



Sadness & Depression

December 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 while reading:

- *121 million people worldwide suffer from depression.*
- *In 90 percent of suicide cases, there is some underlying psychiatric disorder, with depression being by far the most common. It is the leading condition in half the suicides of adolescent boys and 70 percent of girls.*
- *Many depressed individuals never show symptoms.*
- *Each year, some 400,000 high school students in the United States make suicide attempts requiring medical attention, coming to an average of 1,000 attempts a day nationwide, every day of the year.*

Student Submissions

I have bi-polar disorder, and so I often feel random bouts of depression. Not the depression where people feel that cutting themselves feels good, no, the kind where all one does is feels down and has suicidal thoughts. That, coupled with the stress my parents exert on me, has driven me to many points of insanity before. Oftentimes I feel as if my death would have no significance on the lives of anyone around me. Sure, it would be shocking, but only because I'm young, and it's shocking when young people die. I contemplate how death must feel, to live in nothingness, not thinking at all, or is it just the opposite, a never-ending dream? Is there even an afterlife? What if this is the only life I have, and it sucks to be in it? Maybe I really should just end it.

"Depression is the inability to construct a future."

~ Rollo May

There was a time when I'd say I was depressed. It started when my girlfriend dumped me. My grades then fell a bit and it kinda spiraled into a sad, sad time. I didn't see any value in continuing to go on through Monta Vista. I ditched a couple of days while I just sat around and pondered my sad life. My grades dropped even more and then my parents got on my case. We got into a lot of arguments during this time. I still hung out with my friends, except it was different. I kinda stood around in the corner while they had fun. I couldn't at all connect with them. How I got out of my depression was all mental. I started to think "It can't get worse than this." Well I was right, and it didn't. Every day looked a little better, as I started to realize this. I forced myself to think I was happy. At first it didn't work, but as I compared myself to how much worse I could be, I started to see the brighter side of life. After about two months of this, I was finally normal again.

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"A lot of what passes for depression these days is nothing more than a body saying that it needs work."

~ Geoffrey Norman  
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SADNESS. DEPRESSION.

It's like falling down a hole
That's missing a bottom.

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Am I depressed? Not really. But I feel like I am sometimes. Because of my friends problems, my own problems, stress, academic pressure... everything that makes me want to break down and curl up into a ball and sleep and cry and just hide away from the world forever. But I don't want to die or anything. just hide. and never come back. I doubt that anyone could ever tell though. Cause I'm so happy all the time. What a joke. Sometimes, I think that you have to watch out for the people who seem the happiest. because really, they're the saddest. People who you know are depressed have it better off, because they can get help. The people who you don't see are sad and depressed and lonely... those are the people you have to watch out for. It scares me. I can see lots of people like that, some of them my best friends. And some are just random people, that I see getting picked on ALL the time. Its sad. I want to stop it. Because if I feel depressed sometimes, and I don't get teased, then they must feel oober bad. Why is the world such a depressing place? Thank goodness there's good things like friends to balance it all out.

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"I wish I could see me the way you do..." ~ Anonymous
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I sat in my room all lost and confused. I thought about what I wanted to make my high school life like, and what it turned out to be was far from expected. I realized that most of the people judged you by your looks, or who you'd hang out with. When I first went to montavista, I wanted to be that friendly nice girl who everyone loved. After two years being here, I tried to convince myself that I had friends, but all I had were acquaintances. I looked at some of my "friends" and felt jealous of them and their best friends. I'd look online and see tons of pictures of people hanging out with their friends, and that's when my sadness started. I always wanted to find that one person I could connect with like no other but I didn't know how to find her. I started losing all my 'friends' as there were rumors going around about things they thought I said about them. I lost touch with a lot of my old friends, and I started distancing myself from people I've known all my life in outside of school activities. As this continued, in my extra-curricular activity, drama started happening, and one day I couldn't take it all so I just started coming home every day and crying about it. Now, I'm still learning to cope up with drama hoping one day everything will be fine and hoping I'd

have the friends I've always wanted. I am realizing that If I want friends I need to make the change and start talking to people. I am realizing that I always have a best friend with me, and I am realizing that it does not matter how many friends you have as long as you have someone to trust. i always have that one person in my life that gives me something to look forward to... the thing is, this year has turned out to just be really depressing. thankfully there was this person who was really making me the happiest ive ever been, and i was able to forget how dry and stressful this year is. and to make a long story short, that person has been slowly disappearing from my life lately and now the person is finally gone, and ever since then i havent FELT anything besides sadness and fury and confusion. ive just been feeling really tired and ive lost all reasons to do anything. so now im just sitting here and i can barely pull this story together since part of me stil believes that im happy and everything is okay... but its really not. i dont know what can replace this person and i dont know how im gonna finish the rest of this year. i just wanna sleep so i can dream that im living what was happening a few months back, when i knew i was happy.

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"Depression is nourished by a lifetime of ungrieved and unforgiven hurts" ~ Penelope Sweet
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Depression is a very serious issue. I have personally never had depression but I know personally how it feels like when those who are close to you experience it. In middle school, one of my close friend's mother lost her long battle against pancreatic cancer. His mother was a genuinely sweet and nice person even though I hadn't talk to her much in the past. I never thought how unfair life could be, how even the kindest person can die miserably. I wish I could relate to my friend. It's too hard to imagine how heavy the toll of sadness would be when one your closest family member passes away. My friend withdrew from life, school, and everything and I wish I could've helped him more, wished I could truly understood how he felt.

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"Many people think that depression is something you just have to live with when you get older, but it's not." ~Anonymous
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I kind of find myself being jealous of those who are openly sad/depressed and other people can tell. I mean, when I become sad/depressed or whatever feeling that is not positive, I just keep it to myself and pretend that everything is fine and dandy. I wonder what things would be like if one day I just came to school with like bulgy red eyes and complained about my life. I guess it would definitely be different. When I was a little kid, I would end up crying at least once a year at school, whether someone made fun of my name, or I got frustrated at someone (actually one time in the 5th grade I

told someone to go to hell and they tattled to the principal on me. Gawd. It wasn't even my fault either! i cried.) I don't know why, but i think that kind of affected me or something, cause now I hate it when I cry. Come to think of it, that DEF leads to communication problems. I guess that's why I want to major in psychology cause I want to know why I have a fatty bag full of problems that nobody sees. But that doesn't make me depressed/sad. Well, not openly i guess.

Last year, in freshman year, I had trouble coping with high school. I did not have many friends, my parents were not pleased with me, and all in all, I contemplated suicide, to see how everyone would react. Needless to say, that did not occur. However, I was still miserable. I had no friends, no one to turn to. I was essentially on my own. Life is better now, but this is what remains of that time.

My life is not worth living  
Insignificant, unloved, but worse, unnoticed  
Too much stress, too much work, so little time  
Heart beating, not living, merely existing,  
a soul among the masses  
wandering through the entire universe,  
The sailor of the stars in his dreams  
but drowning in a pool of his misery  
Living is too much trouble,  
But death is too scary  
A body without a soul, a doll with no emotion  
No parents, few friends, no life  
Not torture to death, but torture to life  
Insignificant, unloved, unnoticed  
The thief in the shadows  
But nothing to steal  
The assassin of the night  
But no target to kill  
Lost at sea, in trouble, drowning  
No island of hope, no light to follow  
Wandering through the maze of the soul  
My soul, no point of living, and no courage to die

During this period of time, I wanted to go to a corner and sleep, and not wake up again. I didn't want to live, but I was too afraid of death and to see what it held for me. I was once told that death will inevitably come, and that it would be foolish to welcome it so early. I coped by only existing, not really coherent to the rest of the world, but just locked in a box of my misery. Slowly, as life got better, I opened up a little more, to my family and my friends. Depression, sadness, grief, this is what causes the death of so many people throughout the world. Just because life is unfortunate, doesn't mean that that is the set way of life. If you continue to endure, then better times will come. The darkness will retreat, and you will see just how beautiful the light really is so long as you endure the night to see the day.

-Timothy Namkung (Sophomore)

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"A lot of people don't realize that depression is an illness. I don't wish it on anyone, but if they would know how it feels, I swear they would think twice before they just shrug it."

