



Mission

Aletheia (ah-LAY-thee-uh), which means “truth” in Greek, is a student outreach publication that strives to provide a voice for all students at Lynbrook High School in San Jose, California. Inspired by Los Gatos High’s *Reality Check* and Monta Vista’s *Verdadera*, *Aletheia* was created to facilitate communication and overcome stigmas concerning prevalent and taboo issues within Lynbrook.

About

At the beginning of each publication period, the *Aletheia* staff chooses a topic that pertains to the realities of high school. Each issue comprises of firsthand experiences submitted anonymously by Lynbrook students and alumni, professional articles relating to the chosen theme, and resources compiled by the student staff. Finalized newsletters are uploaded online and emailed to Lynbrook families. Back issues can be found on www.lhsaletheia.org, under Archives.

The content in *Aletheia* is composed by the students of Lynbrook High School. Ideas and opinions expressed within the publication are not necessarily reflected by members of the school administration or faculty.

This is the first issue of *Aletheia* for the 2017-18 school year.

Submissions

All Lynbrook students and alumni are eligible to submit stories. We publish all submissions that adhere to our guidelines, which are posted on the website. The Aletheia staff is committed to preserving the integrity of your content and will not make any changes, with exception to certain profanity (which are asterisked-out). We do not edit stories for grammar or syntax.

Our next topic is (Dis)honesty. If you are interested in contributing, a submission box is available at lhsaletheia.org/submit

In this issue, we opened submissions at the end of the last school year and reopened them at the beginning of this school year. Therefore, we met with two Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists on this topic, Jamieko Gruenloh last year and Mary Cannon this year, who have provided different and interesting views on the topic of "In Retrospect." Additionally, if you are interested in learning more about "In Retrospect," there is a 2011 issue with the same topic which may provide readers with a helpful comparison between students' perspectives over time. We hope this issue provides the reader with more insight about "In Retrospect" due to various perspectives not only from students, but from professionals as well.

*Expressing what
remains unspoken.*

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There was a time when I was constantly thinking about life. Nihilism seemed to expand into everything I did, everything I was. In fact, at the end of 8th grade, I quit almost all of my clubs. I signed up for sports, and I would ditch practice because I didn't feel like anything was worth doing, worth putting effort into. In retrospect, I should have realized that I was hurting myself, not physically, but subconsciously. The first day of ninth grade, first period, new year, new me (aw who am I kidding I was still the same old guy). And then I found her. And it changed me. SHE changed me. And after so long, after numerous decs meetings, countless walks and talking into the visible air of the dark night sky. After the homework and the projects and the late night essay revising and the speech writing and the tea and fro yo in the middle of the day and the driving around to random places. After all of that, I've come to realize that she gave me the meaning in my life. I joined clubs, I joined sports, I became more and more social, more and more active, more and more happy, more and more caring because I met her. Now, I'm not that good at writing these kinds of long stories or explaining myself in depth, but I'll try it out. Imagine...(*takes a deep breath*)...imagine that you are in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. You're drowning, and the empty oxygen tanks on your back are weighing you down. You're on the verge, the brink of complete and utter death. But, she finds you. She shakes off the dead weights, and you feel free, and you float up to the surface and you're able to breath again, if only for a moment. And that feeling when you take that breath... you're liberated. Sure, you may become Atlas again in the next day, or the next hour, or maybe even the next second. Sure the weight of the world may come crashing down on your shoulders. But that one moment is something I'll never forget. That one moment is something I'll cherish forever. Thank you so, so much for everything that you've done, everything that you've been, everything that you are. This is the beginning of a story. A story of how I met the person that saved my life, and how high school became the backdrop to my ongoing bildungsroman. (To be continued...)

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I hate myself. I hate everything I have ever done and I hate everything so much. I cut off friends because of incredibly stupid and petty reasons and now here I am. Some friendless creep who just sits alone by themselves. I'm so gross. Seeing them with new and better friends make me feel happy but bitter at the same time. Would we have been good friends if I didn't cut them off? Would it have been even worse? Regrets suck. I wish was more honest with my parents. I f***** hate music, I hate IT I HATE IT But my parents wanted me to have another hobby so I took it up. I could be having the best year of my life if I hadn't. But now I just have f***** depression and I have to spend the rest of the year with all of these f***** playing this s***** a** instrument I DONT EVEN LIKE AND EVERYTHING SUCKS AND I just wish I never existed. I suppose I deserve all this, though.

