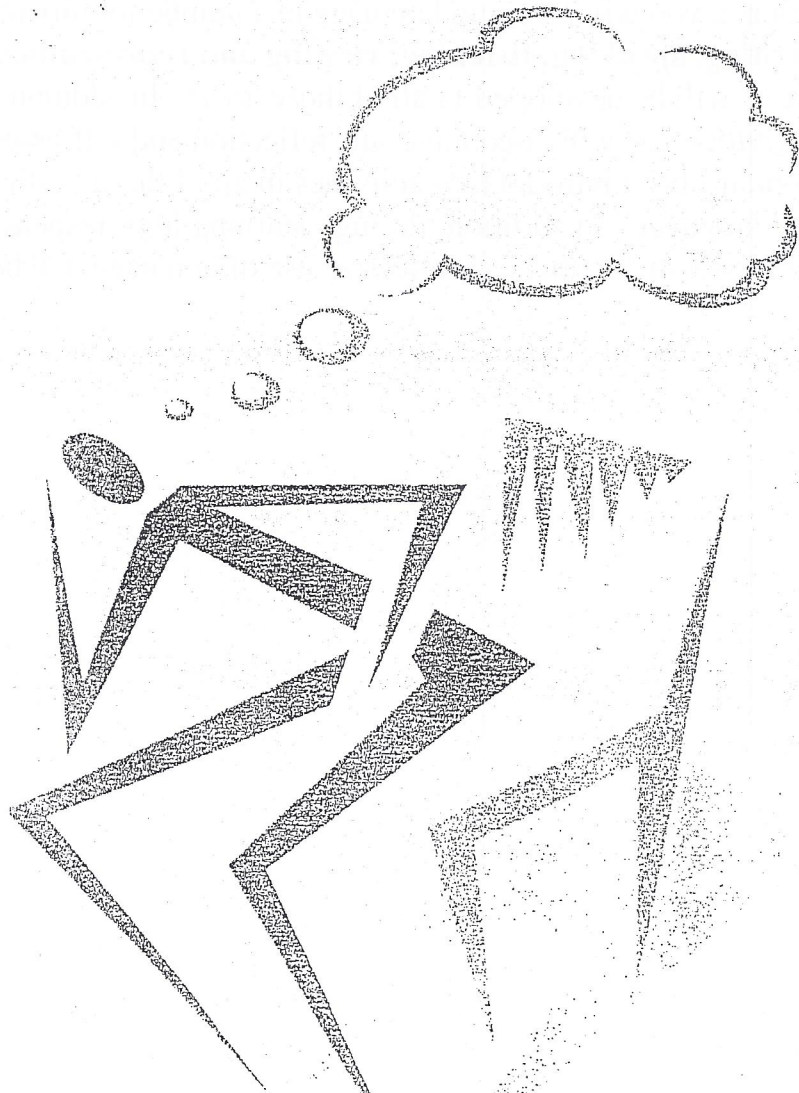


MISSION STATEMENT

Unit 1



Who Am I?

Activity 1: Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening are vital communication skills that we use everyday. This first activity is part of your introduction to the course. Your teacher will explain the English 10 course to you. During this introduction, your teacher will want to find out a bit about your background, interests and skills. This is also a good opportunity for you to ask questions about the course, the school, the teacher, or anything else that you would like to know.

A. Questions

In preparation for your discussion with your teacher, write down **10 questions** that you can ask. These questions may be about the course; they may be about the school and the school's expectations; you may also want to find out more about the teacher you will be working with.

B. Discussion

Your discussion with the teacher will likely take about 10 to 15 minutes.

C. Learning Log

After you have finished your discussion, write a **paragraph** (at least 5 to 6 sentences) on what you learned in the discussion. Also note down your goals for this course: what communication skills would like to improve on? What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses—if any? Do you speak well? Are you someone who asks questions? Are you a good listener?

Summarize

Summarizing is a tough skill to learn, but it is an absolutely essential skill. Summarizing helps you remember what you read and condense the information to share it with other people.

Here's what to do to summarize what you read:

- Ask yourself *who, what, when, where, why,* and *how* questions to pick out the most important information. Remember that in a summary, you may not need to use all of these questions to find the important information.

Who are the characters in the passage?

What is the main idea or problem?

When is it happening?

