

Tragedy  
in Haiti

Ten Songs You  
Want to Hear

Types of  
Birth

Cover photo  
by **Spazola**

Feb. 2010  
TeenHelp.org's eZine  
Volume 3,  
Issue 8

# Avatar



**Understanding Type One Diabetes**  
Understanding juvenile/insulin dependent diabetes.





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### Contact

Your valuable contributions are what make Avatar so unique. Please submit us your content, whether it be an article, poem, joke, game, photo, drawing or anything else you have to share!

Submission form: [www.teenhelp.org/avatar/submit](http://www.teenhelp.org/avatar/submit)  
Email: [avatar@teenhelp.org](mailto:avatar@teenhelp.org)



## Letter from the Editors

Hello everyone, and welcome to this issue of Avatar! We're glad to see you again.

February is the month of love, and this is an issue that we're sure you'll love! (Don't worry, we didn't over do the Valentine's Day references, we promise!) We hope that this February is big for you, even though it's known as "the little month."

We're going to start this issue with a **Letter to the Editors**, in which we receive some feedback from one of our wonderful readers. We love hearing what you all think, so if you have any feedback for us, we'd love to hear from you too! Who knows? Maybe your letter will be featured!

Moving on to **TeenHelp Times**, we have an informative article on the current tragedy in Haiti, which explains some of the issues Haitians are facing and how you can help. We also have a great article on World Thinking Day, in addition to a quick review of events from January of 2010 that matter to you, and our **Cause of the Month**, Médecins Sans Frontières. Check it out for more information!

In **Mind and Body** we have an educational piece on types of birth. Also featured this month is "Understanding Type One Diabetes," which explains some of the facts and misconceptions some have regarding this life altering condition. Don't forget to check out advice from the Avatar Editors in **Dear Avatar**, TeenHelp's very own advice column!

In our **Lifestyle** section we have some more relaxed articles; one on the care of Siamese fighting fish, and another on ten songs that you just have to hear. While you're at it, stop by **Fun and Games** for a little Valentine's Day trivia and some delicious recipes! Last, but not least, don't forget to check out this month's **Self Expression** and your monthly **Horoscope**.

We hope you have a fabulous month!

The Avatar Editors.

## Editors

### Editor-in-Chief

Mel

### Content Editor

Katrina

### Graphics Editor

Jessie (Asylum)

### Sub-Editor of News and Debates

Cas\* (Casey)

### Sub-Editor of Mind and Body

Maria (Gidig)

### Sub-Editor of Dear Avatar

Natasha (SaveMe)

### Sub-Editor of Lifestyle

Nat (Strider)

### Sub-Editor of Fun and Games

Amy (Amy.)

### Sub-Editor of Graphics and Quality

Stephanie  
(Konstantine)





## Letter to the Editors

In the January 2010 Avatar Issue (Volume 3, Issue 7) on page 12 the second question asks about how you can tell if you are depressed. The response from Avatar staff mentions the fact there is a difference between feeling sad and suffering from Depression (with a capital "D"). The response then goes on to say that "People who suffer from depression let that 'down' feeling take over a lot of their life."

It may be one little word, but saying that people who suffer from depression "let" it take over their life angered me as I feel it stigmatizes those with Depression by seemingly saying they are choosing to suffer.

As someone who struggles with various mental illnesses including Major Depressive Disorder, I find the stigma that I am choosing to struggle on many people's lips. I think it's hard for people to understand what Depression is like since the feeling of depression/extreme sadness is felt by everyone from time to time. Because of this, it seems many people have a hard time wrapping their head around the fact that Depression the illness doesn't just "go away".

I try explain Depression to people who have no knowledge of it by telling them "Think of a time you felt so sad you thought it would never go

away, when life felt so painful that even getting out of bed was hard. Maybe you felt that way when a loved one died. I feel like that more days than not because of a chemical imbalance in my brain. It's true that there are things people with Depression can do to help improve their mood such as exercise, getting enough sleep, balanced eating, medication, and therapy. But it often takes time, sometimes months or years, to find the right combination of lifestyle changes and other treatment that will work, even when the person with Depression is doing everything their doctor recommends. Depression is painful, and if I could wish it away, or take a magic pill to make it disappear, I would."

As stated on a website dedicated to reducing stigma against mental illness in the United States, "Mental illness is not caused by personal weakness—nor can it be cured by positive thinking or willpower—proper treatment is needed."

I hope in the future words to describe Mental Illness such as Depression will be carefully selected, as to not fuel the myths which are already alive and well.

Thank You,  
Megan K. (Crescendo)

## Contributors

The Avatar Editors would like to thank the following TeenHelp users for their valuable contributions published in this month's magazine.

Contributions from readers like you are what make Avatar so unique and wonderful. Please consider submitting content, whether it be an article, poem, photograph, or anything else.

**[www.teenhelp.org/avatar/submit](http://www.teenhelp.org/avatar/submit) or  
[avatar@teenhelp.org](mailto:avatar@teenhelp.org)**

### Articles

Charlie (x-gothic-princess-x)  
Jessi (Spazola)

### Images

Jessi (Spazola) [2]

### Letter to the Editors

Megan (Crescendo)

### Self Expression

Sarah (eaty)





## Tragedy in Haiti

by Casey (Cas\*)

**Haiti, the first independent nation in Latin America**, still remains the poorest country in the western world. On January 12th, 2010, tragedy struck the island nation. At 4:52 p.m. local time Haiti was hit by an earthquake measuring 7.0M<sub>w</sub> on the moment magnitude scale. The epicenter, 25km (16 miles) west of the capital and major port city Port-au-Prince, was near Léogâne. Although a 7.0M<sub>w</sub> earthquake is only considered a medium sized earthquake, the quake itself and over fifty aftershocks have caused mass devastation including destruction, injury, and death.



***Cries for help are resounding the world over, and many Western countries are organizing efforts to aid Haiti.***

Cries for help are resounding the world over, and many Western countries are organizing efforts to aid Haiti. Mass media sources like CNN and BBC are constantly updating their websites and broadcasts to bring the world the latest on the disaster. Social networking sites like YouTube and Facebook have links to donate to Haiti, and other organizations are accepting donations via the Internet and text message. Organizations providing direct aid include the International Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and the United Nations.

Some looting has taken place, which is not abnormal in the wake of natural disaster. The current problem is not the looting, however. Getting people out of the rubble, and getting them proper medical care is the major issue right now. Haiti is short on necessities including food and water, shelter, medical supplies, and doctors. With no proper place to help people, as all the hospitals are either damaged or full, and with no sign of Haitian nurses and doctors, Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières) and independent medical professionals from around the world have been working in fields and

under tents, in makeshift medical centers, performing operations and amputations.

Not only hospitals were damaged. A majority of state buildings collapsed, as have many schools and homes. People crowd the streets, lined with the dead, trying to find their loved ones, some still buried in the rubble, some still alive. Tent cities are being erected in streets and fields, and with the major city Port-au-Prince in shambles, help hasn't even begun to reach other, outer-lying areas even a week after the earthquake hit.

