



Dating, Flings, Hookups, Etc.

October 2009

The Verdadera staff encourages you to discuss and explore the issues and stories, as the publication aims not only to offer an outlet for expression, but to improve our lives. Keep in mind that the emotions that flow through the text and the feelings behind the words could be those of your child, your classmate, or your best friend.

Things to consider: What is the difference between hooking up, dating and having a fling?

What are the consequences of dating? The benefits?

Why are these relationships important?

Why should they be discussed and not pushed aside?

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The Verdadera staff thanks you for your interest and support.

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### Student Submissions

Guys can be total jerks sometimes. I was dating this guy and he told me he liked me all the time and stuff, but at the same time I think was avoiding me. Every time I asked him to take me on a date, he always said later. Even at school sometimes he'd disappear on me, especially when he was with his friends. Online though he sounded normal and was always telling me how great I was. Finally after a month or so of this going on, one of his friends finally told me that he was seeing someone else! I got so mad and I screamed out-loud even though my family was in the house. I'm definitely going to be more careful with the next relationship.

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*"Sex without love is merely healthy exercise."*

*~ Robert A. Heinlein*

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I was in a relationship once. It was a very casual relationship; nothing too serious and we didn't do too many things together. I asked if she wanted to go on a date here and there, but she was always busy and her mother always made her "study for finals instead" – at least that's what she told me. Time progressed and winter break came up. I didn't hear much from her over break and we didn't even go to the movies or go to the park like a normal couple. I then received and

email that basically said she wanted to spare my feelings and broke up with me before the relationship got anymore serious. I was devastated, but at the same time I was content because now I was free of a relationship with someone who didn't like me.

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I feel that relationships are often overlooked. I heard a lot of people say that once you start to like somebody, you can never stop thinking about them and start to lose focus over schoolwork or any other important matter. I think that this statement is false. I have found that I seem to try harder on many of my priorities partly because I want to impress my girlfriend and partly because I don't want to have my parents upset over my lack of focus and lose her. I used to think about how much I wanted have a girlfriend and be in a relationship so often that it actually seemed to be more distracting in my daily activities than having one myself. I have also noticed how I am less preoccupied with thinking how I look or how I act around girls since I already have one that likes me and have really been able to act like myself, and that has been the most relieving part of it all. I can put a lot more focus into everything I do now that I don't have to worry about thinking of ways I could get a girl, always stressing out over my looks, and trying to act cooler or a way a certain girl likes, and now can really pay attention to the more important things in life, while having the satisfaction of having a girlfriend.

Kissing. I always wondered how anyone could enjoy making out. But at the same time, I'm an anal retentive germophobe and I hate people's mouths, especially after eating. I can't even stand dealing with my retainer, just ugh germs ew. That's probably why the idea of kissing just perplexed me. However, it fascinated me at the same time... Like a foreign food that you wanted a taste of, you know? So right now I'm in like the best relationship ever, no joke, seriously this guy is just perfect for me, tolerating my weirdness and all. We had just started officially going out and we had eaten hecka popcorn that was buttered like a mofizz, cause butter-y popcorn is simply YUMM. After, we were being the cuddle monsters that we truly are and we were alone, so I guess this was inevitable... but we were trying REALLY hard not to start making out. Or okay I guess we weren't trying that hard cause eventually we started making out. The first kiss, I don't really remember the details, I just know my heart totally exploded like KA-BLAM! And my foot didn't pop up like in the Princess Diaries, nor did dramatic music start playing like in every chick flick in the world. But after we pulled away from the first kiss we just looked at each other for a second... I gave him a look like "Daaaaaaaaaamn son!" and went in for another kiss. This time I started paying attention to what it actually felt like and I realized his tongue was in my mouth and it was just WHOA. Thinking about it is really gross but it actually felt really nice so then I was like okay hello Mr. Tongue and I stuck my tongue into the little tongue mosh-pit too. Then we pulled away again and I wasn't sure so I was like "Are we making out?" and he was like "Yeah" and then we started making out again. I could feel little particles of popcorn going back and forth (or maybe it's just my psycho imagination) which normally would have been really nasty to me but since I reallyyyy like this guy it was just great. Then I was like, "Dude we need some music." So we pause for a while and I play this song that I bet noooo one would ever kiss to since it's like roller-disco music, except we could really care less. And then I realize he has braces and I'm like "Man I wonder if I can feel your braces" and since I'm a total loserfreak my tongue goes on a treasure hunt for his braces and once it finds them, I start laughing and wow I don't even know why he likes me hahah. Anyway then we had to go soon and we were like "Wow this sucks I don't wanna stop" and just SOMEHOW I manage to totally squash his balls cause I'm just so smooth. So I back off for a second and I'm thinking that I really suck. Then we kiss a little more and then we had to go. So now I think I understand kissing... For me personally, if I had to kiss someone I didn't like as much as I like this guy, I'd be hecka grossed out and I'd probably barf my pants. But with this guy. Dang. It's so good. And the rest of our relationship is even better, so it's amazing.

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It's the second to last dance at Kennedy, and I really want to dance with the girl I like. When a slow song comes up, I begin to freak out because I think that the dance will be ending soon and it might be the last slow song and I STILL haven't danced with her yet. So, I walk up to her but then I back off at the last second and I keep circling around her. My friends are following me (while I'm walking in circles around her) trying to convince me that I should ask her to dance. I approach her one last time,

and we make eye contact... And then I know that there's no turning back.

So I ask her to dance, and we dance. One of her friends gives me a thumbs up. And what makes it a little weird is that she's taller than me, so I'm a little bit on my tippy toes. But that's okay! I've gotten used to it.

After the dance, I'm about to leave but then she pulls me back in and hugs me and says "Thanks!!" And then I'm just lovestruck for the next five minutes. Later, I find out that the dance isn't even close to ending, but hey, it wasn't that bad was it? I got a hug from the girl. Can't ask for anything better than that.

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*"Attraction is not a choice." ~David DeAngelo*

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I am ashamed to say that I have hooked up with a guy before. I remember freshman year there was an upperclassman that took a liking to me. We hung out, went on a couple dates, you know the drill. After this, my adolescent self thought that this meant that we were going out and that he was my boyfriend... but, boy was I wrong. At this point, he started ignoring me, not following through, and just all around leaving me hanging. It really wasn't a nice feeling....waiting for someone who never shows up. The whole thing just became very sketch. I remember we had our little spat/break-up and I thought I was as good as new. Again, I was wrong. On the inside I was still seeking approval. This led me to falling for the next boy a bit too soon. Looking back, I know we moved too fast. However, in the moment it was very exhilarating. I felt attractive, liked, and appreciated. This boy went on a weeklong trip with me in which we hung out like a fully fledged couple. It was almost like living in a constant date: going to the movies, park, museums etc. every hour of that week. But, after the week was over...he wouldn't respond to my texts and gave excuses when I offered to hang out. I then realized that I had tricked myself again. I felt worse than I had after the first boy.

After the summer of my freshman year I have yet to have another serious boy entanglement. I have liked boys, but never plucked up the courage to tell them how I felt. There was one boy at school that I liked a lot. I talked to him online, strategically placed myself at school, and would even prepare conversation topics. He was always nice to me but I was sure that he didn't like me. In fact, he would flirt with other girls right in front of me. That was always the worst part. Later, I learned that he did like me but thought that I could never like him and that I was "too good" for him. If I had just told him how I felt who knows what could have happened? I had made the decision earlier that I would rather keep him as a friend than make things all awkward between him and I after I told him (just in case he didn't like me.) But after, I of course began to regret my decision. I have made the personal promise to myself to tell the next boy how I feel about it. For better, or for worse, at least I can look back and say I tried. When this day comes, I can look back and truthfully say I have *no regrets*.

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This won't be a sappy story about a significant other who broke my heart after so much time or a way-too-cheerful story

about a happy-go-lucky relationship. I'm writing this as a silent observer who's thinking about joining the game.

For the last four years, I've been sort of a counselor/advisor to lots of my friends who've been together in some sort of romantic union. I've seen the early stages of "OMG I LOVE <insert someone's name>!!!" and "He/she is so cute/awesome :D" and "what do you think if we named our kids 'Suzy Q' or 'John Doe'? He/she would be such an awesome parent". Yadda yadda. Then the "oh I heard he/she doesn't really like me that much" or "my bff told me he was flirting with her at floatbuilding" and whatnot. Then finally, "I'm so depressed we broke up =( " or "just give me a second and I'm gonna make <insert name here>'s life hell" or "I can't believe that <insert expletive of choice here> cheated on me after all that I did for them... life's a bitch" rants after a relationship.

I've never been in a relationship, but I can fairly say that I know a fairly decent amount on what makes and breaks one. I remember when one of my friends had a rough break up where her best friend and boyfriend were having a fling behind her back... kinda felt bad for her since she was putting a good deal into the relationship. And another where one of my other friends had to keep hers sorta secret because her parents were against the idea and any hint of them finding out would be bad. Tough seeing pretty awesome people go through some rough crap in relationships and the likes. Don't think I'd know how to cope with some of the crap that'd come my way with one.

Maybe that's a reason why I haven't pursued one yet, since I'm usually thinking about what's gonna happen next. Come on... it's a high school relationship, most of them don't usually last that much time anyways and are almost never perfect. Maybe that's just my perception and I haven't found a "good relationship" prospect yet. Is part of me being cynical about the whole thing? There's a chance. Am I wrong? Possibly.

It's hella different, advising my friends on what to do, but actually doing what I say is a completely different story. My problem is that I keep on overthinking stuff and freeze up crap with myself. So to escape it, I guess my way is to help people and try to do what I can, with the hope that I'll somehow find a way of getting around my own issues with overthinking relationships and the baggage they tend to carry. But I think I've stood by the sidelines for quite enough time. Yeah, I'll probably fall on my face quite a bit in the beginning but I think it's the best way to learn and actually get something out of it all. So here's to getting out and swimming in the deep end... let's see how it goes.

