



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 fifth 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 Bullying; submissions are due by May 15th. 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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There are more people at Lynbrook who aren't virgins than I thought there were. I'm generally liberal about things, but really I think I do judge when I hear about someone in high school here who isn't a virgin.

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To me, virginity is an emblematic card that says you have never had sex. As I see it, virginity is not something that you lose; it's something you give away. Virginity is one of the most valuable gifts you can ever give someone, and you'll always remember the time you gave it. For a lot of teenage boys, it's worth some high fives to be having casual sex. That's just the society we live in. What's really sad to me is that no one cares about the experience. It's the lone fact that kids are having sex that makes their friends so proud of them. By the time I turned 16, I had become the only virgin left in my group of friends that had long been f**ing. I felt like the last boy in a group of men. So I gave in and started talking to a particular girl. I didn't really like her, but I knew she would be willing to have sex soon, as that was her reputation. About 4 days in, I realized that I shouldn't waste my virginity on her and I cancelled all my plans with her before actually having sex. After looking at it from a distance, I am glad that I never wasted my virginity with anyone I didn't care about. Thankfully, I still have it. I will give my virginity to someone who's truly special to me. I don't know who or when that will be. All I know is that it will be an everlasting, euphoric memory. Because of these views that I have, I get laughed at by my friends who are all having casual sex. I think when I'm older, it will be a beautiful thing that I gave the gift of my virginity to someone I truly cared about. And people who wasted it will probably regret it.

"People with lost personalities will suffer a great deal more than those with lost virginities."

- Melina Marchetta

To me, virginity means saving myself for the one I'll marry. Even if this sounds weird, sex is something special and I think it should be saved for someone you'll commit your whole life to. Your marriage and relationship with your future significant other won't be

as special if you've already had sexual intercourse with multiple other people. Metaphorically speaking, kisses and sex are like gold coins in a treasure box. You don't want to just give it to anyone you come across. It's worth a lot and is more valuable, meaningful, and special to give it to someone if you've rarely shared it before. Even though society occasionally portrays losing your virginity as something cool to do. It shouldn't be. You weren't made to sleep with any or every guy/girl you meet. Virginity is something that should be valued. I think my environment has definitely influenced my view on virginity a lot. The first time a guy asked me to have sex with him, I took it pretty lightly and joked on about it. I think it wasn't until he started asking me more that I really started thinking more about what virginity means to me. My viewpoint hasn't really changed but I started to realize how much more important it is to actually keep it and to make sure I remember why. When you're in the moment, it's really hard to say no without a set belief about it beforehand. So, I think the environment just made me more aware of how easy it is to lose my virginity and reminds me how important it is to keep it.

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At first, I thought that Lynbrook kids were incredibly sheltered; and to a certain degree, I guess they still are. I know that I'm as sheltered as you can get. But I didn't realize how much they get around. I was kind of surprised when I learned how many other people in my grade have had sex. Considering how many college rejections I got in these past few months, I should have tried to hook up with someone because all of the time I spent in academics, clubs, activities and sports obviously went to waste. At least I could have gotten laid. Probably not though, considering the fact that I'm a total asshole.

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I don't find sex a big deal when it happens to other people but the idea of it happening to me is a big deal? Like I've been really desensitized to it because of media and all so like I said the idea of it happening to one of friends is not weird but when I think of me having sex i can't really imagine it happening for real! Like I've even had sex dreams but it's just something that I've been laughing off. It all just seems like something in the distant future.

Virginity can be viewed as something that is normal, and no longer being a virgin as not anything too significant. I believe that people should not shame anyone (in high school) for not being a virgin, but I do think that virginity can be something that is respected. At Lynbrook, there is generally not that much judgement about virginity, but there will be occasional nasty comments about anyone who is sexually active. I used to think that virginity should be kept until after marriage, but over time I have changed to think that being sexually active before is fine too, and all really depends on personal choice. I still think that most people put some kind of significance on their virginity, so it would be preferable if their first times would be with their life-long partners. Though of course, considering how the world is not a perfectly happy place, their partners who they will be with until further notice...

