

# Avatar



**HOLIDAYS, HOLIDAYS, Oh My**

**BEATING THE  
HOLIDAY BLUES**

**H O M E M A D E  
CHRISTMAS GIFTS**

**PSYCHOLOGICAL  
BENEFITS OF GIVING**



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# EDITORS' LETTER

HELLO AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS, AVATAR READERS!

With the holidays fast approaching, you're probably already getting into the spirit of the season. This month's issue has lots of holiday-related articles, as well as our regulars, so we've definitely got your month covered.

In News and Debates, we take a look at how holidays originated, and how they've developed into the familiar customs of today. Be sure to look at our Cause of the Month, too, which shows that anyone can make a difference – even a four-year-old child.

Meanwhile, in Mind and Body we have an article on staying positive during the holiday season, as well as an insightful look into how gift giving is beneficial, for both the recipient and the one giving the gift. Also remember to have a look at Dear Avatar, where we answer problems submitted by users like you.

Over in Lifestyle, learn how to make easy and affordable gifts for your friends and family, and in Fun and Games, take a quiz to find out if you've been naughty or nice this year. As always, check out the Self Expression pieces, and your Horoscopes for this month.

Wishing you a safe and happy holiday season,  
The Avatar Editors.



# CONTENTS

## NEWS & DEBATES

03 HOLIDAYS, HOLIDAYS, OH MY Casey (Casey.)

04 ALEX'S LEMONADE STAND Katrina (Katrina/AppleTini)

## MIND & BODY

05 BEATING THE HOLIDAY BLUES Robin (PSY)

06 PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF GIVING Holly Marie (Atelophobia)

07 DEAR AVATAR Amy (ShimmeringFaerie)

## LIFESTYLE

08 HOMEMADE CHRISTMAS GIFTS Brittany (.Brittany.)

## FUN & GAMES

09 FUN & GAMES Amy (Ronald Weasley)

10 MOTIVATION STATION Katrina (Katrina/AppleTini)

## MORE

11 SELF-EXPRESSION & PHOTOGRAPHY

14 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & WINDING DOWN

feature

ON 05

BEATING THE HOLIDAY BLUES  
BY ROBIN (PSY)



How to tackle the peculiar phase that is the holiday blues. Ideas on how to cope and maintain happiness.

## ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

by Chess (Sidhe./x.Psychic Crisis.x)

12

HOROSCOPES



## CONTACT US!

Are you a writer? Photographer? Artist? We need your submissions! Valuable contributions from readers like you are what make Avatar so unique and successful! Please consider emailing your submission to [avatar@teenhelp.org](mailto:avatar@teenhelp.org) or submit content online by visiting [www.teen-help.org/avatar/submit](http://www.teen-help.org/avatar/submit).



HOLIDAYS | ALEX'S LEMONADE STAND

## HOLIDAYS, HOLIDAYS, OH MY

By Casey (Casey.)

December is a busy month, no matter where you are. For many of us, it is final exams, the end of one semester or one school year, the rush to get the perfect holiday gift, a time spent with relatives we don't like and people we can't stand, all for the sake of the holidays. However you look at it, December is busy and tiring, overwhelming even. But, have you ever wondered about the holidays we celebrate in December? The holidays that we spent so much time fretting over, hoping that we got the right gift, the right food, the right decorations?

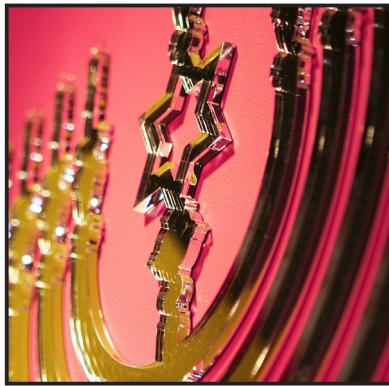
as they already celebrated the holiday.

Hanukkah is also celebrated in December. Hanukkah is known as the eight days of lights, or the festival of lights. It is a Jewish festival, which celebrates when there was only one day's worth of oil in the temple, and it lasted for eight days; this year it runs from the 1st of December to the 8th. The story of Hanukkah varies from place to place, but it is basically the Jewish Festival of Lights, where they light the Menorah, one candle every day for eight days, and recite blessings.



