



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 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 fourth 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 Virginity; submissions are due by April 3rd. If you are interested in contributing, a submission box and a suggestion form for future topics are both available online.

*Expressing what
remains unspoken.*

Student Staff: Alekhya Surepeddi,
Aarushi Agrawal, Sanjana Gupta,
Daphne Liu, Esther Kao, Harsh Jain,
Renee Cai, Jimmy Zhi, Durga Ganesh,
Prakashini Govindasamy, Iris Zhao,
Lois Chen, WeiTung Chen

Advisers:
Kim Silverman & Laura Gloner

I'm terrified that my best friend might kill himself. I mean I always have tried to be there for him but there's not anything I can do to make sure that he's safe 24/7. It scares me sh*tless every time I think that this might be the last time I see him.

~ ~ ~

I used to be terrified of being alone; after drifting apart from and burning ties with all my best friends and companions and wallowing in my loneliness, I gotta say F*** EVERYBODY ELSE. The only person you can rely on for happiness is yourself, and don't let anybody take that from you. We're born alone and die alone.

"Fear can only grow in darkness. Once you face fear with light, you win."
- Steve Maraboli

I fear judgement and how people might perceive me. With college acceptances right around the corner, I fear what people will think of me once I get my results. My dream school as of right now is considered the "back-up" school of the majority at Lynbrook. I'm afraid that nobody will be happy for me as I will be once I get accepted to go to that college. (If I do get accepted... hopefully) It's my fourth year at Lynbrook and now I realize how different I was from my peers. I never excelled in my classes, didn't feel the need to compete with others about grades, and I was always proud of my achievements even though they were not straight As. However, something that I worked so hard for was not praised here. I guess that's what has led me to fear about my college decision and how people will look at me.

~ ~ ~

I'm scared of speaking up. And I'm even more scared that I never will. I can't even count all the times I've kept my mouth shut and looked the other way despite the horrible things that were happening right behind me. I made myself a promise after I someone I knew got bullied that I would vow to stand up for everyone else. I haven't held that promise. Will I ever? Will I forever be the bystander and never the one that stands up?

Every time I see another girl succeed I'm afraid that she will replace me

~ ~ ~

I fear that because I spent too much time on academics, I would eventually lose the time and the closeness with my family. I feel schools, colleges, academics are all artificial, and I don't want to give up the most natural thing, accompanying my family, to focus on all the artificial things, though right not people view education as an essential. I am not saying that education is unneeded. But when we need to choose, I think human relations, love, and experience are much much much 10x more important than studying for a test and aim for an A. I have faced my fears, and I had attempted to spent more time with my family. It was hard. There are so many attractions that seems better than family. Teenagers, please stop arguing with your parents, your heart will hurt at any moments you think of them after they leave you!

"Don't be afraid of your fears. They're not there to scare you. They're there to let you know that something is worth it."
- C. JoyBell C.

I am afraid that I'm going to kill myself one day.

~ ~ ~

I'm afraid that I won't survive long enough to go to college

~ ~ ~

Like most of my peers, I fear failure. I fear losing my identity or never finding my own. I fear being in the center of the spotlight, being forgotten, being friendless and being so popular that everybody hates me (as if it could happen, but still). I fear the dark, I fear the unknown, I fear death, but I think it's harder to live than die. I fear pain and being hurt emotionally and physically by others. But most of all, I think, I fear bugs. Bugs are the absolute worst.

I fear when people are angry, especially at me or my friends. Even more so when my friends are angry with each other. It makes me think that my friendships are falling apart.

I fear letting down my peers. I would disappoint them and feel guilty about it.

I fear when men text with periods if they usually don't, because most of the times that happened was when they were angry with me.

I fear being lost and alone, especially at night. It's scary.

I fear losing the things precious to me. Sometimes I think about throwing my stuffed animals out of an open car window and I get distraught.

I fear knives and needles. Looking at them makes me think about suicide.

I fear being the last of my friends to have a funeral. No one would remember me.

I fear being unable to make a difference in the world. If I couldn't do anything of significance, then what was the point?

Lastly, I fear that the world is going to end soon. Despite what or how many things you may fear, don't let them keep you from living the best life that you can live. Time is ticking...

Good luck.

