

verdadera

LETTING GO, MOVING ON OCTOBER 2011

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:

- What are things in your life you find difficult to let go of?
- How do we let go of things? How do we hold onto things?
- What does it mean to move on?

STUDENT SUBMISSIONS

My bestest friend in the whole wide world turned out to be my bestest friend in the whole wide Kennedy middle school. Us drifting apart, when I look back on it, was in a way sort of inevitable. We got along like none other, but there were differences in our expectations of each other as we grew older, I suppose. I think that was the hardest part about my freshman year. It didn't take me till a year to really let it sink in how we actually stopped being friends. The resentment, the accusations, its all still there when I pass her in the hallway. But we just let it go, and we've moved on. That doesn't mean I don't dream about how we're friends again from time to time, or how I look at her gifts she gave me, that damned photo album of us, and sometimes I'll look at it in the middle of the night and wonder what if. To this day I have some really close friends, but I'd never call them my best friend. It was intense what we had, it was awesome. I really loved her, in a non lesbian way (even though her brother joked that we were because we acted like an old married couple, he said). But I think part of moving on is realizing all the happy opportunities that took the place of

the opportunities you lost. In losing my best friend, I gained several circles of new ones, I got to join different clubs and get to know different people, to really BE a part of Monta Vista. I don't know if the trade-off was worth it. But for the most part I'm thankful for what I have now and I'll always cherish what the two of us had.

"Celebrate endings – for they precede new beginnings."

-Jonathan Lockwood Huie

It took me a solid year to truly move on. From everything. So there was this boy. Yes, a boy, how teenage-angsty I know. But this was different, for me at least. How can I describe the joy I had with this boy that I dare I say it? ...That I loved. He was my everything and more. If you had talked to me a year ago, I would've said I'd give up everything just to wake up to the sound of his car pulling up into my driveway and fall asleep to his soothing voice on the phone. He left for college, but distance didn't matter- for me at least. But it would be unreasonable to chain him down to a silly girl in a

silly city like Cupertino. So I didn't. It was very hard for me to move on, to let go of everything we had, everything we shared. I often think of it, sort of awkwardly, as dating myself. He matched me in every way. My family loved him. His family loved me. He always knew what I was thinking, by the sound of my voice or the way that I typed. He just knew. The same went for me too, and as time went on, I knew I had stumbled upon something special. And so Thanksgiving break and Christmas break and Winter break came along. I'd always see him and we'd just click again. It's like we were never even separated. You can imagine then, it was especially hard for me to move on when I knew I could just count down the days till I could see him on our next school break. We had always agreed that we could try again when we were both older. And after a year, those words finally stuck. It took a year for him to stop popping up in my head 24/7. We still talk every day, and we still care for each other lots and lots. And lots. We both moved on, but we know we'll always have that close bond. It sounds weird that he was the one that supported me through getting over him, and vice versa, but it worked. And we also know that the other will always be a phone call away, and that we have the future to look forward to. So for now, I'm content with my life without him in Cupertino because I know he'll always be there for me when I need him. Who knows? Maybe 5 or 10 years down the road... You could sort of call it a bittersweet surrender I guess.

"What's passing won't last in this perfect shaped hourglass. Believe me you're still on my mind. But even the seasons will change with no reason, and who am I to chase time?" - Jane Day

"Every exit is an entry somewhere."

—Tom Stoppard

Why is moving on so hard? Why is it so difficult to just forget about the past and forget about those memories? Sometimes I wish it was easier, or that I had a short-term memory. So I

could move on from painful memories, from old friendships and relationships and from just things that hold me back. One thing I never seem to be able to let go is how much I was teased and made fun of when I was little. I hadn't really been the cutest kid in the class with my chubby and short, stumpy body. After I lost all that weight and grew taller, I'm now perceived in the opposite view, with some people even saying I'm pretty, but I can still never find the confidence to believe them. I've been through that before, and I just can't seem to be able to let go of that past of bullies and hurtful comments. Another thing, relationships. That's probably the worst. Not being able to forget old memories, not being able to forget how right things used to be. And after those relationships end, even though there's clearly no turning back, I can never help but hope that there is a chance of everything being ok. I don't know. Memories are so strange. Sometimes they make you smile and laugh and other times they make you want to curl up and cry. What would probably be the best would be if we could keep those memories, but find it within ourselves to let go of them. To smile at the good parts and accept the bad ones. I envy those kinds of people. They have the best kind of life.

"Hanging onto resentment is letting someone you despise live rent-free in your head."