It is gruesome to imagine, let alone to watch on the news and see in pictures, but the horrors of natural disaster include the loss of human life. With an estimated 200,000 lost, the dead are being buried in mass graves. It is reminiscent of some of humanity's worst days, and a startling picture of the brutal state of Haiti. But countless people coming together to help this battered nation in all ways possible is an astonishing picture of the good and hopeful state of our world.

### How can you help?

The International Red Cross asks that you donate money to help them rather than send supplies, because supplies won't arrive in time. You can find out more about how to donate by checking out the Red Cross's website at [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org). For more ways to help, research well-known and respected charities, watch the news, or contact your local Red Cross or Salvation Army. ■





## News that Affects You: January 2010 in Review

by Jessie (Asylum)

**Despite its exciting name, we all know that news can be boring.** Let's face it; wading through websites knee-deep in articles on topics you don't care about is a daunting task any day of the week (unless you like that sort of thing.) For those of you less inclined to dig up the stories on your own (and even those of you who enjoy the hunt), now you have nothing to worry about! Check out this section for synopses of news events from the past month that you're talking about (or should be!)

### Mental Health

On January 1, 2010, a study released by Columbia University Medical Center in New York, USA suggests that **teenagers who go to bed late and who sleep less each night are more likely to develop depression and suicidal thoughts.** Data was collected from 15,500 12 to 18-year-olds, and the results were staggering: teens who went to bed after midnight were 24% more likely to have depression than those who went to bed before 10pm, and teens who slept less than five hours per night had a startling 71% higher risk than those teens sleeping eight hours. For more on this study visit [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk).

On January 12, 2010, a study finds **students are more depressed now than during the Great Depression.** The study, to be published in a future issue of the Clinical Psychology Review, analyzed 77,576 high school or college students. Overall it found an average of five times as many students in 2007 struggled with one or more mental health disorders, compared to 1938. To read more visit [www.ap.org](http://www.ap.org).

### Health

A study published January 11, 2010 on the Website of Circulation, an American Heart Association journal, suggests that **watching too much television can take years off your life.** The study of 8,800 adults found that those who watched less than four or more hours of TV per day were 80% more likely to die from heart disease and 46% more likely to die from any cause, compared to those who watched less than two hours of TV per day. To read more about this study visit [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com) or [www.health.com](http://www.health.com).

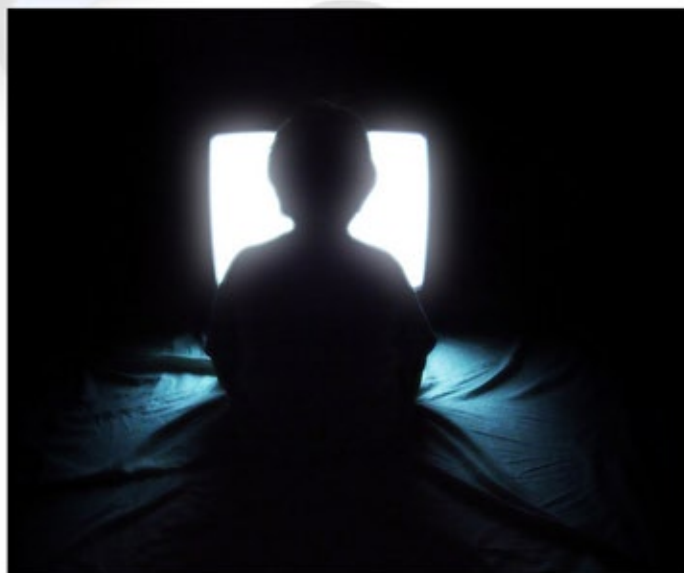
### Human Rights

On January 11, 2010, **Perry v. Schwarzenegger** begins in San Francisco, California, USA. The case challenges California Proposition 8, a state constitutional amendment stating that only marriage between a man and a woman is recognized in the state of California. **Perry v. Schwarzenegger is expected to be a landmark case regarding same-sex marriage,** and many suspect it will reach the Supreme Court of the United States. For the latest, visit [www.ap.org](http://www.ap.org) or [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com).

On January 12, 2010, **Internet superpower Google announces it may end operations in China.** Since 2006 Google has conceded to the Chinese government's demands on censorship, but upon announcing that they may cease to censor search results, [google.cn](http://google.cn) expects disruptions in or cessation of services. For more visit [www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com) or [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk).

### Economy

On January 19, 2010 it is announced that **British confectionery company Cadbury will be purchased by American company Kraft Foods** for UK£11.5 billion (approximately US\$18.9 billion). The acquisition is controversial, and layoffs are expected, as the deal will put Kraft in debt. For the latest news visit [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk).







## Get Thinking: World Thinking Day

by Casey (Cas\*)

**February 22 is World Thinking Day.** World Thinking Day many not be well known, but if you have ever been in Girl Guides or Girl Scouts, you know what I'm talking about. For those of you who don't know, World Thinking Day is when different troops of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts gather together to work and learn as a community. World Thinking Day gives girls and young women around the world a chance to celebrate international friendship, and to work towards a common goal.

**...to give girls a day to think about each other, and give thanks for their sister Girl Guides and Girl Scouts around the world.**

World Thinking Day was created in 1926, at the fourth annual Girl Guide/Girl Scout International Conference. It was originally created to give girls a day to think about each other, and give thanks for their sister Girl Guides and Girl Scouts around the world. The 22nd of February was chosen because it is the birth day of two important people: Lord Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scouts, and Olave Baden-Powell, head of the Girl Guides. Today, not only is World Thinking Day used to give thanks for each other, but it is also a day of service to the community.

This year, girls all over the world are working to combat extreme poverty and hunger. Many troops will be collecting cans of food and raising money. These girls are young, ranging from the age of five to twenty-five. They hope and believe that together, joining 150 countries of girls, they can end poverty. And maybe they can!

Girl Guides and Girl Scouts value friendship, community, and international understanding. Are we all that different from these girls? I don't think so. Here on TeenHelp we all value friendship, our tight knit community, and understanding. We may sometimes disagree but that's part of life. And despite our differences and the troubles we may be facing right now, we can each help to make positive change in our world. This year, on February 22, I challenge you to do something to make a difference. Whether you give canned food to your local food pantry, volunteer, or help someone in need play your part in making our world a better place. Together we can do anything. ■

### More News?

**For more news stories and articles about your world check out:**

"Holocaust Memorial Day" on page 5 of the January 2010 (Volume 3, Issue 7) release of Avatar.

"How Will You Remember the 00s?" on page 6 of the January 2010 (Volume 3, Issue 7) release of Avatar.

"Activism Against AIDS" on page 4 of the December 2009 (Volume 3, Issue 6) release of Avatar.

"Socialism" on page 5 of the December 2009 (Volume 3, Issue 6) release of Avatar.

"Remembrance Day" on page 5 of the November 2009 (Volume 3, Issue 5) release of Avatar.







## Understanding Type One Diabetes

by Jessi (Spazola)

### The Big Q: What Is Diabetes?

Diabetes (medically known as diabetes mellitus) is the name given to disorders in which the body has trouble regulating its blood glucose, or blood sugar, levels. There are two major types of diabetes: Type One Diabetes, also known as Juvenile or Insulin Dependant Diabetes (treated by manually injecting insulin), and Type Two, which involves insulin resistance, and can often be treated effectively through oral medication. Though both diseases concern the regulation of glucose levels, causes and treatment of Type One and Type Two are very different. Neither disease is contagious nor infectious.