~ Jonathan Davis

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There's always so much going on to make me sad and depressed, especially this past week. There's a bunch of grade fluctuations that have led to added stress, a bunch of friend drama, fights with my family, worries that I'm ugly, concerns that I might be fat (even though my BMI is normal, I could lose a little belly fat), the occasional acne breakout...ugh. The friend and family drama is the most serious, I guess, because it seems like it's happening on a daily basis. I end up fighting with my mom a whole lot. Sometimes, she's in the bad mood, sometimes, it's me, and then sometimes we clash. Either way, fights, big or small, always seem to erupt. Then there's my friend drama. I'm caught in the middle of a threesome, and sometimes, I don't know what to do. I absolutely can't choose. Both mean the world to me, and I don't know what I'd do without either of them. But sometimes, their tendency to group off together, or branch with me, leaving the other one alone...I don't know. It just tears me apart, but we're really not the best threesome out there. Maybe it needs time, or maybe it's destined to fail from the start. Either way, I know I'm worried. Then there's grades. I'm the typical Monta Vista student. "B"s are failing to me. Call me geeky, call me loserish, but academics are really important to me. I strive to get perfect grades because they're a big deal to me...just in general. I have no clue how to explain it by seperating me from the rest of the herd, but that's just the way it is. So a B+ freaks me out. Especially in math right now, where I'm teetering and scared to death. Luckily, it's only the start of the semester, but I want things to pick up fast. I know from last year leaving things to end are never a good thing. It's iffy, and as for me, the odds seem to always be against me. I just do a lot of crying lately. I don't know. I hope it'll get better. It's just...ugh.

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"Concern should drive us into action, not into a depression."

~ Karen Horney

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There was this girl I once knew. She appeared to be content with life, but on the inside she was lost. There wasn't much for her to do, except listen and comply to the orders of others. She did this for quite some time, and in the end, she caved in.

She slowly sank away from her friends. Each day, she disappeared into a room, and one day, she completely vanished from view. She was upset but about what she did not know. Months went by, when people assumed she has just found new friends to hang out with or she was just too busy

with studying to hang out anymore. And one day, she picked up a pair of scissors and scarred herself for life. And she did it again. And again. And again.

Then even a few more months after that, she fell into a deep, vicious cycle. Eating was virtually missing from her life, as the only food that she took in was breakfast, maybe a bowl of cereal or such. On certain occasions did she eat a bag of chips or a cookie, but other than that, she lived on a mini twix bar and breakfast. She didn't eat and constantly weighed herself. And she became so thin, that a close friend wondered what was wrong. One day, this close friend discovered her scars. She had cut all along. Nothing stopped her. Nobody ever told her to stop because that was her way of coping with the pressures that high school brought on and the high stakes that Junior year held. And she fell into a cycle.

This pattern continued on for a while but now she is in the recovery stages. This girl was a close friend of mine, who lived and breathed and shared the same space as me.

Now that college applications are right around the corner, I really have nothing to fret about. For all that I have been through, struggling to get through a tiny obstacle is nothing.

The scars slowly heal and I have been nourished back to health -- not just physically but mentally as well. What stressed me out before is a mere pinch on the arm. I have a support system that keeps me in tune with all that there is to see in life. Life is not about grades. It is not about the SAT or the AP test or that next college application deadline. It is not.

It is about the friends you make and the connections you have. Go and see the world. Don't let depression take over your life like it did to mine. I was fortunate to have a couple close friends to confide in who helped derail my life and set it back on the right path -- the one headed straight and not in a circle. Stay on top of things. See the big picture. Know that you can do it. Believe in yourself.

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"That is all I want in life: for this pain to seem purposeful."
~Elizabeth Wurtzel

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people feel depressed at least once in their lives right? Well I've definitely felt it more than once. I can't even believe I'm putting this entry in this. IT all started when I was in 7th grade. You know everyone wants to be popular and stuff but me I didn't I wanted to be anonymous forever and no one will ever talk to me. I wanted to be alone. I'm naturally scared I guess. I hate judgments. Like how if you stay by yourself the whole you're considered emo. Well anyway I didn't want to stay anonymous ; cuz I was afraid of people judging me I just didn't want them knowing things about me. People can hurt you easily if they know secrets about you that others don't. I'm bi no one understands it. Some just thinks it's hot oh girl on girl action that's yummy or wow ew I can't believe you would ever kiss another girl that's disgusting. Well, I don't want to be

disgusting nor do I want to be...well yummy. In 7th grade I wanted to step out of the box...so I told my best friend well someone I thought was my best friend that I was bi...everything went downhill from there...I got into a lot of bad things. Drugs, alcohol, cutting, bulimia, still to this day I'm a freshman right now if someone gave me a gun I would kill myself. I've been in hospitals before and ya I feel okay in there it's just...I guess I don't feel good enough for anyone not even me. I feel like if I open up again everything that I love will just disappear. I like this girl right now and I met her 2 weeks ago at a party I can't stop thinking of her, but as always she won't talk to me. So what I do is I turn to my best friend in the world...my knife. I mean what else can I do. There is my journal of course and I could talk it out with people but I just don't think that would do any good. I'm getting better though. I think. I haven't actually cut in a while and I've been sober for 6 months. I'm proud of myself. But let's just see for how long I can make it.

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I've thought about suicide. But not in a I-really-want-to-kill-myself kind of way. Mostly out of curiosity. How it would feel to die. What would push someone to that point. Do they know there's no turning back? No chance to float to the surface and see family and friends' reactions? It's seriously over. You're done. Forever.

Sometimes I think the world would be better off without me. Honestly, all I do is consume resources, generate waste, and take up space. I don't want to kill myself -- I'm too scared, so I wish I had never been born.

Is this "depression"? Or are these just thoughts? Am I depressed even though I'm not cutting myself or taking pills? Or am I just a curious thinker? I'm not sure, but I think it's a fine line.

I wish I could just cheer up. Think about love, unicorns, gummy bears, whatever. This morbidity thing is so overrated.

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I have a friend who is depressed. and it makes ME sad in turn, because I don't want to be depressed. She doesn't even seem depressed though, because she hides it so well. Sometimes I forget. And others don't know. What scares me the most is that I think I'm depressed too, and I've also learned to hide my depression, so well that I don't know if I'm depressed. Yet I think that I SHOULD feel happy, because a lot of people would love to have my lucky life. I know I'm lucky, but why do I still cry when I'm alone at night doing homework? Why do I still feel sorry for myself because I have no free time, only study time and homework time (I don't even have sleep time)? Why am I so sad because I'm failing math? I don't want to be depressed. So I guess I just hide it. and avoid it. until something comes along...

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"We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never
lose infinite hope."~ Martin Luther King
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I've struggled with depression for several years. I can't explain how terrible it feels to be severely depressed—you won't know the extent of the feeling unless you've experienced it before. I think about committing suicide a lot. During bad times, I think about it every day. I constantly feel like there's no reason to live. If I died right now and someone gave me the chance to relive my entire life exactly the way it happened, I wouldn't do it. There were way too many bad times and way too few good. And that's how I feel all the time. What is there to look forward to in life? School? Definitely! I just love being so stressed out that I can't sleep or eat. I wish my teachers knew how hard it is for me to get through every day and how hard it is for me to do well in school. I'm definitely not smart, but I get good grades by studying like crazy. And I'm at a disadvantage compared to others because I'm constantly battling with this insane feeling of sadness. Sometimes I waste hours I could have spent studying by crying and struggling to get through my sadness. When my depression is bad, I'm on the verge of tears all the time, and anything small causes me to struggle to not cry in class or in front of my teachers or friends. Some of my teachers are always really happy and idealistic. It makes me angry when they tell us things like "don't compare yourself to others". Great, thanks for telling me that. Now I will never compare myself to others. Now when my partner gets an A and I get a D on a test, I won't feel stupider than them. How can people be so happy and hopeful all the time? A lot of my friends are like that too. Part of me is jealous of them for not having to struggle constantly to get through a single day; part of me is angry that they have it so easy. I know it's stupid to think that just because someone looks happy out the outside, they have a perfect life. But isn't that true to some extent? Surely if you had such a horrible life, you wouldn't be able to act so happy all the time. And even if you do have a bad life and somehow manage to be happy all the time, you're still better off than me. I have a terrible life and I can't be happy no matter how hard I try.