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*"Always remember this: 'A kiss will never miss, and after many kisses a miss becomes a misses'." ~John Lennon*

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I've been in a good number of relationships throughout high school. In one of them, I was the victim, constantly being criticized by my significant other that I wasn't good enough, that I had to try harder and that I didn't care enough. This led me on an emotional rollercoaster. I was constantly fretting over whether something I said or did might have bothered my boyfriend. I gave up my quirky habits and things I loved so that

I wouldn't annoy him. All of this was done for a few, sporadic moments of happiness in our relationship, during which I would re-convince myself as to why I needed to make more sacrifices. This cycle continued but was cut off abruptly. Awhile later, I entered into another relationship, this time with a person who was completely opposite to my previous boyfriend. He was kind, gentle, and was not one to take control. At first, I thought this was a perfect switch but the feeling of not being bossed around was so unfamiliar to me that I began to take advantage of that fact. Over time, I became the bully, constantly unsatisfied and urging him to try more. In the end, I realized my misuse of his emotions and felt so bad that that relationship was ended too. Ultimately, I don't feel that relationships really get you anywhere because there can never be a perfect relationship. Problems always exist, coming up sooner or later. And even if they are dealt with, there will always be more problems. Relationships are too emotionally draining. They aren't worth it.

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As a teenager we all wonder what life is like, wonder about our future and possibilities, wonder about love. Always dismissing it as a media spun emotion all to lacking in our everyday lives. I thought you had to be a certain age to know what it is though what that age was I didn't know, but was convinced anyone my age wasn't capable of such feat. That's till I met this girl and we started to get along really well. Yes a cliché turn but this was freshmen year. Life went on with our friendship riding ups and downs that'd put roller coasters to shame with a couple moments that made me think there might be more. Last summer we started hanging out almost every day. I thought it was just another phase that'd somehow would get f\*\*\*ed up and things would come crashing down as dictated by our cycle. But a couple of events made me think, this time is different, we're no longer the emotionally clumsy freshmen but incoming seniors (ya time flies). This could work, and with the assurance of her friends I confessed I had liked her for a couple of years. She didn't know how to respond but just ignored me and I realized nothing had changed. Our little cycle was moving along just as it had always. How do you know you love someone? When it's over.

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When I heard the Verdadera topic of the month was Dating/Hookups/Flings, I thought, what better person than myself to write about this? Sure, I've never dated anyone before. And, I've never randomly hooked up with someone (although I have been approached at random at the YMCA by a very cute guy who asked what my number was...), at a party or anywhere at all! But I have had numerous flings. Or rather, "romantic interactions". I've had boys buy me things (singing valentines, chocolates, and stuffed animals galore!), make me things (yay for cake!), and say awkwardly "romantic" things ("why do you have braces?" "uh. because my teeth are crooked...?" "well. your smile's perfect just the way it is" "oh. thanks."). I've been told "I love you" by guys, given beautiful roses, surrounded by candles-- all the things that are supposed to make girls swoon. And though all these things flatter me, and make me feel special, I've never regretted saying no to a date or a relationship. Because I've never liked these guys as much or more as they've

like me. And from the experience of my friends' break ups, I've learned that it's so not nice to say yes if you don't return the feeling. Even if there's peer pressure (which HAS happened to me before. darn peers made me cry goshdarn tears). And even if I think the guy is really really nice and I DO love him-- but only as a friend. I should never go as far as to which you've crossed the line between casual friendship and a dating relationship if I don't mean it. Next time, I'll know that when I make playful jokes (okay. I guessss you could call it flirting), there could be some consequences. Of course, I'm not perfect, and sometimes I've found myself in situations where I just don't know what to do. My advice (to myself. I think this whole thing was just a way for me to get all this out on paper): Just think about it. Think about how I would feel in 10 years. in 20 years. What would my parents think if they knew this about me? I should also pray about it, too. And after I'm done thinking, and I've made my decision, do something about it. Something that I hopefully won't regret :) And, in the future, hopefully I can look back at what I just wrote and remind myself of what I should do in these "love" situations. Remind myself that this ISN'T all about me-- but it does involve me. and that I should try to make the overall best decision. P.S. \*(Miscellaneous) Note to Self!\* Don't forget to keep in mind how the person who likes you feels. If he asks you to go with him to something big, like a prom, don't say no! Think about it. It could be fun. Just as long as you both know that you're going as friends, and nothing more :)

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The thing I hate about having a "thing" with someone is when people assume what we've done and then those assumptions become rumors that people believe. Sometimes, those rumors are really horrible, and are really hurtful because they give you a bad name. Last summer, I had sort of a fling with this guy. Because both of us had somewhat reputations, everyone had all these ideas of what we've done and people would ask me if it were true that I did certain things, all around the 2nd-3rd base area. In reality, our fling did not go very far, he didn't even kiss me! It was really annoying to have to tell people that we didn't do anything, especially since no one would even believe me.

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*"If you kiss on the first date and it's not right, then there will be no second date. Sometimes it's better to hold out and not kiss for a long time. I am a strong believer in kissing being very intimate, and the minute you kiss, the floodgates open for everything else."*  
~Jennifer Lopez

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imagine being in a room just minding your own business then suddenly the person that you think can be "the one" walking in. you know it's them because your stomach just did enough back flips and turns to win an olympic medal. you suddenly become uncomfortable and self concious and you end up moving just so that you can look at them from where you sit. yeahhhhh, that damn cupid got you and now youre miserable because you feel too shy and embarrassed to get your butt up there and say hello. oh yeah, been there and done that.

when i start liking someone (we'll call him coco), it was the most confusing time of my life. i hated liking coco because every time i saw coco unexpectedly, my heart didn't know whether to beat faster or slower so i would end up freezing and just staring. when coco passed, i would wake up and feel so lame and i was, but it's not like i could help it. stupid movies and their happy endings, this is probably where we all get our default setting of how one is to fall in love or how it's suppose to feel; and that's what i did, i waited for the one just to come in and be so twisted up because they were crazy about me. or, we hated each other but in reality it was love not hate. for every coco in my life, this is what i wanted; a movie ending. So stupid of me because i knew it wasn't coming but i just wanted it.

through all my experiences with coco, i know i still want to be in love but i also know what it does to me. having a coco in my life makes me awkward, nervous and unaware of my stupid actions. i figure the more i want it, the more it won't come. so for now i'm just being single and enjoying all my free time instead of moping around about not having coco. but hey, if coco does come along i won't ignore it, i love me some coco :)

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Hook ups. I have been able to hook two relationships up. They worked, but I found out that if a friend intervenes with the relationship too much, like if the friend is transferring messages to each side of the relationship, it never lasts. One was between Alex and Jamie and another between John and Sarah. Well, Alex and Jamie started off well and died off due to Jamie's lack of care for the relationship and died off in bad terms, not talking to one another. John and Sarah, on the other hand, only caught each other by physical appearance and never actually had deep talks with each other and so they never got to really know each other. And so, none lasted. Like I said, i think maybe the failures also includes the fact that I was helping the relationships last, but instead cut them off faster because there was no real communication between each other. Basically, let them be and maybe just be there for them but not be part of their relationship. Depending on if they really like each other and are willing to listen and talk, it maybe can work out pretty well between them.

In relation to myself, I could tell you about how these experiences have changed me OR about my flings/hookups. Myself, not to be cocky or anything, but I have always desired girl-friends ever since 7th grade. Throughout the time from then til now, I have been called "gay" because of how I am with my friends, all girls, and have learned through that. I can now desire guy friends because it gives me a journey of talking to guys and interacting with them more, instead of the more feminine side of girls. The thing is, I also have flings and ALL the time because I am so social and willing to talk to girls, especially cute girls.

Well, my flings also have problems, there are two that I would talk about. One with Amy and one with Jane. Jane was the earlier one. Jane and I started off meeting beginning of sophomore year. to cut it short, we just really connected. Her friends really liked me and we all got along, trickotreating together, hanging out together, etc. Well, it got cut off when she put a wall against me because she began to think she was liking an immature guy. well, yea, people who know me know I can be immature, but then again, you don't just stop talking to them just cuz they're immature, you TALK to them about it. well, she didnt and I really regret losing her because she really was a big

influence on me, being that she connected with me so well (style, music, talking, jokes, laughing).

Amy was an interesting but fun one. I kind of just met her in my sophomore year and we would webcam online together and it'd be fun. Well, then, I started talking to her a lot and she started liking me. I didn't like her at first but then there came a dance and she just really hit me during the dance. Well, then got cut off because I was taking sides with a guy she didn't like but who was really nice and understanding, Tom. Well, then it got in an argument and the fling stopped. I could say we continued dating Junior year but yea, it was just movies and hanging out or football games.

I learned a lot. And now that I kind of have a fling with someone else, I think it can really work out because of the things these experience I've had have taught me. It taught me to not get with people not willing to listen or to not get with people who are not willing to communicate with me properly. Those are my views on Flings, Hook Ups and Dating

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*"I had a lot of dates but I decided to stay home and dye my eyebrows." ~ Andy Warhol*

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March 7, 2009

Hey you,

I dunno where to start; maybe with the fact that we're not together anymore. It feels kind of weird. A little naked perhaps like a tree that lost its leaves or a car with no seats. Empty, weird, a little odd. I'm still sad. When I first heard about you and Tinkerbelle a couple weeks ago (shortly after valentine's when you said you were at your friend's house), I refused to believe it. I was so proud that I had finally found a person who I thought truly cared about me and I wanted to be with for a long time.

