

Verdadera

BETRAYAL FEBRUARY 2012

The Verdadera staff encourages you to discuss and explore the issues and stories, as the publication aims not only to offer an outlet for expression, but to improve our lives. Keep in mind that the emotions that flow through the text and the feelings behind the words could be those of your child, your classmate, or your best friend.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Have you ever betrayed someone? What caused you to do so?
- How do you act towards someone that has betrayed you?
- As a parent, how can you support your child when they lose trust in a friend?

STUDENT SUBMISSIONS

Who doesn't betray their friends? Wherever you go people talk about 3 things: School, HIMYM, and Other People. If pretty funny we actually bond over a good cup of gossip. Whether its true or not, we like to believe that we're better than someone else. I'm no exception. I make snide comments without even noticing it. When I get frustrated at someone I take it out behind their backs. We all do it. But we wish it never happened to us, I hate hearing when people have issues with me and don't talk to me about it. But I guess I'm just a hypocrite. This year I hope to be more upfront with people instead of being two-faced, I hope that they do the same with me.

"Anyone who hasn't experienced the ecstasy of betrayal knows nothing about ecstasy at all!"
-Jean Genet

I think I've been betrayed by my parents, even though it sounds so dramatic. But I guess my situation is dramatic. Your parents are supposed to protect you

and keep you happy and loved right? Well mine don't do any of that, in fact it's like they work to make sure they do the exact opposite and they know what they're doing to me. They keep telling me how I've failed them and it's like you know what? YOU'VE failed ME and YOU'RE the adults here. Come on.

"Betrayal is the only truth that sticks." - Arthur Miller

Whether it be with my friends or my exes, it's always been some trouble for me to stay with someone. I've ditched my best friends, even my old ones in elementary school who wanted to keep in contact after we moved on to different schools, and I'm pretty sure I'll be doing it again. But next time, it won't be entirely my fault - we'll all be going to college soon, so how can I help it if I never see them again? I must sound like a total bitch right now, but it's the truth. My aunt has always told me to never waste too much energy on the people you're with right now because chances are, you'll never see them again. That's what

happens to most people, so maybe there really isn't any damage. I always hate myself when I do it though, since it is a total bitch move, but I assume I'll simply forget about it, which I actually do. Call me a serial betrayer, but I really can't help it.

"Anyone who hasn't experienced the ecstasy of betrayal knows nothing about ecstasy at all."

—Jean Genet

I think as people grow older they tend to say "don't trust anyone but yourself".

I feel that way a lot. I like being to myself sometimes because I don't have to depend on anyone else. It's not even that people have done anything horrible to me, but little hints of disappointment here and there makes it clear – no one can be trusted 100%.

I always stop myself from loving someone too much, depending on someone too much.

I have to remind myself constantly about the boyfriend I have now – he won't be my boyfriend forever. My best friends won't be my best friends forever. Betrayal will only hurt if you don't realize this. Somewhere down the line someone will break my heart. But my way of preventing it, I guess, is to just depend on myself. Because I know I won't betray myself.

"Betrayal is the only truth that sticks."

—Arthur Miller

When I was in elementary school, I had a best friend - let's call her Carly. I had known Carly since we were in first grade and our mothers were pretty close as well. We did almost everything together - I even went with her to some of her doctor's appointments, and she came to my music class with me sometimes, just so we could have a play date afterwards. At the time, I never imagined that there would be a time when Carly and I would no longer be friends - and besides, we already knew that we were both going to the same middle school,