—Anne Landers

Nothing is impossible." "Never give up." I have always held these cliché sayings to heart, working into the wee hours of the night almost every day, determined to stand out among my extremely talented and intelligent peers. After all, sleep was for the weak, right? I could always make up sleep later, but grades were set in stone. Even at school, I was rarely relaxing; clubs and other extracurriculars ate away at my free time, and before I knew it, I was coming home every day at around 7 or 8 pm. I was rarely happy; if something didn't go how I wanted it to go exactly, I could hardly focus on my work and would instead think over and over

about what went wrong. At the end of sophomore year, however, my friend made a simple observation that changed my attitude completely. "You're in so many clubs and you do so much outside of school. How on earth do you manage to sleep at all?", he wondered. I forced a laugh--I had just slept three hours the night before. But as I went home and mulled over what his simple statement, I began seeing the problem. It was simply impossible to manage so much and still hope for relaxation and a happy mood. I made the decision of dropping two clubs and cancelling several of my outside activities, and I could feel a difference immediately--I became a happier person. I could relax, I could enjoy, and I could, for once, sleep.

The greatest realization from this period of my life is that letting go does not imply giving up. Letting go, rather, is the simple realization that some things are, in fact, impossible to achieve, and that to attempt to pursue them would be foolish.

"Life is not about waiting for the storms to pass...it's about learning how to dance in the rain."

—Vivian Greene

When I first met him—I wasn't at all that impressed. He was relatively big, with sculpted arms and a domineering persona and transparent white skin that reddened when he laughed...definitely not my type. When he talked it always seemed as though he was indifferent and detached. And yet, 3 months from the time I met him I fell hard. Smack. Plop. Down. It was officially the most unexpected crush I had ever experienced. Every day I questioned why I liked him in the first place. Every day I gave myself urgent little pep talks to get over him. Every day I attempted to find some fault in him that would bring about an end to my endless obsession. Every day I tried, fought back against his affect over me—an affect he probably never had any idea that he was the sole reason behind. Every day I told myself that I actually did not really like him—that it was all just a mere passing infatuation that would cease to flame as

quickly as it had lit up. Every day I failed. I knew all along that he did not reciprocate my die-hard feelings of love. That he was already in a relationship. I had seen the signs—yet every day I refused to acknowledge them. In fact I completely denied their existence. Instead, choosing to fill up my thoughts with fruitless hopes that he might still like me—that the detachment that radiated from within him was merely a cover-up to hide what he truly felt, that beneath all that hard-boned indifference he was as madly in love with me as I was with him.

Truthfully, I must admit that I am still trying to let go of him. I am realizing now that I am worth much more than pining over some guy who is already with someone else. That true love is a two way street and for it work feelings must be mutual. The time that I spent in his company I sensed that he did truly like me. In fact the only reason that I began to develop feelings for him was because I felt that he had some for me. However I realize now that if he truly liked me then he would have done anything to get me. I know that it isn't only the guy who has to do all the work, all the pursuing...that to make it work a little has to come from both sides. But, I think I have pursued enough. I am tired of just pining. Sometimes to attain love you just have sit back and let things happen on its own terms. So that is what I am doing. Letting go of my obsession—or at least attempting to do so. I am trying. In the process. But not fully there.

"Courage is the power to let go of the familiar."

—Raymond Lindquist

I've been swimming for as long as I can remember. I remember my very first swim lesson at the age of 3, my first pair of goggles at 6, my first dive at 8, my first meet at 9. By the time I was 12, swimming was my life. I was skipping school from time to time to attend state level competitions. I always imagined myself continuing to train at such a high level, then swimming for the

national team at the 2016 Olympics. And I could have done it.

But then I had to go break my arm.

Sadly my nonexistent Olympic career ended right there. I went four months without any practice and I never would have guessed it would take me another 6 months to get back to where I was. I was older now so school was becoming a priority. I realized I would never be as good as I thought I could be.

There came a point in my life when I had to make a choice.

I slowly began swimming less, and I invested my time and energy into school, art, and music. Soon enough I let go of my old lifestyle of having to go to swim practice at least a couple hours a day and having meets in the weekends. But looking back I'm not regretful at all. I still swim varsity and it's still a lot of work sometimes – but not all the time. I've realized that I no longer want a career centered around a sport. Since high school began, art and music have been holding a high rank in my mind – two talents I've always had but never thought of taking seriously. But I'm glad I do now.

"Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."