I was really heartbroken after I broke up with my previous boyfriend; and I didn't know what to do or who to listen to. I grew numb to things that I once thought were really cute and romantic because everything would draw me back to what was lost. I'll admit I was a pretty foolish person. I didn't want to get serious with anyone because in the back of my head, I knew I would just get hurt in the end. To me relationships were a recipe for disaster. The ends are never happy and I would become even more f\*\*\*ed up than I already became. Before summer I was totally different and you met me at my worst when I was trying to get over my previous boyfriend. Everything between me and him just snowballed into a catastrophe and he just stopped loving me I guess...so I stopped caring and believing in love. I thought there was no such thing and it was all just an illusion that is...until you came.

I was pretty interested in you at first b/c I never met anyone quite like you. My friends were a little how do you say...cleaner than yours and you were...well...you were different. Interesting I guess, well anyways. I was surprised how things moved so quickly between you and me and how open I was with you. I let my guard down so easily after months and months of building it up. I stopped drinking and blazing the pain away because, hell, I wasn't sad anymore after I met you. I also stopped because I knew that I had to do this

relationship would work out.

Later, I got into a lot of trouble with my parents and my friends began to disapprove because you were "shady" or they thought you were "playing me." I didn't listen to anyone else though because I idealized you. Every time you brought me starbucks at school, took me to golfland, gave me cute gifts—those were the things that reassured me that you did care. Despite all the rumors about you being a "good liar," I stood by your side. Even when people started telling me that you and Tinkerbelle were going out again, I refused to believe it because you always told me that you were really honest and would never cheat on anyone. I absorbed the information like a sponge and forced myself to ignore the people telling me these things. I liked you enough to give you your freedom and let you party with other girls and hangout with your ex because I trusted you. Did you ever think that I was worried about it? That maybe it bothered me that you were out doing these things? What the f\*\*\* were you doing when I was at home waiting for you to come home and talk to me?

My worries became truth when one day I called Tinkerbelle because I heard she serenaded you on Valentine's Day and everything was just so surreal. She told me everything from the very beginning. You never ended your relationship with her. You fed me empty promises and lies one after another. Everything I built up just came crashing down and I did not know how to react to this information. While you were going out with me, she was also your girlfriend? You lied to me. You told me to trust you; to believe you. You even got mad at me when I gave you even the slightest doubt. What did I do to deserve this? Have I not always tried to be there for you? To comfort you when you were down and stay loyal to you and only you? I couldn't help but scream and cry as the adrenaline and shock stunned my body. I just can't believe how I invested so much time and effort into this relationship, f\*\*\*ed up my friendships, f\*\*\*ed up my relationship with my parents, and this sort of thing happens. You are truly heartless. But you know what, if you're dumb enough to walk away from me, then I better be f\*\*\*ing smart enough to let your sorry ass go.

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I am a seventeen year old girl and I have never been on a date. Not that I ever wanted to. Personally, I wasn't actually attracted to men until around 7th grade. That was an interesting time. I don't even know if it was attraction until 8th...but there was this one guy. It was a bit strange, considering we got to be good friends and I was only attracted to him. Sometimes love works like that. You don't want to date, hook up, or get to know them. It's just raw attraction, and it really sucks. Especially during the school year when you have your life to worry about.

Oh yeah, and around 10th grade I started becoming attracted to women. That was interesting as well. I didn't understand it at first. I was familiar with the GSA at my school, but even after I attended a meet, I didn't feel like I had to SHOW my sexuality off. It was just a part of me, no more important than the color of my skin (at the moment anyways). Sure, if I wanted to date a girl, I would have to sort of make sure they knew that one, I was a woman, and two, that she was into girls.

Anyways, dating in my opinion seems overrated, mostly because my ideal man (or woman) is my very best friend. Wouldn't you spend most of the time hanging out together

anyways? Sure, going to prom wouldn't hurt...but dating? Can't you just DO stuff together?

Now that I think about it though, dating would be quite lovely in the right setting. And I guess you could count 'doing stuff together' (GET BACK PERVS D:<) as dating in some instances.

But alas, inexperience blinds me in this department. I can never really imagine myself dating seriously, but I guess it's a future possibility. I'm not opposed to it; it just seems sort of...inefficient. Gosh, that's a workaholic talking, HAHA. Ending up with a girl seems a little out of the realistic spectrum for me though, with my parents being a little homophobic. Not that I'm discriminatory at all; I just love my parents. A lot. For my parents, that would just confuse and potentially anger them, and I don't want to have a sour ending to my senior year. Especially not with anyone in my family. I can't help but drop hints though. Having my parents take political quizzes, and slipping little gay marriage questions. It's just the optimist in me. At the moment though, I really don't see the point of coming out to them until I have a girl that I really want to be with. I guess the next step after I find her would be dating...

But at the moment, there seems to be a man I want. That simplifies things a little.

Growing up, I was really shy. I grew up wanting to be friends with boys as opposed to girls. I liked the same TV shows, and girly stuff kind of turned me off at the time. But I was a GIRL, and therefore shunned in most occasions. Plus, after you interacted with boys, it kind of submitted you to shunning from girls as well. It wasn't until I met a really good friend in fourth grade that I got a bit of confidence.

This translates into this Verdadera topic because my early childhood has taught me to respect friendship. It's more important to me than any stupid fling, any hot bod walking my way. Sure, I'm attracted to women and men. It can get a little distracting, checking out people TWICE as often. But I live my life no regrets and unbiased to the best of my ability, and I can't really help but do anything else.

This past year, I've gotten closer to him I think. But sometimes it gets really awkward and I get angry at myself. When I do say something, it usually just makes it worse. I don't regret being a shy person, but I wish those hidden shards of extrovert within me would pop up to lessen the tension sometimes. I feel like I'm costing my friendship for this.

I have to admit though, it's not all bad all the time. I bide my time, and occasionally the awkward wall cracks in places and I'm able to have intelligent conversations. It's like a war for me sometimes, but I feel like hey, even if I don't end up with this guy, I learned so much about such an amazing person. Maybe I do really want to go on a date.

I guess it's just a cultural thing though. Dating, hook up, engaging, marriage, kids, work, (divorcethenrinseandrepeat), retirement. Maybe I won't follow the traditional path, maybe I will.

Right now in my life though, I can satisfy myself with cheesy chick flicks and girl time and the occasional ogling of attractive specimen (HEY I'm not ashamed!). I want to make a contribution to society. It might not end the way I want it, but who says that I have to be the Cinderella. I want to be active. I'll take my small steps towards the man of my dreams, who ACTUALLY finally exists!

And maybe dating is on the way...

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*"They spoil every romance by trying to make it last forever."*  
~ Oscar Wilde

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I have a crush. On an absolutely gorgeous Vietnamese girl. She's beautiful, and she's also a great person. I've had other crushes, on white girls and asian girls, in the past. But there's just one problem: I'm Indian.

Societal expectations, if you will, dictate a lot about any dating that could happen. My dad has explained to me about Indian culture, and can't be ignored. It was such a hassle to get permission to go to prom (with an Asian girl) because even that is somewhat out-of-bounds for the culture. My aunt often jokingly asks if I have a girlfriend, but I know very well that it can't happen. I have to suppress my feelings, even as others around me get into great, but sometimes bad, relationships. With this suppression, I can't really flirt. It's not natural to me. I'm friends with girls, but I've never flirted or tried to take it to another level, aka a relationship.

I know I'll be married in about 10 years through a somewhat assisted/arranged marriage. That's just how things are going to go down, and I understand that and have accepted it for the most part.

But it still makes me think, when I see other Indian guys have multiple girl friends. That is not something that is supposed to happen in the Indian community, but I admire the courage to step out and make the move. I wish I had the internal fortitude to do that, but I succumb to expectations. Maybe I'm just weak for not pushing the system, for not trying to be my own person. I really don't know what to think sometimes.

Since no one can ever know I'm dating, would a fling work? I don't think it would ever happen. If I got caught, there would be horrible consequences. Plus, my values would stop me from doing something like that before it even got started.

In reality, I don't really have that many connections with girls. I can't flirt, and I don't talk to them too often. I can't maintain small talk, and I can't get that cool swagger to make them like me. I don't have the confidence. I look at other guys and wonder, what do they have that makes them so good with girls? How do they do it? All I know is that I am missing that special ingredient.

Many guys have no fear of talking about their thoughts on certain girls, but that's just not me. I'm afraid to tell any girl that I like her, or even tell anyone else that I like someone. Last time I told someone, word spread around, and I was scarred for life by all the teasing that resulted. I can't tell anyone about my crush, except for what I am writing now.

All of this has made me scared of dating. I fear the image I give off. Am I attractive? Am I ugly? I don't have too much confidence in my looks. Sometimes I think girls are looking at me, but I can never be sure. Sometimes I wish I could be great looking and have girls all over me, but then I realize there are many drawbacks to that position.

All I really want is just a moment. Maybe one kiss. One slow dance with her. I can hope, but who knows what the future holds.

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During the summer, I started liking this girl in one of my classes. Unfortunately, by the time I realized it, I was about to leave to go abroad. I decided it was now or never so I decided to ask her out to the movies. To my dismay, she was sick the next day in class so I had to ask her the day after (which was the day I was leaving Cupertino). She said yes and I was really excited.

During my travels, we chatted online for a good 2 hrs every day for about a week and a half. Then suddenly, she stopped talking to me. Confused as ever, I started leaving her messages, texting her, and I even told someone else in class to give her a message. None of these worked apparently.

The date was scheduled when I got back from my trip so I thought she must have been busy. Then she told me she WAS too busy to go out with me in the summer. Also, because of her tennis season, SAT, and junior year she said she wouldn't have time to go out with me.

I assumed from this that she didn't really want to go out with me. This would explain why she started ignoring me.

I now conclude that, since I didn't have enough time to let her know that I liked her/talked to her in class she obviously felt awkward about going out with me.

For girls: please just straight up reject a guy if you don't want to or are unsure about going out with him. It saves trouble later on.

For guys: make sure the girl is your friend somewhat before you ask her out. Give hints/flirt as well.