so there was no way a thought like that would ever occur to me. But when we were in fourth grade, something had changed. One day, Carly would come to school and barely say hi to me - that was all she said for the rest of the day. Then another day, she would purposefully ignore me and talk to our friends. But then other days, she was completely normal, and we'd have our play dates just as usual. This soon became a pattern. There were times when Carly would act so rude and actually insult me to my face that I would cry. It was embarrassing and I began to think there was something wrong with me, not her. By the end of fourth grade, it was safe to say that Carly and I didn't have many play dates anymore. My mom would ask me about it, and I didn't say anything. Then one day, my mom told me that Carly and her mother were moving away. She didn't tell me why at the time, so I could only guess at why, since I hadn't spoken to Carly in so long. I thought that she had left because of me. Eventually though, my mom told me what had happened to her once I was old enough to understand. Carly's family were having money problems, and her dad became unemployed and drunk. Her parents began fighting a lot around the time when Carly had been in fourth grade, and her dad got abusive with her mom and maybe even Carly, my mom wouldn't say. When Carly had moved away, her mother had actually gotten a divorce from her husband, and she and Carly left. When she was done, I sat there in awe as I felt a huge amount of weight leave my shoulders once I had found out that it wasn't my fault when I had been blaming myself this time. But I still felt guilty and grief stricken when I realized I never helped her. I haven't seen her ever since then, but my mother talks to her mother once and a while, and tells me that Carly's doing fine.

My experience with betrayal may not be as drastic as others, but I think they're centered around the same theme. Just because someone left you or doesn't want to be with you anymore doesn't mean there's anything wrong with you. So don't

beat yourself up about it too much, just learn to forgive and forget (:

“Espionage, for the most part, involves finding a person who knows something or has something that you can induce them secretly to give to you. That almost always involves a betrayal of trust.”

—Aldrich Ames

I've never been betrayed. Ever. That sounds great, but not when you realize it's because I don't trust anyone enough to even make it possible for them to betray me. My parents know nothing about me. I have one friend who I'll tell "secrets" (like about my crushes, etc) to, and really, that's it. I don't tell anyone else anything of importance. I didn't do it consciously because I didn't think about it until I sat down to write this... and now I'm worrying about what this says about me. Trust issues? Anyway, I kind of wish I knew what it feels like to be betrayed by a good friend at least once.

Y'all should be careful, cause there are some betraying bitches out there...

“The fear really hits you. That's what you feel first. And then it's the anger and frustration. Part of the problem is how little we understand about the ultimate betrayal of the body when it rebels against itself.”

—Charles Bronson

Yeah I've been betrayed and it felt like sh*t. My girlfriend cheated on me. It was pretty stupid too because I kinda knew she was and I kept asking her about it but she kept denying it and I actually believed her until I finally caught her red-handed.

Having experienced it first hand I can easily tell you betrayal is not a good feeling. It leaves you somewhat hollow because this person that betrayed you took your secrets and your feelings with them. You can only be betrayed by your close ones and that's why betrayal is so hard, Its by the few people you thought you could rely on, the few people you thought you knew wouldn't hurt you.

Of course you can't avoid betrayal because then you'd just have to live a life trusting nobody. I think betrayal is out of our hands, so all we can do to cope is if you do get betrayed, let yourself know its not your fault, it's the soulless bastard who decided to be a d*ck to you's fault.

“Naturally, when one makes progressive steps, there may be some who see it as a betrayal of their goals and interests.”

—Louis Farrakhan

As a member of any team, you always place trust in your teammates. When you are not present at the meeting and practices, you expect them to defend you. Further, you expect them to support you in times of adversity. However, the worst feeling for an individual is to have an implicit trust broken. When I figured that the rest of my team chose to spread negative comments about me without my presence, I felt betrayed. The feeling of betrayal makes you lose hope on those you trust. Belief that the team was a confidant, I no longer feel confident in talking with my team. I feel uncomfortable when the team attempts to behave nice in front of me. It makes me contemplate whether I should trust anyone's comments or as to whether an individual can ever trust anyone. The feeling of surprise and mistrust causes further hatred. Out of curiosity and anger, I tried to resolve the situation by confronting people on the team about the situation. Because I felt that I had done nothing wrong, I wanted to solve the situation and try to figure out my flaws. Although the situation seemed to subside during my discussion with the team, it was only perpetuated further. I started to hear more reports of the team speaking negatively about me, my character, and claims that I never seemed to fit. In fact, I currently feel as if I never want to speak with them or interact with them again. Quitting the team is not an option as I really love the sport and the people I meet at the competitions, but I feel betrayed by my very team.

