

The background of the cover is a vertical, abstract painting. It features a bright blue sky at the top, a yellow sun or light source in the middle, and dark green, almost black, trees or foliage at the bottom. The painting style is expressive, with visible brushstrokes and a rich color palette.

Avatar

Vol. 4, Issue 3 • September 2010

www.teenhelp.org

**BACK TO
SCHOOL
ISSUE!**

CAUSE OF THE MONTH:
**PENCILS OF
PROMISE**

**FALL
FASHION
AND MYTHS**

I WORK WITH
HEART

**HONEST
ABOUT
DISHONESTY**

Cover: *Stephanie (Konstantine)*



EDITORS' LETTER

Hello everyone, and welcome to this issue of Avatar!

September is the month of great changes and new beginnings. Fall is arriving, as is a whole new school year as well! We hope that you've thoroughly enjoyed your break, though, and that you're all set to get back on track with your teachers and peers. If you're not, don't worry, we've got some great ideas to get you started!

In **News and Debates** we're going to kick off this month with a great piece on marriage and civil unions. There you'll also find August 2010 in review, which contains various recent events that matter to you, along with our **Cause of the Month**, Pencils of Promise.

Over in **Mind and Body** we start by exploring the honest truth about dishonesty, which includes some great insight as to why some of us lie and how we can gain control to stop. We also have an informational article on World Heart Day, and for parents out there, a few tips on how to communicate better with your children to get better results. While you're all at it, don't forget to check out our advice in **Dear Avatar!**

Down in Lifestyle, we're changing seasons, discussing fall fashion myths, and suggestion savvy shopping tips. We also have some great information on starting at a new school, which is great for those of you who have moved or have just started the journey to high school.

Last, but certainly not least, be sure to check out our **Fun and Games!** We've got a great piece on "The Game of Life" that we're sure you'll love, along with our **Motivation Station** and so much more! And, as always, don't forget to check out **Self Expression** and your September **Horoscope!**

We hope you have a super fabulous month,
The Avatar Editors.

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ON 5

I WORK WITH HEART
BY HOLLY MARIE (RIE)



World Heart Day is September 26th 2010 and you have the power to change global health in a heartbeat. What will you do this year to get your blood pumping in the name of heart health?

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AUGUST 2010 REVIEW

By Amy (ShimmeringFaerie)
and Jes (Asylum)

Health

US salmonella scare. Half a billion eggs have been recalled in the United States following a nationwide salmonella scare. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that hundreds of Americans have become sick from consuming contaminated eggs, as salmonella cases nearly triple.



Red meat. A new study published in the journal *Circulation* suggests reducing consumption of red meat to one serving every other day could substantially reduce the risk of heart disease and heart attack.

Disaster

Pakistan floods. Torrential monsoon rains and landslides have affected over 14 million people in Pakistan, displacing millions and killing over 2,000. The economic impact is estimated to be as much as 43 billion USD (28 billion GBP).

MARRIAGE & CIVIL UNIONS

By Casey (Casey.) and Holly Marie (Rie)

To many people, marriage is not only a sacred word, but a sacred joining of two people for eternity. To others, marriage is merely a government institution that grants people access to certain, sometimes special, rights. These rights include joint property, custody of the children, visitation rights, and even accepting joint responsibility for debt.

A civil union is a legally recognised partnership between two persons, similar to marriage. Civil unions were created to grant gay, lesbian, and transgendered couples access to similar benefits enjoyed by straight, married couples. A civil union is similar to or the same as civil partnerships, registered partnerships and domestic partnerships. Some jurisdictions have unions that are almost identical to marriage for same-sex couples, the most prominent difference being the name of the institution.

The amount of benefits, rights, obligations and responsibility granted by civil unions varies depending on the laws of the country, and in many instances only some of the rights and responsibilities of marriage are

offered. Because of this, civil unions are often viewed as "separate but equal", since many same-sex couples are not allowed to marry. Many people are critical of civil unions because of the belief that they are simply marriage given another name, but civil unions are less often viewed as equal to marriage in the gay community.

Many companies and employers may not recognise civil unions, whereas they are required by law to recognise marriage. Some companies have policies that specifically exclude civil unions or domestic partnerships, while others provide coverage for those who share a home, regardless of gender or relationship.

Marriage is just a word, but it is a powerful word with legal standing. Civil unions are legal in some areas, but in others they are not even recognised, and gay marriage is punishable by imprisonment or death in some parts of the world. Many in the gay community want to be able to marry for many reasons, some personal and some practical, but almost always to enjoy the same rights as straight married couples. ■



Russian wildfires. Hundreds of wildfires broke out across Russia beginning in late July 2010. Damages are estimated at 15 billion USD (10 billion GBP) with thousands of buildings destroyed.

Chilean miners. Thirty-three miners trapped in a collapsed mine were found alive August 5th. Rescuers estimate that it will take as many as four months to complete the rescue, although there is much debate on the issue.



Politics

Australian federal election. The federal election held on August 21st has resulted in Australia's first hung parliament since 1940. The leaders of the two major parties continue negotiations with the four elected Independents for their support. Ultimately, the Independents will decide which party they will help form government. ■

PENCILS OF PROMISE

By Katrina (AppleTini)

As we gear up for the new school year, Pencils of Promise is hitting its prime season for helping children across the globe. "Pencils of Promise partners with local communities to build schools and increase educational opportunities in the developing world. We focus on early education, high potential females and empowering a new generation of passionate young leaders to create profound good." Less than two years ago, founder Adam Braun started this movement with \$25.00. Since then, it's grown into so much more, with over 40,000 supporters internationally.