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*"O for the gentleness of old Romance, the simple planning of a minstrel's song!"~ John Keats*

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Dating...it is an interesting world to explore. I never thought I would venture into that world but I did, last year, during my junior year. And to tell you the truth, it caught me by surprise. It was during band, and this guy walked up to me and just started talking. I really didn't care about him, because 1) I didn't know he existed and 2) I didn't want to deal with anything more than I needed to during my junior year. So I let it go. But he slowly unraveled me from the inside. He was the one who lent me a hand when I fell down or to place a guiding light when things got tough. I remember, one day we went to the library to work on some homework and it was really cold. We were sitting next to a vent and when he returned [after leaving for a little, which to me was relief, as I thought it was really strange to sit across from a guy I just met] he noticed my lips were purple and he put his sweatshirt on me. He was cold too, but it seemed that he didn't care, because he only cared about me. And that triggered a thought...what does he want and who is he really? So we started talking and well, ultimately, dating. But it's not the usual suspect of oh you are nice and you will give me popularity. He didn't ask me out just because he thought I would be some nice attachment to his status. But rather, he did it because he really loved me. And I couldn't help but say yes. Even if there were consequences involved. And so the year went on, and we hung out and got to know each other really well.

Dating is something I believe nobody should long for everyday. If you like somebody, then ask them because there are only a few chances in your life. I find that the couples that

work out are the most unexpected ones. So don't be afraid. And most importantly, be yourself. No love is truer and deeper than one where you are yourself. People don't fall in love with a mannequin for a reason. They fall for the girl (or the guy) that is unique, that stands out, that shows personality. Don't go fishing for a date to Senior Ball. Don't walk around school hunting down guys (or girls) that you like, because trust me, you will never find anybody. Life's best things come when they are unexpected.

For me, dating has changed my life. I have met so many new people and made a few life long friends. I have learned more about myself and have freed myself from some of the struggles in life. It has been a way for me to escape from my troubles and confide in somebody I can trust. But, sadly, all good things come to an end. They really don't have to though. My boyfriend is no longer at school, so he will no longer be waiting for me after 4th period AP Bio and walking with me up the stairs to Am Lit Honors. But I know that even this year, my senior year, he will be with me all the way through the end. I advise all of you out there who are reading this, don't end a relationship because college [or long distance] get in the way. Don't. Find ways to stay in touch. Find ways to see each other, to talk, to fall in love all over again. Dating is not something that can be bought at a grocery store and can be replaced. If you really want to make the most out of your life, I believe that you need to just believe in yourself and be you. Go out there, walk on campus with a purpose and be yourself. Remember, life's best things come when they are unexpected...

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D A T I N G. whooo! That's a big subject. When high school rolls around, just about everyone has a crush and sometimes, it gets to the point where you want the person to know you like them, you want to know the person's feelings on you, you just want all sorts of things. But when it comes to actually going out with them, and being fully committed with them...do you really want that? I crushed on a guy just about all of last year. I liked him SO much and him even saying my name just made me giggle. I could even imagine kissing him. But then I wondered if I could deal with any of this being public. Firstly, I was super committed to my academics. I couldn't see how I could find time to spend time with this quasi-boyfriend. Secondly, at school, I hung out with a huge, all-girls group. It would be so weird for me to be holding hands with him and having him join our group. It just wouldn't work! Plus...what if I got over him? I could never deal with having to break up with him and hurt his feelings like that. And what if he broke up with me? I could never handle the pain or even embarrassment. And what if I couldn't stand the relationship? If it made me feel too constrained? I'm not a playa, but I've never really liked settling for a guy. Now, don't get me wrong, I don't like cheating on anyone, but I can't see myself just going out with a guy and fully committing myself to him. I haven't liked anyone that much yet. That's probably because I'm still a sophomore, I guess, but still. I just--I just don't know what I want, I guess.

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Talk to me please. I know you're there, and I miss you. I need you. I want you to be with me. I want you by my side in my

arms, all around me. That's how much I love you. Every time I stop thinking, my mind goes back to you. And I want you to love me that way too. I'm so scared of how much I love you. I don't want to be hurt by you, because you won't love me like I love you. Because you might not hug me, or kiss me. Or might not want to love me. And you might not talk to me. But I feel so lonely without you. I'll go insane without you. And this wanting, this needing, is making me scared. I've never loved anyone like this before. I've never felt like I belonged with someone so completely before. Never felt that I didn't need to know every single thing about you before its too ,ate. Never actually been able to see you with me tomorrow. Been able to know that you love me like you do. So I'm scared, but I want you to talk to me. I want us to be together. I love everything about you. All your flaws and imperfections, and I love that you can love me, despite being broken like I am. I'm a half being, and I don't know if you can tell, but you love me anyways, and that makes me happy. I don't want to lose you. I couldn't stand it if I lost you. If you stopped loving me. Because I can't see how I could stop loving you right now. I might, but I know that I'd forgive you. You're special to me. And everything you do, makes me love you even more. So talk to me, so I don't feel lonely, and end up lost in memories.

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*"Hatred paralyzes life; love releases it. Hatred confuses life; love harmonizes it. Hatred darkens life; love illuminates it."*  
~ Martin Luther King Jr.

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Finally it was summer. Last summer I was able to go to a university for a research internship and that was the only thing I was looking for after finals week. The first few days of summer were great. I hung out with my friends but soon everyone started leaving for their own summer jobs and programs. This got me really excited for the six weeks to come. I was a little nervous for the internship but thankfully as soon as I got there I met people. At the internship I really never thought of meeting anyone but it just happened. It all started with my roommate's idea of talking to a guy, R. We became good friends with him, a few other girls, and two other guys. The weeks were going by fast with that big group and we were enjoying ourselves, just going to the movies, bowling and eating together. So three weeks passed. Suddenly my roommate asks if I liked R. I was shocked. Why would she be asking me that?

But back in my head, I did think R was interesting though. He left me Facebook videos almost every day and once he even left me a 20 minute video with another guy. I always laughed nonstop when I watched those. A few days later I found out that R liked me and it was a great feeling. We naturally just started going out to the city together, going shopping, and we even visited colleges nearby. By that point everyone saw us as a couple and people thought that it was definitely a fling, but I saw it going on, maybe even through half of senior year. He even planned on going shopping with me and my friends and visiting. After the camp, I got home and all my friends from camp wanted to webcam but I didn't really want to, with them at least. A few days after, I caught him online. We talked through video chat and I showed him the new computer I made, along

with my miniscule room. It really brought camp memories back again.

We kept in contact for a month after the camp but soon things started falling apart. It seemed like I didn't want the "fling" to work out. I never went online and tried to stay invisible when I did. It was a sad realization that things were ending, but I guess it's supposed to end. Throughout the first two weeks of school, I thought of him less and less. I left occasional videos on his wall but he left so many that it was getting annoying. I never watched it until my friends made me.

I would say this incident that happened at the internship program was a good experience but really flings are supposed to end. It's just a fling.

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Dating this person has been such a life-changing experience for me. It has definitely been one of the hardest experiences, but at the same time, one of the happiest as well. The funny this is that I never planned on going out with this person in the first place. We'd known each other since freshman year when we had art together, but we were never really super close friends. I never thought I'd like this person as more than friends, and the same went for him. So, it's pretty amazing to be where we are right now.

I don't know how it exactly happened, it sorta just did! haha. I kinda even think that fate had a little part in it. Last year, we were in the same class together. Everyday we'd talk and laugh and joke around. I can't believe the teacher never split us up :-0 I'm glad she didn't though because if it weren't for that class, we probably would have never gone out in the first place. That was my most favorite period :] This person would make me laugh EVERY SINGLE DAY. I even remember falling off my chair a couple times from laughing so hard. He still makes me laugh like that :]

We ended up hanging out outside of school too, I remember we'd always watch movies on the weekends or go to the mall, and just laugh and joke around. There wasn't a single time when we hung out and didn't have fun. Everything felt so perfect and unbelievably happy. This lasted for about six months.

Pretty soon, me and him knew everything about each other. We always thought the same things and felt the same way (and still do). We even joke that we're telepathic lol. We had fought only a couple times, and they were only about little things. So we never thought that anything could go wrong. I promised that I would never be the first one to break up with him, and he said the same. Boyy, did we make a dumb promise...

After seven months of going out, we felt the same way every couple feels at that point: scared and insecure. Or at least I did. Maybe being a girl has a lot to do with it, but I'm sure he did too. To make a long story short, the next month or so was unbearable. There'd be an argument almost everyday about nothing, and sometimes about something. Just constant arguing. This was during finals too, so I pretty much felt hopeless and ready to give up. I didn't want to deal with being heartbroken, and he was getting tired of it as well.

But we never really did give up. Yeah we "broke up" a couple times, back and forth, but deep down, we both knew that we liked each other so much. We always did. And that's what

got us through the entire month of fighting, knowing that the other person liked each other the same exact way as they did seven months ago.

Things have definitely changed since then, ya we still fight (too much at times) but we've grown from it all. I can say that I've learned so much from him, such as being patient, understanding, and honest. He's helped me through some of the hardest times, and has been next to me through the funniest. He's seen me cry my eyes out one minute, and then laugh my heart out the next. He has made such an impact on my life, and I admire him every single day. The moral of the story is this: don't ever give up on the one that you truly love, because in the end they will never leave ur side :] I love you with all my heart monkey!

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*"Love is patient, love is kind.*

*It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.*

*It is not rude, it is not self-seeking.*

*It is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.*

*Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth.*

*It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."*

*~ I Corinthians 13:4-8 -Bible*

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Many people frown upon flings and hooking up, as if it is a horrible thing to do. In my opinion, there is time for serious dating in high school. I'm not saying go out and hook up with as many people as you can, I just think that it should be kept casual. I had a boyfriend over the summer and everything was great. We saw each other everyday and were closer than ever. But now that school has started, I haven't seen him or even talked to him for weeks because I barely have time for myself, let alone a boyfriend. He is leaving for college next week and I am worried I won't see him before he goes. In high school, especially Monta Vista there is simply no time for serious relationships. What started out as serious dating with me and my boyfriend is now going to be turned into a summer fling, because I can't handle clubs, school spirit, SAT's, homework, AND a boyfriend. This is why I think that instead of adding another stress to the MV life, just have fun. If you find the "one", good for you, but don't go looking for the perfect person. Just sit back, relax, and do your own thing while you can.

