted to teach me, I acted like I was fine and didn’t need their assistance. This added up week after week, and the content of the school subjects only got harder and harder. I kept falling behind, so I started quitting all my extra-curriculars so I could “focus on my school work.” That wasn’t happening because I had a hard time staying focused and getting the amount of sleep I needed. I started doubting everyone at Lynbrook, and despised everyone around me. I felt like everyone was fake, and all of my friendships weren’t authentic enough. Yet, I still acted like a happy, optimistic girl who had her sh*t together and was strong enough just like every other Lynbrook student. When I was down and needed someone to talk to, they’d have to go study. When I was crying behind my screen like an idiot, no one would have guessed what was going on. The stress from school, and the decrease of self-confidence from quitting all my other activities didn’t help along with personal emotional issues I was going through with my

family. I felt separated from the rest of my community, and I had never felt more alone. I am someone who needs that support from a community, who yearns to make deep connections with the people around me, and I wasn't finding that anywhere. I started losing trust in people and stereotyped Lynbrook people a certain way. It was a struggle, for sure. What got me out of it, was a shift in perspective. I realized that it wasn't other people's job to be there for me and understand how I was feeling. They couldn't make me feel better if I wasn't willing to help myself. I didn't want to keep digging myself a larger hole, and to cake myself with layers and layers of a superficial mask. I realized I was contradicting myself, because instead of getting the true relationships I expected, I was the one being fake with others. I didn't own up to the fact that I just needed help, and I was the one backing away from all possibilities of help. Once I realized all that, things started to get better. I'm not saying everything is 100% solved at this point, but I survived (and I would say thrived), the last two years of high school and I am attending an university now. I hated my years of isolation, but I made it. I'm glad I had that experience early on to learn and reflect from. And I miss Lynbrook.

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A w sh*t I got a 92 on my test." I heard one of my classmates say as a teacher handed back her tests. Once I got my test score, I looked at the flat B nonchalantly. "Oh anon what'd you get?" I told him/her I got an 85 and he/she said enthusiastically, "Oh! Nice job!" That was the first time I felt separated from society. I'm not saying I'm a bad student, but that was the first (and only) time I actually experienced a form of racism at Lynbrook. This moment at school changed how I compared myself to others. I really took it hard. I became less involved and my thoughts were full of self deprecation. I struggled to maintain friends and would often try to avoid that stereotypical conversation about school with my peers. I found it easiest to hide from the academics by simply having very few real friends. For the next three years of Lynbrook I was depressed and lacked happiness. Though I did hide it from people, it only made it worse. It took me three years to realize that I shouldn't feel separated from society just because I have lower grades. However, something positive did come out of this. I learned that if I wanted to truly be happy, I had to get out in the open and make myself

known. As I write this, you may be trying to decipher who I am. Most would think that I'm one of those students who walk around campus during brunch and lunch (I did this at times) with no one to talk to. Yet, I'm not. I've heard people call me popular, and the guy who knows lots of people. And that may be true. But people don't realize that just because someone is near you, doesn't mean they don't feel separated from society. Disclaimer: This aforementioned student has since graduated and is not identifiable.

"The distant soul can shake the distant friend's soul and make the longing felt, over untold miles."

- John Masefield

I'm not going to write a whole lot because I don't like thinking about it, but I feel like for every summer my group of friends and I spend doing our own thing like summer camps, internships, research opportunities and summer jobs, we just grow further apart. We still hang out with each other, but it's hard to say that we all consider each other as best friends any more. I hate it. I hate growing apart from them, I hate blaming myself, I hate blaming them for it; I just hate being separated from them.

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We used to have so much fun going running in the evening, discussing philosophy and calc homework as we walked home, dancing poorly at dances, sending each other silly messages as we drifted off to sleep— Then, he started to ignore me, claiming he was too busy. He lost his feelings for me and started to focus more on his academics and extracurriculars. He rarely responds to my messages now. I don't ever have the chance to talk to him at school either—he's always busy leading a club or somesuch. He claims he wants to be just friends, but he treats me more like a former acquaintance than like a friend. Without him I have no one to talk with, no one to laugh with, and no one to be with. I have tried my best to move on, and to some extent I have, but that doesn't change the fact that he has hurt me. I don't hate him—I don't think I'm capable of hating him—but I can't help but feel disappointed in him. He was so nice and caring and

humble—I saw no malice in him and I trusted him. How foolish of me to forget that there are many more ways to be taken advantage of.

“And ever has it been known that love knows not its own depth until the hour of separation.”

- Khalil Gibran

College creates separation and nothing can change that. but it still hurts to see your relationship with someone fall apart knowing that there's nothing you can do about it. especially when you hung out with them almost every day over summer. what was i, just a summer fling?