The most well-known of these consumer holidays is, of course, Christmas. Christmas, which did not start off as a Christian holiday, is celebrated by many on December 25th, even by some who are

not Christian. Christmas started out as a pagan holiday, celebrating the Winter Solstice. All of the symbols of Christmas, including the lights and tree, started off as Pagan, but was made into a Christian holiday. The early Christians invented Christmas on this day, and used the same symbols of the holiday, because they wanted to Christianize the Pagans, and by not changing much but the name, the people were more likely to accept it,



Usually the festival has Hanukkah food, like Potato Laktes, and games of Dreidel are played. There is some gift giving on Hanukkah, one small gift for every day, but the gift giving is not the point of Hanukkah. The point is to celebrate the Festival of Lights, and to be with family.

Then there is Yule. Many have heard of burning the Yule log, and many know that Yule is celebrated on the Winter Solstice but most know very little about

Yule itself. Yule is a 'pagan' and Wiccan holiday. Yule is always on the shortest day, and longest night, of the year, and it is held to welcome the Sun's return back to earth and a break to Winter. It is held over a twelve day period by some, but some just celebrate on the Solstice. It is a time for Feasting and for honouring the Gods and our Ancestors. Yule is also believed to be the day when our ancestors are closer to us. Gift giving originated on Yule, which has gone by many names over the centuries, when gifts would be given in honour of a loved one who passed. Basically, they would give someone a gift and say, this is in so and so's name. Yule is celebrated on the 21st of December this year.

There are many other holidays, some are different by country and nationality, the three above are just the most common ones where I live. Chances are, you've heard of all of them. Holidays are fun, with the food and the gift giving, but every year I try to remember what the holiday is actually about, the point behind it all. And it's not just about getting gifts, it's about giving selflessly, about trying your hardest and honouring each other. It's about putting aside differences, and having a little bit of fun. This year, I will be celebrating Christmas with my family, and Yule with some of my friends, and I won't be doing it for the gifts, but because the holidays actually mean something to me. The holidays can be simple, stress-less, and happy, if we move away from the consumerism that has consumed December. ■



## DECEMBER CAUSE OF THE MONTH: ALEX'S LEMONADE STAND FOUNDATION

By Katrina (Katrina/AppleTini)

Meet Alexandra Scott, daughter of Liz and Jay Scott, born in 1996; this year, Alex would be fourteen years old. When Alex was less than a year old, she was diagnosed with neuroblastoma, a form of childhood cancer. Though Alex's parents were told she'd never be able to walk, she fought this prediction and slowly but surely learned to walk with leg

braces by the age of two, and continued to work until she was able to walk without support. The following year, when the doctors informed the family that the tumors were once again growing, Alex's family was disappointed, but they neither stopped fighting nor hoping.

Alex, upon getting out of the hospital,

decided she wanted to start selling lemonade to fight childhood cancer. The first year, she raised \$2,000! Each year, she would again raise money for cancer research. Alex passed away at the age of eight, at which point over one million dollars had been donated to cancer research as a result of what she started, and her legacy is still growing and living in the form of Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation.



What's special about Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation? The more relevant question may be 'what about Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation ISN'T special?' This dream was started by a four-year-old wishing to raise money to help other children; nothing seems more remarkable! In addition to donating money to cancer research, this organization also donates money to making sure that young cancer patients have adequate and happy stays at hospitals. It provides countless resources for families of children fighting cancer, and again, it all started with a four-year-old, showing us that anyone can make a difference! ■





HOLIDAY BLUES | GIVING TO OTHERS | DEAR AVATAR

## BEATING THE HOLIDAY BLUES

By Robin (PSY)

**H**anukkah has begun, Christmas and Kwanzaa are just a few weeks away, and billions of people around the world will be welcoming the new year soon after that. For many people, the holiday season is a time to give thanks for all they have, whether it be good health, financial stability, or loving relationships. Unfortunately, the holidays can also be a difficult time for some people. It is not uncommon to experience depression before, during, or after the holiday season. Students may have homework assignments to complete or college applications to fill out over the winter break. Older individuals may have to plan out vacations or coordinate family meetings. The holiday season can also be a painful time for those who have lost a loved one, whether it be due to a break-up, recent move, or death.