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Before I entered high school, I never had much interest into guys except having cute kid crushes. When I entered, I noticed that guys were actually mature and I got more interested in them. In freshman year there was this one particular junior that attracted me. All I knew about him was his name (being partners in French class, we had to introduce ourselves) and that he was in my class. As we were shy, we never spoke to each other much, but I could tell that I liked him by his aura. A few days after deciding that I liked him, it just so happens that a source said he likes me too. I could also tell with my intuition that he liked me because whenever we saw each other outside of class, he'd always stare at me and have this beautiful smile spread on his face. Still, we never spoke to each other much. I thought of saying hello in the hallways but I was just too shy. A few days later he transferred to another class, and we no longer had a

class together. Yet we'd still stare at each other and smile in the hallways. This continued for half a year, and all the time I had the strongest feeling that he would ask me out sometime or come speak to me. But he never did for whatever x-reasons. Then we found out that we really didn't like each other anymore after those months of just smiling and staring...so whenever we saw each other, we'd just throw glares or mutual stares. From this I realized that I missed out on a great person because I was so stupid to think that the guy would always be the one coming to the girl. I expected too much, and my egregiously high hopes made it impossible for me to have a relationship.

And the worst part is, I let it happen again. As the year passed, so did potential relationships as the guys who liked me as I liked them lost interest because I didn't step it up and ask them. And some relationships never happened because there were some shy guys who liked me yet waited too long to the point that all their staring made me feel annoyed and freaked out.

Currently I feel like this frog on a lily pad that sees all these flies within the vicinity, yet the frog never reaches out and gets the flies. No, it merely waits for the fly to come to it, yet it just flies away...

But I'm no longer letting it fly away from me.

My point is,

Guy or girl, it really matters in no way,

Don't miss out on the opportunity of the day.

Don't let that special someone slide away...

Ask them right now, ask them right away!

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im gay. lesbian. but ive haad boyfriends. yeah ive lied to all of them when i said i loved all of them. its not easy. i watch all the people im attracted too get boyfriends and enjoy their lives. this is somewhat of a problem.i never asked to be like this. people tell me that its a choice. its not. im just attracted to them. i cant choose. i cant help it. i pray that im not like this that ill change that everything will be normal. that i can be happy, because i know a person i love, will always love someone else, who has a penis.

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Hi guys, Let me tell you a true story that happended to me. I never dated any girl, all my life, and I was already finishing my junior year. Its possible, that I'm not an ugly guy (the reason I say this is because girls have told me I was "good looking" or "cute" or "hot"), but at the same time my personality is not fully developed. And plus, I have low self esteem. So imagine this - I give good first impressions, but then, after they get to know me, they don't really like me! Mainly because I'm not an interesting person. I don't normally watch TV like all the other kids in my grade do, so I don't know how to interact in a social way. To top it off, I don't wear any cool clothes. I wear these clothes that don't get attention. The clothes my parents give me. I was with a friend, we decided to go to a dance. I met this really cute cheerleader from another school. She was really friendly, and really nice. I talked, asked her questions, and later that night I had my first kiss. Actually, it wasn't my first, but it was the first in america. she left her number on my phone and said I'd better text her back when she texts me. I get

home. And she texts me. And I ignore it. I remembered, all the other girls I texted, and how it always seem to get boring. I didn't want the same thing to happen. So I didn't answer it. Two days past by. And I still didn't answer it because I was too nervous. I texted her back finally. But she didn't respond. And the next day she didn't respond. I wondered if I did something wrong. Then her relationship status on facebook changes, and she has a boyfriend.

I don't need to tell you how I felt about this situation. You can probably imagine my reaction. Anyways, Hookups are exactly that, and nothing more. Learn now before you make the same mistake of expectation as I did.

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*"Why love if losing hurts so much? We love to know that we are not alone." ~ C.S. Lewis*

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My most recent relationship would never have occurred if it wasn't for school. I only had one class with that girl. Through that one class I had gotten to know her really well and it eventually led to us being in a relationship. In the beginning of the relationship it was very weird for me because, to be honest, it was my first relationship. As we started going places together it became more comfortable for both of us. However the biggest problem came after summer and as we entered high school. She always made it feel as if I wasn't doing anything in the relationship. She would only complain about how I would talk to new girls I met from other schools. It was hypocritical in a way because she would talk to however many new boys she wanted and I didn't say a thing because I didn't mind. On the other hand when I talked to one girl she would get mad at me and complain. No matter how many times I tried to talk to her she wouldn't listen. Eventually we broke up and she didn't want to get back together. About a month later, I was almost over and done with her, but she came back to me and wanted to get back together. Since she was my first, I had strong feelings for her and got back with her. In the one month we weren't together, I had become really close friends with another girl. After we got back together things were almost always great. Some things were even better than before. My girlfriend didn't mind if I talked to any other girls except one. She would get extremely angry if I talked to the girl I had become close friends with. I also picked up several new hobbies that I really enjoyed doing. But she thought that I only started those hobbies so I could get girls. She tried to get me to stop these hobbies. If I ever even talked about those hobbies around her, she would become pissed off and walk away. Besides these two exceptions, things were going great. Then again at the end of the school year she broke up with me once again for a reason I still do not understand. Anyways, for parents, I think they should know about their children's relationships. It can actually be very beneficial for the children and their relationship. The only thing is that the parents shouldn't interfere in the relationships.

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I had my first boyfriend during freshmen year. We were friends from middle school, but came freshmen year, we had no classes together. We joined the same clubs and went to all the same events, and for a while, we had the same closeness from middle

school all over again. Amid the teasing of our friends, we started going out. It didn't last. Maybe we were both too shy, or maybe because neither of us really knew what it meant to be boyfriend-girlfriend. It was the same as our friendship had been, only with more awkwardness. By mutual agreement, we decided to end the awkwardness and just be friends again. It was many weeks before we could return to the way we were before.

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I have contemplated the idea of a relationship many, many times before. I spent many years imagining what my perfect boyfriend would be like before I realized this: I don't really want a relationship. I like the idea of one, but only the romantic notion of it. I'm tired of seeing the drama my friends go through and all the unnecessary trouble. It scares me a little.

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Dating isn't for the weak hearted. It comes with it's own share of problems and insecurities. Why is she talking to HIM, why didn't he call me back, so on and so forth. With such thoughts comes that sense of obligation to take time out for the person and talk to them, spend time with them, and constantly show that you care. Things are even harder when two people are polar opposites. Whoever said opposites attract forgot to mention the road bumps along the way. With clashing schedules, different interests, and disapproving parents, it gets nearly impossible to spend the right amount of time and give deserving attention to someone and make them feel special. Along with all that there's the whole issue of effort. There's no such thing as a one sided relationship, at least not one that lasts very long. Each person has to invest time in the relationship to make sure it sails smoothly. Add school, grades, family, and college into that equation, and you have one bit fat mess of responsibilities to take care of. It takes a pretty high maturity level to be able to handle all of that, and sometimes I wonder if we're at that level just yet. I guess what it comes down to is if the relationship is worth all that chaos and work that comes with.

I don't know about every other relationship in the world, but for me, having someone who makes my bad days good, brings a smile to my face, teaches me new things, and most of all makes every day special simply by being there for me makes it all worth it :]

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*"We can live without religion and meditation, but we cannot survive without human affection." ~ The Dalai Lama*

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Sex.

Making out.

What base have you gone to?

All these are things that we hear in our everyday lives as high school students. This new generation that the media has spawned through many forms of entertainment has changed how we live as a whole. The conservative generations are dust in the wind and now it's all about sex. As ugly or brutal this may sound to your tender ears this is what our generation is labeled as and we are frowned upon for it by the conservatives. Those

that are fathers of daughters I truly feel sorry for. I don't know how they sleep at night with the image with little boys with raging hormones running around with one desire; to steal the innocence of their little angels. In reality though, we are not as much of the jack rabbits as we are thought to be. Sure there are those who do it, but that is usually only after a strong trust and bond is formed through communication and love. Yes, that goey red-ish pink stuff that boils within ones heart. We are not that much different from older generations. There is a strong cohesive bond that is formed before anything happens. I just wanted to clear that up. That stuff is not important though, there is many obstacles one has to go through before two individuals can even form a bond and these obstacles are what haunts many teenage boys much like myself every night. Staying awake at night asking myself, does she like me? Is she interested in me? I don't understand how we live past the age of 17 with all these mental stresses. It is hard enough as it is keeping my head above water in this highly competitive school while these other scholarly kids towering above me, and then on top of that I have lead weights of "girl problems" fastened on my ankles. Then when the girl doesn't like you it becomes a question of why, and then it becomes a self esteem issue. It is a long painful never ending chain that wraps around ones neck and suffocates you until the point where you are blue in the face. This is only a scratch on the surface on the iceberg of high school relationship dramas and such, I didn't even touch up on gossip, flings, betrayals, and all that juicy stuff. But I guess you'll just have to take your ship and run into the ice berg to see for yourself how big and cold high school relationships can really be.