Type One diabetes occurs when the body's immune system attacks and destroys certain cells in the pancreas, an organ about the size of a hand that is located behind the lower part of the stomach. These cells (called beta cells) are contained within small islands of endocrine cells (called the pancreatic islets.) Beta cells normally produce insulin, a hormone that helps the body move the glucose contained in food into cells throughout the body, which use it for energy. But when the beta cells are destroyed, no insulin can be produced, and the glucose stays in the blood instead, where it can cause serious damage to all organ systems in the body.

***While there are many treatment options available at this time ... the disease cannot currently be cured or reversed.***

For this reason, people with Type One diabetes must take insulin in order to stay alive. This means undergoing multiple injections daily, or having insulin delivered through an insulin pump. To determine the amount of insulin needed, they test their blood sugar by pricking their fingers for blood six or more times a day. People with diabetes must also carefully balance their food intake and their exercise to regulate their blood sugar levels, in an attempt to avoid hypoglycemic (low blood sugar) and hyperglycemic (high blood sugar) reactions, which can be life threatening.

Type One Diabetes is a self-managed disease, one

that takes years of trial-and-error to control. While there are many treatment options available at this time (such as insulin pump therapy, Multiple Daily Injections, and Constant Glucose Monitoring systems), the disease cannot currently be cured or reversed.

### Common Misconceptions

**Myth:** Taking insulin cures diabetes.

**Fact:** Taking insulin keeps people with type 1 diabetes alive, but does not cure the disease. While progress toward finding a cure has been substantial, there is still no cure for diabetes. Insulin is LIFE SUPPORT, not a cure.

**Myth:** Diabetes is caused by obesity, or eating too much sugar.

**Fact:** While obesity has been identified as one of the "triggers" for type 2 diabetes, it has no relation to the cause of type 1 diabetes. Scientists do not yet know exactly what causes type 1 diabetes, but they believe that both genetic and environmental factors are involved. Eating too much sugar, or being overweight, is not a factor. People with Type One Diabetes can eat just like anyone else--they just need to cover it with insulin.

**Myth:** People with diabetes should never eat sweets.

**Fact:** Limiting sweets can help people with type 1 diabetes keep their blood sugar under control, but, with advice from their doctor or nutritionist, sweets can fit into their meal plan, just as they would for people without diabetes. And there are times when sweets are a must: if the blood sugar level drops too low, sweets (or juice, or soda) can be the surest to raise it, and prevent the onset of hypoglycemia (dangerously low blood sugar). Sugar can sometimes save lives.

**Myth:** Juvenile Diabetes can eventually be outgrown.

**Fact:** While Juvenile Diabetes is most commonly diagnosed in children, teenagers and young adults, it may be contracted at any age, and is a life-long disease. You cannot outgrow diabetes. It lasts a lifetime.

*(Continued on page 9)*





## JDRF Research

JDRF was founded in 1970 by the parents of children with type 1 diabetes. As a result, JDRF volunteers have a personal connection to type 1 diabetes, which translates into an unrelenting commitment to finding a cure. These volunteers are the driving force behind more than 100 locations worldwide that raise money and advocate for government spending for type 1 diabetes research.

JDRF funding and leadership is associated with most major scientific breakthroughs in type 1 diabetes research to date. In fact, JDRF funds a major portion of all type 1 diabetes research worldwide, more than any other charity. JDRF provided more than \$137 million to diabetes research in FY 2007, and is responsible for more than \$1.16 billion in direct funding since it was founded. Our research review process not only includes leading research scientists from around the world, but lay reviewers who either have type 1 diabetes or have family members with type 1 diabetes, ensuring that JDRF funds research with the greatest impact throughout the world, leading to results as soon as possible.



Photograph by Jessi (Spazola)

JDRF is driven to be a leading catalyst for development science that delivers therapeutics to improve the lives of people with diabetes in the near term, ultimately leading to a cure. Working toward this goal, JDRF has taken the lead in translating basic research breakthroughs into cure therapies in such areas as restoring autoimmunity, preventing and reversing complications, islet replacement, beta cell regeneration, and achieving metabolic control. The Foundation creates multidisciplinary programs that bring together diabetes researchers from both academic institutions and industry to find a cure for diabetes and its complications. ■

## What It's Like...

Ask people who have juvenile diabetes. It's difficult. It's upsetting. It's life threatening. It doesn't go away.

"Both children and adults like me who live with type 1 diabetes need to be mathematicians, physicians, personal trainers and dieticians all rolled into one. We need to be constantly factoring and adjusting, making frequent finger sticks to check blood sugars, and giving ourselves multiple daily insulin injections just to stay alive."

- JDRF International Chairman, Mary Tyler Moore

"This disease controls our lives with all the pricking of the fingers, shots, high and low blood sugars; it's like being on a seesaw. Without a cure, we will be stuck on this seesaw till the day we die."

- Tre Kawkins, 12, Michigan

"I want to live someday without thinking about my diabetes. It's a lot for a little kid to keep up with."

- Luke Varadi, 11, South Carolina

"Diabetes has made me different than all my friends. I have an extra burden to carry."

- Caroline McEnery, 17, Connecticut

"I often think that some of the lack of public attention towards type 1 has at least a little to do with the fact that most of us do control it pretty well. And it seems wrong that our successful management of an illness should ever lessen (even in a small way) the need for a cure."

- Anonymous

## Contact us!

*Do you have any comments or feedback on any of our featured Mind and Body articles? Would you like to see one of your articles here or do you have any suggestions on what you'd like to see in future editions of Avatar? If so, we'd love to hear from you.*

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## Types of Birth

*by Maria (Gidig)*

**Having a child can be** a frightening experience. Doctors, needles, babies, procedures, and lists of things to remember loom over your head. You're going to be a mom, bringing a baby into the world. It's best to be informed about the types of births, where you can deliver, and who can and should be there with you to make the experience as comfortable as possible.

### Care Providers

Different people can help in different ways to give you the best care possible. When looking for the right care provider, decide how and where you'd like to give birth. Get recommendations, and decide who you'd feel most comfortable with talking to. Sometimes you have to ask personal questions, so if you don't feel at ease with them, you may not talk about crucial things to the birthing process.

**Obstetricians/Gynecologists:** Obstetricians and gynecologists are doctors specializing in caring for women through childbirth. They closely monitor the pregnant woman's health through the whole pregnancy and delivery. They are meant to prepare you for delivery, and what to expect. Both are informed on woman's reproductive systems, but a gynecologist usually is the one to do pap smears, breast exams and the sort, unlike obstetricians. They're both especially helpful in monitoring high risk pregnancies.

**Midwives:** Midwives usually have a vast amount of knowledge to assist with a delivery. Typically they assist with low risk pregnancies and can help with births at hospitals, homes and birthing centers. They're very emotionally supportive as well as checking on the woman's physical well-being. They believe in normal birth, and only use technology when necessary to you, or your child's health. Midwives also provide the mother with individualized education, emotional counseling, prenatal care, and postpartum support.