"We write to taste life twice, in the moment and in retrospect."

- Anaïs Nin

I wish I had tried harder at school. That's not to say that I didn't work my a** off, but college admissions--more rejections than admissions, honestly--are making me perpetually question what more I could've done. And there must have been something more I could've done, so here I am stuck in this negative mindset of wishing I did more. I probably wouldn't be thinking that these past four years have amounted to nothing and been an utter waste of time. Or maybe looking back now, I should have not given a s***. Maybe I should have partied all the time and not tried at all. The result would have been the same anyway. Until this past month, I didn't hold many regrets and I was proud of the effort I put into my schoolwork and extracurriculars but 20/20 hindsight is telling me I made the wrong choice. Now it's too little, too late.

From summer to a few months before the end of freshman year, I was dealing with depression. One moment that I remember was when a girl gave me a slip of paper with a compliment on it and I suddenly felt ridiculously happy. I hadn't felt happiness in a long time, so it was a nice feeling and I clung onto that memory to cheer me up (and lowkey kept the slip of paper around for awhile).

Colleges have been tough. Sometimes I wish I did more, other times I wish I did less. But in the end, there is nothing that can be done. I tried my hardest to excel with all the extracurricular activities that I was a part of, but it didn't seem to be enough for the colleges I wanted to go to. In retrospect I think that I struggled, but learned valuable lessons through all the hardship; my health was struggling throughout high school, the unexpected death of my grandfather was tragic, and all the social drama caused me more pain than it should have. As a senior, I'm happy to look at all the 'B's,' that some would think have stained my chances at college, and know that they each mean something to me on a deeper level. I learned from each experience, whether it was good or bad, and even though it may have been bitter at the time, it all worked out in the end. I wish I spent more time with my family instead of being so occupied with homework and sports, but there's nothing I can do now. Even though my parents are not the best, especially during this crucial time of choosing colleges, I do not have this unstable wish to get rid of them. I understand their pain and concerns, even if it stresses me out. I guess they seemed to have raised me in that way. Well, let's hope college works out cause I think I'm ready for this next step of the journey. :)

"Destiny is often a name given in retrospect to choices that had dramatic consequences."

- J.K. Rowling

In Retrospect, it probably didn't matter...what event am I referring to, you might be wondering? In truth, the list is so long, I couldn't list them here. In retrospect, the grade, that stupid incident, the Facebook post, that embarrassing joke, that...etc didn't matter. We talk a lot about anxiety and depression in Aletheia, but my situation is slightly different, though connected. I have a strange combination of perfectionism and anxiety, to the point where even I am in a good mode or overall "happy", I am never proud of myself... I turn over incidents, again and again, questioning myself, wondering what would have happened if I didn't do say that or do this.- no matter what I do, I never feel like it's worth being proud of. I don't suffer from the "stereotypical" feelings of depression or anxiety- I

don't feel particularly sad or empty, I'm not drowsy or always tired, I don't have trouble sleeping or doing work, and I have never thought of hurting myself. But I take the act of being "retrospective" the extreme- I can't stop thinking of my past, of things I do wrong, my flaws. There are times when I feel so happy, but something is missing because of this feeling. It's a sunny day, I aced my test, I hung out with my friends for the first time in a month, and I'm coming home with a smile on my face, but I still feel like I'm not good enough. I guess this post doesn't really make much sense, and I'm pretty sure I'm confusing myself, not just the reader. But I guess being at Lynbrook has made feel like simultaneously happy and worthless, and all of this stems from the constant need to reminisce about past incidents.

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I've tried too hard, I've said too much, and now I'm here. I would've changed everything. From the things I say, to the prices I had to pay. I always end up getting hurt. Regret. Remorse. But it's my fault. People will say it's not, but it really is. I'm losing hope in myself. It's hard to change, but I'm still trying. I'm doing my best. I really am. I'm really, really close to giving up. But I can't. Something keeps me from giving up. I can't describe it, but it's there. That's why I'm still here. I'm trying to change. Not just myself, but others as well. I want to keep others from making the same mistake I did. I don't want them to go through what I had to go through. I don't want to see it happen again. I made mistakes. I can't say for sure that I've learned, but I'm trying to change. I really am. I care too much. I said the wrong things too soon, they didn't tell me that I said the wrong thing. They just stopped talking to me. They just left. They all leave. Everyone always ends up leaving. But that's okay. I'll change. I promise. With or without anybody else. I'm here. And I'll change. I'll change everything. From the way I talk, to the way I move. I'll change myself. I'll change who I am. I'll do it all. For you.