In the beginning, Adam Braun gave one pencil to one child on the streets of India, and his passion for empowering children to write and share their stories with something so simple as a pencil has only grown. Today, seventy-five million children live without educational

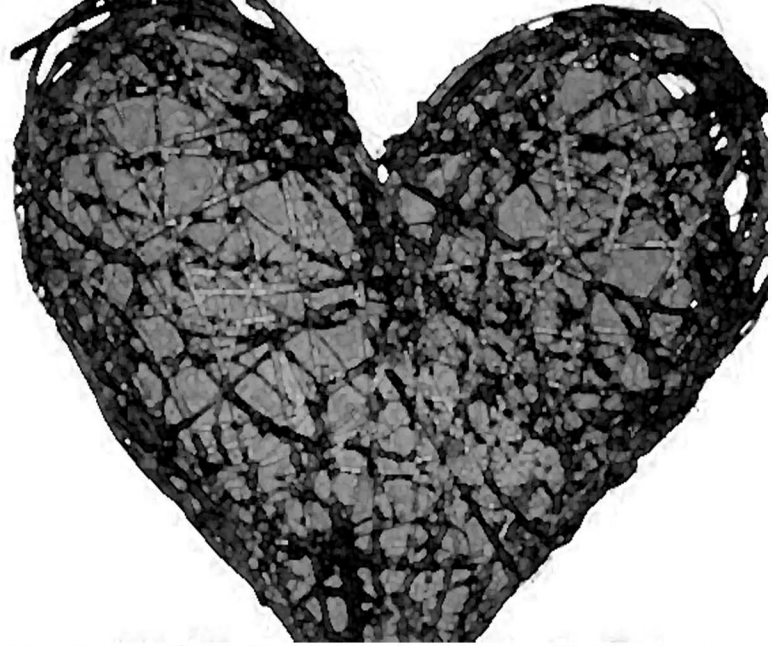
opportunities, and this number includes only the children, not the adolescents or young adults who've gotten through life so far without an education. Pencils of Promise exists to erase this number, one school at a time, one child at a time.

Something incredibly special about Pencils of Promise is the organization's unique ability to look past statistics and see each individual at his or her core. Pencils of Promise believes that each person, each dollar, and each pencil DOES help. This organization prides itself on the fact that in 2009, 90% of its donations came from individuals ages 20-29--young adults willing to put their funds on the line for a great cause, and for the good of humanity. For more information about how you can help, visit:

www.pencilsofpromise.org.



MIND AND BODY



I WORK WITH HEART | HONEST ABOUT DISHONESTY | GET KIDS TO LISTEN | DEAR AVATAR

I WORK WITH HEART

By Holly Marie (Rie)

Cardiovascular disease kills more women than cancer, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and malaria combined. September 26th 2010 is World Heart Day. First observed in 2000, World Heart Day was created to inform the public that strokes and heart disease are the leading cause of death worldwide, claiming around 17.1 million lives per year. The theme for this year's World Heart Day is "workplace wellness". Workplace wellness programs have benefits for both employees and employers. Together with its members, World Heart Day spreads the news that at least 80% of premature deaths could be avoided. World Heart Day thrives to prevent and control these illnesses through awareness campaigns and action to promote knowledge. The vision is to curb the the global pandemic of cardiac disease. World Heart Day is celebrated in more than 100 countries globally, giving a heartbeat of hope to all those suffering with heart disease.

Many things may increase your chance of having a stroke and getting heart disease, and there are many risk factors which you could treat or control to lower your risk. Tobacco use increases the blood pressure and blood clotting tendencies. This means that if you

are a smoker, you are three to four times more likely to develop coronary heart disease. Obesity and being overweight also increases your chances of developing heart disease. If you have too much fat in your waist area, in particular, you are at higher risk of developing heart disease. If you are an obese smoker you can expect to live fourteen fewer years than non-smokers of a normal weight. Being inactive and eating an unhealthy diet are large factors; the more active you are, the less likely you are to have any problems, including cardiovascular disease. Not enough fruit and vegetables, and too much sugar, salt or fat, also increases your risk. High blood pressure is largely preventable. If you're obese, pregnant, taking birth control pills, or have a family history of high blood pressure, you have a higher risk of high blood pressure. Having high blood cholesterol levels or diabetes are also factors in your heart health.

In 2005, roughly half of the deaths caused by cardiovascular disease were women. It is said that women experience cardiovascular disease differently to men, with chest pain, stomach pain, nausea, and unexplained tiredness, leaving it far

more likely to go undiagnosed and untreated. Women should be particularly careful if smoking and using birth control, as this increases the risk of getting coronary heart disease in later life.

A healthy heart is vital for living to the fullest at any age. The unhealthy lifestyles that contribute to heart disease tend to begin during childhood and adolescence, so prevention and knowledge of heart disease must begin there, too. Preventing tobacco use and promoting healthy diets and physical activity in children and adolescents can encourage youth to continue throughout their lives, therefore lowering the risk of having a stroke or getting cardiovascular disease. If you can stay smoke free through high school, chances are you will never smoke. All children of five years and older should be getting at least thirty minutes of exercise everyday.