Some people are insensitive enough to say stupid things about how I always look sad or angry. I'm struggling to live with this stupid, frustrating, terrible disorder and most people don't understand it. Maybe that's why I look sad or angry! I always find myself thinking, why me? What did I do that's so bad to make me deserve this ridiculously terrible disease?

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Many people usually are oblivious to what is happening around them, at least, in my perspective. However, I find that I notice a bit too much, to the point I have to push memories and certain thoughts to the back of my mind just to

act "normal" in the midst of the day.

I might just look the happy type, the type that just doesn't seem to care. But I do. Quite a bit. Thoughts are my lifesource.

You can say I think about basically everything in the midst of the day. Not a moment passes without me thinking about the girl I like, the tests that are coming up, the next events happening that I have to create and make happen, the deaths of the many people that have entered my life and left before I said goodbye. Sometimes I find that the world just seems to hate the way people think. Even how I am a happy person, I notice that I relapse sometimes into a state of disrepair, up to the point that I just cannot think about the class I am in, the conversation that I am trying to take part in.

I feel as if this submission is the easiest thing to write since I find that many of the days, I have so many thoughts, some really sad and depressing to the point I just cannot go on until someone just talks to me. This opportunity just to talk just hits home and let my mind let go of what had happened in the past year. It is time to let go.

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"Depression is melancholy minus its charms."~ Susan Sontag  
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A year ago - or more, I can't exactly remember - I found that I had bottled up my emotions. At a conference, I found that one of my friends had a big problem. He is probably reading this and figuring out that it was he that changed my life. I found that I was not the confident and optimistic person I thought I was and that I had problems despite the cheerful nature I typically radiate. There were problems that I just didn't think about, problems that I had bottled up for just too long, thoughts that I had trapped inside from the moment they entered my mind and destroyed my body from the inside out. There were people around me that I could just reach out and get help from. I never did.

He was the one that taught me a life lesson. One that all who went to the recent assembly should have learned. Maybe you are one of those many that thought the assembly should not have been there to take away our prized possession: the great Wednesday late start. However, if you were to see me, I was listening intently, because even though I have never taken drugs or did any alcohol, I had found myself in the same position as the people in the film and the speaker. The people around me didn't exactly notice that I was ignoring their movements, that I ignored the person trying to catch my eye on my right, I ignored everyone, not because I wanted to, but in my mind, I found myself where I was approximately four months ago.

I was perfectly happy with my life. Except for the fact that my life was not happy for me. My thoughts from my grandfather's and aunt's death were still breaking me apart from a while back. I tended to ignore the feelings inside me,

not talking about them to anyone. I found that everyone was much happier without a friend that had plagued their own life with their negative thoughts. I was completely optimistic then, able to figure out things faster than anyone else since I had no real emotional barrier that everyone seemed to tell me about in their lives. I enjoyed helping everyone. But inside was a different story.

I was breaking, broken, shattering inside. Just a couple months before my competition, one of my friends from another city had experienced a downfall and fell into depression because of her illness. She was thinking of trying to overdose in drugs just to feel better. It took all my mind power just to convince her not to do it. In time, my will drained but I fought well: she didn't continue with her plan. But I had my mental reserves drained.

I fell into disrepair as I found that my thoughts from four years ago had started up again. I had restricted my mind for four years from actually wandering there. Now it was time for my body to wreak havoc. I ignored it.

The competition started. I found myself straining to keep my emotions under check so that I could compete. After my competition, one of my friends came back with tears on his face, walking with one of our mutual friends. Both had a worried and sad look on their faces. I asked why. He said he would tell me later.

After a while, he told me he was ready to talk. One of the first times that I felt as something was strange for me. It was a person that was opening up to me. I felt the emotion pour out as the person told me that he was suffering from the recent death of one of his loved ones. I tried to be kind and considerate, and tried to relate to his experience. What I did not expect was the fact that I could not hold back my own thoughts.

The first time in four years, I truly cried.

There, on the staircase, my friend opened me up, four years of bottled emotions came flooding out. I had broken down completely. It took me fourteen minutes to compose myself.

But it did not stop there. I found that my grades dropped dramatically. Four years of bottled emotions does not come out very easily. I times where I cried myself to sleep, the only words of solace from my only friend. I found that whenever I talked to him, my sadness lifted temporarily. I needed other ways out.

I started to find other considerate friends that could help me express my feelings. Eventually, after two months, I could concentrate again.

Back at the assembly for Teen Truth, I found myself stuck in that same situation, but this time I felt the power of sharing my emotions with others. I felt as if I could stand the depression from sophomore year and quell the emotions in a way that I could control them and release them so that they are

not trapped in my body anymore. I felt as if everyone that I told my story to was helping me, just by being there. I felt freed.

Several months later, my friend recovered from his trauma. I recovered from mine. But there was another person, another problem that could only be solved, not by bottling up as so many people do, but by talking about it. I found that there was always another person to help, always another friend in need.

For those that know what I am talking about, open up. There are more ways to spend your life than just thinking that no one will help you. Sometimes it is just a matter of trusting someone with your thoughts.

And just like Teen Truth, you may not feel as if the message applies to you directly, as if there is, somehow, not one person in your life that is showing signs of a depression, a thought of sadness. But there is. Someone in your life has went through the dark side of life's thoughts. Maybe he or she is still fighting, waiting for a way out. For someone to free them from their depression.

And when they ask for help, give it to them. If you do not think you can give anything, just give them your confidence that you will be there for them. Sometimes, as is with the next friend that opened up to me, it is all they need. Just be there and listen.

I am currently a junior, back on track. Thanks.

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I think depression doesn't have to be clinically diagnosed. I mean that people don't have to have all the symptoms to be depressed. Many times I have felt sad over school and friends. But when I looked up "signs of depression" on the internet, I got all these extreme symptoms. Okay, I only experience like one or two of them out of 10, but I'm still sad right? Sometimes I feel so down that I start to eat and eat or just "lay down" for a bit to clear my mind and not do my hw. I know that by doing all that, it makes me even more stressed and then even more sad. I tried forcing myself to cry to see if I'd feel better, but the tears just don't come and I just get angry at myself, and beat myself over how stupid I am trying to be really "depressed". It's hard for me to talk to friends about my sadness because they just wouldn't understand because I'm always sad over school. They'd tell me that it's just school. But to me it's really important. I can't even explain how sad I feel. You just have to feel it. It could be just a typical frustrating day for some people, or just plain sad. I tell myself that I'm just sad over pity little things while others are really clinically depressed, but in the back of my mind, I think I deserve to be labeled depressed as well. In the end I can't tell if I'm really depressed. I'm not constantly sad, just once in a while when things aren't going well. I usually bounce back to life after a few days. Maybe it's just a teenager thing, and not depression or sadness.



not fun, but feeling unwanted is definitely worse. i've often wondered what would happen if i suddenly vanished. would people notice? would people care? would people wish i was still there? don't worry, i'm not thinking of suicide. however, i wonder if all those people who committed suicide in these recent years would still be alive if someone had just noticed their depression and became a better friend to them.

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"I can't comfort you and mourn at the same time."

~ Anonymous

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i've never really talked about my problems before, which is probably why this entry will sound messed up and confused. At school, i always put on a happy façade, because i usually am happy. But sometimes when I'm just sitting there and spacing out or something i just suddenly feel wave of hopelessness. I feel like there is no point in life, and i just want to start crying. At those times, all i really need is a hug from the opposite gender telling me its gonna be alright. :]but haha, that never happens partly cause i never spill my retarded problems to anyone. Actually, i did once BUT i usually don't because of all the social expectations. I can't just talk to someone about my problems and expect them to not think im depressed. im actually usually genuinely happy and talkative.