### Locations to Give Birth

When choosing a place to give birth, you have to decide where you'd feel most comfortable. Talk to others about their experiences giving birth in different atmospheres, and the care your baby and you will be able to receive at each location.

**Hospitals:** Hospitals are usually the place people choose to give birth. If you have an obstetrician or

gynecologist hospitals are usually where they work out of, and know most about. People choose hospitals because they feel more comfortable having the technology and resources to get help quick in the case of an emergency. Though, keep in mind, sometimes they aren't the most comfortable atmosphere for you. And visiting hours from hospital to hospital vary.

**Birthing Centers:** Sometimes birthing centers are inside hospitals, and sometimes free-standing. They're meant to make the atmosphere more comfortable for everyone involved, and be very specialized at the same time. Midwives are usually the sole care provider here, but obstetricians and gynecologists can work there too. This type of location is recommended for low risk pregnancies, and with woman who want few interventions.

**Home Birth:** Some women choose to have their baby from the comfort of their own home. With having a home birth, you have to be very educated about what's going to happen, what to expect, and how to go about getting medical assistance if needed. Midwives come to help with the birthing process. This is a very family centered birth, but is only recommended for low risk pregnancies. Some women are also uncomfortable with the thought of being so far from medical help in the case of an emergency.

**Water Births:** Some women choose to actually deliver their child in water, such as a pool or a bathtub. Some choose to labor in the water, and get out for delivery. And some choose to deliver in the water as well. The water is soothing and relaxing during the usually uncomfortable process of delivering a child. It can also help lower high blood pressure when it gets high from anxiety. The theory behind it is that the child comes out into an environment that is similar to that in the amniotic sac. If this interests you, be sure to talk to your health care provider and look at if this is a reasonable option.

### Types of Births:

There are various types of births, as in the way the child is delivered. Be sure to look at your options, and decide what is best and most comfortable for you. Talk to your health care provider about what would be in your best interest. And be sure to inform yourself about the possibilities.

(Continued on page 11)





**Natural Birth:** This is also known as vaginal birth. It usually doesn't use the assistance of doctors, and usually people choosing this type of birth have a midwife. These births can happen in hospitals or at home. You can also have a normal birth in a pool, or other water as discussed above. There are many types of pain management that you can use with a natural birth, or you could use none at all. It is rare to need stitches, the only case you may need them is if a tear occurs at the point of birth. Your midwife will let you know what's going on, and will usually put the stitches in themselves. With a normal birth, women usually go home quickly after the delivery compared to other methods. Women also usually recover more quickly.

**Caesarean Section:** There are various reasons why you may have a caesarean section, but normally it is preformed when vaginal birth isn't the safest for you or your baby. Doctors cut through your abdominal wall, where your baby is born through. To have this preformed, you must sign a consent form. You should know all the information you can about caesarean sections, because there are many cases that it needs to be done as an emergency operation if the natural birth is not going correctly. You will be given the proper treatment for pain as you wish, such as an epidural or the like. It can sometimes be uncomfortable because so many people are there, and you are on the spot. But your doctor, your midwife, and your partner are able to come in with you. You normally stay awake for the whole procedure, but in some rare cases they will give you a general anesthetic to put you to sleep.

Overall, remember to ask questions if you're uncomfortable. Look in to the possibilities of what could happen when you're in labor, remember it doesn't always go as planned, but this is for the protection of you and your baby. Your doctor will do what's in you and your baby's best interest, so make sure you chose a doctor you really trust to make these decisions.

After all the labor, rest, and take your child home with you to enjoy having a newborn with you! ■

## More Mind & Body?

### ***Want to read more on pregnancy?***

"*The Stages of Pregnancy, Part I*" on page 7 of the August 2009 (Volume 3, Issue 2) release of Avatar.

"*The Stages of Pregnancy, Part II*" on page 7 of the September 2009 issue (Volume 3, Issue 3) release of Avatar.

### **For other Mind & Body articles check out past issues of Avatar! Some examples of what you will find are:**

"*Alcoholism*" in Volume 3, Issue 7 (January 2010), page 8.

"*Lung Cancer and Smoking*" Volume 3, Issue 5 (November 2009), page 7.

"*Dyslexia*" in Volume 3, Issue 4 (October 2009), page 6.

## Contact us!

*Do you have any comments or feedback on any of our featured Mind and Body articles? Would you like to see one of your articles here or do you have any suggestions on what you'd like to see in future editions of Avatar? If so, we'd love to hear from you.*

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Email: [avatar@teenhelp.org](mailto:avatar@teenhelp.org)





## Cause of the Month: Médecins Sans Frontières

by Jessie (Asylum)

**Doctors Without Borders**, known internationally as Médecins Sans Frontières, or MSF, is a non-governmental medical humanitarian organization. MSF was created in 1971 by a group of French doctors with the belief that all people have a right to medical care and that this right supersedes race, religion or political affiliation.

*"MSF sets out to alleviate human suffering, to protect life and health and to restore and ensure respect for the human beings and their fundamental human rights."*



On the basis of need alone, MSF independently provides emergency aid to people in danger in dozens of countries around the world. Recipients of their services may be in man-made or natural disaster areas, living in areas affected by epidemics, or they may be victims of armed conflict. In countries where health care services are insufficient or non-existent, MSF works in hospitals, aids in vaccination programs, and assists with water sanitation efforts. In poor rural areas, volunteers work in clinics training local health care workers.

MSF also seeks to raise awareness. Human suffering has become so common on our television

screens that an event often has to be of catastrophic proportions in order to gain media attention. Where cameramen and news anchors are not, MSF travels. Recently, in January 2010 alone, MSF teams have reported from Gaza, Republic of Congo, Burundi, Haiti and Somalia.

*"MSF rejects the idea that poor countries deserve third-rate medical care and strives to provide high-quality care to patients and to improve the organization's practices."*

MSF volunteers are doctors, nurses, surgeons, mental health professionals, midwives, laboratory technicians and other paramedical workers. Many non-medical volunteers also play a vital role in the organization's efforts, from administrators and bookkeepers to those in technical fields such as mechanics, construction and sanitation. Because of the demanding and often dangerous nature of their work, MSF cannot open positions to students. If volunteering sounds like something you would enjoy, though, keep them in mind for the future!

For more information on the fantastic work that Médecins Sans Frontières is doing today, and to find out how to can help, please visit:

**International:** [www.msf.org](http://www.msf.org)

**Canada:** [www.msf.ca](http://www.msf.ca)

**United Kingdom:** [www.uk.msf.org](http://www.uk.msf.org)

**United States:** [www.doctorswithoutborders.org](http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org)

### Contact us!

*Do you have any comments or feedback on TeenHelp's Cause of the Month? Do you have suggestions for a cause you would like to see featured in future editions of Avatar? If so, we'd love to hear from you.*

Form: [www.teenhelp.org/avatar/submit](http://www.teenhelp.org/avatar/submit)

Email:  
[avatar@teenhelp.org](mailto:avatar@teenhelp.org)





*A unique way of seeking help.*

I have mild insomnia which makes it really hard to fall asleep at night and I was wondering if any of you had any advice or recommendations on what to use/take to make it easier for me to get to sleep. I've tried lavender but it really doesn't help and my mom won't let me use medications from the doctor

Living with insomnia can make simple day-to-day tasks daunting and difficult. When you're tired all of the time, it can be hard to find the motivation to fulfill obligations for work, school, and your social life. It might help to switch up your routine a bit. Try some relaxation techniques like breathing exercises before sleeping. One of my favorite breathing exercises has you inhale until you can't take in more air, then slowly exhale. It's really relaxing! You might also want to try to sleep without distractions like a television or music playing. If your brain engages with something of visual or auditory interest, it can be more difficult to sleep. Check out your local supermarket for "bedtime" teas or other at-home remedies, and make sure not to eat or drink anything with large amounts of caffeine late in the day. Lastly, don't just lie in bed if you're having a hard time sleeping! If you find yourself awake in bed for twenty minutes or more, do something active or engaging for a while before trying to sleep again.

