



The new monthly magazine
for TeenHelp.org

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the all new Avatar magazine, the latest edition to the tremendous list of resources available on TeenHelp.org.

Let me start off by introducing myself, my name is Owen (Unscriptable) and I will be the person who is putting together this monthly production for you. If you want to see some of your work in the magazine in future months, you can PM it to me, and I will save it and use it in the issue where I think it is most suited.

This issue we have some very informative articles, about self esteem, how the media affects us, how to deal with troublesome families and what it's like being an administrator on TeenHelp.org. We also have some fun articles, like a quiz and some poetry, as well as an interesting beginning to a series about someones struggle with an eating disorder.

Well, it has been an interesting month on TeenHelp for me, with all the changes being implemented on the site. And this magazine has been a big part of my month! So I hope you enjoy it, I hope you will enjoy submitting your own work to it, and I hope you will come back next month and read it again!

Owen
(Unscriptable)

Horoscope for the month of June

ARIES
March 21- April 19



The stars show a lack of energy clouding your life, (perhaps spending a bit too much time on TeenHelp?). You are in serious need of some 'ME' time, whether it be riding your bike, spending some time in the gym *cough* *cough* FluffyHelen, or just cuddling up with a good book (ask Rob for some suggestions). And if that doesn't spring your life back into hyper drive, then why not pull a 'Sissleys' and buy some pretty clothes (like skirts that she'll never wear).

Love Life: Going along with the 'Me' time theme, put your love life in the backseat and concentrate on yourself.

This month's most visited forum is the:
Why Me

This months horoscopes brought to you by
the less than sane Ash.
(Argxpirate)

Self Esteem and You

We all have times in life where we might doubt ourselves, and feel we are not adequate. However, for some people it is more than this. They constantly feel negatively about themselves. Often people compare themselves with others. Low self-esteem can lead to many different emotions including feelings of worthlessness, no point in anything and depression. People may suffer from low self-esteem due to being abused, had relationship problems, been bullied or any other event, which made them see themselves in a dark light.

Our self-esteem can affect us all differently. It can affect how we relate to people, and our outlook on life. Individuals can be stunningly attractive and world-famous, and seem perfect - yet still, deep down, find it hard to value themselves. However, it is always possible to boost your self-esteem. It might seem impossible, but that is because you have low self-esteem so is thinking negatively about yourself.

Firstly you have to start by accepting yourself for the person you are. You are a very special and unique person. No one could replace you, because you have special qualities about yourself, which make you different. This means that out of six billion people in the world, you are a once in a lifetime. Therefore you are very important and precious. People with low self-esteem often think they are not important and that other people are more important than themselves. Do you think that? If so then try to change these thoughts, because otherwise other people will start to think that too.

By Jen
(Nearly-Dead-Inside)



Here are a few things, which may be helpful in improving your self-esteem:

- Appreciate yourself – Have 'you' time
- Stop criticizing yourself – accept yourself
- Write at least 10 positive things about yourself
- Focus on your positive qualities, take a look at what you have achieved and what you hope to achieve in the future.
- Focus on things which make you happy
- When you have achieved something treat yourself
- Pamper yourself
- Accept compliments when people give them
- Set yourself goals which are achievable
- Try doing a new sport
- Volunteering can also be a way to make you feel better about yourself

My Struggle

Warning, the following is a part of a series of entries by a forum member who is struggling with an eating disorder. If you are currently struggling with an eating disorder this article may be triggering.

Sometimes I wish I feel like I'm invisible, like the stars in the morning sky. My physical presence is still there, but nobody sees me. Nobody cares, until one star falls, and they decide to make a wish. Everyone seems to wish for love, happiness, or megabucks. If I was granted a wish, I would wish to be beautiful. I would give up anything just to have the body of a ballerina, or the looks of an angel. Everyone seems to be so beautifully thin and well defined. Everyone but me.