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"Should I wear the black or the grey shirt?", "The Nike or adidas shoes?", "Will she notice and like my style better?". "Should I make that funny comment?", "Talk about how my day was?", "Will I seem too boring or lame if I did?". In some form or another, many teens find themselves asking themselves similar questions. We question our looks and personality and try to change all for the slightest chance that we may increase our attractiveness to another significant person. We choose not to do what suits ourselves but instead, another. Girls choose to wear high heels and walk in uncomfot, and guys choose to sag their pants and walk with...well...waddle with awkwardness. In past relationships, I'd always try to act and dress like someone I wasn't. Even though I may have been initially successful in getting into a relationship through these means, the relationships never lasted very long. Finally, I learned, with the help of my current girlfriend whom I love very much (don't even start on the whole parental "its just puppy love"), that it didn't matter who I tried to act like or dress like. Sooner or later in the relationship, my partner would see through the facade and see who I truly am. I realized that acting like someone you're not is a futile gesture because at the end of the day, when the other person sees who you are and doesn't like it, chances are, you won't be together anymore. My current relationship is comfortable only because we both don't hide ourselves from each other. We don't act for each other but rather, we prefer to be ourselves saying the things we want, and wearing the things we want. I love her for who she is and she loves me for who I am. That is essentially what it takes to discern a true and lasting relationship from one that will ultimately fall apart.

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My friend's life revolves around her boyfriend. And every time he does something stupid and breaks her heart, I'm there for her, which is perfectly okay. It's when they are happy that I'm pushed aside. My job is to basically sit back until I am needed which is ridiculous. Having a boyfriend is fine, but is it really worth centering your whole life on him? I don't think so.

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*"Love is a promise, love is a souvenir, once given never forgotten, never let it disappear." ~John Lennon*

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i've never been in a relationship, and maybe that's why i'm so invested in those of my friends. i follow every development like some people follow soap operas. i squeal at every gift and every note, and feel disappointed at every breakup. and its not even as if I want to have a relationship. well i do but i know that i don't want to deal with the maintenance and the worry. but i'm just so...obsessed?? bout my friends relationships...its wat i feel about dating, i don't want them to get hurt.

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i believe i've been in love once; it's never been the same after that, and i don't think i've ever been the same. i'm not the hook-up/flings kind of gal, and i'm not even sure what constitutes as dating. I only have experiences with actual relationships- so i'm pretty clueless about everything. but there was one person who just seemed right for me at the time, and sometimes i cant help but sit and feel empty because i lost that long time ago. in middle school i thought i knew the meaning of heartbreak and being sad, thinking that love and affection didn't exist. there's always that one significant other that glows in your eyes, and you can't help to gravitate towards that person. i was in a relationship for a little under 2 years, and it was the first and only time i had ever felt something truly special.

i never expected anything out of the relationship initially, but after half a year into it i couldn't imagine myself with anyone else but him. but this was the time i was the most insecure, and it was a time of transition onto high school. after winning class office, i felt i couldn't handle the job and would channel my frustration in sports. i think he knew i was unhappy, and my swinnig moods didn't help our relationship. regardless of the way i treated him, i blindly loved him to the point where it sounds cheesy. we would write notes to each other in our lockers and celebrate most of our anniversaries. near the end of the year, i felt that he was changing. it was good for him, because he had found his passion in something. he found his social niche, and i felt excluded from it; like i was no longer important. i was frustrated at him and the way he was changing, but it was conflicting to be so proud of him. i was proud of him for accomplishing so much, but i was upset that it separated me from him.

we spent one summer fighting about meager things, and i think i instigated most of them. i found more and more differences between each other; my life revolved around rules and organization, while he preferred the opposite. it was hard to associate with that, and i would be upset because of it. i think i

acted more miserly than anything else.

it seemed to be the perfect relationship for at least a good year, but i think it went downhill from there. when we broke up for good, he had already found someone else. i know that he's happy, and i regret that i caused him so much unhappiness for such a long time. sometimes i sit and think about all the things i did wrong, and what i would do if i had one more chance to do it all over again. since then, none of my relationships have ever worked out, and at the end of the day i conclude with shame and regret for what and who i am. it is one of the hardest things to love someone and to let it go for the better, and i cannot predict what the future will be. sometimes i feel that it should never happen again, and other times i cannot help but reminisce about the days when it seemed perfect. its especially hard to cope, since not many of my friends can relate to these problems and how to fully get over that one person. some say that you never really forget that one person, and a lot of times i wish it were easy to just erase all emotions. when i think about him i don't know what to think- anger, frustration, regret but the moment he comes to talk to me my heart melts again.

i heard the best remedy is to disassociate from him entirely, and i'm pretty sure that's the best remedy too. but this is my second year working with him, which i think makes it unprofessional and possibly detrimental to the student body if i don't communicate with him.

sometimes i can't help but cry about these conflicting feelings of what a mistake i made and why it's been 3 years and i still can't be the same anymore.

---

I watched numbly as the paper banner unfurled slowly and rather less impressively than it was meant to, with taped edges getting caught and parts of the message getting obscured as it flapped in the wind. One of the die-cut letters peeled off, leaving behind the message: HOME COMING? The banner was suspended by a sagging cluster of balloons, which was currently entangled in the lemon tree that stood next to my doorway.

The boy who stood next to the door was looking sweaty in a suit jacket and tie, an ensemble that clashed magnificently with his jeans. His face was very red, he pinched his lips and seemed unwilling to look at me in the face as I read the message. I was new to the school - I recognized him in a vague way as being in one of my classes. I also realized, to some horror, that I didn't remember his name.

"Oh. You're in my-"

"Math."

"Ah. Yes."

The silence lengthened. Somewhere in the all-consuming haze of my humiliation, I felt a little shame. It was a good idea. It was a big, time-consuming looking banner. If I had actually liked him, it would have been cute, albeit somewhat canned. But...still. At that moment, I couldn't recall a single time I had exchanged more than two words with him, apart from "Hi. My name is \_\_\_\_\_."

"So."

More silence. I hate awkward silences. I found myself hoping futilely that something, anything would happen to save us both the embarrassment; that the lemon tree would suddenly topple over that my neighbor's kid would kick his annoying nerf football over the fence like he usually did.

".....do you have plans for homecoming?"

"I..." I stumbled, and the next phrase came out in a rush. "I would but I'm not going to be in town -"

I reflected guiltily that I had planned to go to the dance with a couple friends, and we had all planned to go to a swanky restaurant afterwards. Homecoming plans? What Homecoming plans?

"I was actually planning on going and I really would but I'm just not going to be home hahahaha -"

For some reason, whenever I retell this story, people treat me like I'm a horrible person. Which makes me think - Why would it reflect badly on me? Should I have said yes, like so many girls who sigh and acquiesce because they'd "feel bad" if they said no? People suggest that I should have gone with him, that I should have given him a chance, to which I think - would it be selfish of me to worry because I don't want to risk spending the whole night hiding in the ladies' room because he's actually a creep or we don't get along?

Apparently I wasn't tactful enough. I was supposed to say something like: I'm sure you're a nice person and I'm not being open enough or I'm not brave enough or I'm just not giving you a chance. Sure.

But...sorry. Do I even know you?

---

*"Friendship marks a life even more deeply than love. Love risks degenerating into obsession, friendship is never anything but sharing." ~ Elie Wiesel*

---

I always believed relationships desperately needed a contract. Signed and dated by the users, confessing their true feelings on paper and agreeing to commit to each other no matter the costs. Reassuring one another that yes, you are indeed my so called "boy/girl friend", and yes, you can reach out your hand to hold mine. Warning of the fine boundaries, such as never asking what's wrong while the female is on the verge on tears, because you're supposed to know what's wrong you dummy. Never calling thirty times a night just to say hi if the guy has the biggest test of his life tomorrow. Agreeing to be excited whenever the other gets them gifts, whether you wanted them or not. Reminding ourselves that if this is going to last, you will have to know me so well it'll hurt at times. Don't ever brag to your friends so much that the other one hears about it, don't act needy when other people are around. Never look, always expect the worst and be surprised when he doesn't break up with you the next day. Tell him you woke up just for him this morning, ask for a hug to get you through the day. Those are your rights, as of now, when you have entered the world of "in a relationship" on Facebook. Once the contract is done, cupid will read it over, telling you over his arrow to sign here, initial there. Now kiss and lets get this thing going!- he yells, as the happy couple walks hand in hand out of his office. If only relationships were as easy as that. I wished that my past relationships were that secure, that straight-forward, that comfortable so that maybe it wouldn't have ended so awkwardly.

Then again, there's the thrill. The excitement of not knowing the boundaries, the illusions of thinking he's someone you can truly depend on. The guessing of the right and the wrong, the sleepless nights with his picture in your dreams. I'm not sure

anyone would give all that adventure we call a relationship up for security. I won't lie, I don't think I would, either. Because once you feel it for the first time, you know why everyone has to go through those miserable couple of pimply teenage years. To test the limits, to feel the thrill. To know that whenever one is over, there is hope, and another one is just around the corner, waiting, with a flower in one hand and maybe, a contract in the other.

---

I've had a total of three relationships, but none of them I considered real. They always start out the same, shy friendships turn into playful ones, and before I realize it I'm on a date, or a dance, or invited to a party. But none of them ever felt right, and all of them ended early. I'm a big believer in the "first kiss tells all," which always ruins my relationships. My first boyfriend, I kissed him at the first dance and felt nothing at all. The second one, a theatre, the third, I don't even remember. It confused me and after that, none of our dates felt sweet after that and pretty soon I always end it without an explanation, just the whole "it's not you, it's me" speech. I've had three boyfriends, but I'm still waiting for a real one, that spine-tingling sparks flying real first kiss

---

*"Gravitation is not responsible for people falling in love."*  
~Albert Einstein

---

For my lovely Best Friend,

My love story isn't very "normal", mainly cause I'm talking about a different kind of love. I'm not talking about my love for a girlfriend or a friend. I'm talking about my love for a best friend.

Like everything else in life, I guess it began normally. But then things change. For better or for worse, I don't really know. But for the past few years, I've been convinced that things changed for the better good. How I got here...well, I'll just say that it was lovely in some ways and painful in others.