To get the blood pumping for World Heart Day, take a step forward for heart health. If you want to take part, you could go to a talk, join a run or walk, go to a concert or sporting event, and much more. You have the power to change global health in a heartbeat. What will you do? ■

MIND AND BODY

HONEST ABOUT DISHONESTY

By Robin (PSY)

Why do we lie? Tad Williams once said that “we tell lies when we are afraid... afraid of what we don't know, afraid of what others will think, afraid of what will be found out about us.” We also lie when we want to profit from something, to get out of trouble, or to spare the feelings of our loved ones. There are many positive things we can gain from lying, but how does lying benefit us in the long run? The occasional “white lie” may not hurt anyone, but frequent lying can lead to serious consequences, whether those lies are big or small. Telling our parents we were studying at the library, when we were really out with friends, can result in punishment and a loss of trust (which, as we all know, can be difficult to earn back). Many of us have claimed to be sick and skipped work for the day, but if caught by a co-worker or supervisor, we can experience a cutback in hours or be fired altogether. Even omitting the truth about a previous romantic relationship (versus lying outright) can lead to unnecessary fighting and possibly a break-up.

We may be disturbed upon realizing how frequently and easily we lie to our loved ones. We may wonder when it all started, and how we can stop lying altogether, both to protect our relationships and our integrity. It may surprise us to learn that lying is not something we “pick up on” when we hang out with the wrong people in middle or high school. In fact, many of us lie for the first time before we are even two years old! Toddlers may claim to have eaten all their vegetables in order to get dessert, even after we have watched them drop all their vegetables onto the floor right before our eyes. Preschoolers often create imaginary friends and alternate realities, insisting they don't have to go to school because “Mary” is in trouble

and needs their help. Young children may “forget” to tell their parents about difficult homework assignments or failing grades in order to avoid discomfort and embarrassment. It seems the problem is NOT that we lie, but that we become better and better at it with practice. By the time we reach our preteen years, we know how to deceive our parents and get what we want without being caught. We learn how to create more “believable” lies when we don't want our friends to be angry with us. The easier it is to lie (and get away with it), the more likely we are to lie often, and about a variety of things.

This leads us to another question: can a person suffer from compulsive lying? If someone consumed excessive amounts of alcohol every day, they would slowly become addicted to the substance, and thus become an alcoholic. If someone lied excessively, they could eventually develop a habit of lying, and thus become a compulsive liar. There is one key difference between alcoholism and compulsive lying, however: while alcoholism is perceived as a disorder by psychological professionals, compulsive lying is not. Instead, it is treated as a symptom or sign of another disorder, such as bipolar disorder or borderline personality disorder. This suggests that compulsive liars cannot be “treated” for their problem. A compulsion, while difficult to resist, is not the same as a physical addiction to a substance such as alcohol.

So how can we stop lying? Essentially, we need to think of lying (compulsive or not) as a habit that needs to be broken. It is within our power to change our habit of lying if we are willing to admit we have a problem and believe that we can be



in control of our actions. Take some time to think about the first question again: why do we lie? If you discover that you lie most often in order to avoid punishment, then avoid getting into trouble in the first place. If you lie in order to be socially accepted, then perhaps you should seek out new friends who will truly accept you. Find new ways to adapt to situations that would normally tempt you to lie, or avoid them altogether. Finally, it may help to simply pause before answering someone's question and ask yourself, “Is this a lie?” Sometimes, taking a few more seconds to think about your response is all that is needed in order to recognize why you lie and to begin breaking the habit of lying.

It is never easy to break a habit; however, with the right mindset and support from loved ones, you can begin to reduce the number of times you lie each day. In extreme cases, you may feel that additional support is needed. Support groups or “twelve step” programs that target compulsive lying may exist in your area. Psychological professionals who specialize in cognitive and behavioral therapy can offer techniques for coping with the situations that tempt you to lie. Psychological professionals can also offer assessments and diagnoses, if you suspect that your lying may be due to a mental disorder. ■

MIND AND BODY

3 THINGS YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW TO GET KIDS TO LISTEN

By James Lehman

This piece was written by one of TeenHelp's partners - Empowering Parents - who help to support parents struggling with their children. While this was written from and for the perspective of parents, building mutual trust and respect is a two way street, so we hope you will find this helpful in improving the relationship you have with your parents.

Getting kids to listen is one of the most frustrating and difficult challenges parents face. Often parents give up or approach it in the wrong way. If you want your child to pay attention and listen to you, here are three important things you can start doing right away.

1. Talk to your kids face-to-face

When you talk to your child, look at him—don't yell from the kitchen. Walk into his room, shut off the TV and talk to him face-to-face. And be sure to tell him that this is a new communication rule in your house. You can say, "Hey Jason, I wanted to let you know that from now on when we need to talk about something, I'm going to ask you to come downstairs so we can talk face-to-face instead of yelling. And I'm going to shut off the TV, music, or other electronics, so that neither of us will be distracted and we can really listen to each other." It's important to note that face-to-face doesn't mean eye-to-eye. Don't get caught in a "look at me" power struggle with your child.

2. Don't wear your emotions on your sleeve

There are studies that show that children get up to 70 percent of your meaning from the look on your face. So when you talk to your child, be sure to have a positive, calm look, no matter how upset you are. Kids get agitated during emotional discussions, and if your anger and annoyance show on your face, they will immediately shut down and not listen to a word you say. Practice wearing an expression that does not look angry or frustrated, even when you're talking to your child about something really difficult or upsetting.

3. Give your kids structure

When there's no structure in place in a home, parents often resort to yelling to get their kids to listen and comply. Without set rules and expectations, each day is different—and is based on what the parent wants (or allows) the child to do. The child's requests often become personalized, which leads to frustration, yelling and power struggles.

When you establish structure in your home, you immediately have a way of de-personalizing requests from your kids. Set up a daily schedule that's posted in a central location in your home. Then, you can simply point to it and say to your child in a direct, matter-of-fact way, "4 p.m.—time to stop playing video games and do your homework. If you don't, there will be consequences." And let him know he'll be rewarded if he is able to meet his responsibilities consistently.

