



## Loneliness December 2010

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:*

- *Is it okay to be lonely?*
  - *How do you approach lonely people?*
  - *Do you change yourself or act fake to avoid loneliness?*
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### **Student Submissions**

What is loneliness? Loneliness is like a weed. It plants itself in your heart and patiently grows, little by little, until it's wrapped around all your thoughts. Loneliness is like a black hole, It swallows up the very last traces of happiness in your heart and constantly eats away at you, day and night. Loneliness is a slow poison. By the time it has spread far enough for you to notice, it's too late to cure it.

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“We're born alone, we live alone, we die alone. Only through our love and friendship can we create the illusion for the moment that we're not alone.”  
– Orson Welles

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Always been the happy go lucky person, I don't think anyone could have guessed I was feeling lonely. I took all those ill feelings and used it to propel my studies, not wanting to hang out with friends anymore, till one day

one of my friends decided to do something about it. He took the initiative and time for me and since then things have gone back to normal. I'll never forget the feeling of actually being sad for more than a few weeks, and I hope I won't feel that for a long, long time. I myself could not have even seen this coming, judging on how happy I was last year and over summer, it sort of just did. Maybe the stress of school or the realization that I don't have any real best friends anymore did it, but all that's in the past now. I'm just focusing on college now because I probably won't even talk to anyone from high school except at a lame high school reunion 10 years from now, so why does it matter?

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“The most terrible poverty is loneliness, and the feeling of being unloved.” – Mother Teresa

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dear friend,

i wish i could find someone that could be there for you and listen to you and could do everything a good friend is supposed to do.  
i already failed to be that person, so i don't know what to do now. i could help you out occasionally but i don't trust myself because you deserve better.  
you need someone you can depend on. this isn't healthy.  
out of all the people in this world, you don't deserve to be alone.  
<3.

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“When we truly realize that we are all alone is when we need others the most” – Ronald Anthony

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Loneliness, that word screams freshman year to me. It was the most boring time of my life, no one seemed to care about me at all. I didnt go to Kennedy or Lawson and came to MV from some random private school which no one had heard of. I used to be the loudest person in the room, but when I came to MV nobody was inviting or inclusive, or at least I didn't find them till second semester. I would participate in class and be the perfect student, but no matter what I would do I could never find someone to hang out with. Not even hang out, just to eat lunch with or talk to during passing periods. I sat on one the bench outside the library facing the C building every day where I ate my lunch alone, wishing that I had gone to Bellarmine like my best friends had. I hung out with them more than I did with anyone else, and I only saw them one a month, if even at all. I would go home and do homework, then sleep, nothing else besides XC. I did not know about anything that was going on because no one ever told me. I am willing to bet that I was one of the biggest loners at MV. There is one person though that really changed me, and made me feel like I was worth something. He saw me sitting alone on the bleachers one day at XC practice and started talking to me, eventually I ended up tagging along with him wherever he went and got to meet people, all of them seniors though and none in 2012 which still sucked because I never got involved in class stuff. When I look back if I hadnt met Keaton then I would probably still be sitting on the same bench eating my lunch alone, and not be as involved with the school at all. I am really really thankful that he reached out to a random kid like me and was just nice. It changed MV for me and made me see it as an amazing place, as cheesy as that sounds. I am so happy now that I just stuck it through and didn't kill myself or try and switch schools. Idk why I wrote this, but if you are feeling lonely and like MV sucks just wait it out as tough as it sounds. MV sucks dick no joke there, but if you wait it out till you meet someone then you will see how much

brighter of a place it is. If you think that you are the only one feeling like shit, you aren't. Stick it out and you will find someone that wants to be your friend. Don't just sit there waiting for something to happen either go get involved, nothing is ever easy at first, you have to work for it to be fun. I am so happy I did because now I can say hi to people during every passing period and have people I can hang out with whenever I want. Don't be scared to try and meet people because if you don't then you won't. Nothing is as bad as it seems.