Fortunately, there are things everyone can do to improve their moods around the holiday season. First, let's take a look at physical factors that might lead to feeling depressed and/or anxious. With all the hustle and bustle of buying presents, decorating the house, preparing meals, planning trips, and so on, it should come as no surprise that many people end up losing sleep around the holidays. Be sure to get plenty of rest (you may recall the study mentioned in Avatar's September 2010 issue, which lists other benefits associated with getting eight or more hours of sleep per night). Also be sure to eat healthy, regular meals throughout the day. While it may be tempting to microwave something before heading out, or grabbing fast-food while running errands, foods that are high in fat and sodium will take a toll on your health, leaving you vulnerable to the seasonal cold or flu. Finally, make an effort to get some fresh air and sunlight every day, perhaps by taking a walk around the neighborhood. Not only

will the exercise be good for you, but you can combat SAD (seasonal affective disorder) in the process.



Some people may suffer from the holiday blues for unknown reasons, while others can determine what exactly is causing them to feel depressed and/or anxious. Whatever the case may be, it's okay to feel the way you do! It may seem like everyone around you is perfectly happy, but the truth is that many people struggle with various problems around the holidays. You are not alone, and you shouldn't feel like you have to hold everything in when around family members and friends. Don't hesitate to talk to family members, friends, romantic partners, or other people when you're suffering from the holiday blues. Chances are they have dealt with or are currently dealing with the holiday blues themselves! Don't be afraid of "ruining" someone's good mood by talking about your problems. It is understandable that we may not want to make someone sad or concerned when they are in the middle of celebrating holiday festivities, but there is no harm in pulling someone aside and confiding in them when there is a lull in the excitement.

Finally, if you don't want to confide in the people around you, or if you will be away from loved ones for the holiday season,

there are things you can do on your own to help improve your mood and cope with whatever is causing you to feel depressed and/or anxious. Seeing a psychological professional may help you learn how to address old issues, cope with current problems, and prevent future conflicts from arising (to learn more about finding psychiatric services, read Avatar's August 2010 issue). Those who don't have time to see a psychological professional until after the holiday season can find other ways to cope and express themselves. Some common self-therapy techniques include writing one's thoughts and feelings down in a journal, drawing/painting/sculpting/scrapbooking, and finding other creative ways to improve one's mood. Many people find that creating new holiday traditions can also prove useful, as it keeps one's mind on a specific task and gives people a sense of purpose.



I would like to wrap up this article with a quote by author and journalist Hal Borland: "Year's end is neither an end nor a beginning but a going on, with all the wisdom that experience can instill in us." On behalf of Avatar's editorial team, we wish each and every member of Teen-Help the happiest of holidays. Here's to moving forward and having the best year of our lives thus far! ■



# PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF GIVING

By Holly Marie (Atelophobia)

In many cultures, the end of each year is the time to give gifts. Everyone notices the endless charity appeals this time of year, but it is a lesser known fact that gift giving can create happiness and psychological well being. What better time than Christmas to enjoy the act of generosity and embrace the benefits of giving?

Giving gifts is a surprisingly complex and important part of human interaction, helping to strengthen relationships and bonds between family and friends. Strangely enough, psychologists say it is the giver rather than the receiver that reaps the biggest gains following giving, and that those who give without expectation are the happiest and most psychologically healthy in our society today. Correspondingly, people who refuse to accept gifts may be missing out on important connections between family and friends. There are a number of noticed benefits of gift giving and receiving. Some of these include building relationships, deepening relationships, expressing feelings, creating memories, creating predictability, de-stressing, and reinforcing love in our lives.

Building relationships is a very important ingredient in the festivities. By openly giving and sharing feelings we deepen relationships and express who we are, our past and our thoughts. Giving is a

natural way to express feelings that you can't necessarily express through words. Giving a gift expresses love for someone, or even gratitude and thanks. The further social value of giving has been followed throughout human history. The more lavish and expensive the gift, the more prestige won for the given family. Some people even believe that men who were the most generous may have had the most reproductive success with women. A similar pattern of giving has been observed in the animal world, where food in exchange for sexual access has been documented in the chimpanzee, our closest ape relative.