When kids have structure, they

far less likely to challenge every request you make. They may still moan and groan, but the focus will be taken off of you and placed on the structure you've set up. ■



The late James Lehman was a behavioral therapist and the creator of The Total Transformation Program for parents. He worked with difficult children and teens for three decades. James held a Masters Degree in Social Work from Boston University.

DEAR AVATAR



I have cut since age nine, but have not harmed for a year and a half. I was sewing up some blankets and started stabbing myself with the needle. I wanted to stop, but couldn't. Afterwards, I had no urges to self harm again and I've been happy recently. Is this a relapse and why did I do this?

By definition, yes, what happened was a relapse. But it doesn't necessarily have to be a full relapse. You said that you've had no urges to self-harm since then, which is really good. One slip up doesn't mean you have thrown away all the hard work you put in over the past year and a half. Going a year and a half without harming is a huge achievement and there's nothing to stop you from continuing to not self-harm. It's not uncommon for people who have self-harmed before to slip up once and then be fine after that.

As for why it happened, even though you've been happy recently, there could have been some small things that have just built up. Or it could have been something that happened a while ago that has only just forced its way out of your subconscious. Were you thinking about something that upset you while you were sewing? Many people who have a relapse find that they self-harm over something far less significant than other things they've suffered, so you really aren't alone. Things will sometimes build up and we just snap.

You might find it useful, if you haven't already, to find an outlet for your feelings. It might be painting, crafts, writing in a journal. If you find something that allows you to get your feelings out in a harmless way, and do it fairly regular, you might find that you don't relapse again. By getting out your feelings before they build up, you reduce your chances of snapping and do something that you don't want to do. I wish you the best of luck, and keep safe.



I have been with my boyfriend for seven months, but I think I like girls as well. I don't know if I am bi or how to tell my boyfriend. If I get a crush on a girl, should my boyfriend and I take a break, so I can experiment? I want to be with him, but sometimes I want to break up to spare his feelings. What should I do?

Sexuality is incredibly hard for us to work out, especially when we are young. Being confused about your sexuality can be very upsetting, but it's also very natural. At the end of the day, it doesn't matter if you like boys, girls, or both, so try not to stress about it. Over time, you'll work out your preferences, or you might be like one of my friends who says he doesn't have preferences - he just falls in love with people. If you want, you could just tell your boyfriend that you haven't worked out your sexuality yet. If he truly cares about you, he won't care if you like boys and girls.

Truthfully, if you get a crush on a girl, I see no reason why you should break up with your boyfriend, unless you like her more than him. If you had a crush on another boy, would you leave your boyfriend for him? Gender shouldn't matter here. And I think it would be very unfair for your boyfriend to wait around for you while you experiment with other people. If you ever want to be with someone else, then break up with your boyfriend properly.

If you really want to be with your boyfriend right now, then stay with him. There is no point in breaking up with him now because you might like someone else in the future. It's possible that you won't like anyone else and will stay with your current boyfriend forever. So if you have a good relationship, don't throw that away for "what ifs".



In 2006, I developed mild anorexia which became very bad bulimia. A few years later my boyfriend, who was anorexic, moved in and we helped each other heal. I've been ED free for over a year, but my boyfriend and I are on a break and I'm back at square one. I keep telling myself I will eat but don't. Help?

It's so wonderful to read that you were free of your eating disorder for a full year - I am inspired, and I think you should know how strong you are for that. It sounds like you and your boyfriend were very supportive for each other, which is great. One thing that does trouble me, however, is that I think you may be grouping your eating disorder with your relationship, which could be harmful to you when things get rocky in your relationship. To me, it seems like you have (maybe even subconsciously) associated being distanced from your eating disorder with being close to your boyfriend, and on the other hand, your eating disorder being more prominent when you're not as close to your boyfriend.

Tell me, have you ever spoken to a medical professional about this? The first step is acknowledging that there is a problem and that things need to change, which you've certainly done. Next, though, you've got to try and reach out for help - which I know you CAN do. You certainly have the motivation and the drive, and I can see that just by reading this one little snippet about you! Do you have a guidance counselor at school or another trusted adult friend who you may be able to talk to about taking the next step in your recovery? I hope that you will choose to take advantage of this option!

L I F E



FALL FASHION | SAVVY SHOPPING | STARTING A NEW SCHOOL

FALL FASHION & MYTHS

By Brittany (.Brittany.) and Katrina (AppleTini)



Hi fashionistas! Now that it's September, and many of you are going back to school for another year, you'll certainly want to be up to date with the latest fall trends, right? On that note, you may also want to be aware of the top ten fashion myths this season. According to several popular teen magazines, the back to school trends for fall 2010 look a little something like this:

Prints

Animals. Whether it is lion or zebra prints, all of them are definitely 'in' this school year. And don't just stop with black and white zebra prints, go for a wider range with a blue or

grey zebra striped vest or pink and purple leopard print scarves. If it's on the market, it's on the radar for one of the hottest fashion trends this fall!

Florals. Remember when you were a kid and your mom made you wear those flower pattern dresses? We do, too, and you better break them out, because they are back in style! Try wearing them over some fishnets or funky tights. Think "classy," not trashy.

Tops, dresses and skirts

The button-down. Go tomboy in a plaid button-down, but try and mix the tomboy shirt with a nice pair of feminine jeans. The sky is the limit

The sky is the limit with what you can do with a plaid button-down, so change it up, tie it around, layer it with a belt, and go all out.