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“It is strange to be known so universally and yet to be so lonely.” – Albert Einstein

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Once my best friend told me something that maybe she shouldn't of. I was our junior year and she was having a really hard time in all her classes, namely Pre-calc and AP Bio. She bombed a test really badly and even after the curve she got a 54%, and she, usually being the straight A perfect student, could not handle it. She went into a state of depression and started to smoke marijuana. A couple of months into this new 'activity' of hers, she told me, and she made me promise not to tell anyone else. This gut wrenching feeling that my brilliant best friend was drowning her sorrows in pot, giving up everything she ever worked for was killing me. I really wanted someone to help her, but she wouldn't let me. Finally it went too far when she started ditching class to get high, so I told one of her trusted adult friends, and they helped her through it— something I was too young and naïve to handle myself. She stopped talking to me, even though what I did was the right thing for her, and all my friends turned on me because they didn't know the whole story. They just assumed I must've done something really bad for her to hate me so, so they deemed by Bitch Number One, and left me in the dust. I tried to help my best friend, but in the end I'm all alone. All alone because I cared enough to try to turn her life around. So loneliness sucks, and you know what it comes from? Trying to do what you think is right. So we ought to conform to the standards of the rest of the bitches out there. Maybe if I had done that a couple of years ago, I wouldn't be so lonely right now.

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“Loneliness adds beauty to life. It puts a special burn on sunsets and makes night air smell better.” – Henry Rollins

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I love to be alone, so I guess loneliness is an attribute that I revere. I guess it might sound weird and reclusive of me to want solitude, but when I'm alone, it's the only time I can think straight. When I'm lonely, I can understand so much more. I love to lay down in my

backyard, after everyone has gone to sleep, and look at the stars, and think. Cliché? Yes. Wonderful? Yes. There is no noise, not artificial obstacles, no grief or sorrow—it's my time to reflect, it's my time to think about nothing, but yet about everything. So I guess you could call me antisocial, but I just really like to be alone.

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“Loneliness expresses the pain of being alone and solitude expresses the glory of being alone.” – Paul Tillich

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Loneliness may be characterized, as the condition of being in solitude in its simplest form, but it is more than that. Loneliness is a state depression that arises from feeling alone.

Everyday, I remember this mass of emotion hidden deep inside me that no one can understand, so I put on a smiley face and come to school and gossip with my superficial, friends. How I envy them, for having not a care in the world. I try opening up and they push me away, not wanting to have to deal with the miseries of another.

That makes me lonely.

I have a lot of friends, some people would call me popular, but no one knows who I am. I can be surrounded by people and feel lonely.

I'm lonely quite a lot, and no one will ever know.

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“Loneliness is and always has been the central and inevitable experience of every man.” –Thomas Wolfe

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For I am not lonely in the sense of I have no friends or people don't like me or know me or anything. I just feel that people don't really know what I am going through – not that it is some crisis but it would be helpful if people would just know that I work hard but still am not as smart as I am supposed to be or I have expectations for the future that I sometimes doubt I can reach. I wish there was someone just like me so I could talk to them about what my life is and isn't. it would just be easier if someone could have a 100% understanding without any explanation needed.

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“To be adult is to be alone” – Jean Rostand

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My biggest fear is not public speaking. It is not death. It is not getting into the college of my choice or procuring my dream job.

My biggest fear is being alone.

I cannot stand to be alone. I need people near me, physically, and I always long for someone to "be there" for me. I'm one of those people who always asks whether someone wants to come with me to the bathroom, even

though as soon as we reach there I feel horribly awkward having that person just stand around while I do my business. I can't walk in turning stairwells alone because each blind turn presents a new scare.

During tutorial I'll go to a busy room to do my work just so that I'll have people around. I've built up my life around being in groups and teams, always having to work with people and lead people and be led by people because it's so much easier than trudging through whatever it is by myself. I blog because I can find people with the same feelings, with the same hurts, maybe wiser and older or whatever they may be, and then I don't feel as alone.