~

It started out with her just being an acquaintance in 6th grade. You know, just another girl, another friend, another person in 4 of my 6 classes. I didn't feel anything for her back then because I liked this other girl. But like I said before, things happen and things change.

New beginnings start with something else's end, and that end happened to come in 7th grade from a relationship I had just been in. To be honest, I was left in a wreck. I could've taken the end of everything like a man and just dealt with it all by myself, but...I couldn't. And that's why I began to turn to her, that person, that friend, that girl in four of my six classes.

And you know, we just talked about everything. She knew I was pretty heartbroken so she spent probably a month or so helping me out. We'd talk about everything that went wrong...all the confusion...all the sadness. And each time I talked to her, I felt like more and more like a prince or something because she cared so much for me. I felt so comfortable telling her all about my troubles and secrets because I knew from the very first second I talked to her that I could trust her.

And it was just so queer and mind-boggling because it was all of that negative stuff that finally brought us together. It was what made our friendship all the more perfect.

So then I began to have feelings for her. For the first time, I felt like someone really cared about me. Someone really gave a damn about my life. So that's why I decided to ask her for a dance that year in 7th grade. But it never really ended up being what most of us call a "dance". Haha. It was more like hugging-while-spinning-in-circles-with-everybody-looking-at-us-weirdly.

But it was funny. It made me laugh. I guess it made her laugh too. I don't even remember. All that I really remember was her asking me in this doubtful tone, "Do you really like me?"

And I said back to her shyly, "Yeah."

That's all I remember of that great night...

That's how long ago it was.

~

But then I started to get distracted through the rest of middle school. I started taking my eyes off of her and taking her for granted and then? Well, let's just say that I started liking other girls and...things didn't end up that well either. In fact, everything crashed and burned for me just like that. And like before, I tried so hard to take everything like a man and deal with it alone, yet it never really worked out.

What did work out was turning to the girl I'd met in 6th grade, the girl who used to be in 4 of my 6 classes – the girl who had been my best friend for the past year or so.

I've always wondered why turning to her had always worked out perfectly. And suddenly, I know why now. You see, it worked because most girls come and go by so quickly that you'll never figure out why they came by in the first place. And then you'll spend the next month or so wondering why you let them come by, why you stayed with them, and why they left. And that can go on and on for weeks and weeks and you'll never feel better until, that is, you go back to the one person who's always been there this entire time, cheering you on from the sidelines whether she wants to or not. Cause she's the only one who really, truly cares. Cause she's the one who's going to stand by your side through everything...absolutely everything. She'll ease your pain and heal your wounds just by talking to you. She'll wipe the tears off your face just by joking around. And hell, she'll even give you hugs when it's your birthday.

Who else in the whole world does that? Who else in the world stays in your life and leaves a mark on your heart?

~

So things were getting better, but then they changed again, plunging me into the place I am now. It's high school, and we all get busy. But I never thought that everything would come down to this.

She's a busy person. She's busy all the time. She does sports, she does leadership stuff, she does pretty much everything there is to do in this world (except sleep). And I went through my entire freshman year denying just that and thinking that everything would be okay in the end...that maybe we'd be able to keep in touch despite the crazy world around us.

I thought wrong. I mean...we still talked every now and then and it was great! We might see each other randomly at lunch, between classes, after school, at a volleyball game, and what

not...but it never really was the same. I have no idea what was different, but it definitely wasn't the same. And I don't blame her. She has her priorities...  
...unfortunately.

But you know, maybe that's a good thing. Maybe it's cause of her busy life that I'm starting to have feelings for her again. Why? Cause you don't know what you got until it's gone.

It's really only taken one year's worth of rubbish, drama, and problems to make me realize that I've gone through way too many things without her, that I need her more than anything else in this world to be happy, and that nothing saddens me more than not being able to talk to her everyday about nothing.

I miss what I love about her. And I love what I miss about her.

~

Just yesterday, we finally got to catch up on everything. We talked for maybe an hour so, and right before she went to bed, you know what she said to me?

"I'm glad we finally got to talk."

And I said back to her, "FINALLY! Hahaha."

But really, I meant to say this:

"I'm really glad too...because I can't keep going on like this without you. It's been pretty hard going through the past year without my best friend to lean on. It's been pretty hard not being able to see you everyday and talk to you, and it's been pretty hard just getting by without you because you're just such a lovely person...and I really miss you."

With much love,

The One and only Me, Semper Fi.

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*"When the power of love overcomes the love of power the world will know peace."~ Jimi Hendrix*

---

It's kind of a funny story. I was thirteen years old, and had been dreading my family's second trip to Hawaii. Everywhere I turned, there were gorgeous girls in bikinis. The feeling of jealousy overwhelmed me. I envied those long-legged beauties, walking in the sand with their heads held up high. Those were the girls that the guys looked at. I just had to face the fact that I'd never be one of them.

We'd been in Oahu for two days, and both of those days, I couldn't help but feel sorry for myself. I wouldn't even bother looking at a cute guy, because I knew that there was no chance that they'd notice me at all. On this particular day, we woke up early to get breakfast at a restaurant nearby, then walked back to our hotel. The day before, my mom had reserved one of the cabanas near the pool, so I already knew my plans for the day. I would lie down, read Prep, avoid looking at all the beautiful people around me, and possibly swim. As I was reading, I saw this gorgeous guy get out of the pool. I stopped, looked, and then laughed. He was out of my league. I went back to reading my book. I saw another cute guy get into the pool with a girl who looked like his younger sister. I'd thought he looked at me a couple of times, but I'd assumed it was just another one of my illusions that a boy was actually checking me out. I decided it was too hot to keep reading so I hopped up and hurriedly got into the pool so that no one noticed my chubby legs. I talked to

my little brother for a bit, and all of the sudden the cute guy I'd seen earlier was swimming towards us. I turned around, but all of the sudden I heard "Hey, you two want to play a game?"

From there on, the cute guy, whose name was Brett, continued to talk to me. I even started to think he was flirting with me. This was new to me. To my surprise, he asked me if I wanted to go to the beach, and I said yes. The whole rest of the day, Brett and I talked about everything. The conversations between us never died. Awkward silences were unheard of with Brett. I'd never really swam out into the ocean before, but he was just so reassuring. I felt safe with him, even though I'd known him for only a few hours. He took my hand, and we ran to the arcade across the street from our hotel. His arm was around me almost the entire time, and he'd tell me how pretty I was. I couldn't believe it. Out of all the girls in Hawaii, why would he choose me? It felt unreal, as if it was all a dream. I know that to a high school girl, things like holding hands and compliments aren't that big of a deal, but to a 7th grader, it's like you're on top of the world. He text messaged me the whole night, and since I was leaving for Maui the next day, we decided to meet once more. We walked around the hotel, we shared a shaved ice, we laughed at the old man in the gold Speedo, walked along the beach smiling, and talked about how we'd miss each other when we went our separate ways. I had to leave around 10 in the morning, so he took the elevator with me to my room. The both of us stood outside the elevator, not knowing what to say, really. He kissed my cheek. I hugged him. He told me how much he'd miss me and that he'd never forget me. I told him the same thing. All of the sudden, his lips were on mine. We smiled, and said our goodbyes. He didn't know this, but that was my first kiss. I knew I'd never forget him. He also didn't know that once I was inside the hotel room, I screamed. For the rest of the week, that smile never left my face. Every time I got a text from him, my face lit up. I still consider those to be the two best days of my life. After that, I had real confidence. I felt like you didn't have to look like a supermodel to get a guy to like you. All I really did was just be myself, and in reality, that's all it takes. I didn't throw myself at him or act like a tease to make him think I was "hot". I presented myself the way I was; a little odd, easygoing, and willing to have fun. I was just me.

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*"At the touch of love, everyone becomes a poet."~Plato*

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### The Boy Who Changed My Life

I had these ideals and set ideas from my childhood. I looked both ways at least three times before I crossed the street. I was inside before it got anywhere close to dark. All families were high functional, happy, and had little to no problems. All neighborhoods were safe and gangs were only present in the ghettos of New York City. I was sheltered but I didn't know it. I had the same clothes as everyone else and the same music. I was typical, and I was fine with it.

I'd seen him around before, and didn't think much of him other than my silent approval of his outfits and omnipresent accessory that doubled as his passion. He started talking to me, and it wasn't for any specific reason. We were friends, and then we weren't. After our short termed relationship, I never knew

what we were anymore. I spent the next few months vying for approval and looking over at him during class. I watched from the outside as he shook up my friendships and knew nothing of our weird friendship.

Finally, we got it together again. After many sticky situations, we were together again. We were the two musketeers, the couple that no one thought would last. After sticking out a few months, people believed it. We had something that I can only describe as a bubble or a glow of happiness. I knew people were watching us together. We were an exclusive club and we were the only members.

After months of late nights at each others houses, amazingly picked out birthday and Christmas presents, late night walks, and a countless number of perfect kisses and hugs, we became inseparable. I became accustomed to going with him and his friends on their weekend escapades. I was quiet when not spoken to, and exclusive when it was our time to bring back our exclusive relationship. I cried to him when I was upset, and he listened.

We were best friends, we were loved, we were happy. I knew him like the back of my hand and he could complete my sentences before I even started them. I knew there were girls—other girls. I knew that people had their eyes on him, and I knew he was dedicated or at least I thought he was dedicated. I hated myself for not dropping him the second I knew I hadn't been the only girl the whole time, but I didn't.

We were still okay after the dishonesty, but more and more arguments started to come up. My perfect world of him being my first kiss, my last kiss, and every kiss in between was becoming deflated. I didn't look both ways before I crossed the street. The on-screen kisses didn't make a knot of longing in my stomach anymore, but reminded me that I would see him in an hour. I learned that people were wrongly accused of crimes they

didn't commit and politicians could lie and be just as deceitful as prisoners. It wasn't just a decrease in morals that occurred, though. I learned that the world you learn about in your childhood isn't the world that's really out there. People steal your stuff out of your backpack and people flunk out of school because of their addiction to heroin. Christopher Columbus didn't even discover North America.