Giving reinforces appreciation and acknowledgement of those we care for, but everyone has been given a gift that wasn't suited for them. Although grateful and thankful for the gift, we have no idea what to do with it. It's not coincidence; we often give gifts to others that we wish we could receive ourselves and think that the person needs. To be a more conscientious giver, remember that there are endless ways to give other than items that are shop bought. Giving a personal gift such as a CD with family photographs or a poster showing family genealogy is a fun and thoughtful way to give. Festival or concert tickets show you know the receiver well, and will also give the gift of anticipation for the event and a good time once there! Some loved

ones may tell you not to buy them gifts, though; there will always be those who appear to have everything and feel uncomfortable receiving gifts. Perhaps, instead of giving to them, offer to give money to their favourite charity in their name. Other ideas, when you feel uncomfortable giving nothing, are to make them a homemade gift to relive a memorable event from the past, or take them out for a meal.

Although there are many ways to create memories, giving gifts can create long-lasting memories. Going out of your way to give others pleasure and enjoyment, and perhaps writing or making a gift, is a symbol of our love. Giving gifts at a specific time of year creates a predictability particularly for children, as it gives them a sense of security, especially at Christmas and on birthdays. Giving is all about looking outside of ourselves and not expecting anything in return. Rather than putting yourself first it's a matter of putting others first. The ritual of taking the focus off ourselves means stress is handled with more balance and focus.

Giving is an expression of our love. It's the glue that holds relationships together, and is a perfect way to renew love for one another. Have you been good all year? Why not give this year? It's as simple as giving one gift. ■



# DEAR AVATAR

By Amy (ShimmeringFaerie)



**I'm bisexual, and my own mother doesn't accept that. She thinks since I'm dating a guy, I have no feelings towards girls... Well currently, I only have feelings toward my boyfriend, but that doesn't mean I'm no longer bisexual. It's a REAL thing! Why won't she understand this?**

Hi there,

I'm sorry to hear that your mother hasn't been accepting of your bisexuality. I understand that must be hard for you. After all, she is your mother, and it's difficult when one of the people who is supposed to be standing behind you no matter what is criticizing your sexuality.

However, a lot of times parents are actually the last people to be accepting of their children's sexuality. That is not because it is a bad thing that you are bi, but because it may have come as a bit of a shock to your mom. Many parents tend to assume automatically that their children are straight until it is stated otherwise. After a child comes out of the closet, some parents may be shocked or in denial. This could be for a num-

ber of reasons. A parent might not agree with homo/bisexuality personally, and/or they may fear the obstacles that their child may encounter throughout the course of life due to their sexuality. No parent wants to see their child struggle, of course.

Not to mention, bisexuality is a bit of a controversial topic in itself. There are many people who claim that it cannot exist - that someone is either attracted to one sex or the other, not both. Naturally, this is not true. I believe it to be an example of "black-and-white" thinking. That kind of thinking often does not go over well in this world, which is a million different shades of gray!

What I would recommend would be to sit down with your mom and have a chat with her. Try to explain what bisexuality is. Maybe you could bring some print-outs from websites to help back-up your claims. Sometimes learning the facts can help people become more understanding of a sexuality. However, I don't think you should ultimately be aiming to change her view on bisexuality right away, as that may not be feasible right now, depending upon how fixed she is in her beliefs. I think your goal should be to gain respect.

You may not always agree with everything your loved ones say or do, but a lot of times, the least you can do is respect their views. It could take your mom some time to come to terms with your sexuality. In the meantime, though, I think she could be a little more supportive. Let her know that the way she is behaving is upsetting you. Don't try to force her into accepting bisexuality right away, as that may cause her to become defensive and more distant. Instead, try telling her that you wish she could be a bit more supportive, and/or stop making negative comments about it in your presence.

You ultimately can't force someone to understand a particular sexuality. You can provide her with the facts and hope for the best. However, even if she does not accept your sexuality right away, that does not mean you cannot get along and have a happy, healthy relationship. Just as you would like your mom to respect your sexuality, try to respect the fact that she may need some time to come to terms with it.