People who can be alone in peace are so strong. I watched a cute, sad short film called “How to be Alone”. Dancing alone. Dining alone. Enjoying life alone. And the lady's braveness inspires me so much. I'm scared that I'll never find that person with whom I can spend the rest of my life, because I never ever want to be alone. It's not that I'm anti-independence – heck, I'm excited for the college days and the years of youth that follow. But I don't want to be independent for the rest of my life, simply because I don't want to be the only one having to deal with ...me.

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“It is loneliness that makes the loudest noise. This is true of men as of dogs.” – Eric Hoffer

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Loneliness has always been a part of my life. I'm not very social, and I'm bad at making friends. I basically had no friends until I moved, and then in seventh grade I started making friends, but whenever the people I ate lunch with didn't show up, I got all sad, and I wandered around until I found them. Eighth grade was just about the happiest year of my life: I had friends! I had more friends than I had ever had before, and they were the kind who last: I still hang out with them and I see them every day. Although I am now 'friends' with lots of people, there are a sparse few that I really know well. My progress has been slow, but I'm coming along. This Halloween I was all depressed because everyone I know was going to somebody's house, or was having friends over, while I sat at home and watched baseball. I'm still lonely often, mostly because I don't have many friends in my most dull classes. Loneliness sucks, so reach out to people, include them more into your group, and make them feel welcome. I swear, the tiniest things make a huge difference. If you don't, well, sucks to your as-mar, and I at least hope that you know what you're putting your "friends" through. Lonely people: put yourself out there, and if you make an effort to be friendly to others, the people who are worth it will return the favor. One day you

will find your people. Remember: Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind. Dr. Seuss knows what he's talking about. Being fake won't get you nowhere, and it might just mean that you'll backtrack and have to start over. Good luck! It's a friendly world out there!

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"What loneliness is more lonely than distrust?"

- George Elliot  
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She was supposed to be...

...the first born son.  
...the next engineer.  
...the piano prodigy.  
...the star of the team.  
...the one that leads the team to championships.  
...the leader in everything.

She wanted nothing more than to be herself. But she has never been that. She has lived her life hiding, hiding behind the mold she created for herself. She is so good at being fake, at hiding the truth that nobody can break her down. Except herself. She doesn't ask for much; she just wants to be happy again. She doesn't want to hide anymore. She wants to go back to the times when everything was carefree, when everything that mattered was cupcakes, cookies, and rainbows.

Now though, nothing will be that way. And she wants to be herself. She doesn't like the feeling of being alone, of wondering when the next time she will be able to smile again is. She doesn't like going to sleep at night, talking to herself because she has no friends. She only asks for one thing, for one thing that she has wanted her life: Can she have a fairytale ending?

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"People think they know me, but they don't. Not really. Actually, I am one of the loneliest people on this earth. I cry sometimes, because it hurts. It does. To be honest, I guess you could say that it hurts to be me."

- Michael Jackson  
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For the longest time, she spent her days alone. She loved to sit around on the grass at the back of the school, sitting on the yellow benches, slowly peeling each layer of paint back. She loved seeing the bare bench, the brown rawness that revealed who this bench really was. To her, this was a way of being herself. Nobody judged her there and for 4 years, she sat on those benches, she stood on them, and banged on them. That is where miracles happened. That is where friendships were formed. That is

where she learned about herself the most. She loved walking around on the dirt, seeing it kick up into a cloud behind her as she sprinted down the line. Often times she found herself flying through the air, the thrill of seeing the corner there right in front of her. Time slowed down. It is late in the afternoon. The season is over. She is out there, on the grass running football drills, watching the ball rise up into the air, and tracking it. She leaps into the air and lands, smooth on the ground, perfect. She protects the ball, then gets up and throws it in. Liner right at the catcher. The girl is out. She remembers this moment...it happened in a game not long ago.