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It's been a few months since i broke up with my first boyfriend. and believe it or not, it was also my first time experiencing any kind of major separation with someone close to me. all of my grandparents are alive, my parents are still together, and i've never even had a big fight with any of my close friends. so a bit of context: we were introduced to each other by mutual friends and started dating straight away. of course he was the perfect guy, super sweet and caring, funny, and most of all understanding. he just had that kind of air about himself that you felt like you could tell him anything, and so i did even though i barely knew him. he took it all really well and was super sympathetic, as he had also experienced similar tragedies and knew what it was like. he was really expressive physically in how he liked me, which was something i was super uncomfortable with. believe it or not, that was basically what caused us to break up. he..... changed a lot in a really short period of time. he would get angry really easily and we would fight a lot over the smallest of things. he'd constantly guilt trip me or blackmail me (as he knew a lot of my secrets) in order to get me to forgive him and stay with him. he was really controlling, and would threaten to break up with me if i wore the wrong outfit or went out with other people besides him. i stopped loving him really quickly, and instead just stayed with him because he had convinced me that no one else would be able to tolerate me like he did. eventually i broke down and confessed to some of my friends and they convinced me to end the relationship. i gained

a whole bunch of confidence for a while right after breaking up with him. sure, i had my ups and downs, but mostly i was just really proud of getting myself out of that mess. i blocked him on facebook and wrote an essay to myself detailing all the sh*tty things he did in case i needed to remember why i shouldn't miss him. i hung out with my friends a lot more. i started liking other guys. recently i've been feeling kind of weird, though. i don't want to get back together with him, but lately i find myself randomly thinking about him. i'll see pictures of him on snapchat with other girls or hear gossip about him and i don't feel jealous, but i just feel something. now i think a lot about what he did and why he did it. at night when i'm lonely sometimes i'll remember when we used to cuddle and whatever. i think about all the experiences i had with him and i don't know how i feel about them, i just remember them. but i know for sure i will never treat him as anything except for a vague acquaintance. there's not really anyone i can talk to about this, and i don't want to be known as the petty ex girlfriend who spreads rumors even if they're true. i just really hope another girl doesn't fall for him and get trapped into the same sh*t i had to deal with.

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I am separated from the people in my previous religion. Physically, I am with them at all their rituals and events, but I am spiritually a universe away from them. I was born into a family that believed in a certain religion. It was a religious family. I dated a girl of a different religion, and saw that our religions were basically the same. The names of holy figures were different and some superficial rules were different, but the overall messages of the two religions are the same. That day, I stopped believing exclusively in my religion. I do believe that there's a God, but I believe that as long as you act kindly, you'll be ok. Whenever I am at a religious function of any kind, everyone talks and acts as if people who don't believe specifically in their religion will go to hell. I think that's bullsh*t, and it separates me from the entire community of my religion.

“There is love in holding and there is love in letting go.”

- Elizabeth Berg

There is a huge amount of separation between me and the rest of my family. I come from a Muslim family - an extremely religious one. I'm not at all religious. In fact I'm not even Muslim. I believe that God exists, because that helps me sleep better every night, but I don't believe in prayer, jahanam, Shaytan, or really any Islamic principles. This puts me at disagreement with the rest of my family. Implicitly we are tied together because I live projecting a false character to my family - a character of strong Islamic values. The true state of my soul is light years away from what I project. That is what separates me from my family. I pretend to be attached to my family through religion but my heart is momentarily separated.

"If the family were a fruit, it would be an orange, a circle of sections, held together but separable — each segment distinct."
- Letty Cottin Pogrebin

I want to be separated from my family. They are so judgmental. I chose my college particularly because it was farthest from home. When I'm at home, my parents don't even let me go out last 6. It's so f***ing disheartening. This one day, I was casually out with a friend, and my mom called asking where I was. I said I'm at the mall. She said "I'll pick you up." I was so damn disappointed. I hate it. I want to be separated from this sh*t forever

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I have a brother who is 25 years old. He is 8 years older than me and lives about an hour north from here. Despite how comparatively close he lives, I only get to see him twice a year on my little brother's and my birthday. It kind of sucks because I always looked up to him when I was a little kid. He was super cool and nice to me. He moved out when he was 16 years old, so I never really got to see him much after that. I feel like we aren't close at all because it's been more than half my lifetime since I last lived with him. I wish he would visit more.

Jamieko Gruenloh, MFT

Jamieko Gruenloh is a Marriage and Family Therapist that has been working with children, youth, and adolescents for over six years in a variety of settings (schools, in the community, in the home, and even in lockdown facilities like juvenile hall). Currently, she is working part time at Lynbrook High School as a Student Advocate supporting students and the Challenge Day program. Challenge Day was brought to campus in fall of 2014. Challenge Day has been brought to Lynbrook to help increase an emotional awareness, allow students to be/feel more connected, and create a more positive environment for the students. Jamieko also has a private practice in Los Gatos working with teens, individuals and couples.

Jamieko is on campus at Lynbrook Tuesday and Friday and is located in the library.