I just cut myself last night, because my mom told me that she did not care if I woke up in the morning or not. This really upset me, so I hurt myself. But instead of flinching away, I liked it, because the pain helped me take my mind off of what she said and I quit crying. I know I need to tell someone, but I don't want them to do anything too drastic. I'm kind of worried, how should I go about telling a trusted teacher without them freaking out?

I'm really sorry to hear that your mother said that to you. Feeling abandoned or rejected by a loved one can be confusing and difficult. Although I can understand, I'm concerned that you felt your only outlet was self harm. You deserve much better than that, and I hope you will be able to find safe and healthy coping mechanisms. Telling someone would be a great way to garner the support necessary to begin to find and use those alternatives, so I'm glad you want to!

Written notes are a popular way to share difficult infor-

How is it possible that I am on anti-depressants (for my chronic migraines) and yet I still have my depression? It doesn't suppress that, even though it's an anti-depressant.

Our bodies are all different and respond differently to substances, so while some medications may work in one way for you, they will work entirely different for someone else. This is why your medication could be effective in treating your migraines but not your depression symptoms. Also keep in mind that the dose you are on may not be the recommended therapeutic dose for treating depression, which means that you may not be getting enough of the medication to affect your depression symptoms. Remember, though, that I'm not a doctor and that the best person to ask this question is a trained medical professional. If you are concerned about your depression symptoms and would like to start a medication therapy to treat it, bring it up with your prescribing doctor.

Last November I started talking to a nice guy and we became friends. I really like him, and recently he told me that he likes me too! We've hung out a few times and we get along well.

My school is having a homecoming dance. I'm a sophomore and I've wanted to go to one of these dances for a long time. Now that I know this guy, I thought it would be cool to go with him. I was thinking of asking him to go with me, but I'm scared to! I have problems with social anxiety, so I don't know how I'm going to ask a guy to a dance! Any advice or encouragement?

Opening yourself up to potential rejection is a scary thing! I think it's great that you like this guy enough to put yourself out there, though. Hopefully things turn out how you want them to! Remember that if he likes you, too, he's probably feeling shy himself, even if he's making an effort not to outwardly show that. Who knows, maybe he's waiting for you to ask. I find that when I'm nervous, being upfront is best. You could simply blurt it out, something as straightforward as "would you like to go to the homecoming dance with me?" You could also take a more indirect approach, and bring up the dance without asking. Get him talking about it, and see if he intends to go, if he has in the past, if he wants to go with someone, and once you have a feel for his attitude about it, ask then. Good luck!





*A unique way of seeking help.*

**From the moment I wake up to the time I go to sleep I feel exhausted. The only time I'm not is after a few energy drinks or exercise, but I can't constantly chug energy drinks or run all day, so I just live with it, which is hard. I can't concentrate on anything at all, so I'm falling behind in school. All I do is lay around with headaches and I hate it because I'm always so tired, yet I can't sleep anymore because I've already slept eight hours. How the heck do I get more energy?**

I know how you feel on this one. It's pretty rough being tired all the time and you don't know how much it effects you until you experience it yourself. It effects you both mentally and physically and the smallest little things can seem so exhausting. However there is a solution for this problem, actually there are a few solutions. Before even thinking about medication try some of these simple techniques. Sometimes they may seem hard to stick with, but they work for a lot of people. Avoid laying in your bed to watch television, read, or do homework. This will train your body and mind that when you're laying in bed it's time to sleep. Also avoid watching television a half hour or even an hour before going to sleep. The light from the television will wake you up. The same goes for the computer, or even cell phones. Try reading for awhile, or taking a relaxing bath before bed. Also try getting on a schedule that you follow 7 days a week. Eventually you'll be in a good sleep pattern and you should have more energy. If none of these things work, maybe try talking to your doctor. Good luck!

**How should I come out to my father? My mom already knows and she is accepting but my dad is all macho and he has a gangster personality, so how do I face my fears and tell my dad that I'm gay?**

Wow, it's so great that you've already been able to come such a far way with coming out to your mother. Many people haven't gotten that far, so give yourself a pat on your back, you're definitely ahead of the game. When you told your mother, how did she respond? Was she supportive and encouraging and accepting? If so, since I don't know your dad (or you, or the relationship between the two of you), but since your mother does, I would definitely just try to lean on her for support and ask her

advice about this and see how she thinks you should approach this situation. At least, she could tell you if she thinks you should even go for it in the first place. At most, she could be there to monitor and, in a way, moderate the conversation to make sure it stays on track and to make sure you're comfortable. I hope that things work out!

**I've been dying to talk to my therapist about my eating disorder. Im just worried that she will have to tell my parents. Is it one of those things that she has to tell? I was told before that I could talk to her about my SH and when I did she told me to show her. She then went to say that they are to deep and she told my parents. I like her and I would like to talk to her about this but I want to be sure that its confidential.**

I'm glad that you want to talk to your counselor about your eating disorder. That's one of the first steps to recovery so be proud of yourself for that. From what I've gathered from different sites and my counselor herself, mostly everything is confidential unless it gets to a certain point, like being a severe danger to yourself or others. If your eating disorder got very severe she may have to tell you parents, but other then that I believe discussing it with your counselor would be kept between you and her. However I believe the law is different in different states or countries. I think you should talk to her about it, I highly doubt she can say anything, and it would most likely help you out a lot. Good Luck.

## Ask us for advice!

If you would like to submit a question for us to answer, you can email us at [avatar@teenhelp.org](mailto:avatar@teenhelp.org) or PM any of our Avatar Editors. We would love to hear from you!





Kicking off your month with pizzazz.

## Ten Songs You Want to Hear

by Jessie (Asylum)

**Everyone has them, a few** favorite lesser-known songs, ones they could listen to on repeat for hours. Whether the lyrics are uplifting or haunting, there is just "something" that draws you in. Some may have once been popular... when your parents were in school! Still others aren't available on any CD, and some simply never got the radio playtime they deserve. Without further ado, here are ten of my favorite songs that I think everyone should know!

### "Beside You", Marianas Trench

*If your heart wears thin I will hold you up,  
and I will hide you when it gets too much.  
I'll be right beside you.*

Marianas Trench is a Canadian punk rock band from Vancouver. The single "Beside You", from their album *Masterpiece Theatre*, sets a hopeful message of love to startlingly beautiful percussion and orchestra instrumentals.