I've been struggling with my weight for about a year or so, but it seems like forever. The mirror started to lie to me in the sixth grade, or perhaps I lied to myself. I highly doubt that I've done so, though. It's not possible that my eyes and thoughts started to deceive me for so long. My body does not look as great as the other girls' and neither does my overall appearance. I desperately need to have something that they don't have.

Food is my friend and my enemy. It is the comfort

that I seek when everything seems to fall upon me, but it is what makes me feel helpless and spiteful. I pretend that I'm not there, and as I slowly start to fade away from reality, hopefully my body will do the same. I'm getting thin and thinner, but I know no limits. I cannot decide whether I want to stop dancing along the edges of life and death, as I know that if I keep it up it will affect the life that I live. That is, if I choose to live.

There's a little voice in my head telling me that I should hang on to life, as it is very precious. Many people are not blessed with the things I have, but am I asking for so much? I can't find a strand of hope left to hold on to.

By Sylvia
(Amore)



If you Think you may be Developing an Eating Disorder

If you think you may be developing an eating disorder, it is important that you act very quickly. There are lots of means of gaining support or guidance, please don't be afraid to use them.

Some such means of support are the HelpLINK system and the LiveHelp system here on TeenHelp, or you can make a post in the support forums. I am also including some useful numbers which you can ring if you think you may be developing an eating disorder, or if you are currently suffering from an eating disorder. Please don't be hesitant to use them.

BEAT Helpline (UK):
0845 634 14 14

NEDA (USA):
800-931-2237

ReachOut (Australia):
Lifeline: 131 114
Kids Line: 1800 55 1800

NEDIC (Canada):
1-866-633-4220

Avatar

What Influence does the Media Have on us?

Have you flipped through a magazine lately? I'm sure some are frequent magazine buyers, and some glance at the headlines while they're paying for their groceries. How many young girls look up to the "models" in the magazines? How many girls strive, and starve to become so "perfect". The effect of the media has such a huge impact on society, and yet we continue to promote it, to feed the fire.

Sometimes I wonder why we subject ourselves to such a destructive industry, why we continue to let ourselves absorb the chaotic thoughts of tabloids. Why is it that we are so addicted to other people's lives? Why do we feel we need to constantly admire, observe, and judge other people? I think it's because it allows us to not observe ourselves. Because then we'd have to work on improving ourselves, rather than just sitting around making fun of other people's imperfections.

The media makes such a huge impact on individuals, and such, it makes a huge impact on society, and how society functions. Look at how important it is to be thin nowadays. Girls are dying to be thin. Everywhere you go, all you see is images of beautiful people. And you can't help but want to be a beautiful person. I mean, look at her! Her amazing photo shopped body. The flawless airbrushed skin. What could be better?

And the vicious cycle turns round. I don't know what it's going to take to stop the movement, or how in the world we could possibly do it. But, I think that there's a need for change. Imagine a world without the expectation of how pretty you should look. A world where weight and beauty are irrelevant. Because what you look like shouldn't matter. It shouldn't matter to other people, but more importantly, it shouldn't matter to you. Of course, you want to keep yourself presentable and well kept, but who care if you aren't perfect? It doesn't change who you are, and it shouldn't change how you feel. I see people missing out on life everyday because of the way they feel about themselves. It's a heartbreaking sight. To see people so lost, so broken, because of a "standard" that the media has set for society. For me, it's ridiculous. And it needs to stop. No one deserves to be treated differently because of how they look. It makes absolutely no logical sense. How is it that the way someone appears affects who they are, what they believe in, how they feel about life? Who are we to judge someone just because of what we look like?

I don't understand the mentality. And yet I won't say I've never been there. We all have. We've all judged someone else because of their appearance. It's so natural, so easy. Does it ever make you feel guilty that it's so easy? Do you ever wonder why it's so easy? It's because we were raised in a world where we judge people by their cover. That's the world we grew up in, so that's how we act, right? Technically, yes. But theoretically, no. You have the choice to put the garbage out of your mind. You don't have to "do what you're told" when it comes



to the way you treat other people. You can make the change. You can be the person who doesn't care what someone looks like. You can be the person who is genuinely interested in who a person is, rather than what a person looks like.