Also, remember that at the end of the day, if you are comfortable with yourself, that is all that matters! ■



**My mom has multiple sclerosis, and I want to help her so badly, but it's scary. Her illness takes a lot out of her and recently, she stopped taking her anti-depressants. I can see her relapsing at any minute and she's started verbally taking things out on us again. I hate it. She knows that I have confidence issues and have only just come out of depression. It's so hard to know how badly she's hurting. I know it's not my fault, but I blame myself, and I'm so scared that I'm going to get MS too since my mom has it. Finally, my family has told me that I'm a hypochondriac but I can't help that I live every day scared that I'm going to get MS when I see it in my mom every day.**

It's natural to blame ourselves when someone we really care about is sick. Especially when we are young, we have trouble understanding illness and usually blame ourselves when our parents are sad, hurt or angry. So if your mother has been sick for a long time, it makes sense

that you would blame yourself even when you know it doesn't make sense. Have you considered seeing a therapist or counselor to help you work through your feelings of guilt? If you don't want to do that, you need to just keep reminding yourself that logically it doesn't make sense for this to be your fault.

If you are worried about developing MS, I strongly recommend that you see a doctor. He could give you some more information about the disease and perhaps give you some strategies for reducing risk factors. He might even be able to test you for it now. Don't listen to your family. Obviously you are going to be concerned about getting MS if your mother has it. That doesn't make you a hypochondriac and truthfully, it's better to be tested and have nothing wrong than to not get tested and discover you do have MS later on.

In regards to your mother, I'm really

sorry that she is taking things out on you right now. Have you tried talking to her about how you feel? If you feel like it is too hard to have a conversation with her, writing her a letter might be more useful for you. That way you can tell her how you feel without worrying about her getting angry at you in the middle of the conversation. Make sure that it doesn't sound like you are blaming her for things. Instead say something like "it hurts me when you say things like (insert example). I know that you are suffering right now, so I was wondering if there is some way I can help out, so that we all feel better." Make sure that you tell her that you are not angry at her, you are just worried about her. And encourage her to either come and talk to you or write you a letter back. Life must be very hard for your mom, so I'm sure she will appreciate the fact that you are so concerned about her.

Best of luck and I hope everything works out for you and your mom. ■





# LIFE



## HOMEMADE CHRISTMAS GIFTS

By Brittany (.Brittany.)

**I**s cash tight? Maybe you just want to make a gift your loved one will cherish forever! Parents love receiving homemade gifts from their kids, and they are perfect for others, too. If you need some neat and easy craft ideas that will bring smiles on Christmas morning, you're in the right place.

### *Christmas Snow Globe*

#### **Supplies**

- Jar with tight fitting lid
- Distilled or boiled then cooled water
- Glycerin
- White and/or silver glitter
- Clear silicone sealant
- Waterproof ornament or figurine
- Plastic jar lid
- Acrylic paint for the ornament stand
- Coiled Christmas rope or decorative ribbon
- Craft glue to attach the decorative rope
- Another plastic jar lid, or wooden circle, a bit larger than your jar lid to use as a stand (optional)

#### **Instructions**

Make sure the ornament or figurine you've picked will fit in the jar. If the figurine needs to be elevated, use the plastic jar lid. Next, make a trial run of your snow globe. Put it together, and make sure it all fits properly. If it does fit properly then use the silicone or sealant to glue the figurine in place. Allow time to dry.

Now its time for the water. Firstly, you want to test the snow fall to make sure it will work! Using a test jar, fill it with

distilled or boiled water and add glitter. Put the lid on the jar and shake it! Keep adding glitter and glycerin until you like the way the snow is falling. Over a sink, pour the water that you just set up with your glitter and glycerin into the snow globe. Fill it to the very top. Place your assembled ornament into the water and screw the lid into place. Some of the water might fall out, that is okay.

Now you can decorate the outside. Paint the base and the lid of the jar in a colour of your choice. Once the paint is dry, you can use craft glue to glue on coiled rope, or anything else you want. Shake and enjoy!

### *Recycled CD Snowman*

#### **Supplies**

- Discarded CD
- Juice can lid
- Chenille stems, a brown one and a red one
- Two plastic eyes
- Orange craft foam or felt
- Three buttons
- White spray paint
- Black permanent marker
- Small piece of fabric or yarn
- Two small pom poms
- Glue gun

#### **Instructions**

Spray the CD and juice can lid white and allow to dry. Glue the eyes and a small triangular piece of foam for the nose onto the juice can lid. Now, using a black permanent pen, make a series of dots for the mouth, also on the juice can lid.

Cut a length of the chenille stem so it will fit around the top of the lid. These will be the top of the ear muffs. Glue a small pom pom on each end of it to complete the ear muffs! Your snowman head is now complete, so glue it to the top of the CD.