### "Sooner or Later", Michael Tolcher

*Be first in line, raise your hand,  
remember everything you hear.  
And playing in the rain is worth catching cold.*

Michael Tolcher is an American singer-songwriter from Atlanta, Georgia. "Sooner or Later", a single from his debut album *I Am*, is the all-too familiar tale of growing up and becoming independent.

### "Sex and Reruns", Matt Duke

*Do you shake through the night,  
tucked under the covers tightly?  
There's monsters in the shadows  
and zombies in the street lights.*

Matt Duke is an American singer and songwriter. "Sex and Reruns" is an honest, sometimes comical, song with an upbeat tempo, from his album *Kingdom Underground*. Another Matt Duke song worth checking out is "Rabbit".

### "Muddy Hymnal", Iron & Wine

*The begging choir told the captain's man,  
'we all assume the worst the best we can'.*

Samuel Beam, more popularly known as Iron & Wine, is an American singer-songwriter. "Muddy Hymnal" is the eleventh track on his 2002 album *The Creek Drank the Cradle*. At just two minutes and forty-four seconds, this Simon and Garfunkel-esque song is bound to be a favorite.

### "Flyin'", Emerson Hart

*Here comes the wind let your string unwind.  
Run as fast as you can in your mind,  
back to a place that you never forgot.*

Emerson Hart is an American singer, musician and songwriter. "Flyin'", from his 2007 album *Cigarettes and Gasoline*, is the heartbreaking tale of love and loss. Other Emerson Hart songs worth checking out include "If You're Gonna Leave", "Devastation Hands", "Vanity" and "Friend to a Stranger".

### "Still Fighting It", Ben Folds

*"You'll try and try and one day you'll fly  
away from me."*

Benjamin Scott "Ben" Folds is an American songwriter and singer. Previously a member of the group Ben Folds Five, he has also released alternative rock solo albums. "Still Fighting It", a single from his solo album *Rockin' the Suburbs*, leaves any listener longing for the innocence of childhood.







Kicking off your month with pizzazz.

## "Nothing Like a Song", Azure Ray

*I'm not what you write in your books  
and no, I'm nothing like a song.*

Azure Ray is an American pop duo, consisting of Orenda Fink and Maria Taylor. "Nothing Like a Song", track 12 on their 2003 album *Hold on Love*, is beautifully understated, with gentle instrumentals and intimate vocals. Other songs worth listening to include "Sleep", "Safe and Sound" and "If You Fall".

## "Wake Up and Lose You", Lobelia

*You're lost, you're found, your arms are around  
me.*

*I'm safe, I'm loved, your body surrounds me.*

Lobelia is an American-born, London-based indie singer-songwriter. "Wake Up and Lose You", an unreleased single, is a stark yet intimate song that's sure to touch you.

## "I Need You", Dan Bern

*Sometimes you gotta get lost  
'til you wind up someplace new.  
I need you.*

Dan Bern is an American singer, songwriter, and artist. Throughout "I Need You", and other songs on his album *Fleeting Days*, you'll find traces of Dylan and Springsteen, enhanced by unique and eccentric lyrics.

## "Nowhere", L.P.

*When memories fail, I've got a photograph smile.  
I'm making it last for one more day.*

Laura Pergolizzi, better known by her initials, L.P., is an American rock artist from New York City. "Nowhere", from her album *Suburban Sprawl & Alcohol*, is a gentle yet tortured song about waiting for a lover.

So what are you waiting for? Get listening! And if you have any songs you think everyone should know, be sure to tell us about them! We'd love to hear from you. ■

## Siamese Fighting Fish Care

by Charlie (x-gothic-princess-x)

The very common Siamese fighting fish, also known as Betta, is a colour fish to the fresh-water aquariums. They come from rice paddies in Thailand and Cambodia. They are called "pla-kad" or "trey krem" which means "fighting fish" in native Thai. The fighter fish came from the Belontiidae family of fish. They come in many different colours and tail types and also have their own unique personality. Because of their colour and different tails, this makes them very popular in fish keeping and shops. A fighter fish is one of the well known fish, and someone with no understanding of this fish could still know the name of it. Even though the fighter lives in small rice paddies and slow moving streams, this does not mean they like to be kept in small containers in homes.

### Habitat & Care

Most people overlook filters and heaters, things which regulate **tank temperature**. The fighter fish live in shallow streams, which means the temperature is going to reach a high degree, whereas most people keep them in cold water. The waters that the fighter fish lives in often reaches 80F. Fighting fish love being in warm water and without it can become ill, lifeless or even dull in colour. These fish will change into a lifeless state if the water temperature drops below 75F. Water temperature is often the biggest problem and argument within keeping this fish, as most people keep these fish in a bowl which makes it hard for the temperature to be kept at the right level. Fighters prefer the temperature to be around 75-86F (24-30C). You can buy heaters from any good fish shop; you should always make sure the heater you buy is right for the size tank you have.

Fighting fish do a lot better in waters low in dissolved **oxygen**, but this doesn't mean that they need less oxygen than any other fish. Fighting fish have a special air breathing respiratory organ that allows them to breath air straight from the surface, without causing them problems like other fish would have. The fish has to have this, or else they would die from suffocating. Because these fish are an air breathing species, they must always have access to the water surface.

(Continued on page 17)





*Kicking off your month with pizzazz.*

The water should be **warm and soft flowing** for these fish to be as happy as they can be. Fighting fish prefer a slightly acidic pH level, around the 6.8 - 7.4 mark. Water movement should also be kept to a minimum; this means that filters or air pumps that produce a current should be avoided. These fish should be kept on their own and not mixed with any other fish since fighting fish might kill the other fish or other fish will tail nip and stress the fighter out. If you are thinking of keeping a fighter fish in with other fish avoid any brightly coloured or long finned fish (Guppies, Platties), since this will confuse the fighter in thinking it's another male. Also avoid any fish that might chase or tail nip the fighter fish (Barbs, Tetras) as this will stress the fighter and may cause death or illness. Keeping them in a community tank can be done, but it's a very risky idea and can cause more problems than it's worth. However you can never keep a female and male together, or two males together, because they will fight to the death. You can keep males together if there is a separated plate to keep them from reaching each other. Females can be kept together if the tank is big enough.

Fighters can be kept in **floating boxes or breeding boxes** if they are ill or have turned aggressive lately, or if other fish nip them. They are also used for keeping more than one male in the same tank without a separated plate. Though these do have their downfalls, they can cause stress upon one of the males, resulting in illness or death. Many people keep fighting fish in flower vases, which are small and not ideal for the fish as they don't have the room to move around in, and will become very depressed.



In nature fighting fish would mostly **feed** on small insects and bugs on the water surface. Their upturned mouth helps them snatch insects quickly and faster than they fell onto the water surface. The fighter fish's digestive system, an alimentary tract much shorter than those of vegetarian fish, is made for meat. Because of this, live foods are great for the fighter fish, however these fish will adapt to eating frozen blocks of food or flakes. Live foods can be brought from most fish or reptile shops for a low amount of money and contain brine shrimp, blood worms, black worms, plankton, daphnia. You can breed brine shrimp if you have the right things. Fighting fish will also eat small cut up parts of beef heart, which can be found frozen or alive. If flake food is fed to these fish, you should try to give them a frozen block once a week or a mixture of different things. You can buy special Betta flakes, some of which contain freeze dried brine shrimp.

