

## 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 publication period, 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 the chosen 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](http://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 second issue of *Aletheia* for the 2017-18 school year.

## Submissions

\*The submissions in this issue were collected in November 2017.

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 issue release will be a compilation of three topics that fall under the overarching theme of Pressure. Look out for it in April 2018!

We currently have the topic "At a Crossroads" open for submission. Submit at our new website: [www.lhsaletheia.com/submit](http://www.lhsaletheia.com/submit)

*Expressing what  
remains unspoken.*

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I'm dishonest. f\*ck, im dishonest before everything else i am and pretend to be. im a bisexual transgender boy, and it suffocates me every time i breathe. my dad asks me if im a f\*ggot and i deny deny deny, laugh it off, when in reality im so terrified my hands are shaking my skin might just melt off my bones. he wants to "kill all the gays"; hes told me that he will kick out any f\*ggot kid of his. so i lie. i lie and i lie and i lie and i hope and i lie

*"Lying is an elementary means of self-defense."*

*- Susan Sontag*

There is one person who I've been meaning to talk to. I am far too pissed to talk to that person face to face or on any social media platform/texting. And I am too much of a coward to confront that person. So on the off chance that this person reads this submission, they will know how I truly feel.

You want me to be honest? I think that you're an \*ss-hole with a massive ego. Every single day, you make me feel like sh\*t. Everything about us is one sided. I'm always checking up on you, asking how your week was, asking how you are, asking about your family. What about me? I don't get sh\*t. Do you even care about me? I've been avoiding you and I pretend like my life is great without you. And it is. But I am f\*cking sick and tired of this. And what's even more f\*cked up is that I f\*cking love you and you're too blind to notice it.

*"If you tell the truth you don't have to remember anything."*

*- Mark Twain*

I lie all the time. To my friends, my family, my teacher, but I don't think I can ever lie to myself. I don't know how to lie to myself, I always know when I lie. I know who my emotions are directed toward. Kind of like the moment when you said you 'hate' or 'don't like' someone, you are not really hating them. You're

just hating, or disliking yourself, for not being able to cope with that situation. Like for example when you tell your friends that you simply hate that girl because she's teacher's pet. That's very opinionated honestly. You don't 'hate' that girl, really, you are merely disliking yourself because you are not better than her. That is a rather pessimistic way to look at it, but I find that to be the more truthful truth than the word 'hate' when put into feelings. I always know what I'm feeling depressed toward. I tell myself that I don't care much about losing, but I know that I care very much. Sometimes it really hurts to just smile after loses, but I know exactly that I'm lying to myself as I pretend to be happy. I don't like expressing myself with emotions like crying. I try to smile (as much as I can anyway) and just be as upbeat as possible. My friends expressed that I'm fun to be with, that I'm nice and I'm likeable. I'm happy when I heard that, to know that I finally belong somewhere. It's a warm feeling that almost all human beings longed and craved for. But knowing that doesn't really makes me feel better for a long time. I'm simply, well, un-me around them. I like to play games, run, push myself to my limits, and slack off. And in their mind? I'm the perfect A+ students, the person who attends math class three grades higher, someone who scores all A in classes, and the person who seemed to be always serious about academics. I hate it. I hate myself for being unable to express to them that I'm not who they think I am. I don't get all A, I receive Cs and sometimes even D, and I barely managed to pull it up before the reports were printed. I slack off, I miss project deadlines, I forget homework, I disappoint teachers, my parents insisted on me attending higher math classes while I wanted nothing more than to stay at home, play games, eat, watch TV, and be what they called a 'social-failure'. But would my 'friends' really accept me if I tell them that I'm not who they are? I like to laugh, I like to make jokes, I like to be a little silly, but they looked at me weirdly when I did that. I stopped because it seems that it was already too late to change who I am. Though, it's this moment that I have to pause, and really think it over. Maybe I'm lying to myself the whole time. Maybe I'm really just who they think I am, maybe I'm supposed to be that A+ student, strict and serious, and 'likeable' in a way. Maybe I have been lying to myself that I want to be more 'myself'. I don't know. I don't know anymore. Or maybe I do know but I am lying to myself again because I don't want to know the truth.

*"Lying is done with words and also with silence."*

*- Adrienne Rich*

Honestly, dishonesty is a huge part of my life and I can't see a life filled with nothing but the truth. From a young age, I have been exposed to blatant lie after blatant lie and I suppose I picked up on it. Do I regret a thing? No. I wish I could say I felt a pang of guilt. I wish I could say I was sorry. But I'm not sorry.

My parents were never sorry for never telling me my aunt was having risky surgery, they never apologized for hiding the fact that the woman who's like another mother to me struggled with cancer, they will never apologize for not telling me a close family friend DIED, and they certainly aren't apologizing for not telling me what's happening with a family member I know is ill. And in a way, it isn't their fault I guess. They never found out that I know enough of their mother tongue to be able to understand every conversation they have in front of me. But in a way, it is their fault. Because I know there is more they're hiding that I don't know and they don't feel a damn bit wrong about it.