This is how I felt at the end of my senior year. The school year was close to ending -- it was almost June yet still found myself longing for the softball field. As I walked away this one afternoon, I began to cry. For those of you who know me and have seen me around campus and on the field, you would understand why. Softball has been my outlet for my high school life. I have played since I was 6 and still continue to play today in college. I don't play competitively anymore but I do love the sport dearly. During my Junior year at Monta Vista, softball became my best friend. I went to play whenever I felt down. I played when I was lonely and I turned to it for support. I would overwork myself on the field, in the cages, anywhere. I remember waking up at 4am just to go attend tournaments and not getting back until Sunday night and realizing I have a test the next day. Softball is the one thing that has been there in my life and when it isn't, things seem to always get worse for me. When I don't have the sport, I hurt the most. I feel down, lonely, lost. Softball gave me a purpose in life. It gave me the chance to reach out for something bigger than myself, to be a part of something -- anything.

The best times I have had at MV were the times I could go and turn to softball for support. It was an outlet. I was myself. And when I didn't have it, I felt I was in a hole. It felt that I was lost and couldn't find my way out.

At the end of the day, though, my feelings of loneliness dissipated into the air...only because it is softball that saved me from it.

There have been many a times I have been lonely. There have been many a times and still are days where I feel that everything is turning black and I will not wake up out of my sleep. Many a times, I don't know what to do with myself. But having a purpose -- even a small one -- has helped me out of it. Softball has been this purpose. I urge you to go out and find that one thing you know will bring you out of the darkness. Even if it is temporary, it will help. It shows you that there is hope, and I know this because I speak from experience. Don't trust me? Experience it for yourself. The worst days are the ones

where I play the longest, try my hardest, and wish that softball was the world.

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“To be alone is to be different, to be different is to be alone.” – Suzanne Gordon  
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Sometimes I feel really lonely. Sitting in my room watching groups of friends walking by while I sit by myself just confirms those lonely feelings. I guess not having strong support from my parents and family contributes to those feelings. Knowing that getting straight A's is the only way I will feel accepted by my parents really puts a distance between us. But in the end, I know I do have people in my life that are there for me and to support me. So though I may feel lonely a lot of the time, I know that I am truly not alone.

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“What loneliness is more lonely than distrust.” – George Eliot  
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Everyday, walking around school campus during lunch, I see people sitting alone quietly eating the sandwich that was packed for them. Maybe it was a new kid, or maybe it was just a kid that had to work on some social skills. Either way, I can never help but notice how lonely they look. Some days I feel like I should walk over and say hello, but I never do in the end. What's weirdest is when I see a kid in my math class, who sits behind me, sitting by himself during lunch. From talking to him in class, I know that he is a new student, who moved here from out of state. I guess I would consider us to be friends, but when I pass by him during lunch, I simply do not know what to do. I know I should stop and at least say hello, but I don't. Thinking about it now, I guess we just have that subconscious mental block that does not want to associate ourselves with “loners”, for we ourselves are too scared to be one of them.

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“The worst loneliness is not to be comfortable with yourself.” – Mark Twain  
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you know how people say that even when there's a sea of water around you, you don't have a drop to drink? that's how i feel sometimes. my group of friends isn't too

large, or too small, and we're all really close. i tell them everything, but sometimes i don't think i should tell them some things, and i don't know why. so i don't say anything, and all of it has been building up inside me and i feel so lonely because, if i can't tell my closest friends, who can i tell? i completely trust them and it always makes me feel better to talk to them, but sometimes i know that i'll regret opening up about some things to them and then i can't say anything, and frankly, it sucks.

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“Loneliness is and always has been the central and inevitable man.” – Thomas Wolfe  
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I am a floater. That is the best way to describe me; I float from friend group to friend group, socializing and catching up with people. So how could a person like me, with innumerable friends, ever be lonely? It's quite possible; I discovered how this week.