"One day, in retrospect, the years of struggle will strike you as the most beautiful."

- Sigmund Freud

Sometimes she'd like to imagine how it would be like after she died. She wasn't afraid of death; for her, it was simply just a resting place or a dark mysterious pit or world that she would want to explore. The only reason that she had not yet made her move yet was that she still could not yet leave what made her feel happy. Not her parents or her family members. They cared, but not in the way she wanted, so she often escaped in stories or movies. Her friends were often a torch in the dark as well. She wondered so many times how the kitchen knife would feel against her skin. She was curious and excited and anxious and scared of the thought. She imagined how her parents would react. Would her mom cry for her just a few months and then go back to normal, putting her attention instead to her younger brother or sister? Would her dad think that she had been a waste of time, money, and effort? Or would he be sad for her, to the point that he'd cry in public? Would he remember only the disappointment later or the happy memories of her? I really don't know except that I don't want to end my life yet. I want to avoid the words suicide or kill because they have such strong connotations. But I still wonder, would it be better to not live any longer? Because I'm more a little tired and scared of going on. But when I listen to songs, I don't want to give it up because despite how tired and unhappy I'm, I don't want to give up what's beautiful and that feeling it's giving me right now. Sometimes I feel ashamed of these thoughts, but they're there so often on bad days. I know a lot of people have survived and endured worse, and I'm not one of them. I don't have much of their difficulties, but my heart still has that ugly and unhappy twitch. The more it twitches, the worse I feel. I don't know what to do anymore. So much of the time I've wasted is regretted. This doesn't seem to be depression b/c I still continue w/ my life w/o a big hitch; it's just that I think about death and my death more than I should. Is that unnatural?

*"Because you are my regret this year,
and if I could change anything, I would
change how I've treated you."*

- LHS Submission

In retrospect, I probably should have tried harder. I think this vague statement applies to multiple aspects of my life. I should have tried harder with my grades, I should have tried harder to please my parents, and I should have tried harder to not screw up any of my friendships. If I started caring and stopped slacking off two years ago, I would be the kid my parents always wanted. I wouldn't be a disappointment and be the cause of their sleepless nights. I just want to make my parents happy and in retrospect, I should have tried my very best to avoid the situation that I am in right now. I also should have tried to maintain my friendships and not be a bad friend. I failed at that unintentionally and I think about it everyday. In retrospect, I should have been supportive of my friends and not caused any emotional trauma. In retrospect, if I had one wish, I would choose to rewind my life to two years ago and prevent myself from screwing up my future.

I want to go back to freshman year and redo everything. from friends to clubs to classes, i keep getting the feeling that i did everything wrong. lately, i find my mind roaming to the endless abyss of "what ifs" that exists. as a junior, standing face to face with college applications, i can't help but think that i could have done something different. it's just that i've spent what feels like my whole life working towards this one thing, and near the end of it all, i just want to rewind and begin again because i can't get over the feeling that there's something I could have done that would change the way i feel now. i don't know what it is that i wish i had done differently, though. i don't know if i would go back to do less or more. you're asking me whether i made wrong or right choices, but that's the thing i don't know. so in retrospect i don't know what i would have done, but maybe if i had...

It took me until my junior year to realize that I could do whatever I wanted and other's judgement really shouldn't affect me. In retrospect, I really wish I did what I truly felt like doing-- no one is actually that invested in your life to really care about what you do or don't do. And if they are invested in you, they're likely a good friend and supportive of what you want in life. So yeah, I started taking a really "f*** it" approach to everything afterwards. I stopped doing extracurriculars I didn't want to do and just stuck to

what I liked. I dropped toxic friends that I was staying with just because I wouldn't have a squad otherwise. I started signing up and auditioning/trying out/applying for anything I had the slightest interest in. I was open about parts of my life I had previously hidden and just embraced the people who could appreciate my openness and personal choices (and ignored the rest). Looking back, that change of attitude and increase of self confidence is possibly the best thing that happened to me.