At home, im also content. My parents support me and love me. But we get into these really crazy shouting fights and it usually ends up with me stomping into my room...and cutting myself. I think the first time i cut myself was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. i just wanted to escape reality and focus on my physical, not emotional pain. Once, i even carved out the words hate on my arm. yeah, im pretty messed up. but after i cool down, i would be like wtf, why did i do that? And it would happen again and again. But it's not only because of my parents. If i have a really shit day at school and I'm not calmed down enough sometimes I'll cut myself there too, just to escape the pain of reality. lol, i just remembered. Once I was hella angry and i cut myself so my wrist was bleeding and shit. then i just randomly decided to write FML(written out) on my wall...with my blood. yeah i know, im weird. But anyway...it's still there, on my wall. i wonder if it will ever come off, arnt blood stains hella hard to wash off? but nobody can see it because i put an oil painting over it. other times, i wouldn't want people to easily see it, so i cut myself on the thigh, arm (i "fell") and once on my hairline. haha i regret that. cause whenever i sweated it would sting. but i mean, i would NEVER suicide. i want to get married, do the thing to get babies:}, get a baby, and raise a child. i wanna splurge on a shopping trip and find my soulmate. i wanna get high, only once, just to the heck of it. i have goals in lifel become successful, go bungy jumping off a cliff, go skydiving, etc. these thoughts are what always keep me going on in life. in addition to the obvious; friends, family, etc. But yeah, as i

said before, maybe all i needed before was a hug and reassurance from a guy. funnily, thats often the remedy that can cure a lot of stuff for me and a lot of other girls. i think im done writing the stuff that i want to right. ohh gosh, it's all jumbled and stuff. but hey, cutting is just a temporary escape from pain, so if your problem isn't just an outburst of frustration or an "in the moment" thing, dont do it.:]

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I feel like there is something wrong with me. I can't ever recall a time when I was really depressed and hurting. They say 1 in 3 teens have thoughts of suicide, and I am definitely not included in that. Yeah, there are times I feel sad, but those usually pass within an hour maximum. I remember when I participated in Challenge day, they had the cross the line activity. One of the categories was, cross the line if you have ever felt scared an alone. I thought to myself, "Have I?" but I couldn't think of a time at all. Everyone crossed, and I was embarrassed, so I lied and crossed as well. Also, my friends always pour out about how they are so depressed, resort to cutting and often think about suicide. I cannot relate. I am not writing this to be like HA! My life is great! Your lives must suck, but I want to know, is there something wrong with me? Why can't I be like everyone else?

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*"The best cure for worry, depression, melancholy, brooding, is to go deliberately forth and try to lift with one's sympathy the gloom of somebody else."*~ Arnold Bennett

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Depression makes you do things that you aren't proud of, and do things that you would think that you would never had done in a million years. It makes you lose perspective of what's important. I wake up every day and ask myself "why am I doing this? why am I still living?" And the answer comes to me. Nothing. absolutely nothing holds me to this planet, to this world. When my parents neglected me, when my friends deserted me when I was too depressed to be useful, i decided that everything was overrated. Talking, connections, love, hope, friendship: these are the things I can no longer relate to nor connect to. Depression has made me numb to my feelings and to other people's feelings; i am callous without even knowing it. In fact, I take pride in being a bitch because it keeps people away. It keeps hurt away and keeps me from hurting people. My personality is a buffer between me and the rest of the world; with it i can't feel. When I allow myself to really feel, to really think about the hurt, it literally makes me stop breathing. It's like a knife slicing through my chest, ripping out any thought of feeling better. The first time I thought of suicide, I was 13 years old and cutting tomatoes. I realized than this sharp object could easily take me away from this hurt. I was too much of a coward to make the cut. 2 years later, I made my first cut, and it felt good because I was punishing myself for being so useless and pathetic, weak and

cowardly. 5 months ago, I took a knife and held it against my throat. I thought “No one will miss me, since I have been gone from this earth from a long time: and “What if I am saved, then my mom will be mad at me for cleaning up my mess” and so on and so forth. Every single thought that people have before they die was running through my head, and before I knew it, i was curled up in a ball on the cold, hard kitchen floor with the knife shaking in my grip. I was utterly alone. I had nowhere to turn to, noone to turn to, and in that moment, I knew that the black hole i was crawling further and further into was swallowing me whole with no one as a rescue tube. Instead of wishing to be better, I instead thought of how much off a coward i was because i was not strong enough to press harder. What if? It is a question that haunts me, and will continue to haunt me. Depression is serious. It is the word you use lightly when you describe the B on the math test or the annoying how or the devilish teacher. Being depressed is like living without a heart. What I can say, if your friends or close one is depressed, no matter how serious, talk to them. Be their heart, be their connection to the world. Because once you lose that thread, once its snapped, no one can say how long it will take to be sewed back. That’s how fragile life is.

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my mom married because she was getting old. she and my father actually decided to get married on their second date. i don’t believe there was ever any love in their relationship. now they pretty much hate each other, my dad frequently yells at my mom, calls her stupid, and yells at her for making such stupid decisions. the other day, he was yelling at her for making another “stupid decision” which was buying the wrong kind of radio/cd player. i find this completely immature, and it makes me very angry. well my mother is now suffering from depression and takes medication to deal with it. the fault isn’t only her marriage, although it mostly is. I don’t ever want to be depressed, so i will never marry just because im getting old.

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“Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising everytime we fall.” ~ Confucius

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I’ve struggled with depression for several years. I can’t explain how terrible it feels to be severely depressed-you won’t know the extent of the feeling unless you’ve experienced it before. I think about committing suicide a lot. During bad times, I think about it every day. I constantly feel like there’s no reason to live. If I died right now and someone gave me the chance to relive my entire life exactly the way it happened, I wouldn’t do it. There were way too few good. And that’s how I feel all the time. What is there to look forward to in life? School? Definitely! I just love being so stressed out that I can’t sleep or eat. I wish my teachers knew how hard it is for me to get through every day and how hard it

is for me to do well in school. I’m definitely not smart, but I get good grades by studying like crazy. And I’m at a disadvantage compared to others because I’m constantly battling with this insane feeling off sadness. Sometimes I waste hours I could have spent studying by crying and struggling to get through my sadness. When my depression is bad, I’m on the verge of tears all the time, and anything small causes me to struggle to not cry in class or in front of my teachers or friends. Some of my teachers are always really happy and idealistic. It makes me angry when they tell us things like “don’t compare yourself to others.” Great, thanks for telling me that. Now I will never compare myself to others. Now when my partner gets and A and I get a D on a test, I won’t feel stupider than them. How can people be so happy and hopeful all the time? A lot of my friends are like that too. Part of me is jealous of them for not having to struggle constantly to get through a single day; part of me is angry that they have it so easy. I know it’s stupid to think that just because someone looks happy out the outside, they have a perfect life. But isn’t that true to some extent? Surely if you had such a horrible life, you wouldn’t be able to act so happy all the time. And even if you have a bad life and somehow manage to be happy all the time, you’re still better off than me. I have a terrible life and I can’t be happy no matter how hard I try. Some people are insensitive enough to say stupid things about how I always look sad or angry. I’m struggling to live with this stupid, frustrating, terrible disorder and most people don’t understand it. Maybe that’s why I look said or angry! I always find myself thinking, why me? What did I do that’s so bad to make me deserve this ridiculously terrible disease?

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“You must make yourself succeed every time. You must do the thing you think you cannot do.” ~Eleanor Roosevelt

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I really can’t watch the news anymore, and I can barely read news magazines. The world is a depressing place, and I can’t handle knowing that I have such a good life and such atrocities are occurring out in the world. I can’t imagine the life of a newscaster – all it is sadness. The world seems unsurviveable. Any second, something could go wrong and it would all be over. It’s just too difficult to detach myself from the world and be able to focus on myself. Sometimes I hate myself for caring.