Additional Contact Information:
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We start our lives with the literal separation from our mother. Without separation we wouldn't exist. So it seems almost fortuitous that we continue to practice separation as our lives continue. I think when the teens on the Aletheia team thought of the topic separation they were thinking of only the college experience and those who submitted took it to another level that they were not expecting. This allowed the team to really dive into this idea, what is the definition of separation? The word separation can be thought of in three different contexts; the action or state of being moved apart, the process of distinguishing between two or more things and what I like to consider your basic form of loss.

Whether it be breaking up with your significant other, moving away to college or that empty feeling of being alone in a crowd separation always looks like it is a negative thing and people often fear it. As a therapist, and as a human being, I find the most difficult thing for people is loss. That idea that what once was is no longer. We aren't taught how to properly say goodbye. We are not taught how to grieve. Too often we are taught to, "Suck it up" or "Get over it!" Neither of those allows us to process the loss or the separation. We need to understand that every separation a teen goes through is a big deal. Understand that often they need help. They need a friend, a parent, a mentor, sometimes even a therapist, and that is ok.

However, separation is not always a bad thing. Yes, I agree it can be painful and disheartening, it can also be a stepping stone in life; in fact often a rite of passage. We live in a series of seasons, beautiful, ever changing seasons. People come in and out of our lives when they are meant to and sometimes that season ends. There are times when that season does last a lifetime, there are times where it lasts only a few seconds and there are times where it last years, you separate and then years later you reunite. You can never determine the season, it just happens. Like the changing of the leaves, you will grow, you will move on and you will change. If we were stuck in a constant summer we would never experience growth. Without separating from junior high you'd never be able to move on to high school, without separating from college you'd never experience your first job, without separating from your parents you'd never create your own family.

Parents: The teen years and early twenties is a time for children to find themselves. A time to truly separate from parents, experience their many rites of passage, we call this individuation. During this time teenagers question religion, values, and traditions. Here at Lynbrook we have a large number of first generation teenagers who are truly trying to find themselves, separating from their culture while acculturating into this new one that they now live. This is normal. This is expected. This is healthy. Try not to be hurt by this. This does not mean you did anything wrong, in fact it means you did the right things. You have made them feel safe enough to explore.

The difficulty in separation comes when a teen feels alone. When a teen separates faster or in a different direction than their friends, when they feel like their family doesn't support who they're trying to become, when

the one person they were closest to is gone, or when the routine of life as they know it changes. You need to be able to support your child through whatever separation they experience. You too will experience separation as they grow and as much of a struggle as this is for you, remember they are not as emotionally intelligent as you and they need help. Allow them to be sad over a breakup, or teach them to say goodbye appropriately, encourage them to celebrate each rite of passage with pride and with your support. In fact often times celebrate with them or grieve with them. This will teach them it is ok.

Teens: Life is about a series of rites of passages, separations, and losses. You will move many times physically from high school to college, college to a job, job to job, city to city or country to country. You will physically move and that will separate you. You will begin to grow apart from your current friends and your future friends and realize that you are different. You will set who you are, what you believe in, what you find humorous, what you want to fight for. This separation will truly distinguish you from others and will also bond you to others. You will also experience a separation that will just be a loss, a loss of childhood, a loss of dependence, a loss of loved ones, a loss of innocence. All of these separations are expected and they will often be painful. However, they can also be exciting and a stepping stone to becoming an adult. My suggestion to you is learn to embrace the many separations to come. Say goodbye when you are meant to say goodbye. Celebrate when you are meant to celebrate. Cry when you are meant to cry. What I want you to take away from this is that separation is normal, it is healthy, it is often planned and sometimes a surprise. When separation happens and you begin to struggle reach out and ask for support. Your struggle can look like anxiety, depression, anger or just plain emptiness. If you don't know where to go remember you have two Student Advocates on campus here to help.

Good luck with this process. Being a teenager can be stressful for so many reasons other than how many AP classes you take. It can be stressful for just the fact that you are forever changing and becoming the adult you were meant to be and that is scary. Understand that this is a process. It doesn't happen overnight and it's not an exact science. So sometimes your heart will hurt, sometimes you will feel loss, and sometimes you will be so excited that life will be a great party! Take the time to celebrate, grieve and be genuine with your feelings. Most importantly, if you are feeling lost reach out and ask for help. You don't have to go through separation alone. You are not alone in this crowd. It is not just you and the screen you are looking at. This is a big world with a lot of people at school and in your community who can help you navigate through whatever season you are in.

Additional Resources

How to Talk So Teens Will Listen and Listen So Teens Will Talk

By Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish

Staying Connected To Your Teenager: How To Keep Them Talking To You And How To Hear What They're Really Saying

By Michael Riera

Santa Clara Toll-free Crisis Hotline 855-278-4204

<http://transitionyear.org>

<http://www.goodtherapy.org/individuation-in-therapy.html>

<http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/adolescence/part7.html>

<http://www.more4kids.info/2286/parenting-and-teen-independence/>