* The Aletheia Staff, in consultation with counselors, have considered the fact that "Ana" may be short for "Anorexia". Please consider this possibility as you read the next submission.

I thought it would make me happy. I thought being able to sit in the front seat of the car and see the airbag sign flicker between "on" and "off" would mean I was finally an okay person. I thought being able to see my collar bones protrude from my bony chest would enhance my beauty. From my dramatic cheek bones, to the bony shoulders I aspired to have (and did receive), to the paleness of my skin; I was beginning to meet Ana. She was nice at first, I was able to exchange my size medium clothes for small, sometimes even extra small, clothing. My pant size dropped dramatically from an 8 to a double zero, extra skinny jeans. Dress size decreased down to a 0. Cup size down to an A. I was finally able to compare myself with my peers, I was able to be as pretty, as skinny, as slim as them; I was able to finally feel like I fit in, at least that was the plan, as I never really felt like that, and within a few months time, Ana was no longer a friend I chose to have, she became something beyond my control. It started out with the loss of my time. I would spend hours upon hours each day researching "natural beauty hacks" or "ways to lose weight fast." I remember the journals I kept writing in fine detail what exactly I had to eat, whether it was a "full" meal, or a bite of an apple -- the list was extensive. Calculating online how many calories I would have to eat to achieve my goal, I would often cut that number down each day (I was always an over-achiever), to the point where I would shame myself for eating more than the planned 600 or 700 calorie intake (as an fyi a girl my age should have been consuming around 2000 with my extensive exercise habit). Irregular periods, no, absent periods; frequent

chills; intensive pain -- that was not the worst of Ana's weapons. I could handle physical pain, but when Ana would get into my head... that was really the worst. I remember days of surrounding myself with friends but never feeling like I was truly there. Ana was always in my head shouting at me to not eat food in front of others, to be uncomfortable when others did eat, and to hide myself because I was a worthless piece of shit. I don't really remember what catalyzed my recovery, the days are kinda a blur once you have known Ana for that long. It could have been my friend's attack on me, it could have been the countless doctor visits who just showed me the charts, it could have been God. Yeah, maybe it was him? Wow, I have never really thought about it. Hmm. Well, all I can say is that the negative and borderline harmful reactions from family members and friends were definitely not the worst of it. The reactions from Them were the absolute worst. I remember before I met Ana, I would always want to be with one of Them, but They never really saw me in that way; however, Ana introduced me to Them, and all of a sudden They were interested -- like too interested. At that point, probably 4 months into recovery, I was extremely self-conscious about my body and was scared of continuing to base my worth on my weight. When I saw that They were all of a sudden interested, or I would hear comments from friends about them objectifying my body, or when I would go someplace and in modest attire I would be harassed by Them as They yelled, "my friend thinks your hot" after I let them continue to go down the elevator because it was too crowded, i felt worthless... my body was no longer mine. it was first reconstructed by Ana, then it was taken away from me by Them. i would continue to struggle with my self-worth throughout the years, soon turning away from my stylish clothing into sweatshirts and sweatpants, hoping that would rid the focus off of me, just hoping they would leave me alone and my body would no longer be a defining characteristic. sometimes when i sit and think, i feel alone in this. like if i do decide to tell someone with my struggles, they won't know what to do and will just feel worse and treat me with some bubble. i mean, what would i even expect from them? i don't know what i want. however, i do know that i am currently struggling to be happy with myself as i have gained back weight, and im struggling to not answer Ana's many, many voicemails. as i continue to hid myself underneath the covers, i am struggling. now, maybe you think you know who i am. maybe your like "omg, that is totally

her," but the chances of you being correct are so small because of the sheer numerous students who i know share similar stories with me. so, maybe instead of focusing on who this is, focus on the message in this submission, and when you figure out what it is, hmu, cause im still trying to figure it out.

"And then I found her. And it changed me. SHE changed me."