—Albert Einstein

Moving on is a very hard thing to do, It seems simple but it isn't. I moved to Cupertino in sixth grade and met my best friend on the first day of school. She was in the same math class and sat across from me. That year we became extremely close, we either went to the mall, watched a movie, or went to each other's house practically every weekend. At this same time I also started talking to my neighbor; she was in the same grade as me and went to the same school. Though she wasn't in any of my classes since she lived right next door we became pretty good friends too. As the year went on I became closer with my neighbor. One day my best friend asked if I wanted to go to the movies, I was hanging out with my neighbor when she called and

so I said yes, but I asked if I could bring my neighbor along. She said yes and all three of us went to the movies. Both my friends hit it off and all three of us were having a really great time. Then summer came along and I went to all day tennis camp. My best friend kept calling me to hang out but I had no time, I suggested she hang out with my neighbor. She did just that. School started again and now it was seventh grade. My best friend wasn't in any of my classes this year but my neighbor and I shared two classes. As the year went on, me and my neighbor became really close but at the same time a distance was forming between my best friend and me. I don't really know why the distance was forming, maybe it was because we didn't have any classes together but I really don't know. Apparently my neighbor and my best friend were also getting really close and hung out together all summer. Sometimes I'd call them both up and arrange a hangout for all three of us but when we did they always had inside jokes and I ended up feeling like a third wheel, because even though my neighbor and I had become close, my neighbor and my best friend were inseparable. Sometimes when I was hanging out with my neighbor she would get a call and it would be from my best friend asking her to hang out and I would always wonder if I would get the same call. I don't think my best friend stopped liking me just that she liked my neighbor much more. It came to the point where I would get mad at myself for introducing them to each other. From seventh grade onwards me and my neighbor got closer but me and my "best friend" were hardly friends anymore. After my failed attempts I stopped trying to reestablish a friendship with her. Now I see her around school but we don't even smile at each other. There's always days when I think about when we were really good friends and we did everything together. I try to move on and let go but I always remember the times we had. Then in ninth grade my "best friend" ended up being in my biology class. Even though she was just seats from me we went the whole year barely interacting. We didn't hate each other but were rather indifferent to each

other. The whole year I was just waiting for her to ask me if I wanted to hang out again someday, but she never did. Even though it had been so many years I couldn't let go and I really wanted to be friends again. Moving on is extremely difficult and if you ask me I don't think it's possible. I'm a junior now and every time I see my "best friend" at school I remember the memories and inside jokes we had. I've made new friends and had great times with them but how can I forget times that were so good. Maybe moving on is possible but only after a period of time, all I know is it's been six years and I still haven't been able to move on.....

"Laugh when you can, apologize when you should, and let go of what you can't change. Life's too short to be anything... but happy."

—Anonymous

Clank-clank, clank-clank, clank-clank. The rollercoaster dragged its way up the track. My hands grasped the bar in front of me. My friend just laughed. "You know it's no fun if you hold on to the bar." "You know it's no fun if you die," I retorted. Once more he laughed. I frowned. The ride started. My hands were clinched on the restraining bar. We went down the first drop. Everyone's hands flew in the air. My hands clasped the bar. Down another drop, still holding on. Around a bend. The G-force was crushing me. Another drop. Underneath one of the previous drops. Looping around some more. One final drop, and the ride was over. I had not let go of the bar. The next time I went on a roller coaster I decided to try throwing my hands in the air and I've been doing it ever since.

"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing. Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature."

—Helen Keller

Let him go. That's always the moral of the average romantic comedy. The storyline to the irritating daytime soap operas. What we want we cannot have, do not deserve, or should not be wishing for. We are deceived into accepting the commonly portrayed illusion that moving on can be

brought upon by a change in mindset, a metamorphosis of our entire outlook on life. But letting go isn't practical, how can one ever truly and completely escape the consequences of the past? I can never forget what my brother did to our family despite the fact I've forgiven him. His alcohol abuse left our family broken, and his complete disappearance in my life remains apparent. My parents are still spilt because of him, and we don't keep in touch with relatives out of shame. My brother's problem wasn't confined to himself, it left lasting marks on my life today. How can I let go, if it stares me in the face everyday? How many times have I ignored my brother's rare calls in an attempt to completely erase him from my life? The fact is that he's still everywhere I look. The results of his actions forever plaguing my life. Letting go, though we may try just doesn't work. It's not about our inability to want to move on, it's the world's inability to let us.

"To be able to move on, one has to learn to forgive not only the person (or people) who have done one wrong but also oneself."