The arguments became too numerous and he decided he couldn't lie to me anymore. He left me. I lacked my best friend and my boyfriend. The next few months were a long string of depression, anxiousness and anger. He'd moved on with someone else but still came back for more. I always gave him what he wanted because I thought we'd fix it somehow. We never did. The situation got messier and messier.

Despite the closeness I have with my friends who were supportive of me during my months of depression and my knowledge of the real world, I am now filled with skepticism and trust issues. I still think about him and he still comes around sometimes, but I'm growing stronger in being myself again.

Even though I spent days and nights crying over him, I wouldn't take back the memories I have of our movie nights and inside jokes. I have a box with all the stuff I have from the time we spent together. It was enough to give me a springboard for the rest of my life. I now know the career I want to pursue and why. I now know how to help my daughter when she has her own bad boy. Although he left me all alone and feeling like there was nowhere to turn for a long time, someday he'll get it together and meet a girl who changes his life. I'll never forget him, the good times or the bad times. I can't really explain why I can't make myself blame him for all the hurt he put me through, but I know I won't be walking through any more rainstorms for a boy who leaves me like he did.

## Dating, Flings, Hookups, Etc.

By Holly Osment, Marriage and Family therapist

Figuring out where the lines are between dating, friends-with-benefits, hookups, flings, etc. can sometimes be hard to figure out. There are always people who think it's really clear which one is going on, others who think it's one thing but it's really another... or want so badly for it to be something else that they convince themselves that's what's going on, even if it isn't... or think they know what they want but then change their minds... etc, etc, etc.

No one can even agree fully on the definitions, but let's try. Dating – usually agreed to be a committed relationship... that one is the easiest to define perhaps. Fling – a string of dates or time spent together that is an emotional connection, but never fully a committed relationship. Sometimes you only know it's a fling afterwards, when things fade before they become more serious. Hookup – physically getting together, with a big range of definition: from kissing/making out all the way up to sex, but it can be anywhere in that range. These are the definitions most often agreed upon but there's a lot of variation, which makes things even more confusing than they already are!

I think this will always be true, no matter how frustrating or painful or annoying it is. I wish I could describe a process where suddenly it's clear to everyone. Unfortunately life just refuses to be that simple. So what are you supposed to do?

Relationships are sticky. More-than-just-friends relationships are stickier. They are also about emotional risk. You take a risk to say, "Let's be boyfriend/girlfriend," not knowing if you'll be rejected or things will go well or badly. You take a risk to hook up with someone, not knowing what feelings or consequences might happen afterwards. It's a risk to be honest with someone and show them how you feel. It can be hard to let someone in and let them see who you are when you don't always know who you are! It can be hard to figure someone else out when so often we can't figure out ourselves. But – we can try to be decent. And respectful. To ourselves, to others we are in relationship with. Or... we can choose to *not* make the effort to be decent. The choice is always yours, and at any given moment you can make a choice. But it is a choice either way; it doesn't "just happen."

Relationships begin and relationships end (whether dating or fling or whatever it is), and you can't always control what happens. But what you can control is how you act. How you treat others, and – just as important – how you treat yourself. Because how you act is what stays when the dust has settled.

This is what I would say to you: Take care of yourself. Listen closely to what you want and be honest. Are you being yourself, instead of trying to be someone else? Are you being respectful of the other person's feelings? Are you being respectful of yourself? And when you are in the painful, heartbreaking place of a relationship ending, I hope you take care of yourself some more. Take time to heal, don't beat yourself up and don't harm yourself. I've never seen that make anything better. Be kind to yourself, or at least try.

In the rush of a new relationship or attraction, it's easy to be generous with your good and positive actions. But what about when things get complicated? When you start to lose interest... when you become attracted to someone else... when you want to end things... Then somehow it can be easier to be careless, deceitful, rude, avoidant. The challenge, then, is to make the effort to *not* be those ways. Maybe that's the price of connecting with another person. Wouldn't that be nice if that were the rule? Can we pass a law and make it so? Well no, but you could make it the rule for you.

You can't escape pain in relationships no matter how you act. Sometimes you get hurt, and sometimes someone else hurts you, even when we try to act in all those good, decent, respectful ways. You still can't escape the pain sometimes. With love comes pain because you let someone matter, and all we can do is try to tip the balance so that love is worth it! All we can do (and it's no small thing) is try to act with integrity from the beginning all the way to the end. It's easy to say and not always so easy to do. But in the roller coaster of life-in-relationship-to-others, it's what you can fall back on; it's what's in your control. And when life seems like it's spinning chaotically all around you, that's something to hold onto. Tightly.

And what about when you want to be in a relationship but aren't? Maybe you like someone but the feelings aren't mutual. Maybe you're afraid of the pain you've seen others go through, and so you're caught in the middle – unsure of what you want, hesitant but feeling lonely. Maybe you just like the idea of being with someone even if there's no one you are longing for particularly. All these states are painful too. Sometimes it's easy to focus on self-criticism, blaming yourself

and thinking of all that is supposedly wrong with you. This adds pain on top of pain and makes things worse. You are the only one you'll *always* be with, so it's worth it to treat yourself well. So I urge you to soothe yourself through loneliness, console yourself through disappointment, make peace with where you are as best you can as you prepare for what mysteries lie ahead.

**To Parents:**

There can be a lot of reactions to seeing your teen join the dating world, and many of them can be negative. Disapproval. Worry. Concern. Anger... to name a few. You may or may not have had the dating experiences that teens today at Monta Vista are facing, and you may or may not agree with the choices many teens are making (maybe even your own teen). It's a confusing time for teens, but also for parents!

Some parents find it hard to understand the impact these relationships can have on teens. Some are dismissive of their teen's experience. Any type of romantic attraction or relationship can come with strong and intense feelings that are very real, and this is true for your teen. What types of feelings and experiences? Passion. Longing. Delirious joy. Exhilaration. Devastation. Confusion. Emotional intoxication. Aching betrayal. Vulnerability. Big, sweeping, grand emotions that overwhelm your teen, and can be experienced as life-changing. Certainly nothing to be too dismissive about!

The problem here is that when parents react with only negatives, this can weaken your relationship with your teen. You do not need to approve, you may feel legitimately upset, and that's okay. Your teen needs to know your values, expectations, standards. The problem comes when parents are not willing to respect their teens' emotional experience and acknowledge the reality of the intense feelings. It's a problem because it hurts your relationship. Your teen cannot come to you for advice or sharing if they do not feel respected, and this hurts your relationship. Your teen may feel belittled when you don't understand, and feeling belittled by parents is a very painful experience... and it hurts your relationship.

If you can find ways to share your reactions while also, *at the same time*, being willing to respectfully acknowledge the seriousness your teen's emotional experience (and maybe even listen to it), your relationship will not suffer. Respecting your teen is not the same as agreeing with your teen, and your teen needs to know when you don't agree. But the best way for all of you to survive this turbulent time of adolescence is to do what you can on your end as a parent to keep the relationship strong and intact.

\* \* \* \* \*

Holly Osment is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in private practice in Los Gatos. She specializes in working with teenage girls, and also offers parent consultations and family sessions addressing the stressful adolescent years. She can be reached at: [hollyosment@gmail.com](mailto:hollyosment@gmail.com), 408-550-5101, 800 Pollard Road, Suite B207, Los Gatos 95032.

## Resources from the Verdadera Staff

- **Dating and relationship advice for teenagers**

[http://teenadvice.about.com/od/datingrelationships/Dating\\_Relationships.htm](http://teenadvice.about.com/od/datingrelationships/Dating_Relationships.htm)

Articles written for teens from anything about how to cope with unrequited love to how to survive your first fight with your boyfriend or girlfriend

- **Promoting healthy teen relationships**

<http://www.teenrelationships.org/about>

This is a teen relationship website and forum created by Community Overcoming Relationship Abuse's Teen Outreach Program. It supports healthy teenage relationships by helping to identify relationship abuse and also teaching relationship tools.

- **Teen Love: On Relationships, A Book for Teenagers**

by Kimberly Kirberger

Kimberly receives hundreds of letters a week from teens addressing every possible concern - love, sex, drugs, parental problems, cliques, fitting in - and through this communication, Kimberly has developed an empathy that teens throughout the world sense from her work on Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul.

## Upcoming Issues and Submission Deadlines

| <u>Issue</u>           | <u>Deadline</u>                         |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Marijuana              | 6pm, Saturday, October 3 <sup>rd</sup>  |
| Depression and Sadness | 6pm, Saturday, October 31 <sup>st</sup> |
| Money                  | 6pm, Saturday, January 2 <sup>nd</sup>  |

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Email Verdadera ([verdadera.entries@gmail.com](mailto:verdadera.entries@gmail.com)) with:

- 1) Student and parents' full name.
- 2) Postal address
- 3) Student and parents' emails.

And Voila! You've helped save a small part of the earth! We appreciate you for doing so.

## Ways to Submit

1. Visit us at [www.verdadera.org](http://www.verdadera.org). You can submit stories here, learn more about Verdadera, and meet staff members.
2. Stories can be turned in to **any staff member** – hardcopies or emails, anything is welcomed. Staff members are also there to help answer your questions about issues, topics, anything.
3. Email it to [verdadera.entries@gmail.com](mailto:verdadera.entries@gmail.com)



## Dating, Flings, Hookups, Etc.

October 2009

*Verdadera is a publication created by and for Monta Vista students for the purpose of instigating communication concerning the reality of high school within the community. Each month, an issue on a topic relevant to the lives of our students is sent home for reading by both parents and students. While we do not edit submissions, we aim to publish personal experiences, not opinion articles. Please utilize all the resources present and feel free to email comments and feedback.*

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