- LHS Submission

Looking back at her, I know I should have said that I liked her. But I (probably) won't. It's not that anything's wrong with her. I mean she's an inspiration, someone I've looked up to and admired for a long, long time. Once, a while back, I asked a friend what the most important thing in a relationship was. You know what she said? She said that you had to know them really well. If you didn't, then distrust or falling out of love lurked right around the corner. Do you kind of see where I'm going with this? Do you see what my problem is? If not, I'll break it down for you. I cannot let anyone know me. There are some things that I really need to talk about, some things too painful to hold in the rest of my life. But she doesn't deserve to be burdened by them. As Bergen Evans said, "A man who won't lie to a woman has very little consideration for her feelings." Hence, I cannot tell her the truth. I cannot tell her these things for the sake of hurting her, because I as a person have no right to bring others down with me. I cannot tell her that I really, really like her. I know I'm flawed in my thoughts. I know that this will hurt me more than her. I know that when I'm older, I'll remember that I didn't tell her, and, for a moment, I'll regret it, and then, I'll remember that I got to be a happier person by simply knowing her, and I'll forget that sorrow. *Second post from the guy who likes the girl who changed his life.

Jamieko Gruenloh, LMFT

Jamieko Gruenloh, LMFT

Jamieko Gruenloh is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist that has been working with children, youth, and adolescents for over eight years in a variety of settings (schools, in the community, in the home, and even in lockdown facilities like juvenile hall). Jamieko currently works as a Wellness Counselor in San Mateo Union High School District. Being a school based mental health professional allows Jamieko to see the ins and outs of daily high school struggles. Jamieko also has a private practice in Los Gatos working with teens, individuals and couples.

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As the school year comes to an end it seems only fitting to have the prompt be, In Retrospect.

Retrospect is defined as, “looking back on or dealing with past events or situations”. It’s not defined as what in life did I mess up on and how can I do it better? However, it seems as though when we look back on life this is how we look at life, through dark colored glasses

I think from a young age we are taught that we are always to look back at what we did. It’s how we learn right? We are told that we learn and grow from our mistakes. However, it’s interesting to think that in doing so we actually beat ourselves up. We ruminate about the things that went wrong instead of reliving the things that went right. Really, we become our own human punching bags training for the next welterweight championship but never putting out name in for a fight.

In therapy we talk a lot about the fact that the way we talk to ourselves impacts our mental health. The more negative self talk you have the more anxious and depressed you feel. I teach every client I have about how they “should” on themselves. I should be a better student. I should be a better husband. I shouldn’t have said that to my child. I should apply to 22 colleges. I should know what they’re thinking... etc. This is such a detrimental way to think in life. It sets up expectations that will never be met because nothing is as perfect as the story you create in your mind. Nothing.

As different as all of these submissions are this month it is clear that regret is the theme and each article in some way is “shoulding” on themselves. Here’s my question to you: is it healthier for you to sit in the ickiness of poor life choices or move forward and know that you learned something even if it is just not to do “that” again? It’s a hard thing to do because we are programmed to focus on the negative. We are programmed to continually re-evaluate our life and our life choices. Come on though, y’all are teenagers!!! Reading each of these submissions is insightful yes. There is beauty in these submissions, yes. However, this is not the only way to look at life. I find it disheartening and just truly sad to hear the pain of teenagers who have, let’s be real, so many more years to make choices that they might regret in retrospect.

It’s hard not to constantly beat yourself up when you have your parents, your friends and even society telling you you need to meet a certain expectation and live up to a certain standard. I do not disagree that you might feel the urge to set these expectations as a standard of living. However, I don’t feel like this will always be your existence. It will get better. You have to be able to at some point make choices for you. You have to be able to stop having experiences just to build up your resume. Your goal in life is yes to be a well-rounded, well-adjusted, productive member of society. However, you can do so by finding things that you like, that you love, that you want.

I want you to ask yourself, do I do anything that I enjoy? Do I do

anything for me? Do I feel guilty when I do? Challenge yourself to at least once a day to do something YOU enjoy. This alone will help prevent burn out and the damaging impact stress has on you. Find someone you love to talk to at 4 am and laugh with them. Find a hobby you can rock! Learn a sport! Start to draw! Take that dance class! Then you need to challenge that guilt you have when you take time for you! Know that it's ok to do things for you. You are in the egocentric phase of life. You are supposed to be selfish. Instead y'all are making the process of college admissions your identity. You are forgetting to have fun, to go play, to go be teenagers. You take life so seriously you don't even want to risk getting to know someone (both romantically and platonically) because you know somewhere, at some point in time, there's a chance you might get hurt. Life is about making mistakes. Life is about getting hurt.