—Eugenia Tripputi

I am greedy, needy, lustful, avaricious. I want. I want. I want. I want good grades, I want a dog, I want a new pair of jeans, I want a happy life, I want to love someone like in the fairy tales, want to hold the world in my palm and never let go. I want my old stuffed whale (the one from fifth grade that my mother tossed and I never saw again), I want the old coat I wore to school, I want our fifth grade teacher who told me we were all special, I want my old best friend who moved away and never came back. I want my old life back. Fourth grade, I walked to school, crunching through layers of cold winter air, running chilled fingers along frostbitten corners of the universe. Summer, I ate Popsicles with my cousin, side by side, sticky fingers and dark asphalt and the hot China sun. Ten, I held hands with a boy, perched upon the swings and on top of the world. I saw my old best friend again today, and he was a stranger. When I was little, I fell asleep to the sound of my mother's breathing. When I was little, I fell

asleep safe. I want to be safe again. I want. I want. I want. The world is a forest, bathed in eternal twilight. There is no path, so you pick apart pieces of your soul and toss them behind you, breadcrumbs, fodder for the hungry wolves. But I don't want to give anything up. I want it all, I want it all back. I want fourth grade me, sixth grade me, before-middle-school-me, the me that sang lullabies to my sister, the me that wanted to be a dancer, the me that believed anything could happen. If I hold my memories tightly enough, I can fold them all up and tuck them under my skin, right next to the clockwork beat of my heart. Never to be forgotten. Never let go.

"Too many people grow up. That's the real trouble with the world, too many people grow up. They forget."

—Walt Disney

I'm the kind of person who puts a lot into their friendships. I love my friends, and I love looking out for them. After all, that's why I'm here, right? But just as much, I'm so dependent on my friends. I need them to be there for me, and I need them to help me through some tough times. When I lose a friend, it really cuts me in my heart. Especially if they were really close. The closer they were, the harder it is. I start out angry and hurt and just plain upset, but over time all of those just turn to sadness. Those are the three stages for me- anger, sadness, and then nothing. Absolutely nothing. No twitch of emotion, no hint of regret, it comes to nothing. It does take a while to get to that stage, since moving on is never easy, but I do eventually and then there's no turning back from there. So I'm just saying, I am going to move on from you, and I am going to go on and live my life, but that doesn't mean I'm going to forget, much less forgive. Remember that you're the one who chose this not me, and that I just "ended" it for you, not because I wanted to give up. Just remember that when you come to regret everything .Because I absolutely won't regret it at all.

"Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance you must keep moving."

—Albert Einstein

Saying goodbye really is the hardest part. And it all started last May, when he asked me to senior ball. Being me, I said yes. And that turned out to be one of the best decisions, and the most confidently made one, that I have made in the last few months. All in all, senior ball turned out to be one amazing night from him serenading me on the deck and to just talking to him on the deck of the boat.

Over the summer, the two of us hung out a lot. We did everything from Laser Quest, Raging Waters, hanging out at parks, eating gelato, to him cracking the lock on my phone. That was something I really liked. Him unlocking my phone. Why? I still don't know. I think its because I've always liked the little things that people do to show that they care.

I remember when I left Cupertino for a week in June, and how when I was away, he was all that on my mind. It honestly was kind of scary because for the first time, I realized just how much he meant to me. All of a sudden, all of these thoughts and questions filled my mind along with a sad emotion as I started to wonder what would happen if it all fell apart. If we couldn't make it through the summer. What would happen once he left at the end of the summer. But while I was gone for that week, we were constantly texting each other at night. And when I got back, it was as if I had never left. The next week we hung out with each other almost everyday. But it was when I left for the second time this summer was when it changed. Something happened between us that caused awkwardness to form. It didn't help that he left Cupertino for a few weeks the day before I came back.

When he came back, we did hang out, slowly breaking the tension and in time, it was almost like nothing had changed between us. Like the month of July never happened. By then the

summer was winding down and the thought of saying goodbye to him really set it, it got harder and harder every time I saw him. Thoughts were filling my head and I ended up writing a list poem about everything that I loved about him and everything that he did that I loved. It stretched over one hundred lines. That's a lot of things. And I was only describing what had happened over the months of June and July. I didn't even get far enough back in my memory to mention things that happened during the previous school year.

When I went to see him for the last time before he left for college, I wanted to tell him so much. I wanted to tell him how I couldn't get him off of my mind and how much he really did mean to me. But I didn't. I just said goodbye and we parted our separate ways.

Over the last couple weeks I really haven't talked to him. I'm not going to lie and say it's been easy not talking to him online or talking to him over the phone. It's hard. I miss him. Not in some cheesy, let's hold hands and be together forever way. I just miss him. Plain and simple. I miss his presence in my life. And that's the hardest part: him not being there.

But it's getting better, as the school year progresses, I've found new things to occupy my time and the space in my mind that he used to hold, but for some reason I still can't seem to let go of him.

So how exactly do you let go of someone that means so much to you? You don't. I've learned over the past few weeks of trying to let go of him that I can't. So I've decided that I'm not letting go of him, I'm moving on. He means too much to me to let him completely disappear from my life. I'll see him again one day, but in the meanwhile, I'm continuing on with my life, without him constantly on my mind or in my life. I never said goodbye to him, only that I hope to see him again someday

"Celebrate endings –for they precede new beginnings."

