



Aletheia  
December 2024



# FAMILY Dynamics





# Aletheia

[A-LAY-THÉE-UH]

*(n.) truth , disclosure*  
(greek)

## ABOUT US

Aletheia is a student outreach publication that strives to provide a voice for all students at Lynbrook High School in San Jose, California. Aletheia was created to facilitate communication and overcome stigmas concerning prevalent and taboo issues within Lynbrook.

Every year, the Aletheia staff chooses topics that pertain to the realities of our high school community. The issues are comprised of firsthand experiences submitted anonymously by Lynbrook students and alumni, among many other components as described on the *contents* page. Finalized issues are distributed in Lynbrook High School, uploaded online, and emailed to our subscribers. Past issues can be found on [lhsaletheia.com/archive](https://lhsaletheia.com/archive).

Note that ideas and opinions expressed within the publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Aletheia staff or the school administration.

You can find our archive of issues at [lhsaletheia.com/archive](https://lhsaletheia.com/archive)

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## Student Submissions

\*All submissions were submitted anonymously. Note that the views of the submissions do not necessarily reflect the views of Aletheia or of Lynbrook High School.

Family is really annoying to be honest. I am one of those people who think that I can do it on my own and I don't really need family. Like why do you need family to do great things. I mean sure they're there but then sometimes

I feel like I'm leaching off of them and other days I'm like I feel useless. Anyway all in all I think it's one of those things that are so weird. It's interesting cause like family this and that blah blah. Like okay and then what. They have all these opinions that are outdated in my opinion. I guess we're all just trying to do our best to survive and I rather fight for it on my own.



You know my brother right? So my brother was doing his math homework right? And then I wanted to go bother him and so I kicked him in the shins. He didn't like that. But hey, least I only got one black eye



In defense of the younger sibling:  
You were my first justification for  
existence. I was your first nuisance. I  
knew, you made sure of it. Did you ever  
realize the latency between our  
thinking? To lag behind was the  
natural order. I am always lacking  
“common sense.” Me, peeking over  
your shoulder, swatted away like a fly.  
From the start, I turned your oxygen  
into CO<sub>2</sub>. I didn’t fulfill my purpose.



You braid my hair and it falls undone,  
paint my nails and they smudge. When  
we went to the store to buy a doll  
instead, I got one too, to match.

“I turned your oxygen into  
CO<sub>2</sub>. I didn’t fulfill my  
purpose.”



You braid my hair and it falls undone,  
paint my nails and they smudge. When  
we went to the store to buy a doll  
instead, I got one too, to match. At a  
restaurant, I could never order what  
you chose. I scramble through the  
menu even now, when what was on my  
mind is “taken.” What’s so wrong about  
twinning plates, shameful about shared  
pain? At my lowest, when no one could  
hear me, you covered your ears. I know  
now that it was out of spite, the same  
kind echoes in my own words, but I  
can’t help but be bitter. So are(were)  
you.





While you suffered in silence, I screamed nonsense. But you said it better. I was just trying to say anything at all. Should I be thankful? When the words “annoying,” “bratty,” “lazy” cross your mind, I am the first image that appears. When my temper is short and words hold bite, the voice that snaps out is yours—so far yet familiar. I will always be your imitation, your privileged pair. No matter how far we diverge, I will always be the lesser huert. I will always be lesser.

Yet, you tell me happy birthday, not caring enough to remember my age. Your bookshelf is now mine, all the YA romance and AP workbooks.

Send me Instagram Reels that put your disdain to words—though I don’t think it’s that simple, not anymore. Is this what they call solidarity?

Tell me what to say, what to wear. You were my first experience with honesty, the kind I no longer wilt under. Run away. They miss you (or what they wanted of you). Am I meant to? Fly further. I can wash the rice. The music plays. You sound happier. I sing along in an empty room. Don’t come back. I don’t know how to say sorry.

Thank you.

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In the defense of the older sibling:

I can build you a justified existence. You follow my steps, a path I cleared for you alone. You know, I make sure of it. How can “I don’t want to” be an adequate justification? The audacity in autonomy, my sacrifice as given as your freedom. You, innately born an object of pity, rather than of scorn. There is something enviable about the helpless.