At the end of the day there is only one person who looks at you in the mirror, you. I want you to be proud of the choices you made. The choices that helped shape and shift who you are and where you're going, even if they were wrong. Would it be awesome if you could learn and grow from other's mistakes and poor life choices? YES! However, you will always need to be the author of your story and we are just around to read what happens next. So live your life and enjoy it. Learn from your mistakes and grow instead of beating yourself up with all of your coulda, shoulda, wouldas. Turns out you're not a boxer and beating yourself up isn't helping you any!

One of my newest and probably now closest friends has taught me that sometimes life catches you off guard and your greatest fear is messing up what you feel is perfect in the moment. Sometimes you just need to embrace the unknown. You need to take each moment day by day and truly revel in the fact that you have the choice to live life or to stay six feet under your covers and hide from your past mistakes and fear any future regrets. Yes, you might be making the wrong choice in the end but it turns out those mistakes could be your best memories! As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, Life is a journey, not a destination.

Enjoy the journey Lynbrook. Enjoy the journey.

Additional Website Resources:

A resource for LGBTQ+ teens: Trevor Helpline: 1-866-488-7386 - a 24/7 crisis intervention and suicide prevention hotline. TrevorText: Text "Trevor" to 1-202-304-1200 (available Wednesdays, Thursdays & Fridays 12pm to 6pm PST. Online chat: www.thetrevorproject.org/pages/get-help-now

Some good websites for parents and teens:

<http://transitionyear.org>

<http://www.goodtherapy.org/individuation-in-therapy.html>

Additional Resources

How to Talk So Teens Will Listen and Listen So Teens Will Talk
by Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish

Staying Connected To Your Teenager: How To Keep em Talking To You And How To Hear What They're Really Saying
By Michael Riera

The Anti-Depressant Book: A Practical Guide for Teens and Young Adults to Overcome Depression and Stay Healthy
By Jacob Towerly

Santa Clara Toll-free Crisis Hotline: 855-278-4204

Uplift (EMQ) Crisis Team: 408-379-9085 or 877-412-7474

National suicide hotline: 1-800-273- TALK (8255)

Mary Cannon, LMFT

Mary Cannon, LMFT

Mary Cannon is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in San Jose. She sees individual teens and adults as well as couples and families in her private practice. Her work with clients is to build on their strengths, to foster insight and understanding, and to improve communication skills. She has advanced training working with survivors of sexual assault, individuals with alcohol and other drug challenges, parenting issues, and couples.

I really appreciate Aletheia giving students a chance to consider “In Retrospect” past experiences in this month’s edition. Taking a moment to reflect on where we’ve been and what we’ve done is an opportunity to better understand ourselves. As a therapist, a big part of the work I do with clients is exploring thoughts and feelings about a client’s past as it impacts their present and future. Sometimes, but not always, we talk about shame, disappointment, regret, hurt, and loss. These difficult feelings are explored with curiosity. The goal is not to judge the client but to improve the client’s insight and to empower them to make any necessary changes because of the new insight. One of the tools I have to share with the client is perspective.

High school can be a very intense time. A teen is becoming an individual within the confines of their environment, which may or may be reflective of how the teen wants to be. Teens are learning who they are and how they fit in while often being harshly judged for mistakes. Many teens are working furiously toward future success but “success” may be ill-defined and nebulous or someone else’s definition of success. How does anyone examine an event in life “In Retrospect” with all this pressure?

Imagine that your feelings are like the contents of a suitcase. If you have returned from a wonderful trip, you might want to leave your suitcase out, opened and slowly put things away as you savor pleasant memories from your adventure. On the other hand if your time away was a bad experience (e.g., maybe the weather was bad, maybe you got sick or hurt, etc.) then you can (1) stuff the suitcase in the back of the closet and vow to never open it, (2) put the suitcase aside and agree to open it sometime later, or (3) open the suitcase and deal with what’s inside.

In these situations some may try to keep things packed away but you can imagine the mess that will you have to deal with later when wet and smelly things have been stored in a dark place. Feelings are very similar. When bad or regretful things happen some people try to ignore or forget them (understandable in many cases, no one relishes talking about difficult things); but much like the colorful beach towel stuffed into a dark suitcase when it was wet, stuffed away feelings can come out completely unrecognizable. For example, when hurt is not expressed or acknowledged what usually gets expressed later is anger and it might even be anger over something completely (or seemingly) unrelated.