They never thought I deserved to know anything, and I realize that I have inherited that from them. I lie constantly now. Not just to them, but to my friends and classmates. Am I okay? Yes, of course. What are my grades like? Straight As, obviously. Am I feeling confident about how I did on that test? Couldn't be more confident.

And it is no longer just little white "Lynbrook" lies. There is a friend I have that I would be shunned for having by everyone. They live over 2000 miles from me, we have never met, and yet I know I have saved their life, but what they don't know is they have saved mine as well. Nobody knows this person exists in my life, and I lie to make sure it remains that way. I need them as much as they need me. I have and will tell any lie to make sure that nobody will ever judge the friendship we have or try to tear it apart because

we've stood together and cried and laughed and had our hearts broken and sloppily mended together for over a year now and I have no regrets about that lie because that lie is saving two lives right now.

I also lie to myself often. I persuade myself that I am okay far too often. The truth is that I amn't. I never have been, and I doubt I will be any time soon. I laugh at "lmao I'm so retarded, kms" jokes and tell myself I'm fine as my heart breaks for the autistic girl who killed herself because I couldn't save her that day and because the world couldn't see her as more than a retard, and I laugh as if it's hilarious as I remember the days I truly almost downed bottles of pills and the days I barely talked my friend off the edge of a cliff and the struggles far larger than a B on a test that lead us all there.

I tell myself that I am dumb, that I am a piece of sh\*t. I know this isn't entirely true. Move me to rural Arkansas and I'd be an honor roll student. There are colleges out there that send me personalized hand-written mailers asking me to apply, mailers many of those rural students would kill for. But the way I grew up, here, I remain convinced that my 97th percentile scores render me stupid. And I tell myself that daily. I have realized it is a lie, but it's one I can't stop telling myself.

And finally, I lie to myself about my sexual identity. I identify as bisexual, but my parents are traditional (surprise surprise) and the way they speak has made me question myself time and time again when it already took me so long to understand who I was. I lie to myself, telling myself that I am hetero and this bi thing is "just a phase" like my parents would say if they knew. So what if I've liked girls and guys before? That doesn't mean anything, right? I can't live with myself and so I lie to myself and shove my bisexuality down and say that it is nothing, that it's something I can get over, I treat it as if it's something inhuman and I recognize that but guess what? I can't stop lying to myself about that either.

So yeah. tl;dr, I'm a f\*cking liar and my parents are f\*cking liars and I regret nothing, but that's another lie because I also regret everything. What would I do if I could restart? Knowing the dumb\*ss I am, probably nothing different than what I am doing now.

Dishonesty? The f\*ck is that? I've lost count of the number of times I've been dishonest to both myself and others. I thought I knew myself, but I really don't. I have no f\*cking idea who I am. And guess what? I'm a senior. Hold up. Is this also counted as dishonesty? Or maybe it doesn't because apparently the only dishonesty people see is if you cheat on a test or some dumb sh\*t like that. With this mask on, no one knows the "real me". Not even myself. I was always taught to be strong, hide the weak, bend to social rules, don't complain, don't express yourself because that's so embarrassing. I feel dead. I fake everyone out, they think I'm happy and never cry. There's so much sh\*t I want to just say sometimes but that mask. That stupid f\*cking mask, but it's not just one. I have so many fake masks on. It's so suffocating. Never have I taken them off, not that I can.

lol. And i do not regret it one bit. Lynbrook is a lie. Hell i dont even have a 4.0 gpa and i cheat. My friend who does not study/cheat get 4.0 so it doesnt really matter. Just think of it this way; cheating gives you more time to do more fun stuff instead of wasting it to learn useless things. Like high school is already hard enough with all the homework and parents. Why do we have to learn more useless stuff like this? Jussayin i never got caught but i dont reccomend others following my footsteps. Final word: for me, dishonesty is fun. Nothing beats the thrill of looking at my partners answer and seeing i got the question right. Even the crimes of the dishonest rapist who got elected thanks to russia pale in comparision to me.

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*"A half truth is a whole lie."*

*~Yiddish Proverb*

Is academic dishonesty dishonesty? i think it is. But i cheat and Im not ashamed of it at all. Like who needs to know all of this useless informaton anyways? When in life will you need to know that the bond angle is 109.5 or whatever that number is. When will stochiochemistry come in useful anyways? When will i need to integrate something without using a calculatr? When will ever need to do proofs in real life? When will I even need to know calculus anyways? Im not being a engineer or any of that stupid stuff. Whats the point of knowing which battles were fought in the Civil war? Stupid apush. When will we even need to know kinematecs in real life? It's not like someone's going to point a gun to my head and threaten to kill me if I don't know what happened in a random story which never even happened in real life. Why do I need to know what random enzymes do in cells? I'm not going to find a cure for cancer or anything like that! Maybe I do take old tests from classrooms. Look at my neighbors answers. Copy off of my friends. I dont get caught I wont get caught and i feel good because I get a good grade without having to memorize any usless stuff. Of course i am honest with myself. I accept who i am. I cheat according to many ppl. I should have an f in a class right now. But oh well. I feel good regardless