## Breeding

Fighting fish have a lifespan of about five years. Shop bought ones should not be bred as these tend to be slightly older and past the breeding age, causing problems with the fry produced. If you are looking into breeding go for a fighter around one year or less in age for healthy fry. Most shop bought fighters are around six months old, but you can never be sure. Also do not breed Veil Tail fighters as these are common enough and you will find these hard to sell as shops won't buy them from you.

While breeding fighting fish they don't need a big tank or any special equipment, since they make their own nests called bubble nests. Most commonly breeders will use a ten UK gallon tank with a bare bottom and a couple of soft fake plants for hiding. Smaller tanks will also work. When the fry is big enough for feeding they should be fed on live foods and nothing else. When the fry start swimming length ways instead of up and down, the father should be removed from the fry, or else he will eat them. After the breeding has been successful the female should be removed as soon as possible. The pH should be around 7.0 for the fry and the temperature should be around 80F or slightly higher.

Siamese fighting fish are very inexpensive to keep and can be kept easily if you know how. ■





*Start your month off with a tasty treat!*

## Bake for Family Fun Month

by Amy (Amy.)

**Bake for Family Fun month began in February 2002** by the Home baking Association to encourage families members to spend more quality time with one another. Not only does baking create enjoyment for the family, but also teaches essential skills and knowledge to those of all ages. This includes motor skills (used when pouring, mixing and measuring), mathematics and nutritional insight. Hopefully, everyone this month can take some time to bake something delicious with his/her family!

Here are some recipes to try out!

### Triple Chocolate Custard Pie

1 cup chocolate syrup  
3/4 cup skim or low-fat milk  
1/4 cup sugar  
4 eggs  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
1 (9-inch) prepared chocolate cookie pie crust (6 oz.)  
Chocolate whipped cream  
Mint leaves, optional

In small saucepan, stir together syrup, milk and sugar. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until mixture bubbles at edges. Set aside. In medium bowl, beat together eggs and vanilla until well blended. While stirring constantly, slowly pour in heated syrup-milk-sugar mixture. Stir until well combined. Pour into pie crust.

Bake in preheated 350° F oven until knife inserted near center comes out clean, about 40 to 45 minutes. Cool on wire rack. Serve warm or refrigerate and chill thoroughly to serve cold. Garnish with whipped cream and mint leaves, if desired, just before serving. Makes six servings.

### Popovers

3 eggs  
1 cup milk  
2 tablespoons melted butter or cooking oil  
1 cup all-purpose flour  
1/2 teaspoon salt

In small mixing bowl at medium speed, beat eggs until foamy. Beat in milk and butter until blended. Add flour and salt. Beat at low speed until smooth, about 3 minutes. Fill greased popover pans, muffin cups or 6-ounce custard cups half full.

Bake in preheated 425° F oven until brown and firm, about 35 to 40 minutes. For crisper popovers, prick side of each with wooden pick and bake about 3 to 6 minutes longer. Loosen edges with narrow spatula or knife. Remove from pans or cups. Serve immediately after baking. Makes one dozen.

### Cherry Pecan Pound Cake

1 cup butter, softened  
1 cup sugar  
4 eggs  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
1/2 teaspoon almond extract  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1 jar (6 oz.) maraschino cherries, drained and chopped  
1/4 cup chopped pecans

In large mixing bowl, beat together butter and sugar at medium speed until light and fluffy. Add eggs, vanilla, extract, salt and nutmeg. Beat until thoroughly blended. Reduce mixer speed to low. Add flour 1/2 cup at a time, beating just until blended. Stir in cherries and pecans. Spread evenly in greased and floured 9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan.

Bake in preheated 325° F oven until cake tester inserted near center comes out clean, about 60 to 70 minutes. Cool on wire rack 10 minutes. Remove from pan and cool completely. Makes one loaf or eight servings. ■







*It's all fun and games until you forget the flowers!*

## Making Paper Flowers

by Amy (Amy.)

**If real flowers don't make this years budget,** try making your own flowers!

**Petal Materials:** Cupcake papers (mini sized) or Tissue paper (make sure that the pieces are relatively small).

**Stem Material:** Pipe cleaners.

Photographs by Amy (Amy.)



### Step 1:

Layer about 5-10 pieces of paper on top of each other in the desired color order.



### Step 2:

Take the pipe cleaner and push it through the bottom of the center of the stack of papers up through the top of the papers. Bend the top of the pipe cleaner down (to secure the petals).

### Step 3:

Cut the edges of the papers to add design and a more flower-feel.

### Step 4:

Pinch the bottom of the papers and twist them slightly to create a more cone shape to your papers.



### Step 5:

Wrap the pipe cleaner around the twisted and pinched section of the flower to ensure the petals will stay on. ■

### Final product:







## February Comic

$$\sqrt{\heartsuit} = ?$$

$$\cos \heartsuit = ?$$

$$\frac{d}{dx} \heartsuit = ?$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \heartsuit = ?$$

$$F\{\heartsuit\} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} f(t) e^{it\heartsuit} dt = ?$$

My normal approach  
is useless here.

## Movies Coming Out This Month

Dear John  
District 13: Ultimatum  
From Paris with Love  
Cop Out  
The Wolfman  
The Crazies  
Percy Jackson and the Olympians

## Word of the Month

Laugh - English	Risa - Spanish
Rire - French	Risata - Italian
Lachen - German	cmex - Russian

## Name that Tune!

"We only got 86 400 seconds in a day  
To turn it all around or throw it all away"

## TeenHelp Trivia

When was the TeenHelp Mission Statement introduced?

## Valentine's Day Trivia

- Approximately 110 million roses are bought and delivered over Valentine's Day (3-day period).
- About 15% of women buy themselves flowers.
- The average consumer will spend roughly \$77.43 on Valentine's Day gifts.
- Approximately 1 billion cards are exchanged.
- Hallmark has over 1330 different cards dedicated to Valentine's Day.
- Teachers receive the most Valentines. Second are children.
- Roughly 36 million boxes of chocolates are sold each year.

## More Fun and Games?

**Want more content? Check out past issues of Avatar!**

"Top Ten Things to do When You're Bored" on page 13 of the November 2009 (Volume 3, Issue 5) release of Avatar.

"Top Ten Homemade Costumes" on page 11 of the October 2009 (Volume 3, Issue 4) release of Avatar.

"Top Ten Back to School Items" on page 15 of the September 2009 (Volume 3, Issue 3) release of Avatar.

"Top Ten Roller Coasters" on page 13 of the August 2009 (Volume 3, Issue 2) release of Avatar.

"Top Ten Summer Recipes" on page 15 of the July 2009 (Volume 3, Issue 1) release of Avatar.





*Expressing life through your fingertips.*

## The Wandering Soul

*by Sarah (eaty)*

She was lost and scared, she had lost everything she ever had. All she had left was herself. She ran as far as she could to get away.