“There are only really a few stories to tell in the end, and betrayal and the failure of love is one of those good stories to tell.”

—Sean Lennon

I’ve often hated watching reality tv, or any kind of teen mtv dramas because I thought that they seemed so unrealistic. I mean, in real life, I couldn’t imagine EVER cheating on my boyfriend or having a friend stab me in the back as badly as those shows. They just seemed so unrealistic!

Even though I’m still not a fan of these shows, recently, they’ve become so much more relatable. Well I had a kind of boyfriend, but not really in that boyfriend stage yet, one of those people where it seemed like any day we’d make it official, to the point where he was basically my boyfriend. WELL ANYWAYS, we would spend sooo much time together, and any moment we were apart, we would be constantly texting each other and checking up on each other, and I really thought he loved me. Well one day, I found out that not only had he been cheating on me, he had slept with one of my closest friends...on multiple occasions!

When I heard, I couldn’t believe it. How could I be so stupid, and how could something this crazy actually happen to me in real life? Suddenly, these TV shows stopped being so ridiculous. Or well, as ridiculous as they seemed before.

“Is it possible to succeed without any act of betrayal?”

—Jean Renoir

I like to think I live my life with a code of honor. Don’t smoke, don’t drink, don’t take drugs, respect elders, etc. So for me, betrayal is really serious. Why would they do that? Did they do it purposely? Unintentionally? And if they didn’t mean to, what kind of circumstances made it so that they “had to”. Yeah, I don’t believe it. There’s always a choice. For example, one time, a friend of mine

found out that I was upset at this person. And they went ahead and just told them. Later on, I asked them, why the hell did you do that, and they said, oh, I mean, I had to. Someone deserves to know if someone is upset at them. Really? Okay, so I was just slightly ANNOYED at the other person and you go ahead and tell them? What the f*ck. Firstly, it’s not your business, and second, even if you said you “had to”, it was YOUR CHOICE. It was not a “set of circumstances” that forced you to tell them. It was your choice. Betrayal is always a choice.

“Deep down, my mom had long suspected I was gay... Much of her anger and hurt came from her sense of betrayal that she was the last to be told.”

—Chastity Bono

A WORD FROM THE PROFESSIONAL



Beth Proudfoot is a Marriage & Family Therapist with a specialization in working with children and parents. She's the Director of the Child & Family Counseling Group, and a co-author of the audio book, "The Magic of Positive Parenting."

What a lot of pain is revealed in these essays!

Betrayals are deeply felt, and clearly students are suffering. The feelings generated by even "small" betrayals are felt deep in the soul. Because it is our nature as human beings, we try to create a story when we've been hurt, one that protects us in the future.

Unfortunately, after a betrayal, many decide that trust is a bad thing, that people are generally evil, or that they themselves are so horrible, bad and dirty that they deserved to be betrayed.

In my long experience as a counselor who is privy to many, many stories of how cruel people can be to each other, I feel that I need to share with you that none of these stories we tell ourselves are true. The Truth is that betrayal happens. It happens for good reason and for no reason. It is an unfortunate, painful fact of life that people cannot live together without occasionally stepping on each other's toes. The lesson to be learned, the True story to be told is this: betrayal is the awakening you get, hopefully very seldom, that reminds you to act with integrity.

If you have recently been betrayed, please take the time to howl at the moon at how unfair it is, how wrongly you have been used, how deeply hurt you are. Don't make excuses for the other person. Don't forgive them. Cry it out. Pound a pillow. Tell a really good friend how hurt and angry you are. Resist, please, the urge for revenge, which always, ALWAYS backfires. As time goes by, and it may be that a long time will have to pass, you may be able to start to see the situation

with more objectivity. Some people can even take responsibility for the pieces of the puzzle that they had a part in. Some people, at the very end of the process of healing, can come to at least a partial forgiveness.