Lacking expectations ensures a lack of disappointment. I think they were always trying to make up for it.

Whenever something was split halfway, we were always 25-25, you a full 50. Rooms, ice cream crepes, opportunities—we concede. You won't remember though. It's your only reality.

“Accountability must feel unfamiliar.”

Do I exist for you? Wasn't it supposed to be the other way around? Do you realize (anything)? Enjoy the option of silence. I fight your battles, the ones no one fought for(with) me. My voice is a scapegoat, vulnerable against the slammed-close door of your room—always yours alone.

I've heard it before. I breed your “attitude,” encourage your “behavior.” I do everything right—the things they'd beg of you, lose hope for—yet you will always be my remaining stain. We bear your fault. Accountability must feel unfamiliar. We've heard it before. You are growing. I could help you grow better. The map laid out, I could guide you around all the mistakes no one told me not to make. Isn't it maddening to accept inferiority?



I can give you every opening. You won't take it. I can't tell if it's complacency or satisfaction, but I don't believe in our happiness. I can bring you closer though, at least to my image of it. That's the problem. You aren't me. It's hard to imagine that you could be. Yet, I wait for your class to finish. I meet your friends, and they're good influences, not that any of you is my business. This hierarchy is set to expire. Once it dissolves, do you know who you'll be? The world won't bend







like we do. Enjoy it for the time being. I return from boba shops with both hands full, always containing a constant: Number 10, half sugar, less ice. Let's sing out of tune on the car ride home. I can't figure out harmonies even if I tried. I think I will come back. I don't care whether I miss it. Good luck. Goodbye.

Maybe I just wanted a thank you.

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“I guess we're all just trying to do our best to survive and I rather fight for it on my own.”

family to me is anyone i am close enough to so that i can be myself around them which isnt a lot of people just a few friends and my blood family like my mom and dad. but now i feel like i am drifting away from my friends but they still feel like family even if i dont hang out with them that much.

My blood related family is really small and sometimes i feel really alone with no siblings and pets and stuff (but my friends tell me im lucky for not having any siblings lol) and there may be a chance that i get a pet in the future? :D overall defining a family is complicated and families in general are complicated af







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Siblings are something that will always take getting used to, I think. Since I'm an older sibling, when my younger sister was born, I was quite lonely and didn't understand why I was always left alone. Thinking back, it's difficult to tell a 3 year old why you can't play as much with them, but as a child, you don't know that. It's just, "oh, my parents don't want to play anymore." I am also forced to share everything with my sibling: food, items, gifts are just many of the items that I have had to learn to part with. 2) In chinese culture, family is very important, but I feel like it doesn't matter too much in my household.

3) Family for sure does not need to be blood related, as there are plenty of parents that do not deserve calling their child their "son" or "daughter". I think family is just someone that you feel safe with, and you can trust with your darkest secrets. Further Consideration: 1) Divorce is certainly something that is worth talking about when you mention external factors. It's a common fact between me and my sibling that our parents are only together due to us. In fact, in asian households, I feel like it is quite common that the love they one had isn't there anymore. I've grown up with my parents fighting all the time, so it really is not an issue when they threaten divorce all the time. You do get used to it, so after a while, it doesn't phase you much anymore





I know there are stereotypes surrounding birth order, like the oldest child should be the most mature, the middle child gets overlooked, and the youngest child is the spoiled favorite. I don't think that birth order determines everything, but there is a little truth to the birth order stereotype in my family. As a middle child, I don't get overlooked, I just don't do anything to stand out. I wish I could make some sort of large accomplishment to stand out, but I don't find myself very attached to any hobby. My siblings stand out more than I do, and while it isn't a toxic relationship or anything like that, I just wish I could do something more, but I'm not sure what.



i feel like my family is divided into two separate groups. my moms side of the family is really involved in my life and i get to see them a lot, but i dont get to see my dads side of the family and they never really reach out. sometimes i feel that my dads side of the family doesnt even exist. i dont talk to my cousins on my dads side either, so its a really weird dynamic. it doesnt really bother me since my moms side always holds these big family gatherings and i love being around them but it keeps me up sometimes. i think my dad had a falling out with his family so i doubt ill reconnect with those cousins. hopefully i will one day