Tie yarn, or fabric around the neck, so it looks like a scarf. Cut a brown chenille stem in quarters to create the snowman's arm. Repeat for the second arm. To complete your snowman, glue three buttons down the front of the CD. ■





# JUST FOR FUN

By Amy (Ronald Weasley)

## NAUGHTY OR NICE QUIZ?

Have you been Naughty or Nice this year? Take the quiz to find out!

1. *On an average day, how often did you hold the door for the person entering behind you?*

- A. Every time (1 point)
- B. Most of the time (2 points)
- C. Maybe once or twice (3 points)
- D. Never, they can open the door themselves (4 points)

2. *Over the last week, how often did you find yourself saying "please" and "thank you"?*

- A. Every time I asked for or was given something (1 point)
- B. I tried to say please and thank you as much as I could, but I might have forgotten a few times (2 points)
- C. I rarely say please, but I did say thank you often (3 points)
- D. Who uses those words anymore? (4 points)

3. *While walking out of the grocery store, you notice the cashier gave you an extra twenty dollar bill. What do you do?*

- A. Immediately return the extra money (1 point)
- B. Pause for a moment, then return the money out of guilt (2 points)
- C. Keep it - the cashier wasn't very nice anyway (3 points)
- D. Obviously keep the cash - who couldn't use an extra twenty? (4 points)

4. *Your mother gave you \$30 to buy your sister a birthday gift. In the mall, you pass by your favorite store and can't help but take a peek inside. You spot an*

*amazing sweater for \$20 and the perfect T-shirt for your sister for \$15. You're five dollars short, so you...*

- A. Buy your sister the T-shirt and return the extra money to your mother (1 point)
- B. Buy your sister the T-shirt and use the extra cash to buy yourself a cool necklace (2 points)
- C. Buy yourself the sweater and make your sister a hand made birthday card instead - she always appreciates the effort (3 points)
- D. Buy the sweater and tell your mom to sign your name on the card that comes with the gift she bought for your sister (4 points)

5. *Your grandmother spends all year knitting you a Christmas sweater that she wants you to wear. The sweater is not only hideous, but also extremely itchy. Your boyfriend is going to be there and you'd rather wear the cute dress you bought a week earlier. What do you do?*

- A. Wear the sweater - your grandmother made it out of love (1 point)
- B. Wear the sweater for most of the day, but put on your dress towards the end of the night (just before dinner) (2 points)
- C. Try on the sweater, but take it off just after - you did buy the dress for a reason, wouldn't want to waste the money (3 points)
- D. Why wouldn't you want to look hot for your boyfriend? Wear the dress of course! (4 points)

### RESULTS!

1-5 points: You have been incredibly nice this year - perhaps even a little TOO nice!

6-10 points: You have been a little naughty (but hey, haven't we all?)

11-15 points: You have some work to do, but there's still hope for you!

16-20 points: You have a lot of explaining to do this year!

## WORD OF THE MONTH

Enervate: (v) to weaken  
[Source: Dictionary.com]

## UPCOMING MOVIES

*Friday, December 3rd*  
Night Catches Us  
The Warrior's Way

*Friday, December 10th*  
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader  
The Tourist  
The Company Men

*Friday, December 17th*  
Tron: Legacy  
Yogi Bear

*Wednesday, December 22nd*  
Gulliver's Travels  
Little Fockers  
True Grit

*December 31st*  
Blue Valentine

## BOOK OF THE MONTH

Nineteen Minutes by Jodi Picoult is an intense story about a school shooting in New Hampshire. Peter Sterling, 17 years old, is a victim of verbal, emotional and physical abuse at school. Without a healthy means of releasing this anger, he resorts to taking matters into his own hand. Parents confused, school mates terrified, and Peter broken down, this easy read becomes your worst nightmare. The story travels through time and shows the reader just exactly how one teenager could end up with so much rage. This can be a triggering novel, so be sure to consider whether or not this novel could affect you in a negative way before reading it. Enjoy!



# TRIVIA

How many Associate Staff does TeenHelp have?