— Jonathan Lockwood Huie

I think letting go becomes a big part of growing up. As a kid I always wanted to do everything - I planned to collect every song in the world while winning the Nobel Prize and becoming a chess grandmaster. As I grew up, those dreams changed (grandmaster vs. girls wasn't a tough choice at all), but it was always just an idea that I would do everything and I would do it well.

Sometime last year, I began to realize that even if I wanted to do everything in the world, I was running out of time to do it. I began having to choose in junior year between playing the sports that I loved and taking the classes that I enjoyed. When I first thought about this month's prompt of letting go, it felt like more of a poignant topic. However, the more I thought about it, letting go doesn't always have to be bad. Sometimes you have to let go of one thing that you really enjoy (I chose sports) for something else that you might enjoy even more (learning is fun!). The more I realize that I don't have all the time in the world left to me, the more I have to make choices and compromises with my time. I'd rather do everything, but letting go of things I love like sports was a choice I made so I would have more time to do other things I loved.

"There are things that we never want to let go of, people we never want to leave behind. But keep in mind that letting go isn't the end of the world, it's the beginning of a new life."

— Anonymous

Moving on. These two simplistic words demonstrate a crazy if not insane attempt to summarize the myriads emotions that often pervade an individual who is forced to accept their fate in a given situation. Often times, we wonder, "How could I be so stupid?" or "How did everything end up so messed up?" As reflective as they are rhetorical, these questions pop into our minds the minute a situation has "gone to hell" or as a certain history teacher pointed out, "What the h-e-double hockey sticks? This is a sunken benefit!" However,

moving on, as dangerous and terrible it be in its idea, shape, and form, cannot hurt us as much as we think it does. Ideally, moving on is a gratifying experience. It presents us a chance to not only learn from our previously fallible nature, but also understand and correct what we had done during trying times.

Although we may not feel elated to have such a “gift” be bestowed upon you by fate and misdirection, we inevitably reflect upon these actions and grow as an individual. As I type the words on my computer, I cannot help but reminisce about things that have recently broken my heart. After reading the prompt and contemplating the depth and moral questions that it pose, I somehow strangely feel obligated to tell my tale, as if I had a sudden compelling force to “spill my guts.”

Over the course of two if not three years, I had, to put it formally, taken interest to one of my middle school friends.

Because of the separation of the middle school, she went to Cupertino, where as I went to Monta Vista. However, I did not actually start liking her until the end of 8th grade summer (going into high school as a freshmen). Although I did not know she liked me (or even acknowledged the current situation), I would always tease and flirt with her, undoubtedly leading her on at every corner. I guess at this point, the “irony was on me.” Anyhow, as high school started, we began to grow apart due to the pressures of a new environment, the stress of a significantly harder curriculum, and the anxiety of the unknown that high school held in secret. However, she would still attempt to keep in touch, instant messaging (I hate spell check) me at every possible time that we could relax. Despite this devotion, I was oblivious to the intents. At first I thought it was incredibly annoying how she would talk to me even when I had a large homework load or a big test coming up. Sounding insincere, I would always type “brb” or “ig2g” in order to have some “peace of mind.”

As life would have it, every situation or action proved as a lesson on how “life is a bitch.” After a few months of high school, I suddenly became attracted to her. To me, she was

one of the only girls who I could truly open up to, one who could understand me, make me laugh, and most importantly, devote her time to me. However, my realization, as fate would have it, came too late. She soon began to talk to me less and less, which in turn, made me want to talk to her more and more. This continued on throughout the entire freshmen year as I struggled to keep my mind off of her and at the same time, juggle my grades and extra-curricular activities. After going into freshmen year summer, I had a sudden epiphany. Although I felt whipped, I was elated when she IM’ed me. Ironically, it would appear that the tables had finally turned and I was in the palm of her hands. As school started once again, I was able to successfully take my mind off of her, immersing my self with my sports and academics. However, occasionally, thoughts of her would come to me intermittently and would trap me in a daze or a stupor if you will for a week, unable to concentrate on homework or anything else for that matter. As sophomore year slowly rolled by, it was a rarity for me to talk to her online, much less see her in person. At this point, she either completely ignored my messages or would have slow to no replies. Evidently, during the year, she had also gone to several formal dances with other guys. Although I knew that I had no right to interfere in her personal affairs, I could not help but feel jealous of the guys who had the privilege to take a girl of her stature to a dance. As you, the reader, may think, I was completely whipped if not a little bit obsessive.