# Teacher interview: Andrew Seike

## QUOTES

“MY FATHER VIEWED THE WORLD CYNICALLY AS A PLACE WITH LITTLE WARM AND GENEROSITY. THROUGHOUT MY YOUTH, I WATCHED MY MOTHER’S NUMEROUS ACTS OF KINDNESS SUCH AS GIVING MONEY TO THOSE IN NEED, EVEN IN THE FACE OF MY FATHER’S OBJECTIONS. HER UNWAVERING KINDNESS SHAPED MY LIFE, CREATING A SENSE OF DEFIANCE TOWARDS MY FATHER’S PERSPECTIVE. THESE EXPERIENCES INFLUENCED ME TO EMBRACE MY MOTHER’S VALUES, ULTIMATELY INSPIRING ME TO PURSUE A CAREER IN TEACHING TO MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON OTHERS.”

“AS THE YOUNGEST, I FIND IT DIFFICULT TO SHARE THE SAME OPINIONS AS MY OLDEST BROTHER DUE TO THE SIGNIFICANT AGE GAP, SO I TEND TO LISTEN TO HIM MORE THAN ENGAGE IN AN OPEN DISCUSSION. HOWEVER, WITH MY MIDDLE BROTHER OUR CLOSER AGE DIFFERENCE ALLOWS FOR MORE TRANSPARENT AND CANDID CONVERSATIONS.



# From A Professional:

## FAMILY DYNAMICS:

### THE DANCE BETWEEN BELONGING AND RESENTMENT

I see clients who are often struggling with relationships, primarily in their marriages or with family. While these individuals come from a variety of cultural backgrounds and family histories, similar themes arise when talking about what's most painful about their relationships. Most notable to me, are the themes of resentment and belonging. By the time clients come to me, they have been feeling overwhelmed and stuck for a while. When one feels as though they have spent ages to provide, accommodate, be agreeable, make better, or take care of others, at the expense of themselves, it can be a rude awakening to find that the outcomes are not as you hoped. Appreciation does not always follow. There might not be peace. It doesn't always feel better.

BY: PRISCILLA MEDINA

A man and woman in their thirties started premarital counseling with the hopes of preparing for marriage, only to discover that while she was brimming with enthusiasm, he was experiencing doubts and dread about the whole ordeal. Further exploration revealed that he felt pressured to propose in the first place and felt resentful about how wedding planning was stressful due to their misalignment on timelines for life. This is a common pattern for many couples. One partner may act solely to satisfy the preferences or promptings of another in order to avoid the tension of the moment that actually desperately needs time and tending. Another partner may feel compelled to move life milestones along according to what they think is best, unwittingly neglecting the values of the other partner. They relive this pattern over and over again in deciding what's for dinner, how kids should be disciplined, which city to move to, etc.





Two youth of different cultural backgrounds described similar experiences of their parents who shared about their histories of hardship- war and conflict for one, and addictions and parental neglect for the other. Both sets of parents desired to share their experiences to instill values for work ethic and thankfulness. Their children, however, experienced unbearable anxiety and when their emotional reactivity was met with criticism from their parents, they each resigned to limited interactions with them, resulting in continued expressed frustration from the parents. The youth became resentful for the ways their parents didn't meet their emotional needs. Meanwhile their parents became resentful towards their children for the ways they did not meet certain expectations for behavior.



Children do want to know their parents and are often curious about their lives. However, there's a difference between a parent sharing about a traumatic experience that they've processed already from telling a traumatic story for the child to process alone. These well-meaning parents neglected to provide what their children needed to hold that kind of awareness- their emotional availability. When children are faced with a reality that life can be dangerous, they need to experience safety and compassion from their parents in order to continue exploring their world and grow their confidence. A parent may feel at a loss because they show up and even express explicitly to their child that they want to be there and help. What they may not realize is that when that desire is expressed within a greater context where they are also rageful, sarcastic, critical, or anxious, etc, children will have difficulty believing and trusting they can be safe.