**Answer:** 45

## GAME OF THE MONTH

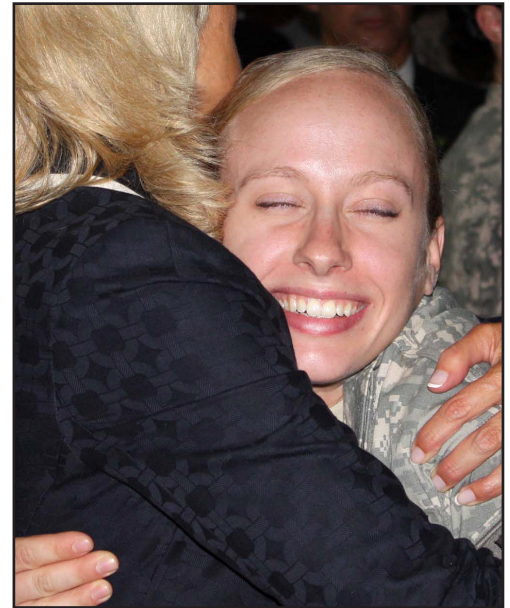
*Baby, if you love me, SMILE!*

Ever been forced to play this icebreaker? I have. While it might be one of the most awkward games, it can also bring a lot of laughs and fun between friends. Gather up some guys and gals and stand in a circle. Choose someone to start it off by staying in the middle. The object for this person is to make someone in the circle smile. This is achieved by walking up to a person and saying, "Baby, if you love me, smile." The person must reply with, "Baby, I love you, but I just can't

smile." If the person successfully keeps a straight face, he can stay in the circle. If he smiles, it's his turn to be in the center and try to get someone else to smile. Have fun!

Tips for getting people to smile:

- Ask them in a very seductive way
- Make a funny face
- Do a crazy dance
- Surprise them from behind
- Hold his/her hand



## MOTIVATION STATION

By Katrina (Katrina/AppleTini)

*"Do not anticipate trouble, or worry about what may never happen. Keep in the sunlight." Benjamin Franklin*

**R**eason for December's season: It's the end of the year, and time to celebrate all of the wonderful accomplishments

you've made this year! Snow is probably also falling, and it's officially cold. Time for waffle shirts, knit dresses, snow boots, leggings and legwarmers, mittens and gloves, and caps to keep your pretty faces warm. December always introduces the "holiday season" which shows a change in people's attitudes for the better!



Picture by Naomi (Naomi.)

**Reveal the Real:** A while ago, I was watching what looked like a wasp moving across the floor. It took me a while to realise that the wasp wasn't moving itself - it was being moved by an ant. The ant, about one twentieth of the size of the wasp, was slowly but surely dragging it along. If something so small can move something so much larger than itself, think of what we

can achieve if we challenge ourselves.

**Send a Grin:** Don't get caught up in the commercialization of the holidays! Instead, and perhaps along with whatever gifts you may give to friends and family, include a "coupon" of sorts for a day out with you - a day at the spa for your mother and yourself, a day on the shooting range for your father and yourself, or a day at the mall for your sister and yourself!

**Dare to Share?** Have you been inspired lately? Did you see something that just made you smile? Has a friend told you a piece of advice that really did change your life? Let us know, and get involved with the Motivation Station! ■

# SELF EXPRESSION

## A QUOTE BY ME

*Self Expression is like having a friend. It will always be there for you.*

By Anna (Lightning)

## UNTOLD BEAUTY

*Your innocence is shown  
By the light in your eyes  
Your sweetness is shown  
By the words that you speak  
Your lack of knowledge  
Of the evil in this world  
Shows the beauty of a world  
That is left untold.*

By Nicole (colie18)

## LOVE

*I know there's a reason but I just can't find it  
And I'm livin' each day with the bad dreams behind me  
And I shiver in fear that one day they'll find me  
My heart and my habits, they just aren't aligning  
And I'm feelin' so worthless, so lifeless, so cold  
That I put you all through this, I don't do what I'm told  
I'm told that one day the Good Lord will behold  
A better way out for me, given invaluable, console  
the sins out from me, speechless I fall to my knees  
Hitting the ground, I don't make a sound,  
Engulfed in a fire, bright lights all around  
Through the wounds that I cut I find something more,  
from the wounds of the man who settled the score  
In the innocent criminal of a capital crime I see the  
image and likeness suspended in time  
Of the will of the man who with his final breath  
Felt the pain of the world to redeem us from death  
And he lay in that garden with the world on his  
shoulders till he gave himself up to the bloodthirsty  
soldiers  
And they tried him and tied him and whipped him  
and beat him and spit in his face and they just kept  
repeating*