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I have this carefree attitude. The “everything’s amazing” face. And people just smile (or look on in a puzzled manner) and say, how is she so happy? And then they say, well, duh, she’s smart successful, energetic, spirited, why wouldn’t she be happy? Well, maybe because it’s all a façade. A façade that I started building five years ago. A façade that’s starting to crumble. A façade, that I feel made me a better person, a

more likeable person, a *happier* person. A façade that at some point, became me. Because if you live a lie, it becomes you. You become it. But sometime last year, when what I had been striving for slipped out of my grasp, my formerly-faked happiness turned into the “I don’t give a shit” attitude. Not a good thing – it made me not pleasantly carefree, but dangerously *careless*. I let myself down, and as the school year ended, important things didn’t matter to me anymore. I spent my summer in a daze, just a jumble of irrelevant events that had no significance on my future. It takes strength, willpower, and effort, to climb to the top of a mountain – but the fall occurs with just one stumble, and down you go, with nothing to stop you from falling and hitting the ground, hard. In addition to that, not only was I dealing with myself and my failures, but I was the person who would always be there for my friends. And even if they didn’t feel like talking, I knew something was wrong, and every time I saw them, I worried about how they were doing. While I had climbed up that mountain, I had grown more exhausted and piled on the luggage of my exhausted friends. My fall went even faster, and I crashed even harder. Sometimes I just want time to stop. I want to be able to catch up on everything, to be able to sit and redo as much as I can of what I did wrong when I was caught up in the nothingness of despair. I wish I hadn’t let myself fall. But the best I can do right now is climb up, slowly but surely. I’m shaken, slower, have injuries, but I can climb that mountain. I can be happier, and I will be. Even if it means that I have to build myself up again, even if for a while it’s just a façade. Because later, it’s going to be me. A happier me.

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*“Depression is not sobbing and crying and giving vent, it is plain and simple reduction of feeling...People who keep stiff upper lips find that it's damn hard to smile.” ~Judith Guest*  
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I don’t want to tell too much. That’s how it all began. I won’t tell you what happened or how it happened specifically. That would be saying too much, but I will tell you what happened afterwards and how I felt. Just to give you a brief idea, I was hit with hurt after hurt after hurt. They all followed each other. As the “incidents” accumulated I became devastated, filled with sorrow, disappointed, and unsure of what to do. I was gray: lifeless, dull nothing. Nobody could help me out. I tried my friends, I tried a counselor, and I contemplated talking to a therapist but concluded that this was my problem and only I could fix it. I had to brave the storm and face the wind head on. It hurt...a lot. That’s what happens in life. You get knocked down a countless number of times and there’s nothing else to do but get back up. So that’s what I did. I kept standing back up. A lot of life changing things happened to me. But I won’t talk about those. I walked around everyday knowing that a shadow was looming over

me. I’m naturally a loner and wanderer, and being alone helped this shadow engulf and hold on to me; it was eating away my essence. I decided that if I couldn’t get rid of it, I would live with it. After some time I started to enjoy the company of the shadow. I enjoyed being sad and depressed. Which is hard to explain, but take my word for it; I was happy being sad. As long as I had my sad time I would be happy. On the outside I would appear energetic and lively, but on the inside I felt sorrow and knew a void was present. Crying gave me energy and being alone, locked away from the world was extremely relaxing. Over time, I found a balance. Depression is like a daily emotion for me now. I’ll feel happy when I’m with friends and doing things I enjoy. I’ll even be on top off the world and have the best time of my life, but when I’m alone I acknowledge the sorrow and give in to it. Surprisingly it works. I wouldn’t call myself happy and I wouldn’t call myself depressed. I would call it a contemplative state. The best way to describe it is a state where I’m neither happy nor depressed but not emotionless. It’s like in this state of emotion you’re able to watch everything without colored glasses on. You see what’s really in front of you, not what you want to see or wish you could see. I don’t believe in being happy all the time. That would be boring and life would get repetitive quickly. Being sad all the time sucks too. The balance between the two is the way to go...for me at least. But that’s all I can talk about anyway: my perspective.

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*“When we are angry or depressed in our creativity we have misplaced our power. We have allowed someone else to determine our worth and then we are angry at being undervalued.”~Julia Margaret Cameron*  
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Depression. Not a fun thing to go through. A lot of high school depression, from my observations at least, seems to happen when relationships end. Or crappy grades or other situations, but in general it has something to do with being rejected or the like. In my personal experience, from my very 1st relationship, which was a long time ago (think middle school) – things can go very bad. I went out with a girl, and things were all fine and cheery until a few months later – when I decided, that, well, I didn’t really like this girl that much anymore and another one caught my eye. As bad as this sounds this is pretty much the truth of what went down. So, I started talking to that other girl more and eventually broke up with the one that I had been going out with. She took it really hard – crying, yelling, amongst other things and I felt really bad. Even worse, I knew that she was emotionally unstable beforehand and so that part of her life obviously went into a slump. Horrible depression, stress, all of that. It definitely took her a while to get over it, and she may had had the help of professionals (to this day I still don’t know), but I definitely do feel bad for what I caused, even today. Then again it’s not

like all my days have been 100% super cheery and everything so I guess it somewhat evens out in the end.

I guess what you'd describe my worry as would be sadness by association. I belong to a few "high-stress" groups on campus, and things are not as cheery as they seem. Every day, I see this one friend, "Tracy." She's in sports, taking seven classes, has several leadership roles at school and out of school, and she's working herself to death. It honestly scares me. I know what can happen if you keep your emotion and your pain bottled up inside. It starts eating you from the inside out and you just end up collapsing, or reaching for some way to escape pain. And I can't help but be worried about them. Maybe I'm too perceptive or something, but everyday someone or the other looks so down and so...gone. And I want to help them but there's only so much I can do and it hurts me to know that they aren't okay.

"Depressed people think they know themselves, but maybe they only know depression."~Mark Epstein

I don't get sad a lot but, the last time i was in tears was probably in the beginning of June when i first moved into my new place. and it's not because I moved into a new area, i can still go to MV but I had to give up my dog. so the majority of June i was calling every single animal shelter and hospital trying to find someone who would take my dog. apparently, giving your dog up for adoption is a pain in the ass! you have to pay \$200 and go through an interview process and after all that, they either reject or take your dog. i'm not going to lie, my dog was not the friendliest one out there so my parents wouldn't pay to go through the process when they knew that she was going to get rejected. we were running out of time and while we were living in our new place, my dog was living in my dad's car which is really sad. so my dad put word out about my dog in the paper and then someone finally called, but they were hella sketchy. they wanted a loud barking dog, and who would want one?!?! unless you're like Michael Vic or something, but thankfully he said she was too small and didn't want her. whew. but it also sucks because he was our last hope so now we could either a) drive to the mountains and leave her there ←---my dad's idea....i think he was joking b) keep her in the car until we found someone or c) euthanize my dog which is putting her to sleep. to tell the truth we couldn't keep her in the car anymore and I wouldn't allow my dad to toss her in the middle of nowhere, so option c was all we had. i decided to look online about it and i read this story about this lady who had to put her dog down and how she got a few minutes with her dog afterwards and her and her husband were just holding their lifeless dog and it was just so sad imagining me holding my dog knowing she had so many years left to go and just taking it away. i didn't know who to

talk to so i just stayed in my room a lot crying. so until taht day came, every day after school i would go to my dad's car and play with her for as long as i had to make up for what i knew was coming. she was my baby and i didn't want to let her go but i didn't have a choice. my parents saw me sad all the time and so they tried anything to keep my dog from option c. and then one day, my mom said she found an old lady that she knew that would take in my dog. it's kind of the lady's think to take in homeless dogs. so I got super excited but also sad because i wouldn't have her anymore but it was 100 times better than option c. so i asked my mom to give her away while i was at school so i wouldn't have to see her go. i said my goodbyes a day before and then she was gone. i don't know how she's doing right now and as much as I want to go see her, my mom says i shouldn't. she said that it would be cruel to go see her and then leave without coming back anytime soon, which is true since the lady lives about an hour away. now i'm only left with memories and pictures i have of my dog and i like to think she's doing good and is happy and i'm sure one day i'll see her again.