These cases all share a common pattern. The individuals believe they need to abandon parts of themselves (their timelines, expectations, values, beliefs, emotional needs, etc) in order to find belonging with others in their lives and with society at large. Resentment is what often follows- it's important information from within us. It tells us that something about our needs have likely been neglected. In attachment theory, the understanding is that as soon as babies arrive in the world, they seek bonding with primary caregivers, namely their mothers. It's through this primary attachment that infants learn about the world and ideally, develop physical and emotional security. When children have a secure base with their primary caregivers- when they know they belong, they can explore the world with general feelings of safety.



This in turn affects the likelihood that these individuals form secure attachments as adults, most notably with their partners and children. A variety of things can affect the health of family dynamics and make forming secure attachments a challenge, though. A two-parent household may mean that parent teamwork can lead to less overwhelm, but struggles to align in values can also present high conflict and stress. In a close-knit family, members can experience deep connection while finding it difficult to have privacy or autonomy. Blended families can represent beautiful unions while also disrupting long established family cultures or traditions. Then, there are any number of transitions and stressors that will also affect a family and its members- war, poverty, financial strain, job loss, divorce, addictions, death, etc. It's important to note that children do not need perfect families or perfect conditions, but they do thrive on consistency, responsiveness, and emotional availability from their parents.



## FOR PARENTS:

When it comes to addressing the struggles of your children, you may feel afraid of being blamed for things that didn't go well. You work really hard to create wonderful lives and opportunities for your kids. When things don't seem to go as planned and if they don't respond positively to your efforts, it can be really scary. Parents, after all, know this secret: we are just adult children. We want to belong and we want to feel safe. When things are challenging our expectations, it can seem like the risks will overcome us.

Whatever your family dynamics are, children don't need perfection, they need **CONNECTION**.

This is so freeing for many parents. Perfectionism is not a focus on improvement or betterment, rather it is the condition of being impossible to satisfy. So, do not demand it from yourself or your kids. One way to connect is to **EXPRESS CURIOSITY**. You don't always have to do this by asking questions. Sometimes that can feel like an interrogation. Rather, you might start to use the words **NOTICE** and **WONDER**. "I notice you're not speaking very much today, I wonder if anything is bothering you." Leave room for silence. It's ok if you don't get an answer. You are inviting your child to connect, not forcing. You might also express curiosity by asking for permission to watch them play their favorite game or even play a round with them. You don't have to have the same interests,

but willingness to sit with them in their world lets them know you care to know them and you accept them. You might learn more about them and even learn from them. Again, this is an invitation to connect. If they decline, it's ok to notice the possibility of feeling rejection within yourself. And it would be important that you try to depersonalize that and find ways to care for yourself. Therapy is a great way to do that.





## FOR STUDENTS:

As a teen, it's very normal to be seeking belonging and feel unsure about whether or not you ever will find it. You might also desire more understanding and independence from your parents and feel discouraged when they don't respond positively. What I hope you'll notice from the examples I share is that when people abandon themselves, painful patterns will ultimately continue. You may find that to protect yourself, you've had to manage your interactions with family. I'd just also encourage you to still seek support and give your needs attention even when it seems you don't get it from them. Often what I find in my work with adults is that in order to address their most painful relationship dynamics, they have to start with themselves. This is something you can do even now as a teen.

1. It begins with **NOTICING** and **IDENTIFYING** the emotion you may be experiencing. If you can be honest and learn to name the feeling, you gain vital information about what you are needing. Take a look at this feelings wheel and develop your emotional language: <https://feelingswheel.com/>



2. Better connection with others begins with connecting with yourself. When you increase your self-knowledge and develop an authentic sense-of-self, it is much easier to live a life aligned with your personal values and strengths. Give time to learning about your interests, preferences, strengths, and weaknesses.



3. Develop your **SELF-COMPASSION**. If you notice a critical voice within yourself, it would be important to get curious. What's this part of you trying to accomplish or help with? Does it realize that it's not always helpful? Try making it a regular practice to acknowledge these critical parts and also to ask them to give more space and confidence to the hurting parts that need compassion. You might say something like "hello, I see you and thank you for trying to make sure I don't embarrass myself. But I'm just learning to be me and I'm allowed to make mistakes. I want to connect with people who will accept me for who I am."