So maybe we can't abolish tabloids. Maybe they won't ever go away, who knows. But maybe we can make a change, one by one. If you were to be conscious about the way you're judging people, and stop to think about it each time you go to start, you could change yourself little by little. And by changing ourselves, we can affect others. One by one, we can help everybody live a little bit better, and a little bit more peacefully. All you have to do is think about it.

By Lee (Little _ Broken _ One)

Poetry

I Hope

I hope you find happiness,
In everything you do.
I hope someday someone
special;
Falls in love with you.

I hope you find courage,
Whenever you aren't strong.
I hope you find that extra
push,
To help you get along.

I hope you experience,
All the good things in life;
And that someday you;
Won't have to deal with
strife.

I hope you have luck,
That never ever ends;
That you will make up,
With any lost friends.

I hope you get to laugh,
Many times a day;
And have more happy mem-
ories,
Then words can ever say.

I hope that you read this,
When you're here Or away
from home,
And that you remember No
matter what;
You're never alone.

By .Infinity.

This month in Avatar, we have two poems which have been carefully selected by TeenHelp's self expression forum moderator "forgottenfadedmemory"



If you would like to submit your own poetry in to later issues of Avatar, there will be a thread at the top of the self expression forums for you to do this.

Inspiration

Fingers dancing on the
strings,
Chords of strength come out
in rings,
A melodic voice speaks in a
soothing fashion,
As the lyrics hit you with true
compassion.

His hands move with a mas-
culine grace,
Keeping in time with his
passionate face,
The words spoken with each
passing moment,
Raise within you an awaken-
ment.

Mesmerizing movements
captivate those who gaze,
Leaving their mindsets in a
reflective daze,
The talent seeps through
each twist of his hand,
Adding to the inspirational
piece we all understand.

This performer is no ordinary
man,
For he is gifted in life's musi-
cal plan,
Talents beyond imagination
lie within his soul,
The power of music all at his
control.

By Angeleyes55

A Day in the Life of a TeenHelp.org Administrator

What is it like to be one of the administrators on a site as big as TeenHelp.org? Well, I have been doing this job on and off for about seven years, and have worked with quite a few different co-admins in that time too, so I would say I have a pretty good understanding of the role by now.

My browsing the web generally begins with stuff that I probably won't be able to do once I load up TeenHelp.org. This includes checking my facebook, dealing with eBay auctions, talking to people who are non-teenhelp related and reading my news feeds. Piddly little things really but important nonetheless.

Once I have done all of my non-TeenHelp related internet business I'll load up the site and deal with my PM's first. On an average day I will receive between 5 and 10 although there are usually way more. The PM's will be anything from "can you change my username please" to "I have a problem with another user on the site". Sometimes I'll refer these to Maddox and Voltar to deal with but mostly I'll be able to do them on my own.

Then I'll go in and check any new threads in the Staff/Admin forums and reply to those. These take priority over the rest of the site because they are the views of the staff members who essentially work for me and I need to know what is going on with them and their lives. Then it'll be a quick check of the staff calendar

to see who I can expect to be online/who is going to be busy and then I'll hit the main forums...

Supermods (thankfully) deal with the majority of problem threads in the forums though there was a time when I would have to add that to my daily to-do list also! I'll go through and browse the forums and generally make sure everything is running as it should be. Then I'll go back into the Staff forums because the discussions in there are surprisingly much faster than the regular forums! Ooh, the intrigue!

Whilst I've been carrying out these tasks I'll generally have had about seven different IM windows open in the background and which will continue to flash up at me regularly until I go offline! So bear in mind that if you are going to send me a message on MSN that you are often among around eight others who are also doing the same! Having my IM open means that more jobs will come in through that. Sometimes I can pass these over to Maddox or Voltar to deal with but mostly they are small jobs.

Then it is time for my inbox and whatever my TeenHelp.org email address wishes to throw at me. People from the site will usually PM me which means that my inbox is usually full of transcripts from Live Help and the chat room. I'll open up a few transcripts and make sure everything is going OK and scan through the chat room log to make sure it is all above board.