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Every time people around me learn that I'm not a virgin, I'm treated with the same reaction: "WHAT, YOU? I NEVER WOULD'VE THOUGHT!" But I often wonder why this subject is always surrounded with a negative connotation. In a society where we so emphasize the learning process and the journey of growing up and self-discovery, why do we so frown upon this one event along our physical growth? I am an upperclassman at Lynbrook, I am heavily invested in both my academic, social, and extracurricular lives, and I am grateful for friends who have supported me all of my life. But why does this one fact that I am not a virgin completely destroy a friendship? Here is the truth (my truth, that is) about losing virginity: nobody says you need to be in love with the partner. Nobody says you need to be in a committed relationship, and nobody says you ever need to enter a relationship with this person. The only requirements are that you do it safely and consensually, and you know that this is the way you want to lose it. Hell, you may never even see the person afterwards, but this is something you'd be okay with remembering like this. And that's okay. When I lost my virginity, the only other thing I lost was the boy. I didn't lose my identity, my happiness, my sense of purpose in this world. I did, momentarily, lose a piece of my heart, as the boy in turn went on to leave me. But I grew it back. Virginity is not a piece of ourselves; when we lose our virginities, we cannot let it seem like a piece of ourselves have floated away. As

long as we have crossed the milestone with a sound mind and with safety in mind, there is no reason to treat someone differently after he/she has lost her virginity; this person has simply decided that it was the right time for him/her to keep right on growing up.

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"No language has ever had a word for a virgin man."

- Will Durant

I define virgin as someone who has never had sexual contact and has innocence. This includes foreplay, anything like that. When I was at Lynbrook, I don't think this topic even passed between my friends and I, since none of us were in relationships. I wouldn't feel judged since I'm selective about who I tell about these things. My opinion on virginity when it comes to other people is live and let live. I don't care about other people's sex lives. If someone I knew had sex, I would congratulate them. Doesn't matter if it's casual, even, as long as they're mindful of sexual health and all that jazz. Being a virgin (or not being one) doesn't really matter that much. I wasn't ready for sex, and neither did I get the opportunity for it. I didn't think about sex, because it made me feel uncomfortable. This was partly due to my sexuality, which I firmly repressed until even after I graduated. I said to myself that I'd save virginity until marriage. Now, I think it's alright to just go with what feels right for me; it doesn't have to be complicated. I'm less stubborn about the idea that I have to lose my virginity to my future spouse. I personally prefer losing my virginity to someone in a loving, long-term relationship and that works fine for me.

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I've had the same friends since middle school. We're nine really close knit boys and girls. In freshman year, the first boy in our clique had sex. We all thought that was kind of edgy and cool, but I thought he was going to be the only one of us to have it in high school. It was kind of like meeting a celebrity. One person in every group of friends has done it, but usually no more than one. Fast forward to junior year, in all of my friends, I was the only virgin left. I didn't feel ready to have sex but I was in a group of friends that

had long been f***ing. Just after the first finals week that year, I started talking to this girl. She was one of those edgy girls and I knew that in a short while, we would be having sex. It happened, and I regretted it immediately after. I felt as if my virginity was a valuable possession, and I had given it to someone I didn't care about out of peer pressure. Virginity isn't something that should just be passed around casually. It is a valuable gift. I wish I had given it to someone I had truly loved, but I didn't let that happen.

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Tfw the only thing that has come remotely close to taking your virginity is your right hand, and sometimes your left hand.

"Virginity comes standard. A good head is earned."

- Mokokoma Mokhonoana

****warning: this submission may contain sensitive content**

Iwasn't ready at all. It was at this last New Year's Eve party, two hours until midnight. I was drunk and sad. A random college boy followed me into the garage and peeled the clothes off of my wobbling body. He buried his nose in my cold shoulder while I watched moths hit the lamp next to us. He then took my virginity, finished, got dressed, and left me laying naked on the couch. I, in my drunken state, passed out and didn't wake up until early morning. I always wanted my first time to be romantic, but I guess I got this instead.

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Ihave never had sex, and that doesn't really bother me, nor does it make me proud. When I eventually do have sex, I don't think it will change me very much. Virginity just doesn't seem important to me. I mean, having sex for the first time is a unique experience in the same way that riding a bike for the first time is a unique experience, but I don't ascribe any special meaning to virginity beyond that.

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Jamieko Gruenloh is a Marriage and Family Therapist that has been working with children, youth, and adolescents for over seven 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. For more information feel free to contact Jamieko at www.jamiekogruenloehmft.com

When I was approached to be the professional on this month's topic of virginity I genuinely didn't know what to expect. Virginity is such an interesting thing to discuss that has so many beliefs and stigmas attached to it. Look at movies, like classics Porky's or Fast Times at Ridgemont High or more recent hits like, American Pie, Easy A or of course, The 40 year old virgin. Every generation seems to have the same fascination with virginity. Where do you lose it? Who do you lose it to? What is appropriate? And most importantly when is it appropriate?