~ ~ ~

I fear that the friends I trust the most don't reciprocate my loyalty to them and that I could be easily replaced. The thought is really scary, especially when you feel that you're not good enough to be considered their close friend, but you really trust this person. I'm trying to deal with this fear, as I find it deeply affecting my relationships and my self-esteem, but the idea of confronting my friends about this issue seems horrifying. I know I should address the problem, but I honestly don't know where to start.

"Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less."

- Marie Curie

Fear.

I used to not fear anything, sort of like a Supergirl. I was strong and independent and didn't care what anyone else thought.

Then he came along.

He took it all away from me, but I know I let him.

I am scared of my ex-boyfriend, yes, I am scared of the abuse he put me through.

But most of all, I'm scared of myself.

I let myself get to this point.

~ ~ ~

I'm afraid that I'll never be able to talk to him the same way ever again. I loved what we had-- I loved him. But now I know that I might never be able to get back that connection we once had.

"Too many of us are not living our dreams because we are living our fears."
- Les Brown

I fear myself. Every single part of myself.

Im mostly afraid of ending up alone. Like i have wished for a perfect relationship so much of my life and chased after guys who never cared. At home i've just never felt loved and more like my family used me. I just want that moment where you feel like your finally safe and you know that you are loved.

Im still waiting for that moment to come and Im afraid that it will never come.

Im afraid of my dreams never coming true. Afraid of being alone and lost and unloved

"When you do what you fear most, then you can do anything."
- Stephen Richards

At this point in my life, my fear of darkness has been replaced with things that I hate myself for being scared of. Fear of missing out? Fear that I'll be the only one without a prom date? Fear that I'm not, and never will be good enough.

A Teacher's Perspective

Mr. Akamichi discusses various fears.

Q: What were you afraid of in high school?

MR. AKAMICHI: "I was afraid about everything except my future. I was afraid of relationships (not having a girlfriend), friends, school, grades, and list goes on, basically most of the things students are afraid of nowadays. However, I wasn't as stressed out as you guys today who worry about your future and the pressured to get into a good college. At the time, I didn't know that colleges can reject students, and I thought everyone who applied got in. I didn't have the best SAT score, but I got into all the schools I wanted to go. Meanwhile, in my high school years, not everyone went to college, but they still were able to get good jobs. So, the pressure to succeed was much lower."

Q: What scares you about your future plans (i.e. opening up a new studio)?

AKAMICHI: "It will be a challenge, because this is my first time setting up my own school. First of all, I have to consider that new students who have never met me may not be used to the conceptual approach to problem solving. At Lynbrook, students knew me by reputation, so I didn't have explain concepts over and over again."

Q: Since you have been working for a public school for over 25 years, did you ever fear that opening a new studio by yourself will be overwhelming?

AKAMICHI: "One thing my colleagues all expect is that they all assume when you retire, you don't do anything. Maybe you travel. But the people who knew me would say, 'I know you are not retiring,' because they knew that I have so much energy. It has taken so long to unconsciously absorb all of these experiences, scholarships informations, etc, and they are really like an intellectual property. Because of all the information I have with admissions and scholarships and all of that, I don't want to just walk away."

Q: Did you fear that you might be used to teach in your own school?

AKAMICHI: "Nope. So, it's time to retire from public education, and I think it's gonna free me up for the pure teaching part. And so I am ready for that. And I will be doing that five days a week. I have my own studios,

and I have already got my business license. I will be open up officially in the middle of next month. I meet privately with kids now, and then I am planning to have a summer program over the summer. And I think it would be a great way, since we are here, to introduce to people of what we do and once they realize the value of what we do collectively. Then, hopefully many of them would stay on."

Q: Did you see any limitations when you were putting this school together?

AKAMICHI: "The only limitation would be there is only one of me. I can't open two offices and be there at the same time."

Thien Pham, MS

Thien Pham, MS

Thien is a licensed marriage and family therapist currently. She has spent the majority of her career working with children, adolescents and their families. She has extensive experience working as a school and clinic based therapist, in addition to private practice. Ms. Pham specializes in trauma work and comes from a culturally sensitive and solution focused perspective. In addition, she is an ally for the LGBTQ+ community.