*They crowned the King of the World with a crown  
made of thorns, the man who saved me from battle  
with a garland of horns  
But that wasn't enough just to prove all his love  
for you, even though he was sufferin' he cared too  
much for you ever to lose  
He lifted you broken and lost in the street, held you  
high on his back, so bloody and beaten  
And he held you on his shoulders as he walked  
through street, he just wouldn't give up till he  
knew you'd be healed  
While he struggled to carry you down the way  
of the cross he took comfort in knowin' that you  
wouldn't be lost  
And he laid you down on that hilltop and and he  
gave you the antidote, his flesh and his blood given  
willingly so that his people forever will know  
Never forget, always remember the love that he  
showed  
Lovingly sacrificed with the love that he'd love  
you to know*

By These Three Remain



# READ THE STARS

by Chess (Sidhe./x.Psychic Crisis.x)



## SAGITTARIUS

NOVEMBER 22 - DECEMBER 22

**Happy Birthday, Sagittarius!** The gift you can give to people this holiday season is confidence. That may sound like a strange thing to give people, but with your natural leadership qualities, if you act confidently, other people will follow. Also, encouraging people to be positive is something you might want to consider doing this month.

**Sagittarius in love:** This month you may be surprised by sudden romantic opportunities. Just remember: you can say no, and if it doesn't feel right, it probably isn't.

**Sagittarius on the job:** An unexpected but not unwelcome proposal may come this month, and you would be wise to seriously consider it.

**Sagittarius, the vivacious:** It's a good thing you're so full of spirit, because this month will be pretty busy, and could be a little trying for you.

## AQUARIUS

JANUARY 20 - FEBRUARY 18

This month, you'll give people the gift of hope. By showing your natural charisma and sharing your vision for the future, you can help make December a pleasant month for everyone.

## PISCES

FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 20

Your competence will be very valuable this month, and a gift to others, who feel they can trust you with more - whether it be friends, who trust you with secrets, or people in the workplace, who trust you with more responsibilities.

## ARIES

MARCH 20 - APRIL 20

Your enthusiasm this month will provide a much-needed boost for those around you. With your unwavering dedication and cheerfulness towards any task, you'll be an inspiration to others.

# HOROSCOPES

## TAURUS

APRIL 20 - MAY 21

Your usual sense of generosity will show through in December. Whether it's taking a little extra time to write a card, or spending that tiny bit more on a present, your gift to others will be greatly appreciated.

## GEMINI

MAY 21 - JUNE 21

Your modesty this month will prove a welcome gift to others. It may mean letting someone else have the spotlight for a while, but they'll definitely appreciate it.

## CANCER

JUNE 21 - JULY 22

The gift you have to offer people this month is that of inspiration. You'll find yourself flying ahead with everything you do – meeting deadlines, achieving goals – and in doing so, you'll inspire others to do the same.

## LEO

JULY 22 - AUGUST 23

Your energy in December will be a blessing for the people close to you. You may find yourself picking up the slack, and helping out wherever you can, which will lessen the strain on the people around you.

## VIRGO

AUGUST 23 - SEPTEMBER 21

Your good organisation skills will help many people this month. Not only will you be able to make your own preparations and re-organise your own life, you'll be able to help others do the same in their own lives as well.

## LIBRA

SEPTEMBER 21 - OCTOBER 23

The best thing you can offer people this month is friendship. Family, friends, even people you barely know may become very important in your life! By being a good friend to them, you can make their month a lot easier.

## SCORPIO

OCTOBER 23 - NOVEMBER 22

You'll find yourself being very helpful this month. In order to make someone else's life easier, you may acquire a larger work load, but you'll be able to handle it well.

## CAPRICORN

DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 20

Your initiative will not only make your month productive, but help other people enjoy the month more. Some of your focus will be on internal issues, but the rest will be on those outside you – now is a good time to get creative, do some charity work, or embark on a journey.



Thanks!

THANK YOU to the following TeenHelp users for contributing to this issue of Avatar:

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These Three Remain  
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# THE WIND DOWN

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All comments, questions, suggestions or criticisms should be directed towards the editorial team. Email us at **[avatar@teenhelp.org](mailto:avatar@teenhelp.org)**. We look forward to hearing from you, and hope you enjoy the next edition of Avatar!