Graphic tees. These old classics are back in style! Why not go and find the perfect one for yourself. On a budget? The thrift store is usually the perfect place to start looking for a fun graphic t-shirt.

Sparkles. No, this doesn't mean you can go and dump a container of sparkles on yourself, but it does mean that glittery and sequined tops are back in style, so get yourself noticed in the hallways with these bright tops.

T-shirt dresses. Fashion trend-setters started wearing t-shirt dresses several months ago, and they haven't gone out of style since! The long shirts that stores have been carrying lately can work just like a t-shirt dress.

Leather mini. You can use this to replace your shorts in the late summer to early fall. Slip on some chic combat boots or a pair of stilettos in a pungent color and hit the dance floor.

Outerwear

Leather bomber. Just putting on a leather jacket, or bomber, gives any of your outfits a cool-girl feel. Layer this with something you've never thought to layer it with before, like a funky neon tube top or a lace blouse.

Over-sized cardigan. These big cardigans are back from last season in full force and will look good with any type of outfit. Experiment with layering different patterns.

Fashion myths: Now that we've gone over some fashion truths, let's talk about some fashion myths!

Colours and patterns

"Don't wear white after Labour Day." Labour day in Canada, and the United States, is on the first Monday in September. It is an economic and social celebration of workers.

L I F E S T Y L E

Everyone says that it's bad to wear white after Labour Day, but that's not true. Since September is the end of summer, and the beginning of fall, white actually looks really good. It also has a lot of different shades, and tones, which will go with anything from your fall wardrobe.

"Black looks good on everyone." People with lighter skin tones don't necessarily look good with black, as it makes them look a lot more pale and ghostly; however, people with tans can usually rock the black. If you are more fair-skinned, it's okay! Wear black, but just be sure to add some color in the mix as well.

"Horizontal stripes make you look big." I'm sure everyone has heard that horizontal stripes make you look big, but really, they don't. If anything, horizontal stripes make you look smaller. With the optical illusion, horizontal stripes make something look taller and narrower than vertical stripes do.

"Don't mix patterns and stripes." Patterns and stripes go well together. They complement each other, so don't let anyone else tell you differently.

Matching and fit

"Your shoes should match your bag." Who says you have to wear matching shoes and bag? They may clash and not go well together. If you have a floral bag, then you need to find floral shoes? I think not; they certainly won't go together. Your shoes and your handbag are so far apart on the finished product (that is, you), that you don't NEED to match them to look good!

"Men's shoes should match their belts." Not a lot of people these days even wear belts, which definitely helps disprove this myth. Just as women's handbags and shoes don't have to match, men's shoes and belts don't have to, either!

"Baggy clothes is the way to go for curvier bodies" Wearing baggy clothes doesn't show any curves which might actually make you seem a lot bigger than you really are. Love your curves, and love yourself the way you are. ■

SAVVY

By Amy (Ronald Weasley)

Pencils, binders, and notebooks, oh my! Yes folks, it's that time a year again. School is underway and it's prime time for back to school shopping! While some dread and avoid this event of the year, others tend to fall in love with the sweet, crisp smell of a new notebook. Regardless of what type of back to school shopper you are, there are some key things to keep in mind while heading to the stores!

Why shop when you don't know what you need? A lot of people false start when it comes to back to school shopping. Before you really attend the class and see what it's all about, how can you be sure of what supplies you will need? A lot of teachers do provide a list of mandatory supplies, but several others leave room to allow the students to choose which organizational system will work best for him/herself. It's best to sit in class for a week, or two, and see what sorts of things the course will be covering and the teacher's general style. Maybe your teacher hands out a lot of worksheets, or maybe they prefer that you take notes on a PowerPoint they present. Knowing this information can really change how you want to prepare for class. You might choose the 1" binder instead of the 2" one—a small difference, but an important one. Imagine if you bought all 2" binders for five subjects, instead of a 1" one that you really needed. That's 5" of wasted space in your backpack, 5" of wasted plastic, and more costly! The point is, learn what you need first before aimlessly shopping.

I always spend more than I want to. How can I fix this? Set a budget and make a plan! A lot of the time, excess money is wasted in order to follow the new binder

SHOPPING

trends or pen fads. Sure, it's nice to indulge in a super cool graphing calculator sometimes, but know that it does all add up. First, think of a reasonable budget you'd like to set for yourself. Then, try making a list of supplies before going to the store. Look at your list and price out average costs of each item. See where you can afford to get a better model, or fancier binder, but also see where you can save money. Look for coupons and promotions at stores; you might have to go to a few stores in order to get the most out of your dollar. If you go into this process with a plan and budget, though, shopping will be easier and less stressful!

Even with a budget, I still feel like I'm spending too much! All the supplies can really add up! You might be able to save some money by reusing things you've already bought! Look to see if you have any functioning binders, or stored away folders that you forgot about from the spring. Even if you only find a binder or two and some pens, that can easily save you ten dollars! You could also ask your friends, siblings, and neighbors if they have any supplies they don't want anymore. Your school may also have kept some "lost and found" binders from last year you could use!

I have to buy my textbooks this year, are there any ways I can reduce the cost? Textbooks these days can be extremely expensive, but without a book, you're losing out on valuable information— it's a frustrating problem. There are a few ways to help save some money. First, don't just buy the textbook where the school advertises it. It's usually way more pricey at those places rather than through a website like Amazon or Ebay.

(Continued on page 11.)