I think I was lying to myself that I was doing well. Not just with like school and stuff, but like my life in general. I guess when your told that you live in this bubble of privilege and that you should be blessed to have such an amazing life that it's kinda hard to ever really complain about anything without feeling a bit guilty that you're just having one of those 1st world problems and that there is always some one else suffering ten times as much as you are. And I guess I thought any problem I did have just wasn't really worth mentioning. So when all my old friends started just disappearing right in front of me and my new "friends" were just being complete \*sshholes every single day and my grades were going to utter sh\*t and the family was just telling me how out of control I am and how I'm f\*cking screwing myself over for the future that I just told myself that it was all was going to be ok and that it was all for the better and put myself in this state of denial where "if some else has bigger problems than me then I guess mine done really count." I don't know, I guess deep down I'm still in denial, even though my friend tells me I've got the lowest self esteem he's ever seen in anyone and I always sh\*t on myself all the time. I guess I'm just living in a kind of a trance and telling myself it's all going to be ok when maybe it isn't. Or maybe it is, because someone out there has it worse than me and therefore there is nothing for a petty little 1st worlder living in Silicon Valley to complain about.

At first sight, I thought it wasn't meant to be  
She complimented on my style, that's me  
We were getting to know one another  
Until I started falling for her  
She never noticed later til I said  
"I like you and you probably don't feel the same."  
Waiting for a response wasn't until next day  
Everything became so clear, rumors being spread  
One of the worst mistakes I've made  
Curiosity and vulnerability kicks in  
What have I done with my life?  
Wondering why she got to tell other people  
I don't know what went on in her head  
It mattered to me cause I felt dead  
A part of me is upset  
And all I want to do is forget  
So no she didn't feel the same way  
I decided to move on through the day



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Dishonesty. Honestly, it's hard to define it. Is it the lack of honesty? Or, is it something different. I submit that for the most part, things are just not that black and white.

Sometimes I might use phrases like "brutally honest," which could infer that there are different degrees of dishonesty or honesty. My take is that it's not that black and white. We use words like "little white lies." What does that really mean? And what is the opposite of a "little white lie"? Is there a "big, black lie"?

Let's look at a definition of "Dishonesty" – "deceitfulness shown in someone's character or behavior." And breaking it down to "dishonest" there are all sorts of definitions including corrupt, fraudulent, two-faced, deceiving, cunning, swindling.

Here's another take on the difference between Truth and Honesty from an attorney: "Lawyers must be honest, but they don't have to be truthful. "Honesty" and "truthfulness" is not the same thing. Being honest means not telling lies. Being truthful means actively making known all the full truth of a matter. Lawyers must be honest, but they don't have to be truthful. A criminal defense lawyer, for example, in zealously defending a client, has no obligation to actively present the truth. Counsel may not deliberately mislead the court, but has no obligation to tell the defendant's whole story.

Currently Uber has been in the news. Here's the headline "Uber's Big Problem Is a Culture of Dishonesty." I imagine that dishonesty will cost Uber for years to come, or maybe not. I love Uber. And the next time I want a ride to the airport I will open up my Uber App on my phone and order a ride.

And let's consider the cultural context regarding dishonesty, Duke University found that "people don't cheat as much as they can get away with; rather they cheat up to the point at which they can continue to believe that they are good people." Plagiarism, is just a part of the dishonesty in education.

From some religious/cultural perspectives, there are various expectations about "sin." Some identify "sins of commission" and "sins of omission." Sins of commission, means "doing something," while "sins of omission" are "not doing something." But that's for another article.

Here's an example of being dishonest in a friendship that could be somewhat kind: You realize that your friend is stressed about an assignment or exam, and yet you are frustrated with your friend about some other matter. So at the time you say, "Oh, it's fine". You want to be kind to her. So, it could possibly be reasonable to be dishonest. It could be out of kindness.

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## Additional Resources

My References for the article:

1. Cheating Across Cultures, Inside Higher Ed, Elizabeth Redden, 2007
2. Cheating and Honesty/Ethical Systems, Business Integrity Through Research, 2007
3. Uber's Big Problem Is a Culture of Dishonesty, Bloomberg 11/22/17
4. An Attorney On The Difference Between Truth And Honesty, Forbes, March 4, 2016; Jonathan Becher

Recommendations for Reading:

1. Man's Search For Meaning, Viktor E. Frankl
2. The Whole-Brain Child, Daniel Siegel, MD and Tina Payne Bryson, PhD
3. How to Talk so Teens Will Listen & Listen So Teens Will Talk, Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish
4. The Dip, Seth Godin (just for fun)