There are theories about how humans can be very risk-averse and that we are much more sensitive to negative outcomes. For many of us, the idea of overcoming obstacles can be daunting if we only focus on failure. When we focus on failure, we are also focusing on our fears. Many of us don't often spend the time to think about how our fears affect us. Maybe these fears have been a part of us for so long that it is a familiar, yet uncomfortable, feeling. Some don't realize they have the power to change the nature of their fears. Know that your thoughts and feelings are not static and that it is possible to direct them.

There are generally two categories of fear. The first category is concrete fear, the kind that kick starts our "flight or fight" responses. An example of a concrete fear is the fear of bugs, drowning, or being in the dark. You may have found yourself sharing with friends or family about these fears. The second category of fear is based in our thought process. I call these abstract fears. These are fears about ourselves and how others perceive us. Abstract fears are much harder to share with others. For example, how comfortable would I feel sharing with a classmate that my fear is failing in college? That I might be depressed? That I don't have any close friends? Thus, when we talk about fear, we also have to think about vulnerability. Vulnerability is risky.

Vulnerability is one of the themes in this month's submissions. Being vulnerable means being able to be real and honest and hope that others will still accept us. It is intentionally sharing our true selves even in the path of possible judgment. Fear can get in the way of vulnerability because it can cause spontaneous thoughts and feelings to be filtered, simplified or completely masked. Yet, vulnerability is the one thing that brings us closer together. In sharing our vulnerabilities, we are able to let others see our imperfections and also inform others that they do not have to be perfect either.

I challenge you to embrace your vulnerability. I want you to seek others who are willing to embrace your thoughts and feelings, your fears and wishes, your dreams and ambitions. Perhaps, as a product of these conversations, you will find solace in knowing someone else is going through the same struggle. It is within these discussions and connections that lasting friendships are created and sustained.

In this article, I will be addressing the abstract fears. Another theme I noticed centers around fears of our own shortfalls and disappointments. There were submissions about fear of loneliness, judgment from others, not being good enough, losing one's identity and fear of the future. The fears mentioned are all very common and most of your peers share in them. Being aware of our fears is a great first step to learning more about who we are. While fear is informative, the degree to which fear affects us dictates whether they become discouragements or inspirations.

Fear can be oppressive if it is allowed to stop us from striving for our best selves. Consciousness of fears is good, but also leverage that knowledge to form steps to address them. There is a difference between having awareness and letting fear control you versus allowing them to motivate changes that can be beneficial. For example, one student mentioned fearing loneliness. What can be done to reach a place where you feel like you belong? Would joining a club or volunteering be the right path? How about taking the initiative to coordinate a hang out? Another student feared judgment from others. What is it about how others perceive you that makes you uncomfortable? Are there things about yourself that make you insecure? Are you okay with being different? We can use fear in a constructive way to challenge ourselves. We can use fear to look introspectively to learn how to become the person we wish to be. We can listen to our fears with purpose and intention.

Talking and sharing our thoughts with friends and family can help us process our fears. If you feel like your fears are controlling you, it is time to talk to a school counselor, therapist or psychiatrist. There are many mental health professionals who can help.

For parents:

Fear is part of growth. When your teen is afraid or worried, spend time to discuss it with them. Talking it out and hearing how you have managed your worries might help them see their fears from a different perspective. Parents are an important pillar in a teenager's development of self. When parents are vulnerable with their child, it can teach the child to also open up and share parts of their lives that they may not have felt comfortable talking about. Engaging in conversation may also help you understand their lives in ways that you have missed.

I hope this month's topic has sparked discussions about fears in your life. When we allow fear to exist alongside other feelings, we find that fear is one in hundreds of different feelings we possess. I will end with the quote below with the hope it will inspire you.

"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it."
-Nelson Mandela

Additional Resources

8 Facts About Fear:

<http://www.scienceandentertainmentexchange.org/blog/eight-facts-you-didnt-know-about-fear>

Fear vs Anxiety:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/renee-jain/fear-versus-anxietyexpla_b_5939618.html

Informational Videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/watchwellcast>

24/7 Line for Youth:

1-888-247-7717

Crisis Hotline (Santa Clara County):

1-855-278-4204

Teen Line:

1-310- 855-4673 or 1-800- TLC-Teen Text TEEN to 839863, Open from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. every night.

LGBTQ Youth Services:

(408) 343-7940, www.youthspace.org

Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing Services:

(408) 292-9353

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