L I F E S T Y L E

Some schools also have rent programs where they can rent you the textbook for the year, where you only have to pay half of what the original textbook cost. Other schools offer a buy-back system, where you can sell your textbook back to the store to roughly half of your money back. If you know anyone who has taken the course before you, ask them if you could borrow their textbook. Remember, the libraries on campus should have copies on reserve as well, which are free of charge and definitely useful. Recently, there has been a push for "e-books," online versions of textbooks. They can be significantly cheaper, but remember they are the computer, which can be a hassle to some, especially if you enjoy highlights and marking pages. Lastly, you can try getting a different edition of the same book. Sometimes the changes between the 5th and 6th editions are barely noticeable, but can save you a fair bit of money- it's an option worth exploring.

When do I start shopping for the basics? While you might have to wait a little longer to get the specifics you need for your new classes, there are always the basic supplies you might need to get. If you know you need lined paper, pens, pencils, and maybe some graph paper. Try to get them earlier rather than later. There are normally some great deals earlier in the season, or very late in the season, but during primetime a lot of the items can be very pricey. Look into dollar stores or stores such as Building 19 for cheaper simple supplies! Buying in bulk can also be really useful in saving money. If you have siblings, or a couple years left in school, buying a large box of paper and pencils could be more expensive up front, but save you a lot of money in the long run. Try shopping at Costco or BJ's for these deals.

Good luck savvy shoppers!

NEW SCHOOL

By Cheyenne (Desert)

Starting a new school can be one of life's hardest and most awkward experiences. You moved for whatever reason—parents started a new job or they just felt like a change of scenery. Now, you've unjustly been expected to leave all your friends and start over completely. It sounds utterly impossible, doesn't it? The good news is that it doesn't have to be!

Pretty much everything depends on your outlook. If you go into this new school thinking that you're a) not going to make any friends or b) you're going to be a loser for the rest of your school career, you'll put those negative vibes out around you. Potential friends may feel that and not want to come near you.

Before you even start at the school, you need to do some preparation. Start with your school supplies. Buy things that will help to motivate you for the school year you're about to begin; it's okay to splurge a little if it's going to help you feel better about your new school. This motivation will carry you through your first day and the weeks following.

If you're finding it very hard to get motivated because your anxieties and fears are weighing you down, try making a list of all the things that are bothering you about starting a new school. Hold nothing back—get it all out on paper. Then you can start finding solutions. Let's say the new school is way bigger than your old one.; is it possible for you to take a tour of the school before it starts to find where all your classes are? Or maybe you're worried that you're not going to make any friends. Think back to when you first made your old friends

and how it happened. There's no reason why that couldn't happen again, just with different people. There are solutions to most problems you feel you may encounter, you just sometimes have to think creatively outside the box in order to find them!

The last weeks of summer are now coming to a close, and it's the first day of school—whether you're ready or not. You've been registered; you've got your backpack in hand and butterflies in the pit of your stomach. You walk into homeroom and don't see a place to sit. Before you panic, remember that everyone here was new at some point. See if there are any other new students who can identify with your feelings. Additionally, many middle and high schools have student activists who are there to help you get situated and comfortable within the school. They're usually friendly, kind and love to make new friends, so seek them out of the crowd and let them help you out. Your guidance office will likely have further information on these students.

Be outgoing. If you're a shy person, this could be very difficult. People are often too afraid to approach someone new if they're silent and sitting alone. Above all, YOU need to make the effort to be friends with people. Being quiet and withdrawn won't help you. Others need to know that you're willing to make friends. You might feel discouraged at this point, and think 'I'm so shy!' Take a deep breath and look for the people you would probably identify the most with, and see if you can get grouped with them. Use good humor and statements that boldly proclaim who you are. "Yeah, I love animals! I was thinking of being a vet when I get older..how about you?" will take you a lot farther than "Uh-huh. Yeah. Can you pass me that eraser?"

Over time, things will get easier because people will get to know you and your interests. Guaranteed, there will be people who are mean to you for no reason. It comes with the territory. Brush them off and focus on what matters—getting good grades and making new friends. Above all, have some fun. ■



FEATURED BOARD GAME | MOTIVATION STATION | TRIVIA | BOOK REVIEWS | MORE

RASPBERRY PEACH SMOOTHIE

By Amy (Ronald Weasley)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup raspberries
- 1 cup diced peaches (white or yellow)
- 1/2 cup apple juice
- 1 cup strawberries
- 1 cup of ice

Preparation:

Combine ingredients in a blender and blend on high for about 30 seconds. Shake the contents and re-blend for another 30 seconds. If you prefer a thinner smoothie, continue blending. Add a straw and enjoy!



THE GAME OF LIFE

By Amy (Ronald Weasley)

The Game of Life, most regularly known as simply Life, is a board game that simulates, well, life! The journey begins at the college level and concludes at retirement, encompassing careers, marriage and kids in between! This can be a great game to play with some friends on a Saturday night. It's both fun, entertaining, and a great alternative to a normal night with the girls or guys.

Who Can Play?

The game is designed for two to six players ages nine and up. I, personally, would say the game is most fun from ages eleven and up, because some of the decisions could be a little complicated for a nine year old. Grandparents are definitely welcomed to play as well!

How to Play.

First, set up the board. There should be a 'spinner' on the board that can spin freely. Add in the plastic houses and mountains to create the full effect. Once that is complete, shuffle the "Share the Wealth" cards and choose your banker. Then distribute the cards accordingly, some to each player, and some on the board.