Going into the summer that we have all recently came out of, I began to critically self-reflect myself and the situation. Evidently, my best friend had a crush on a girl as well. However, having more courage than I could ever possibly muster, he failed to get the girl. Acting as an inspiration, I decided that I would finally put an end to the madness that was haunting my mind. I chatted with her online and decided to play a fun game of truth or dare. At that moment, I openly asked, “Who do you like?” When she answered that she liked some guy in her school, I was crushed. At that moment, I realized

that my daydreams of a possible relationship were finally extinguished. At that very moment, I asked myself the very questions that I had raised earlier, "How could I be so stupid?" I felt that this was fate's ace-in-the-hole, an event that woke me up from the illusion that I had been trapped in, a case similar to the idea of limbo from the movie, "Inception," where I was unable to shake my mind off of what was concrete and what was impossibly abstract. As I write this experience, I have critically thought about the entire situation and its relevance to you as the reader. Reading this, you may expect a "big idea" or thinking, "Well maybe if you weren't such a dick in middle school, you could have hooked up." Well, you are right. I am an asshole, vulgarly put. However, after reminiscing about these series of events, I can finally understand that this was all a blessing. Through self-reflection, I was able to realize that I did not truly like her because of her personality, but rather because I felt guilty for leading her on for so many months. As the months progressed, I felt more and more guilty that I could have gotten something that was now out of my reach, incessantly teasing and baiting me to continue on my path. That, ladies and gentlemen, is where the "moving on" concept kicked in. Essentially, by moving on, we, as individuals subject to the whims of our emotions and hormones, accept or situation and move forward to grow as an individual and strengthen as a new person. By gaining closure, we are able to continue our path to be better people. That is why moving on is such a powerful and fear-instilling tool: it is the factor that drives us to understand ourselves and ultimately confront the core and root of the issue and finally deal with it. Unconsciously and consciously, we are susceptible to the dangers of the very-human aspects of lust and hatred, and inevitably, make an error of judgment that essentially beats you into submission. But the real dilemma is not the idea of making the choices that lead to the situation or the thoughts after the occurrence of that event, but rather the confrontations of your problems and, in a serious

sense, sins is what ultimately drives us to be better people. As the amiable Dr. Suess said, "Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened."

"Move on. It is just a chapter in the past, but don't close the book- just turn the page"

-Anonymous

Letting go and moving on. To me, those things are separate. You can say you've moved on, but have you really let go? I'm the type of person who likes to heal others. I'm attracted to those who are broken, because deep down I feel like I can help them; I want to be their salvation, the person they can rely on in times of despair. I guess I overestimated my skills this time; one boy I liked for almost a year has several problems. I thought I could change his view of the world. I thought I could teach him how to love life, despite the setbacks that he's had. This was not the case. Although we would talk, he would never want to open up fully and tell me everything. I guess in the end, some people can't be changed. Today I've finally decided to move on, but I know I won't be able to let go. At least not for a while. A part of me will always be waiting for him.

"Hanging onto resentment is letting someone you despise live rent-free in your head."

— Anne Landers

Ever since I can remember I was always told to 'forget the past and move on', well it's not that easy. There was this boy named Desmond and I really liked him. I never told Desmond that I liked him, even when he asked me, I was too scared that he didn't feel the same and that he was gonna think I was weird. But later he found out and he didn't think I was weird. We became really close friends. Desmond was odd. He made me feel like I meant a lot to him, and I think I did. He would make me feel amazing. Like whenever I was with him I was so happy. He knew I liked him and he would use that against me. This one time he gave me the most unforgettable day ever. I don't talk to him anymore and it sucks. Every now

and then I think about him. I think, “Hmm, I wonder if he remembers me?”. There are little things that happen throughout my day that remind me of him, and it’s really hard to let go of one of the best things that’s probably ever happened to me. I think the key to moving on/letting go is wanting to. Everyone is different, every situation is different, and no one really knows how it feels like you do. But there is a difference between moving on/letting go and forgetting. I don’t want to forget, I want to remember those days, those texts, and those memories. But I want to move on and let go, just like he did. It’s hard, sometimes it’s really hard, but if it’s what you want then it’s worth it.

“Some of us think holding on makes us strong, but sometimes it is letting go.”

—Herman Hesse

My bestest friend in the whole wide world turned out to be my bestest friend in the whole wide Kennedy middle school. Us drifting apart, when I look back on it, was in a way sort of inevitable. We got along like none other, but there were differences in our expectations of each other as we grew older, I suppose. I think that was the hardest part about my freshman year. It didn’t take me till a year to really let it sink in how we actually stopped being friends. The resentment, the accusations, its all still there when I pass her in the hallway. But we just let it go, and we’ve moved on. That doesn’t mean I don’t dream about how we’re friends again from time to time, or how I look at her gifts she gave me, that damned photo album of us, and sometimes I’ll look at it in the middle of the night and wonder what if. To this day I have some really close friends, but I’d never call them my best friend. It was intense what we had, it was awesome. I really loved her, in a non lesbian way (even though her brother joked that we were because we acted like an old married couple, he said). But I think part of moving on is realizing all the happy opportunities that took the place of the opportunities you lost. In losing my best friend, I gained several circles of new ones, I got to join different clubs and get to know

different people, to really BE a part of Monta Vista. I don’t know if the trade-off was worth it. But for the most part I’m thankful for what I have now and I’ll always cherish what the two of us had.