She found herself to be in the woods, in a small clearing where she could see the sky. She didn't know where to go, or where was safe to be.

"I cannot walk alone anymore" She said as she stood there crying, unsure of what to do. "It is too scary in this place. I am too weak to carry on"

"You are not weak" He said as he stood next to her, barely showing himself as he looked like a shadow. "You have made it this far, you can make it farther if you just let go of your fears"

She looked to him and saw someone she hadn't seen in a long time. She saw a man she once knew, but yet something was different but she didn't know what.

"I am weak. Just look at me, standing here crying in the middle of nowhere. I have lost everything i have ever had. I am too weak to carry on" She said as she started to pace around, looking at the shadow of a man she once knew again.

"You haven't lost everything. You are still alive aren't you? You still have a future" He said as he watched her move around, he could tell she was upset and he wanted to comfort her.

"I have lost everything, my body might still be here. Yet i have no will to live, i want to be dead" She said as she fell to the ground crying harder.

"I know one thing, you are strong and are never alone. You may feel alone, but in your heart and mind you are never alone." He told her as he walked forward and knelt beside her. He pulled out a simple necklace from his pocket "I cannot follow you out, for i am to stay here. But take this as a reminder that no matter what, you are never alone and lost. And to remind you, you are always strong" He slowly put it around her neck and started to walk away and he called out to her "Follow the stream as it flows down, it leads to a place that you won't forget. And in there you will find what you need to carry on." And with that he walked away.

She sat there, still not sure of what to do. Slowly her tears died down, and as they did she realized. She needed to find a way out she couldn't die here in a place she didn't know, she would rather be in a place she knew. She stood up and slowly listened for the stream. As soon as she heard the faint trickling sound of it, she started to walk towards it.

She started to follow the stream down as it flows. She walked for what felt like forever. Till she met a place, that made her stop and gasp. The stream led her to a waterfall, but that isn't what shocked her. What shocked her was to find that she in a place that she remembered, she suddenly remember who the man was and what was different. And remembered the promise she had made to him many years ago when she last saw him.

She realized that he was right when he told her that she was strong, and when he told her that she was never alone.

She went and sat below the great tree, the one she knew as a kid. She sat thinking and remembering of the times she spent here. She smiled at the memories, and for once she didn't feel alone or scared. As she drifted off to sleep below the great tree, she swore she saw him standing at the top of the waterfall, watching over her making sure she made it. She fell asleep with a smile.

She wasn't a girl lost and scared anymore. She was a girl who was reminded of what life was. Who went from nothing, to being full again.



Untitled by Mel





*It is the dawning of the Age of Aquarius.*

by Katrina

Welcome to February. Though I dislike glorifying Valentine's Day just as much as the next person, I figure that a couple of love themed horoscopes won't hurt anyone.

**This month's sign:** Aquarius (January 20 - February 19)

Happy birthday! While you may not have the best start to February, things will shape up by mid-month, but may go back to bumpy by the end of the month. Fear not, though! As long as you focus on hanging out with friends and taking life as it comes, you should have no problem.

**Strength:** You have killer rhythm!

**Possible Weakness:** You sometimes have trouble staying grounded. You can do it, though!

**Famous Aquarius:** Lewis Carroll, Virginia Woolf, Robert Burns, Paul Newman, Wolf Gang Mozart, Oprah Winfrey, Alice Cooper, Babe Ruth, Ronald Reagan, Charles Dickson, Garth Brooks, Charles Darwin

## Pisces

(February 20 - March 19)

Hello Pisces. Welcome to February. This month, it looks like your significant other is really looking to go celebrate Valentine's Day traditionally. Even if you're not big on the whole candlelit dinner/red rose thing, humor your partner! Who knows? You might end up having a whole lot of fun!

## Aries

(March 20 - April 19)

Aries, unlike your Pisces friends, you're going for an eclectic February, and I don't think there's a better person to do it than you! You're all around hilarious, you can make light of any situation (especially awkward Valentine's Day situations) and you know what to say to anyone. Keep your chin up this month!

## Taurus

(April 20 - May 20)

Taurus, be careful of your friends' jealousy issues this month. You've been on such a roll with keeping everyone happy, and you don't want that to end here. Balance time with your family, your friends, and your partner, but don't forget about yourself. You could always use a "me" day here and there, you know?

## Gemini

(May 21 - June 20)

Hello you little gem, you. (Clever, right?) Even though this month might not be such a gem, you're sure to find someone who is! Since you sometimes push people away without giving them a chance, just go for it this month! You never know what could happen. As they say, "The biggest risk is not taking one at all."

## Cancer

(June 21 - July 22)

You have a good month ahead of you, dear Cancer! Not only will things really be shaping up in the realm of love, but you'll also get a huge financial bonus or opportunity at some point near the end of the month (I know, I know, AFTER Valentine's Day or course). Until then, don't stress out too much, but do try to be thrifty and frugal in your spending habits!





*It is the dawning of the Age of Aquarius.*

by Katrina

## Leo

(July 23 - August 22)

You're not in the spotlight this month, Leo! That's okay though, because this month is kind of one for everyone to focus on themselves and their own lives. With that in mind, don't freak out if something doesn't go your way and don't take on too many projects. Only bite off what you can chew, and don't do extra stuff just to get noticed.

## Libra

(September 23 - October 22)

If you're feeling a little down and out about Valentine's day and aren't sure what to do, don't stress! Hang out with friends. See if there's any tango classes that you and a friend may want to try--dancing is always fun for any occasion, and having some tango skills under your belt would make you absolutely fierce! Most of all, keep your cool and don't bite anyone's head off that IS celebrating Valentine's day.

## Scorpio

(October 23 - November 20)

Being in a long distance relationship in February is always tough, but with your stubborn (in a good way!) personality and cheery disposition, I have no doubt in my mind that you'll get through it with a breeze. If you're not in a long distance relationship? You'll still sail through this month with few to no bumps in the road.

## Sagittarius

(November 21 - December 21)

Looks like you have a secret admirer! Whether it's someone you see as a best friend or someone you've never met before, someone definitely has a big crush on you! Be extra nice to those you come into contact with around Valentine's day. Who knows who might ask you out for dinner?

## Virgo

(August 23 - September 22)

Feeling chilly this month, Virgo? Your crush/partner/significant other is, too. Instead of doing something on Valentine's Day just because it's Valentine's day, do something a few days before or after that special day for no reason at all! Curl up with some hot chocolate around the fireplace or go to a nice candlelit dinner. Who knows what feelings these romantic times together could spark?

## Capricorn

(December 22 - January 19)

Capricorn, I'm not a fan of this month either, but cheer yourself up! Things might be hard at the beginning of the month, but by the end, I feel like you're definitely going to be in a golden situation. In the mean time, just try to hang in there and take everything one step at a time. No need to rush through anything!





## Acknowledgements

### Image sources

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### Articles

Bake for Family Fun Month: [www.homebaking.org](http://www.homebaking.org)  
Cause of the Month: [www.msf.org](http://www.msf.org)  
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News that affects you: January 2010 in review: [www.ap.org](http://www.ap.org), [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk), [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com), [www.health.com](http://www.health.com), [www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com)  
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The Avatar Editors.

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