Each player starts with one car and one driver. Choosing a driver is simple- pink indicates a female, and blue indicate a male driver. The youngest player should take his/her turn first, meaning he/she will spin the 'spinner' indicating how many spaces the car will move along it's track. There are two different tracks: Career and College. Each square along both tracks will have certain events or tasks that people in life deal with an do everyday. Some of these include:

- Getting married
- Having children
- Purchasing residential property
- Purchasing insurance
- Purchasing investments

By the end of the track, you (and your family) will find a retirement home. Once everyone retires, the player with the most money wins!

FUN AND GAMES

MOTIVATION STATION

By Katrina (AppleTini)

A Quote to Note: "The happiest people in life do not have the best of everything, they just make the best of everything they have." - Unknown

Reason for September's season: Its one of those "in-between" months where nothing too huge happens, so we can take time to appreciate the small things, we can enjoy labor day off and be thankful for the reasons behind it, Americans can look back and reflect on September 11th, 2001 and hope that it will never happen again.

Reveal the Real: This story is about paying attention to and learning from others. Often times, we go about our day without really paying attention to details. We go through the motion of saying "good morning" without actually meaning it, or without listening when someone replies to our dull "how are you?" At my place of employment, which I will admit I do

spend most of my time, I've learned so much this summer just by paying attention to the details of the way my coworkers and supervisors live their lives. I've learned to stand up for myself and to not back down when something's not going right. I've learned to take a walk in another person's shoes before making any assumptions. I've learned to do this, and so many more things, and I think that you'll find that if you take a moment to really get to know those you're around a lot, you'll learn things too.

Send a Grin: Everyone enjoys hand-written mail. It's more personalized than a text message or an email, and shows you've taken more time than that needed to just make a phone call. Whether it's a letter to your best friend, a letter to a relative you haven't seen in a while, or a letter to someone you just met, take a few hours and write to them; show them that you care!



JOKES & MORE

By Amy (Ronald Weasley)

Jokes

1. What do you call a cow with three legs?
2. What do you call a cow with no legs?

TeenHelp Trivia

Q: How many different forums do we have? (Example: Mental Health, General Health, etc).

Name That Tune

*"Don't you worry, there my honey
We might not have any money
But we've got our love to pay the bills"*

Word of the Month

Attar (n.) The oil/perfume extracted from flowers (petals).

Can You Say It?

Happy (English)
 Heureux (French)
 Feliz (Spanish)
 Glad (Swedish)
 Fericit (Romania)
 Glücklich (German)
 Laimingas (Lithuanian)
 Boldog (Hungarian)

Jokes: 1. Lean beef.
 2. Ground beef.
 TeenHelp Trivia: 35
 Name That Tune:
 "You and I" by Ingrid Michaelson



FUN AND GAMES

TEENHELP'S SEPTEMBER BOOK LIST: HAVE YOU READ IT?

The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood, reviewed by Amy (Ronald Weasley)

Similar to Alduous Huxley's, Brave New World and The Giver by Louis Lowry, Atwood creates a futuristic story detailing the life of a handmaid in a monotheistic run society. In this world, women are essentially slaves to the men, divided into different categories to fulfill the needs of men; childless Wives, housekeeping Marthas, and reproductive Handmaids. No female is allowed a voice, until Offred begins to stray off the designated path as she develops a relationship with her reproductive male partner. The tale explores Offred's inner struggles and the injustices of society. If you enjoy captivating (yet at times heartbreaking) novels, this is an excellent book for you!



Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom, reviewed by Nicky (xFallenxFromxGracex)

Have you ever thought about your life and wondered if something was missing? Mitch Albom did, and it led him down a road he'd never thought existed. In Tuesdays with Morrie, Mitch tells a true story of how, through the eyes of a friend who's time is coming to an end, he just might be able to recover the meaning he's lost in life. This book is a memorable experience, and you might just find that your journey with Mitch and Morrie is one of the most meaningful you'll ever experience.

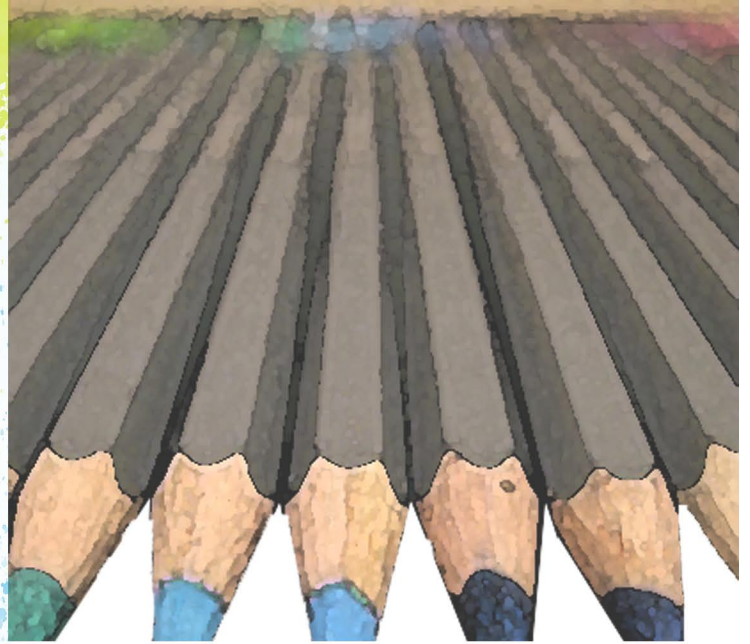
Am I Blue?: Coming Out From the Silence edited by Marion Dane Bauer, reviewed by Casey (Casey.)

Am I Blue is an anthology, a collection of short stories by some amazing authors. It's a coming of age tale about coming out, understanding yourself, and learning to accept who you are. Am I Blue is a great read if you are interested in learning about gender identity, relating to someone who has come out, or even finding yourself!