A WORD FROM THE PROFESSIONAL



Chandrama Anderson, MA, MFT is a licensed psychotherapist (MFC#45204) in Palo Alto, where she specializes in couples therapy and grief counseling. Prior to becoming a therapist, Chandrama worked in high tech at Stanford University and in Silicon Valley. She is the author of "No U-Turn at Mercy Street: A Memoir and Resource Guide for Grieving Parents" and "Personality Mapping." Her blog about couple relationships can be found at www.connect2.us.com.

I was privileged to be with the editorial group of young adults last night to read through and discuss the topic of letting go and moving on. The real-life stories that were shared fell into three categories:

- o Relationship with Self
 - Younger, more innocent years of life
 - Giving oneself over to boyfriend or girlfriend and losing sense of self
- o Relationships with Friends
 - Best Friends
 - Outgrowing friendships
- o Romantic Relationships
 - Breaking up (due to changes, over the summer or going off to college)
 - Does s/he like me, too?
 - How do I get him or her out of my mind?

Your feelings of loss, the endless questioning, thinking it all through and trying to understand are all normal. Your coping strategies are normal (although they aren't always helpful in these situations). The intensity of your reactions is normal.

The big topic of letting go and moving on due to death was not raised in the student writings, and so I will leave it out of this article. However, if you are grieving a death, please be sure to reach out for support (you can contact me for resources).

Three Top Thoughts Regarding Letting Go and Moving On (For Teens; parents, please read this, too)

• You Can't Make Yourself Let Go or Move On – So Be Kind to Yourself

o While it's uncomfortable, you need to let yourself feel your feelings of loss, regret, anger, questioning, and so on. Otherwise those feelings will get bigger

and stronger. Give yourself time to integrate the loss. Then you can move on.

- Feelings are like road signs; they let you know that you need to attend to something. We don't park our car under the "Curves Ahead" or "Yield" signs, but if we don't heed them, we're bound to crash.

o Don't Ruminates

- It is important to try to figure out what happened, and what your part was in it. This leads to growth and hopefully we can extrapolate what we learned from this situation to other areas of our life. We are like stones in a tumbler, getting polished in the grit.

- However, if we ruminate, then we feel worse. You know the narrator that sits on your shoulder and won't shut up? It needs to be befriended in your life so it can quiet down. This will allow you to hear other thoughts, feelings, and ideas.

- If you find yourself ruminating, hold up an imaginary STOP sign (in full color). Look around and name to yourself what you see in detail (e.g., a magnolia tree in bloom, green, waxy leaves, a red Mustang).

o Get Other Perspectives

- Talk with someone that can be attuned to the intensity of your thoughts and feelings. And make sure that person is a "friend of your relationship." By that, I mean to choose a person that will tell you the truth as they see it; not to trash the other person involved, or just build up your ego (the hard part of being a great friend).

- For friendship loss or outgrowing one another: Ask your friend if the two of you can talk about unresolved issues and then see what's next between you. Maybe you'll go back to being friends. Maybe you won't. Either way, you'll have made an effort.

o If a person you have a crush on likes you, too, get to know him or her and figure out if you really like him/her. Group activities are a great way to figure this out. You can see how s/he acts with others.

- For online loss: Real-life relationships issues and recovery are also true for online relationships. Think about how you want to manage your online/ social media self-image (i.e., respond vs. flame/ react). The topic of online/social media, rumor mill, flaming, etc. is beyond the scope of this article; but please do think about it.

- For a change of scenery: Get off your device and into the same physical place with others (we are regulated when together).

Your Brain is Wired to be Sensitive to Loss; Your Reactions are Normal

The brain is comprised of three parts: the reptilian brain that manages food, safety, breathing, and so on; the limbic or emotional brain, and the cortical, or thinking brain.

o The human brain's oldest survival technique is to check and make sure you are safe (from a predatory animal, foul food, etc.). The reptilian brain knows only life or death, and time is irrelevant.

o Loss of community, in an evolutionary sense, likely meant death. Your current brain registers loss as such. That's part of the intensity and tendency to ruminate when something goes wrong between you and a friend.

o Connections in your brain create neural pathways – ruts, if you will, that provide instantaneous judgments for your safety. This happens in your emotional (limbic) brain in 1/200th of a second. Your cortical brain comes on line more slowly. That's why we react instead of respond.

o Do whatever you need to slow things down so you respond vs. react. Count to 10. Name your

surroundings. Breathe slowly.

o Any loss from earlier in your life will be your brain's "checking" point, and put you on high-alert when an event is even remote similar.

o Take time to recover from a breakup and learn what you can about yourself before jumping into another relationship.