"This too shall pass"~Chuck T Falcon

Depression is an epidemic among all age groups, but the severity of these cases are greatly increasing in the teenage population. This lack of happiness often times stems out of some sort of social rejection and it can lead to a variety of problems. Increased chances of drug use, deterioration of mental and physical health and a more moody and violent nature are just a few of the symptoms of depression. I myself have been a victim of depression and have done many things in the past that I now regret. Due to my gloomy, violent and isolated demeanor actions, things became a continuous downward spiral. As a result, in the past I have resorted to drug use and cutting which only made things even worse for me and those that are close to me. At times I even had thoughts of committing suicide for reasons, which I now see as stupid and irrational. There are many different reasons why people become depressed, but it is always helpful to confide in your friends and family or even counselors. If depression is not stopped early on it can ruin or end your life. I'm glad to be saved.

"Depression can be the sand that makes the pearl."
~Joni Mitchell

I don't know what depression is exactly. But I probably know more about it than most kids my age save for the ones who actually are depressed. But I know from living with someone who has depression, just how bad it can be. For the person, and for everyone around that person. It's not easy to hear someone you love cry every night. And it's not easy to

remember the good old times, when she used to get out of bed and sing, and together it seemed like you could take on any obstacle together. Sometimes I think it was the abrupt change that affected me more than her staying locked in her room, or that emotionally drained face. I think it affected all of us in different ways. My little brother left the house to avoid the gloom after school. He stayed at his friends house until very late, never coming home until he needed to sleep. After that, I didn't see him much at all. I didn't have anywhere to go so I couldn't do what he did. I had to hide in my room. I think someone told me, that energy jumps from person to person. And I kind of believe it now. I was happy at school, surrounded by people who had seemingly nothing to worry about. I atleast for some moment could pretend that I was one of them. Happy and carefree. Then I came home, and my feelings changed immediately. It was like someone put something over my brain and made everything grey. It was like the house itself was in depression, because of the one person who wanted to die. I never wanted to suicide, but it was hard not to think about what would happen after I died. I felt so lonely inside that I couldn't open up to anyone not to my parents or anyone. I locked the door and didn't let my mom come into my room, it made her think I hated her. But that was far from it, I loved her with everything I had but I just couldn't look her in the eyes, or anyone in the eyes. I think I was depressed, but I didn't believe it because depression is clinical. I was just affected more by the person whose energy I caught. Either way, I don't know if what that was is considered depression. I tried looking it up to learn more about it, but it was too hard to keep reading. I did learn that depression is something to do with a chemical imbalance in your brain and can be hereditary. So I don't know. I'm afraid that one day when I get older, I'll break down and never want to get up. I'm scared that I'm not as strong as I think I am, and I one day I'll not want to live anymore. But I'll look to the future. Noting is set in stone yet, I can be happy now if I choose to be

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*"Do you know what a pessimist is? A person who thinks everybody is as nasty as himself, and hates them for it."* ~George Bernard Shaw  
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It was just the worst of times. I felt like my life was just a depression commercial on replay, sad old people melancholically petting their sad old pets, or knitting. I just felt like there was just no where in the world I was going to fit in, I would think about life for hours before I could sleep, I would sleep hours and still feel tired, I would eat cookies and taste shit. I would be chopping carrots and imagine the blade stabbing into my gut. Like a gateway drug, depression to me is a gateway sickness: you lose your friends, ostracize family, you just don't give a shit about anything. It's just a downward

spiral into nothingness. But for me it was all those things that I lost care for that made me so down. For those who say just suck it up and get on with life there's a life to be living! Good point, but for me my friends pulled me up they reached out and I felt like there was a life worth living. Telling a depressed person to just suck it up is like telling a baby to just stop crying, you need to reach out and grab that baby. Not till my friends reached out, I felt better. So reach out.

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Depression taught me a few things: the person on the other end of the 24 hour suicide line really doesn't give a rat's ass, eating your emotions is not the answer, you can watch as much TV as you want but you're still stuck in this world and I thought my life sucked. I lived in gray, motivated by grades, fear of what other's thought, the need to be accepted, to have the perfect body...I noticed there's more to life than this shit. There's two types of sad people at Monta Vista, those who have serious issues. they are coming out of the closet or addicted to drugs, or have eating disorders, and others who need support and friends and family to be there...but then there's people like me who honestly need to widen their horizon and see that there's more life...that there's a whole universe out there and that my problems are just smudges on the masterpiece that is life. You don't need to be hanging out with the cool people, you don't need to have the latest shit, you don't need to be perfect

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"Laugh, and the world laughs with you; Weep, and you weep alone, For the sad old earth must borrow its mirth, But has trouble enough of its own" ~Anonymous
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Depression is such a serious word. It covers so many things. I used to think that I was the only one who felt this way, sad and pathetic all the time. I'd go to school and see the popular kids laughing and hanging out and I'd wonder what they could have problems about. I'd always wonder why I could never be as carefree and happy as they are. What was wrong with me? I've never been clinically depressed, but I get sad. Huge waves of sadness that pull me down. When I feel that way it's like nothing will ever, ever be okay. That I will never get through high school, that I will never get good grades, that I will never be popular, that I will never be pretty. Sometimes the stupidest thing will get me going. Like Halloween this year. This was the first year that I didn't go trick or treating. I woke up this morning and I felt so sad. I felt like I've lost a part of my childhood that I could never regain. Like I betrayed the child in me, and that child is never coming back. School sometimes makes me sad. All these people just working for good grades all day. I know where they'll be in a few years. And then the slackers, the stoners, the losers. I know where they'll be in a few years too. Little kids break my heart. They're so innocent and pure and I know that in 5, 6, 7

years they'll be like me. They'll be like everyone else. They'll lose cartoons, they'll lose toys, they'll lose fairytales, and they'll lose Halloween. They'll end up like their parents, I'll end up like my parents, living in a two story house on a street with other two story houses and trimmed green grass and white picket fences. It's a never ending cycle. And the fact that this life is never ending is what really makes me sad.

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"I drink to stay warm, and to kill selected memories"

~Conor Oberst
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I don't know where depression stems from. I don't know exactly when I first started feeling depressed. My parents had always been close, but two years ago, they started fighting more often. I used to hide in my room when they fought, not because I was scared but simply because I was annoyed at the noise and stupidity of their fights, which usually erupted because of some little thing. But then I realized that the fights weren't just once or twice a month, they were every week, until it became everyday. Now I hid in my room because it hurt too much to hear them, and to know that a hug the next day wasn't going to change anything

They started talking about divorce. I didn't know why they were doing this. Maybe it's selfish of me, but I felt like if my parents truly loved me, they wouldn't fight in front of me – they should've at least tried to hide their problems from me. I should've been strong. At school, I acted like everything was all right. I started staying over at my friend's house more, telling them that my house was boring, never that anything was wrong. If I stayed my home, my mother would always be locked in her bedroom, the lights off and the TV on. My dad didn't come home until 11 now, and he started smoking profusely. I hated the smell of the smoke. I hated their fights, their silence. I hated that my mom cried in front of me, and I couldn't cry because I had to stay strong for her, and I hated my father's quick temper. Neither one of them tried to help each other, and neither one of them saw what was happening to me, because I never showed it to anyone.

Depression hurts so much. I lost the motivation to wake up in the morning, and I couldn't fall asleep until past midnight every night because all I could do was lie in the dark and pray that everything would get better. I told myself that I was pathetic, that calling myself depressed was just an excuse, that I was just being a baby and blaming my sorrow on depression. I felt pathetic, and I was afraid to tell people because I couldn't help but feel that they felt I was just being weak too. I had a group of friends, but never someone I felt truly close to, and I believed that if I told them of my depression and let it show when I hung out with them, it would eventually push them away. There was nothing to do except sit. I felt like I had no friends that could understand

what I was going through, and no family to turn to. There was one friend that I revealed things to, and whenever I had problems I would run to her and talk about it, but one day, she told me to stop complaining because every family had problems, and to stop telling her these things because she felt like I was just being immature. I never talked to anyone after that. Her words made me feel worse, because I agreed with her.