People don't ever fully recover from betrayal, though. It's like you start out with a shiny, smooth

piece of aluminum foil. Betrayal crushes it. A great apology from the person who hurt you, or a whole bunch of positive experiences with other people, might straighten out that foil, but it will never be smooth and shiny again. This is why we must become the change we want to make in the world, why we must use our empathy to help us behave toward others with great kindness.

Integrity is hard. It's easier to lie, or to just avoid a situation, than to face it. Those who are recovering from betrayal and determined to change the world, though, can often summon up the self-discipline to really keep their friend's secrets, to refuse to participate in gossip or group bad-mouthing of others. Those

who have both courage and skill can be direct about problems in a relationship. I love this phrase: "when you...(did the thing that I didn't like)...I felt...(sad, angry, hurt, disappointed)...because..." This sounds something like this: "When you told me I can't be friends with X, it made me feel angry because I don't think friends tell friends what to do like that. I don't tell you which friends you need to have!"

We all make mistakes. I don't know anyone who has lived on this planet for a while who hasn't hurt someone else's feelings. If you are feeling guilty

theLOWDOWN

websites for parents and teens

Parenting classes:

- "Parenting Your Teenager: The Indo-American Context" Palo Alto, Feb 25-Mar 3. More info at www.sush-matrivedi.com

- Parenting classes by Beth Proudfoot, MFT at www.meetup.com/san-jose-parenting-class

Counseling for teens and parents:

- www.childfamilygroup.com

Books:

- The One Minute Apology by Ken Blanchard

- Forgiving the Unforgivable by Beverly Flanigan

something you can do. Remember that the crumpling lasts a long time. It doesn't matter how long ago this happened. You can still make a Really Good Apology.

This is the way a Really Good Apology goes:

1. I know what I did and I know how it made you feel. (Sometimes you have to ask questions to get to this point.) I'd feel the same way if I were you.
2. I am really sorry. What I did was wrong. I feel sick with guilt whenever I think of it.
3. This is what I'm going to do to make things right. (These actions should "fit the crime," but can be for someone else or for the community at large.)

Take a minute, right now, to imagine the person who betrayed you saying these words. How would it make you feel? You probably won't get this from them. Most people don't have the emotional maturity to take responsibility for their mistakes. However, you can change the world by giving the gift of a Really Good Apology whenever needed. Don't forget the last part. Words can be empty. The person you hurt might not be ready to forgive you. If you have taken action,

though, to make things right, then, and maybe only then, you can forgive yourself.

Apologies can only happen, of course, and repairs can only be made if the betrayer is made aware that something they're doing is hurting the other person. One of the essays in this issue was a very poignant story of a student who felt betrayed by her parents. I have a feeling that this may be because of a cultural misunderstanding. I have learned that in Chinese culture (and in India, according to some parents I know), it is considered extremely rude to brag about your kids. So, proud parents do the opposite. A parent of a bright student might say to other parents, "oh, my child is not very smart." The thing is, other Asian immigrant parents know that this is a kind of reverse bragging and assume that the kid is actually super bright. Their kids, raised here, don't see this. They just feel the sting and begin to doubt their own worth. What a shame! This is, unfortunately, only one of many problems created by the culture clash in immigrant families. I've listed in the resources an upcoming parenting class for Indo-American families which I highly recommend.

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JANUARY: PURPOSE IN LIFE

FEBRUARY: BETRAYAL

Verdadera is a publication created by and for Monta Vista students for the purpose of instigating communication concerning the reality of high school within the community. Each month, an issue on a topic relevant to the lives of our students is sent home for reading by both parents and students. While we do not edit submissions, we aim to publish personal experiences, not opinion articles. Please utilize all the resources present and feel free to email comments and feedback.

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