No One Can Read Your Mind

o Take responsibility for your life, and please take action. Build your support system of friends, family, and trusted adults.

o Ask for help; ask for what you need or want. If you're not getting what you need from a conversation, start again. If you want an emotionally attuned listener, tell your friend or parent that's what you want. If you need advice or ideas ask for those. If you need body language and eye contact to match the listening, ask for it.

o Your parents are busy, too. They will likely respond to your approach for help.

o Tell someone what happened. We are all human and have had experiences that were hard to let go and move on from. Know that you are not the only one that has been through this.

o Think through what you've done for yourself in the past that worked for you. Do more of that. What

have you tried that isn't working? Don't do more of that!

Three Top Tips for Parents to Help Your Young Adult Facing Letting Go/Moving On

Be Emotionally Attuned

Listen carefully and acknowledge what your teen tells you.

o Don't belittle his or her emotions or experiences with comments like "You'll get over it." "You're only 16; it won't matter in the long run." conversation.

theLOWDOWN

resources from the professional

Books for Teens and Parents:

- Difficult Conversations, Stone, Patton and Heen (Harvard Negotiation Team)
- Taming Your Gremlin, Rick Carson
- Mindsight, Dr. Dan Siegel

Books for Parents:

- The Good Son, Michael Gurian
- Parenting from the Inside Out, Dr. Dan Siegel
- NurtureShock,
- Everyday Blessings: The Inner Work of Mindful Parenting, Myla and John Kabat-Zinn

Teen Crisis Lines:

- 24/7 Teen Line 888-247-7717
- Youth Crisis Line 800-843-5200
- Red Cross Runaway Hotline (for teens and parents) 800-621-4000

Three Parting Tips

- o A teen's feelings are very intense; see if you can remember how intense your teen life was.
- o Be careful not to try to fix; listen with two ears, and ask your teen what s/he needs from you in this conversation.
- o Don't change the topic to positive things or be too quick to share your story that's similar.
- o Don't tell him or her to forget it and go do homework.
- o Be okay when your teen says, "I don't want to talk about it." It's also okay to circle back and ask about it later on.

Find a Way to Set Aside Your Cultural Approach to Loss

- o As parents, model feelings and behavior that allows family members to bring up difficult topics without shame.
- o Be human. High school is a time devoted to social life (and getting good grades for college and life success). This loss is important to your teen and his or her social/emotional intelligence in life.
- o Hiding our losses doesn't make them go away (see Teen section above); nor does it build self-esteem and teach teens skills to deal with the inevitable losses of life.
- o There's a saying: "We're only as sick as our secrets." Secrets lead to shame and stress and are isolating.

Be Respectful

- o Respect your teen's loss and feelings about it. Let him or her lead the conversation and solutions.
- o Show respect by being a healthy couple; your teens are watching your every move and making meaning of it!

Make a plan, have a goal, and be flexible.

o Teens and Loss: Risk

- The risk aversion part of the brain doesn't come on-line until about age 25. This information is not to encourage you or let you off the hook for doing stupid or dangerous things.
- The one area that teens are completely risk-averse about is when it comes to the person you "like a lot." It is a huge risk to show your feelings for another and find out whether they share your feelings. This is an area ripe for loss and the need to let go and move on.

Ask for what you want/need; you will hear, "Yes," "No," or "Maybe."

- o One of the sayings I'm known for is: "If you don't ask, they can't say yes."
- o Learn to be resilient; honor your effort and deal with the answer you get.
- o Grab opportunities and make the most of them.

Be curious about what went wrong

- o I have never known a person that imagined correctly what went wrong between them and another person. It is always something we haven't thought of.
- o It's scary to ask what happened. But if you want to know, you'll have to ask.
- o Let your friend have his/her feelings and perspective. Listen well, and be emotionally attuned. Last, but not least, I'll leave you with two thoughts:
1. Be kind to yourself. 2. The opposite of love is not hate; it is indifference.

2011-2012 ISSUES

AUGUST body image

SEPTEMBER letting go, moving on

OCTOBER competition & academic stress

NOVEMBER morals and values

JANUARY purpose in life

FEBRUARY betrayal

MARCH media influence

APRIL sexual identity

MAY encouragement

JUNE innocence and maturity