Then it is just a case of cycle, rinse, repeat until I go offline!

On a busy day I can expect to be in front of a computer for several hours at a time. It is very rare that I can clear the TeenHelp workload in under an hour, especially if my MSN is open at the same time.

So there we go. This is the day in the life of a teenhelp.org administrator. I do obviously have a life away from the internet but even then I'll be getting phone calls/sms messages informing me of site business! I like to go to the gym (around 4 times a week) and I work as a temp for an agency which means that I am periodically working a full 9am-5pm week for somebody else.

I enjoy the work that I do on TeenHelp.org and eventually hope to go into some kind of social work-related job which I get paid for as opposed to just giving up my time to do.

I am especially thankful to anybody on the site who helps ease the workload from me by taking some tasks off my hands. I currently have Pure-Morning heading up co-ordination of Staff Training and of course Owen has taken it upon himself to re-design the logos/become the editor of the TeenHelp magazine.

I will finish my first article here. I will try and come up with a more interesting topic for next month.

By Helen
(FluffyHelen)

Three Tips for Dealing with a Difficult Family

I grew up around a crazy family, and it would've been helpful if I had some pointers of how to deal with them at the beginning, so here are my tips I've put together on how to stay sane when the rest of your family isn't. I've also added in some personal experiences.

1. Stay Calm

When your family is driving you up the wall with nagging or name-calling, do your best not to say any of it back to them. If they're making you do something, just get it over with and do it to stop their bothering, don't yell back to them, it will make things worse. If you have a sibling who constantly gets on your nerves, chances are they're trying to, so either lock them out of your room calmly or ignore them. If they get no response at all, they will likely stop.

When I was little, I found it hilariously fun to break into my older brother's room and play with his stuff, even touch his mint-condition coin collection with my sticky little fingers. What kept me going back? The fact that he got mad at me and it made me want to be even more of a little devil. Eventually he got older and me, still being around 7 years old, kept playing with his things. He decided to ignore me, and I eventually lost interest in being a little brat.



2. Communicate

Are your parents not letting you out to that party on Saturday night? Do they just say no? Or is there some sort of misunderstanding between you? Best thing to do is talk it out with them. Your parents are adults, and they've had some of the same experiences as you have. It is much more effective to raise something maturely and let them see things from your point of view, than it is to yell until your voice gives out and get grounded from going out for two whole weeks. Communication is the key to a lot of problems between families, and if things were calmly talked out these days, we'd have a lot less problems in the world.

Also, a good time to communicate with them is if you've having problems of your own, like your schoolwork piles up and you feel stressed. It's good to open up to somebody in your life, as they can help you out, too. If you're feeling down or even if you're feeling happy, talk to them about it and share thoughts with them. They'll probably be happy their teenager who they barely know is talking to them.

My mom and I share a very open relationship. Granted, she may annoy me sometimes but I know she means well. It's also very comforting to know that someone else has gone through what I have, and they understand. It's also good to bring things out, into the open, instead of keeping it bottled up inside. An older sibling is also good to talk to, to get a few tips for things they have encountered too. Maybe they can even warn you for some tough times coming up.



3. Keep an Open, Trustworthy Relationship

Both of the above things will not work if you don't work hard to keep an open relationship with your family. If you end up being nice to your parents for a day, just so you can get to a party, then do something irresponsible, chances are they won't trust you again for a long time. They're also the only family you'll ever have, so it would be best if you'd make the best out of any situation. If something's bothering you, just let them know. Families have a gift of being comforting and nice if you give them a chance.

And remember, to always offer the same back. If your parents just had a big fight and you find your mom alone and upset, offer a hug and ask if she wants to talk. I know my mom always appreciates this. Or if you find your older sibling in their room crying, offer them a hug and a chance to talk, too.

So, this concludes my 3 Main Tips for Dealing with a Difficult Family. Good luck with these tips, and stay safe, everyone!

By Kris
(Love__)



We would like to thank the following people for contributing to Avatar:

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