My brother asked me, "how many friends do you have?"

I replied, "Lots." Definitely not a lie.

Later in the week, I realized the superficiality of many of my friendships. I realized that I talk about the dumbest things with many of my friends- clothes, makeup, grades, etc. Many of my friends do not know how sensitive I really am; because of this they said stuff to me that made me believe that they were truly angry with me. For a few days, I thought they all just hated me for a dumb reason, and because of that, I sort of went into a people-hating mood. I felt like nobody really understood what I was feeling at the time, and I couldn't talk about it to my friends, because they were the cause of my frustrations. I still hung out with them out of an obligation to do so, but I didn't really feel like talking or doing anything, for that matter. I felt like I couldn't relate to a lot of things they were saying, and I was upset that the bulk of what they were saying involved me as the butt of their jokes. I felt emotionally ostracized from them all- mental loneliness, if you will.

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“The eternal quest of the individual human being is to shatter his loneliness.”

– Norman Cousins  
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# Loneliness

by Beth Proudfoot, MFT

When a rabbit is frightened, it runs to the nearest bramble or hole. When a human being is frightened, it runs away from trouble, for sure, but the direction it runs is toward its tribe. This is a defining characteristic of our species and one way we differ from most other mammals. Naked, without sharp teeth or claws, and not terribly fast or strong as individuals, our tribes have been our salvation. The need to belong is part of our DNA.

In fact, it's more than just belonging to large social group. We need to be attached to at least one other individual in a meaningful way. Someone has to have our back, to care for us so deeply that they'll take risks on our behalf. Our first attachment, to our mothers, begins before we are born and is the deepest and most enduring of all human relationships. We also love and are attached to our fathers and extended families and good friends, of course. They are our tribe, and our happiness and well-being depends on them.

During adolescence, our intense attachments with our original tribe fade a bit. This is a necessary thing for our survival. We must let go of our parents and stand on our own for a while before we can form our next great attachment to our lover/spouse. This can feel like a trapeze act over the Grand Canyon. That free fall between letting go of our parents' hands and grasping firmly onto our lover can be both exhilarating and terrifying.

It also can be very sad. Psychologists have studied loneliness in teens extensively because of its connection to depression and suicide, which also seem to reach a peak during this time in the life cycle. Here's what we know about loneliness. It is universal. Every teen feels lonely much of the time. There appears to be a survival need involved: loneliness is unpleasant and therefore spurs adolescents onto forming intense relationships with their peers, leading to new attachments to lovers with whom they will have babies and keep the species going.

When things go well, teens' lonely feelings lead them to join groups, go to their temple or mosque or church or circle in the wilderness to find God, and form meaningful friendships with their peers. When things go badly, they become angry, depressed and disillusioned. They define themselves as unlovable. Some stop reaching out or even actively avoid relationships with other people, causing them become even more alone in a negative downward cycle. Others attach themselves to peers who are not good for them in some way and are too afraid of loneliness to let go.

It is very human to try to avoid pain. Unfortunately, avoidance not only makes the pain worse, it can cause other problems as well. The very best thing to do with loneliness is to face it head on. Name it. Sit with it. Invite it in. I have been touched deeply by the stories of the teens in this issue. My heart goes out to them. I know how they feel. And I'm not worried about them. They have found a creative way to express their feelings. They'll be okay.

Are you troubled by loneliness? Contrary to what you might believe, the teens who are the happiest in their relationships are not necessarily the ones with the most friends. In fact, it's easy to be lonely in a crowd. The most important factor keeping loneliness at bay is just having at least one really good friend. This friend can be of the same gender or not, the same age or not. But they must be trustworthy, loyal and reliable in times of crisis.