There were times I went to school and couldn't remember anything the entire day. My grades started lowering, pushing me further in my depression, and I never saw my parents now. Everyday I cooked for myself, and sat in the empty and dark house and cried because the loneliness was too much. My parents both started driving away in the middle of the night without telling each other or me. There were a couple of times when after they fought, I heard my mom's car start. I would run out to her car and hit the window as hard as I could, begging her to stop. I ran after her car but she didn't stop, and I spent the night walking outside without a jacket, wandering around the neighborhood and not going home. When the sun started coming out, I would go back, get my school stuff, and sit in the car waiting for my dad to drive me to school. At school, no one would know that I had spent the night crying, no one would know about the pain I was feeling. My dad cried too, which hurt me more than I could explain. I couldn't do anything to help them. I used to pray but now I've stopped. I've lost all my faith. But then one day, I came home with my father from practice, and when we opened the garage door, my mom's car was on and running. I felt like time stopped then. She was inside the car with the windows rolled up and the doors closed. Her eyes were closed. My dad let out a scream, and ran to the car and turned it off. He almost slapped her there, and he started crying. Then he told me to get out of his car, and he drove away. I sat on the floor of the garage, not knowing what to do. My mom was still awake and crying, so she must not have been in there for long. She was still all right, but what about me? I sat there then, and it was the lowest point of my life. I couldn't do anything. It was all too much. My dad didn't come back for 3 days, and he smelled heavily of smoke whenever I was near him. My mom moved to Taiwan for over a month afterwards, and when she came back, nothing was better

I started cutting myself, and felt pathetic with each swipe. I didn't use a blade, I used the jagged edge of a piece of hard plastic I had found, so the cut would never be deep but it would bleed. People tell you that it doesn't help to cut, but it did. It was something to do when I was alone, and it didn't make me feel better but it calmed me. I have scars that I hide, and scars that people can see, but I tell people it was my cat, or it was just an accident. It doesn't help to go to a counselor or therapist, I tried that. I hated talking about what was

happening to me, it made me feel more useless. I'd rather it hurt than confront anything

Two more times, I took entire bottles of Excedrin. I guess since it wasn't prescription medicine, I didn't overdose or anything, but I threw up 7 times that night until blood started coming up. I sat in the bathroom and cried, and would fall asleep until I was woken up by the pain again. My parents never heard, and they never came. The next day at school, I nearly fainted several times. After that incident, my stomach burns all the time until I can't breathe, and I'm dizzy all the time. During practice now, I can't go for too long without feeling dizzy or nauseous, and I feel weaker than ever. I blame them for not hearing me that night, I blame them for making me do it. But I blame myself the most.

I thought about suicide a lot more back then, what it would be like to just cut deeper and end it all, but I'm a lot stronger now. I'm applying to out of state colleges because it hurts too much to stay near home. I blame my parents, but I'll never tell them that. Because as much as I hate them, I still love them. I want them to get a divorce so we can be happy again. But it's too late for everything

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"I'm a riddle so strong- you can't break me" ~Layne Staley
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I don't get sad a lot but, the last time I was in tears was probably in the beginning of June when I first moved into my new place. and it's not because I moved into a new area, I can still go to MV but I had to give up my dog. so the majority of June I was calling every single animal shelter and hospital, trying to find someone who would take my dog. apparently, giving your dog up for adoption is a pain in the ass! you have to pay \$200 and go through an interview process and after all that, they either reject or take your dog. I'm not going to lie, my dog was not the friendliest one out there so my parents wouldn't pay to go through the process when they knew that she was going to get rejected. we were running out of time and while we were living in our new place, my dog was living in my dad's car which is really sad. so my dad put word out about my dog in the paper and then someone finally called, but they were hella sketchy. they wanted a loud barking dog, and who

would want one?!?!? unless you're like Michael Vic or something. but thankfully he said she was too small and didn't want her. whew. but it also sucks because he was our last hope so now we could either a) drive to the mountains and leave her there <-- my dad's idea ... I think he was joking b) keep her in the car until we found someone or c) euthanize my dog which is putting her to sleep. to tell the truth we couldn't keep her in the car anymore and I wouldn't allow my dad to toss her in the middle of nowhere, so option c was all we had. I decided to look online about it and I read this story about this lady who had to put her dog down and how she got a few minutes with her dog afterwards and her and her husband were just holding their lifeless dog and it was just so sad imagining me holding my dog knowing she had so many years left to go and just taking it away. I didn't know who to talk to so I just stayed in my room a lot crying. so until taht day came, every day after school I would go to my dad's car and play with her for as long as I had to to make up for what I knew was coming. she was my baby and I didn't want to let her go but I didn't have a choice. my parents saw me sad all the time and so they tried anything to keep my dog from option c. and then one day, my mom said she found an old lady that she knew that would take in my dog. it's kind of the lady's thing to take in homeless dogs. so I got super excited but also sad because I wouldn't have her anymore but it was 100 times better than option c. so I asked my mom to give her away while I was at school so I wouldn't have to see her go. I said my goodbyes a day before and then she was gone. I don't know how she's doing right now and as much as I want to go see her, my mom says I shouldn't. she said that it would be cruel to go see her and then leave without coming back anytime soon, which is true since the lady lives about an hour away. now I'm only left with memories and pictures I have of my dog and I like to think she's doing good and is happy and I'm sure one day I'll see her again.

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"I don't consider myself a pessimist. I think of a pessimist as someone who is waiting for it to rain. And I feel soaked to the skin." ~Leonard Cohen
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# Depression and Sadness

by Janet B. Jacobi, M.A. MFT

Since this issue talks about depression and sadness, I thought it would be helpful to define those words at the outset. I have also included the definition of bereavement since the symptoms often look similar to depression.

## **Major Depressive Episode**

According to the Diagnostic Statistical Manual IV-TR, the symptoms for Major Depressive Episode include five or more symptoms that have been present for the same two-week period and represent a change from previous functioning. At least one symptom must be 1) depressed mood or 2) loss of interest or pleasure.

- Depressed mood most of the day, nearly every day (e.g., feels sad or empty) – in children and adolescents this can be an irritable mood
- Markedly diminished interest or pleasure in all or almost all activities most of the day
- Significant weight loss when not dieting or weight gain
- Insomnia (inability to fall or stay asleep) or hypersomnia (sleeping too much) nearly every day
- Psychomotor agitation or retardation nearly every day observable by others
- Fatigue or loss of energy nearly every day
- Feelings of worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt nearly every day
- Diminished ability to think or concentrate, or indecisiveness, nearly every day

Recurrent thoughts of death (not just fear of dying), recurrent suicidal ideation without a specific plan, or a suicide attempt or specific plan for committing suicide

The symptoms cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational (school) or other important areas of functioning.

The symptoms are not due to the direct physiological effects of a substance (e.g., drug abuse, medication) or general medical condition.

The symptoms are not better accounted for by Bereavement.

## **Bereavement**

According to the Diagnostic Statistical Manual IV- TR, the diagnosis of Bereavement is used when the focus of clinical attention is a reaction to the death of a loved one. The duration and expression of “normal” bereavement vary considerably among different cultural groups. Usually, the diagnosis of Major Depressive Disorder is generally not given unless the symptoms are still present 2 months after the loss.

## **Sadness**

Sadness can be defined as unhappiness, feeling gloomy, feeling like one is in a funk, having dimly low spirits, feeling somber or having the blues. It is also a symptom of depression especially if it is intense, persistent and enduring.

## **Reasons for Teen Depression**

**Genetics/Family History** - Genetics and family history play a role in depression. There are genes that are linked to depression and chemical imbalances that may be passed down. That doesn't mean that everyone who has a depressed family member will become depressed, but they may be more likely to do so. Usually as part of the evaluative process, the therapist will ask about family history. Learning this information is very helpful to the clinician.

**Environment** - Children need a loving, caring and secure environment in which to thrive. Children who grow up in abusive, argumentative and even poverty-stricken homes may have lower self esteem which can lead to feelings of hopelessness and failure. As a result, some children turn to drugs, alcohol and other dangerous behaviors to alter their moods and to “escape” their stressful environment.