Teenagers across the decades and continents have always had discussions about virginity and I don't believe that will ever change. I believe it will always be a hot topic of discussion. The reason being because you can only lose it once and it is a rite of passage into adulthood. Parents want their children to hold on to it for so many reasons and teens are so anxious to let it go.

Here at Lynbrook, there is the assumption that sex does not happen. Well that is a false assumption. Sex still happens even with the kids who take 5 AP classes in one semester. Lynbrook is like any other traditional American high schools with the three taboo topics: sex, drugs and rock and roll. These submissions only prove my point. Teens will be teens and hormones will rage. Yes, I will agree that sex does not happen as often here and we don't have issues with things like teenage pregnancy but that doesn't mean it doesn't happen. I see sex not being a major topic in the halls but more within your small circle of friends. I hear students talking about having it and I also hear students speaking out against sex.

Parents: I know it is a scary thought to think of your child losing their virginity. It's a scary thought to think about your child growing up. However, it's going to happen at some point. This is the only thing that is inevitable. Trying to control it or avoid it isn't going to stop it from happening. I believe you can teach your children the morals of your culture and hope that sticks. Help your children understand what is right and wrong in your home and help them shape who they want to be. Be that waiting until they are married or just making sure they are safe and making their own choices, if you never have the discussion they will make these choices on their own with the influence of their friends and of society. When you have open discussions about sex, sex is not a mystery that they want to conquer. It is essential to talk about sex with your children so when the situation arises your child will be able to process what they believe instead of being pressured by someone else's desires.

Students: I read a meme that said, "We live in a world where losing your phone is more dramatic than losing your virginity." That makes me sad. Sex is a big deal. It's not just something you do on a dare, or just because everyone is doing it. It is a personal choice that you need to make

when you are sober and right in mind. The idea that everyone is doing it is false. Everyone is not doing it. If you believe in waiting until marriage, then wait. If you aren't sure, then wait. If you're wasted, then wait! Understand that although you might feel like sex isn't a big deal, understand that we as adults know it is. There is an emotional attachment that happens with sex, any sort of sexual activity, that you might not understand yet because your hormones are raging. The increase in "friends with benefits" and detached sex honestly breaks my heart. You are all so anxious to grow up, to rush through life and forget that being a kid also only happens once. You need to stop and enjoy it.

I am realistic and understand that sex is going to happen for some of you. If you choose to have sex I have two words of advice; make it safe and make it your choice. Pregnancy and many STDs are things that will last with you for a lifetime. Those aren't the only things that last a lifetime, the emotional scar that can be left from you having sex too soon, with too many people, or not in the way you wanted can forever damage who you are. You are setting a precedent of who you are. Be careful with those choices. Understand that with adult choices come adult consequences. So make sure you take appropriate measures to make wise choices and to be safe. Please make sure that you AND your partner want to engage in sex. Make a choice and hold firm to that don't allow situation or persuasion change your mind. Don't use sex to gain popularity, gain attention, to establish your value/worth, or because you think it's what's expected of you because of how long you've been dating, how you're dressed, signals you've been giving or what you have done sexually in the past. Have sex because it is your choice and you are with a partner you want to be with.

Always remember bullying anyone into having sex is not acceptable. Making fun of someone because they choose not to have sex is not acceptable. Making fun of someone for choosing to have sex or "slut shaming" is not acceptable. Sex is never meant to be violent. Sex is never meant to be broadcasted on social media. Most importantly, no means no! If your partner is drunk or high, wait until they are sober. You must remember consent needs to happen when someone is sober, no ifs ands or buts about it. Sex is a part of life and you will eventually take that next step. Make sure it's a step you are ok with, you can never go backwards.

Additional Resources

Love is Respect: www.loveisrespect.org

- you can text Lovels to 22522 or call 1-866-331-9474 to talk confidentially to an advocate about any issues.

CORA (Community Overcoming Relationship Abuse) has a 24-hour crisis support line: 1-800-300-1080 that will support your needs

That's Not Cool: www.thatsnotcool.com

- teaches you what is and isn't cool in technology

A Thin Line: www.athinline.org

- a campaign started by MTV teaching you the harmful effects of digital abuse

Go Ask Alice!: goaskalice.columbia.edu

- provides unbiased medically accurate answers to any and all questions.

GLBT National Youth Talkline: www.glnh.org or an anonymous hotline 1-800-246-PRIDE (7743)

Break the Cycle: 1-888-988- TEEN (8336)

Rape, Abuse, Incest, National Network (RAINN): 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

Santa Clara County Suicide and Crisis Line: 1-855-278-4204