One way to find a friend like this is to try deepening your relationship with someone you already know. The topic of how to make a friendship better could fill a whole book, of course. Here are a few things to try:

1. Stay positive. When we're critical of others, it doesn't help them to change, it just makes them not want to be around us. Focus on the things your friend does that you really like, and they'll do more of it.
2. Listen. Try to help your friend come up with his or her own solutions to problems before offering yours and well before telling your own story.
3. Address conflicts assertively. When your friend does something to you that you don't like, it's important to stand up for yourself without blaming them. You can do this by just stating how you feel. An example might be, "hey, remember yesterday when you were ragging on me in front of Josh? I know you were just joking, but it was kind of embarrassing for me." It's hard to do this, but none of the other solutions that most people try (just walking away from that friend, getting angry with them, getting revenge, etc.) work very well to solve problems. And the path to a good friendship absolutely must go through solving problems together.

I have mentioned, above, the strategies of learning more about your own spirituality and finding creative outlets for your feelings. Both of these are excellent solutions for dealing with loneliness. I'm running out of space, but here's one more idea. Our emotions live in our bodies in interesting ways. One thing I've noticed in a long career of helping people to understand and deal with their feelings is that our bodies are not big enough to hold two exactly opposite emotions at the same time. The opposite of loneliness is compassion. So, when you recognize you are feeling lonely, when you're uncomfortable, and when facing the feeling and expressing it isn't enough to make it go away, try turning your attention to those who are even lonelier than you are. And think of what you could do for them that would be amazingly kind. If you're brave, take the risk and do it. Random Acts of Kindness are not only good for the world, they're an antidote for lonely, sad feelings. If your cup is half empty, they will make it full.

Okay, I'll end with a little bit of philosophy for you to ponder. We are all lonely. Therefore, we are not alone. Our mutual longing for connection connects us...It's quite an adventure, being human, isn't it?

Beth Proudfoot is a Marriage and Family Therapist who specializes in working with parents and children. Her website is [www.bethproudfoot.com](http://www.bethproudfoot.com)

## Resources from the Verdadera Staff and Professional Resources

### Resources for Teens:

Stressed Out Students' Guide to Handling Peer Pressure by Lisa Medoff, PhD

Teen's Guides: Living with Peer Pressure and Bullying by Thomas Paul Tarshis, MD, MPD

The Self Esteem Workbook for Teens by Anita Bohensky, PhD

Mean Chicks, Cliques, And Dirty Tricks: A Real Girl's Guide to Getting Through the Day with Smarts and Style by Erika V. Shearin Karres

GirlWise: How to Be Confident, Capable, Cool, and in Control by Julia DeVillers

Be True to Yourself: A Daily Guide for Teenage Girls by Amanda Ford, Shannon Berning

### Resources for Parents:

Yes, Your Teen is Crazy!: Loving Your Kid Without Losing Your Mind by Michael J. Bradley

Staying Connected to Your Teenager: How to Keep Them Talking to You and How to Hear What They're Really Saying by Michael Riera

Uncommon Sense for Parents with Teenagers by Michael Riera

Queen Bees and Wannabes: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends, and the New Realities of Girl World by Rosalind Wiseman

### Helpful Websites

[www.happinesshelp.org/unhappily-judging-others](http://www.happinesshelp.org/unhappily-judging-others)

[www.teendepression.org](http://www.teendepression.org)

## Upcoming Issues and Submission Deadlines

| <u>Issue</u> | <u>Deadline</u>                         |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Love         | 6pm, Saturday, January 8 <sup>h</sup>   |
| Escape       | 6pm, Saturday, February 5 <sup>th</sup> |

## Ways to Submit

1. Visit us at [www.verdadera.org](http://www.verdadera.org). You can submit stories here, learn more about Verdadera, and meet staff members.
2. Stories can be turned in to **any staff member** – hardcopies or emails, anything is welcomed. Staff members are also there to help answer your questions about issues, topics, anything.
3. Email it to [verdadera.entries@gmail.com](mailto:verdadera.entries@gmail.com)