The Glass Castle by Jeanette Walls reviewed by Cheyenne (Desert)

In this wonderful and richly told memoir, Jeanette Walls grows up with a violent, alcoholic, wholly unpredictable father. The many hardships he put his family through would have broken a weaker child, but Walls prevails and makes a successful life living on Park Avenue in New York. Set against the stunning backdrops of the desert, this is a story you are sure to remember.

LIVE OUT LOUD



Stitch My Lips
by Charli (RainbowSkies)

I stitch my lips to
curb these lies,
To silence broken
battle cries.
Permitting truth to
have it's speak,
To swallow tears before
they leak.
To show my hidden
silver scars,
To break down rusted
iron bars,
To let some light break
through these walls,
To catch myself before
I fall.
I stitch my lips to
curb these lies,
To hide the hurt within
my eyes.



"Arizona Sycamore" by Robin (PSY)

SELF EXPRESSION

Four Year Anniversary by Robin (PSY)

One, two, three, four
years.
Has it really been that
long?
Is it possible to date you
And still be going strong
After four long years of
smiles,
Frowns, laughter, and
tears?
After sharing our great-
est
Dreams and darkest
fears?
You and I have
changed,
And so has our tale...
But there is one thing
I know without fail:
When you say those
three words
Sincerely, as you always
do,
I believe we can make it.
"I love you."

Clueless by Aubrey (Snufflez)

How can you not see,
What's happened to me?
Did you not hear my cries at all?
When my room's right down the
hall.
Didn't you notice the scars on my
arm?
Didn't you realize I was causing
myself harm?
You never saw all the blood on
the floor,
Or even once tried to open my
door.
Don't you notice I'm not eating?
And that my weight is quickly de-
creasing?
No, you don't because you don't
care.
I thought you told me you'd
always be there.



Untitled by Shaz (Moofin)



"View of Heaven" by Kitty (Kitty)

READ THE STARS



by Chess (x.Psychic Crisis.x)

VIRGO

AUGUST 23 - SEPTEMBER 21

Happy birthday, Virgo!

Your relationships this month may involve people seeking you out to ask for help because it seems like you have everything under control. Just make sure you really do have things under control, and this month should be rewarding for you.

Virgo, the Caring: Your caring nature is definitely going to show through this month, and why not let it? Helping others can be good for the soul - both theirs and yours - so go ahead and lend a hand.

Virgo in Love: You're very observant, especially when it comes to how people relate to one another. Now might be a good time to relax a little, especially when around someone you love, and just go with the flow.

Virgo on the Job: This month is a good time to get things organised, and the workplace is no exception. If you put in enough effort, whether at school or work, you will surely be rewarded.

AQUARIUS

JANUARY 20 - FEBRUARY 18

This month you may be faced with some difficulties in your relationships, but by the end of the month you will find happiness in a comfortable relationship. You may be suspicious of the motives of some people, but you should try and focus more on your morals than theirs.

PISCES

FEBRUARY 18 - MARCH 20

Your plans this month may put you at odds with some people close to you and disrupt your relationships. You should be aware that all opinions are valid, even when you disagree, and sometimes compromise is the answer to successful and peaceful relationships.

ARIES

MARCH 20 - APRIL 20

Your relationships this month are all about change, which isn't always a bad thing. Roles may be reversed, but after some emotional times, the status quo will be restored and things will go back to how they were. Roll with the punches, Aries!

HOROSCOPES

TAURUS

APRIL 20 - MAY 21

This month, an attraction you've felt may blossom into a more personal relationship, so be on the lookout. Although you may be unsure or insecure, now is a good time to relax, enjoy yourself, and open up to this new relationship and new possibilities!

GEMINI

MAY 21 - JUNE 21

This month, you may find yourself in a new relationship, where you're able to offer support and advice to someone. As great as that is, be careful not to put their happiness before your own; you matter, too, Gemini! Don't let your own wellbeing become affected.

CANCER

JULY 21 - JULY 22

Your main relationships to focus on this month are those with your family. Things might get a little stressful at times, particularly at home, but if you find the balance between meeting your needs and compromising with theirs, it should be an okay month.

LEO

JULY 22 - AUGUST 23

This is a good time for you to sort out your relationship, especially those from the past. This month may also bring an exciting new opportunity, which you'll be hesitant about for fear of seeming inexperienced—but if you take it, you'll find it's not as scary as you thought.

LIBRA

SEPTEMBER 21 - OCTOBER 23

Your most important relationship this month is probably going to be a romantic one. You may feel like you've lost control or that magical connection, which may lead to some deep thinking and hard decisions, but remember to trust your instincts and opinions.

SCORPIO

OCTOBER 23 - NOVEMBER 22

If you've been feeling lonely, this month will see an end to that! You will find a new relationship, whether it is romantic or otherwise. This may seem like the end of your problems, but watch out: things may be more complicated than they seem.

SAGITTARIUS

NOVEMBER 22 - DECEMBER 22

The focus for you this month will be freedom and independence, but be careful not to neglect your relationships with those close to you. This month may also see you face a difficulty in your social life, but stand your ground and it will settle down.

CAPRICORN

DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 20

This month you may find yourself being the supportive one in a relationship, Capricorn, but overall things are looking good for you. Conflicts and stresses are settling down, and you can now focus on more enjoyable pursuits. Take advantage of the break!

Thanks!

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

Charli (RainbowSkies)
James Lehman
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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. We look forward to hearing from you, and hope you enjoy the next edition of Avatar!



PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBIN (PSY)