Medical/Physical Conditions - There are neurotransmitters in the brain that communicate between nerve cells. Some neurotransmitters (e.g., dopamine, norepinephrine, serotonin) specifically affect mood and when they are low, can lead to depression or sadness. There are also medical conditions such as hypothyroidism (thyroid gland doesn't make enough thyroid hormone) and anemia (not enough healthy red blood cells) that can lead to depression. Chemical imbalances may require medication and other treatments to clear up the symptoms of depression.

Trauma and Stressful Events - There are life transitions that can be traumatic and stressful for teens and lead to depression. These include separation, divorce, remarriage, illness or death of a close family member or pet, moving to a new home, changing schools, having to make new friends and homelessness. Some children do just fine with transitions; others need professional help to find their way. This is usually the case when the depression, sadness and emotional instability are of longer duration and greater intensity.  
<http://www.teendepression.org>

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After meeting with the staff of Verdadera, reading the submissions and discussing the topic of sadness and depression, a few themes came to the forefront that I wanted to share with the readers.

The first theme is that teens often keep their sadness and depression to themselves, bottle up their feelings, and rarely share them with others. As a result, they feel like they are presenting a façade or “false self” to the people around them. In essence, they are trying to deny their pain and prevent others from seeing it, yet when they are alone, they tend to cry and break down, sometimes for hours.

The second is that teens are grappling with difficult emotions, thinking about suicide, and finding ways to “treat” their pain. Some cut their skin preferring physical pain over emotional pain. Others turn to alcohol and drugs to numb their feelings. Still others withhold food, dealing better with the pain of hunger than the pain of their emotions. Even teens who don't want to die by suicide grapple with the concept of suicide (e.g., what it would be like to feel so down, what it would be like to make a plan, what it would be like to complete the act) and its permanence. Some teens feel that there is no reason to live. They have had too many bad times, one hurt after another.

The third theme is the stress of school and how that stress is all-consuming. Teens are sad and depressed over grades, worry excessively over receiving a B+ on a test or paper and concerned that their grades won't go higher before the end of the semester. They have no free time to be kids, no free time to hang out with their friends, and they don't even have time to sleep. They feel that they are on a treadmill with no way of getting off and wonder if life will ever be different. They don't want to let themselves or their parents down so they continue this crazy pace of life.

The fourth theme is how important relationships are and how difficult it is when those relationships are strained or terminated. Teens have difficulty dealing with self-esteem, the drama of friendships, social rejection, loneliness, finding their identity, and the lack of connection to others. They have difficulty if they don't feel popular and are not part of the “in crowd.” They tend to compare themselves to others, thinking everyone else has it easy or that others have the “perfect life.” They tend to lose perspective and don't realize that everyone has ups and downs in their lives.

The fifth theme was how the teens described depression: “As a ditch that consumes feelings,” “a shadow looming over a person,” “a dark lonely hole,” “a huge wave of sadness,” “a black hole,” and “living without a heart.” (These quotes were taken from actual submissions to this edition of Verdadera).

It is difficult to know exactly when sadness turns into clinical depression and it is important not to trivialize either one. I think of sadness as temporary, less intense and of shorter duration (not much more than 2 weeks) versus depression as more intense, of longer duration and persistent unless one gets proper care and treatment. A friend might be sad over an argument with another friend, have a couple of bad days, and then feel better once they make-up or work to resolve their differences. Someone depressed might also be sad over an argument with another friend, but his/her thoughts and feelings tend to be negative and spiral out of control (“I am a horrible person. Nobody likes me. There is no way I can go through life this way.”) To some extent, the difference between the two is the degree of sadness one feels. People who are sad can recover more quickly than those who are depressed. However, persistent and intense sadness is a symptom of depression and should be treated in the same way as depression.

Depression is an illness like diabetes or asthma. Depressed teens need treatment by professionals (therapist, possibly a psychiatrist) because they cannot “bounce back” or “turn a switch on or off” to recover. It helps for depressed teens to have the support of a professional and to know that they have someone to talk to in a confidential manner. Without treatment teens may isolate from family and friends which can lead to a hard time sustaining relationships. They may lack motivation to do their school work leading to poor or failing grades. They may engage in alcohol/drugs or other dangerous behaviors and be at a higher risk for suicide.

*For teens:*

It is important to look out for one another at school. If a teen notices disturbing signs in another teen, they can be a good friend by listening and encouraging that person to get help. If the friend is reluctant to get help, he/she can accompany his/her friend to a school counselor, teacher or parent. Teens can also help each other by opening up about their feelings. If one teen shares his/her feelings with a friend, it is more likely the other friend can open up and share his/her feelings as well.

*For Parents:*

Your teen needs your support and needs you to refrain from judging or discounting his/her feelings. It is important to pay attention to changes in your teen’s mood. If you notice the signs below, please take your child to his/her primary care doctor or to a therapist. While culturally it may be against the norm to go outside the family for help, depression is an illness like asthma or diabetes and your teen needs treatment to get better. Asking for help is not a sign of shame; it is a sign of strength. Teaching your child to ask for help when needed is one of the most important things you can teach him/her. It is a skill that your teen can use throughout his/her life.

***These are warning signs of teen suicide:***

- Change in eating and sleeping habits
- Drug/alcohol abuse
- Noticeable personality changes, violent reactions, rebellious behavior or running away
- Difficulty concentrating, failing grades, loss of interest in fun activities
- A focus on morbid or death themes
- Frequent complaints of stomachaches, headaches, fatigue and/or physical symptoms related to emotions
- Prior suicide attempts
- Family history of suicide
- Verbal hints such as “I won’t be a problem to you much longer; nothing matters; it’s no use; I won’t see you again, I wish I was never born”
- Putting affairs in order, cleaning one’s room, throwing or giving away important belongings
- Suddenly becoming cheerful after a period of depression

(Taken from Bill Wilson Center Training Materials for Interns)

Lastly, I hope that parents will encourage their teens to get a good night’s sleep. The body needs sleep to stay healthy and function well; inadequate sleep can lead to depression. Homework and extracurricular activities are important, but not so much that they should jeopardize the physical and emotional well-being of teens.

Janet B. Jacobi, M.A. MFT  
20395 Pacifica Drive, Suite 101  
Cupertino, CA 95014  
(408) 996-7575

[janetjacobi@comcast.net](mailto:janetjacobi@comcast.net)

Provides psychotherapy for teens and adults.

## Resources from the Verdadera Staff and Professional

### Important Phone Numbers for Parents/Teens:

Suicide and Crisis Hotline (408) 279-3312

Contact Cares (408) 850-6125

24/7 for Youth (888) 247-7717

### Websites for Self-help and Information

[www.depression.com](http://www.depression.com) – for information on treating and identifying depression.

[www.hopefordepression.com](http://www.hopefordepression.com) – for information about eating disorders, different kinds of depression, and treatment options available.

[www.twloha.com](http://www.twloha.com) – an American non-profit organization focused on helping people with problems such as depression, drug addiction, etc, and seeks connect individuals to treatment.

[www.depression.about.com](http://www.depression.about.com) – for information about what may cause depression, as well as tests to help individuals determine if they actually are clinically depressed or not.

### Upcoming Issues and Submission Deadlines

| <u>Issue</u>                   | <u>Deadline</u>          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| February – Money               | 6pm, Saturday, January 2 |
| March - Crime                  | 6pm, Saturday, February  |
| April – Fears about the Future | 6pm, Saturday, March 6   |

### 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)

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

- 1) Student(s)' and parents' full name.
- 2) Student(s)' year of graduation
- 3) Postal address
- 4) Student and parents' emails.

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

*Issues will be sent via email starting February. If you would like to continue receiving a printed copy of Verdadera while subscribing online, please indicate so in your email to <[verdadera.entries@gmail.com](mailto:verdadera.entries@gmail.com)>*



## Sadness & Depression

December 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.*

**Staff:** Christina Aguila, Jackie Barr, Kevin Chang, Alex Cheng, Kriti Garg, Amy Kahng, Jane Kim, Tiffany Lau, Brendan Lee, Yasmin Majeed, Karishma Mehrotra, Samantha Pham, Jennifer Nguyen, Kevin Tsukii, Rachael Yao, Shishi Wang, Laura Yang, Sara Yang

**Advisors:** Hung Wei, Carol Satterlee

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