Part of life is to have bad experiences, slip ups, regrets, failures, unmet expectations; we all make mistakes, lose our cool, hurt other people’s feelings. How we incorporate these inevitabilities into who we are is important. Unpacking our unfortunate experiences is similar to unpacking from a bad vacation. Unpacking thoughts and feelings and exploring things “In Retrospect” is important.

Someone with depressed thoughts and feelings might unpack their feelings and figuratively sit in them. Imagine the depressed person engulfed in a suitcase of dirty clothes and feeling overwhelmed,

ashamed, guilt-ridden and worthless. Overwhelmed by the feelings they come to believe that those feelings validate the negative thoughts the person has about themselves. Meanwhile, a person with anxious thoughts and feelings is going to be a little more active going through each item one by one verifying how each of these “proves” the negative thoughts and feelings the person has about themselves. A proverb says, “We count our miseries carefully, and accept our blessings without much thought.” Both depressed and anxious thinking counts miseries carefully. You can imagine being caught in either a depressed or anxious spirals would be incredibly painful at best and completely debilitating at worst.

Looking at our lives “In Retrospect” is something to be done with curiosity and kindness. Examining an unfortunate event with curiosity and a goal for understanding is a good start. “The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago,” no one disagrees with that but, “The second best time is now.” We can lament not having avoided some negative thing or we can learn from it.

Give yourself some time so the intense feelings are not so intense. This might be the length of time to take a few deep breaths, a walk around the block, or a good night's sleep.

Try to think about or reflect on the event without judgment, like you would a box sitting on the floor. All facts, no judgments, assumptions, conclusions, or meaning attributed to the box. Remember the proverb about Sai Weng and His Lost Horse, <http://www.wisebread.com/good-luck-bad-luck-who-can-tell>. The wise man did not judge the circumstance, he just acknowledged it.

Acknowledge how you feel about the situation. Sai Weng looked at the events in his life without judgment, we can acknowledge our feelings in much the same way. Events can make us feel hurt, frustrated, anxious, disappointed, sad, confused, etc. It's ok to have any number of feelings and even conflicting feelings.

Be curious, think of questions that will help you come to a better understanding of what happened. The insight you gain from looking at the situation will help you next time.

Appreciate the intensity of feelings during or immediately following an event; and that all feelings dissipate over time. It's really hard for anyone in the moment to realize that moments pass, that one's perspective can be very focused and narrow and stepping back, widening one's view of things can lessen the intensity of the feelings. The person with depressed or anxious thoughts has a very difficult time with this. Sometimes you can get the courage to address a negative event or feeling by thinking about making things better for your Future Self.

Now that you've taken a look at what went wrong and some curiosity about what can be done differently next time, what resources might be helpful? Who are the people in your network you can talk to? Who are the people who boost you up and support you? If you feel overwhelmed by your own thoughts and feelings about yourself, consider talking to a trusted adult about them. A trusted adult might help you reflect on and gain insight from your situation and may help guide you toward resources helpful given

Additional Resources

Suicide & Crisis: 1-800-273-8255

Teen Line you can call, text, email or post on their message board.
<http://teenlineonline.org>

Get help, Get involved,
Get perspective:
<http://www.itgetsbetter.org>

your situation. Trusted adults may be your parents, teachers, doctor, Scout Leaders, activity leaders, coaches, music teachers, tutors, parents of your friends, older family members and grandparents. The one thing another person may have that is harder for anyone in any given situation is perspective. This becomes especially important if you struggle with thoughts and feeling that lean toward being depressive or anxious.

I was really impressed with the depth and honesty of the heartfelt submissions to this edition of Aletheia. I appreciate the risks writers took in sharing their experiences. From the submissions, it seems clear that students at Lynbrook take their education and futures very seriously.

Resources for Gaining Perspective:

A High School Senior's Perspective:

<https://ww2.kqed.org/perspectives/2017/09/27/rethinking-the-rejection-letter/>

A Grownup's Perspective:

Grownups are often willing to listen to young people. Some caring adults you might know are your parents, teachers, doctor, Scout Leaders, activity leaders, coaches, music teachers, tutors, parents of your friends, older family members and grandparents.

An Outsider's Perspective:

If you are concerned about confidentiality or not comfortable with talking a grownup in your network; consider talking to a therapist. We are trained listeners and often work toward helping you gain insight into your own life to improve your relationships.

Support for teens and parents (individual, group, parent support counseling as well as in-home teen and family coaching): <http://teentherapycentersv.com>