Where is it happening?

Why are the characters doing what they're doing?

How was the problem resolved?

- Write just **ONE sentence** to summarize what you read.
- Leave out **details that aren't important.**
- Check your **ONE sentence again.** Does it have only essential information?

Here's how to summarize the phone message below using only ONE sentence.

"Hi, Joleen, this is Kendra. The movie starts at 7:30 tonight, so my mom will pick you up around 6:45. I know it'll be a great movie. I think Thea will go, too. See you later!"

Summary: Kendra's mom will pick you up at 6:45 for the 7:30 movie.

Complete the summarizing pages in your handouts.

B. Response Journal

After you finish reading and commenting on the narratives, **choose one** of the narratives to write a response journal on.

A response journal gives you an opportunity to express your personal thoughts and feelings about a particular piece of reading. **Follow these basic guidelines for writing your response:**

- 1) State the title and author's name.
- 2) Begin with a brief description of what the piece was about (2 to 3 sentences – use what you have learned about *Summarizing*).
- 3) Include a connection between your own experiences and those described in the reading.
- 4) Give an opinion about your reading in general or about something specific in the reading. Explain why you reacted this way.

Your response journal should be at **least half a page long** (i.e. 6 to 10 sentences in **paragraph** form). Check below to see how response journals are marked.

Response Journal Marking Criteria

Excellent (5)

- shows evidence of close reading/viewing, with astute observations
- includes comments/questions that are insightful and probe toward greater understanding of the text
- shows insight into the connectedness of literary concepts in reading/viewing
- reveals impressive word choice, usage, and sentence structure; effective mechanical skills; accurate spelling; style effective in relation to purpose

Proficient (4)

- shows evidence of careful reading/viewing and attention to details
- poses thought-provoking comments/questions about significant issues in the text
- shows consistent understanding of literary concepts, possibly through the appropriate use of literary terminology
- reveals only minor problems in word choice, usage, or sentence structure, and few mechanical or spelling errors

Adequate (3)

- shows evidence that text has been read/viewed
- makes general comments or poses general questions about issues arising from or related to reading/viewing
- shows an emerging understanding of literary concepts
- reveals some problems with word choice, usage, or sentence structure, and some mechanical or spelling errors

Limited (2,1)

- presents a response that is vague, confusing, or lacking in detail
- makes few comments and poses few questions, and those that are included do not clearly connect with the experience of the text
- shows little or no understanding of fundamental literary concepts
- makes many errors in word choice, sentence structure, mechanics, and spelling

Activity 5: Writing (Personal Writing)

Writing is a form of communication that is vital in our world today. We write for many different reasons: to provide information, to argue a point, to entertain others, and to help ourselves understand who we are and what we believe in.

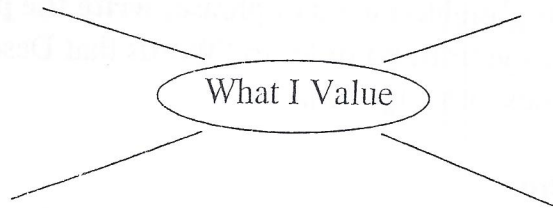
A. “Values” Response Journal

Read the article “Values: What is Important to Teenagers” in the back of this booklet (page 25). After you read the article, write a response journal. Comment on the following:

- What does the author say is important to teenagers?
- Do your own experiences confirm these findings? Explain.

B. Web Cluster

Create a web cluster about what is important to you.



C. Personal Statement Outline

Refer to the handout, “Personal Statement Outline.” Discuss with your teacher how you can develop your web cluster into a personal statement about what you value. Complete the “Personal Statement Outline.”

D. Draft

Use your outline, to create a first draft of your personal statement. This personal statement is basically a short essay about your personal beliefs.

E. Personal Statement Final

Type up your personal statement. Use the “Impromptu Writing Rating Scale” from your handouts to mark your personal statement. Hand both in to your teacher.

"I AM" Poem Instructions

I am (two special characteristics you have)

I wonder (something you are curious about)

I hear (an imaginary sound)

I see (an imaginary sight)

I want (an actual desire)

I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

I pretend (something you actually pretend to do)

I feel (a feeling about something imaginary)

I touch (an imaginary touch)

I worry (something that makes you worry)

I cry (something that makes you very sad)

I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

I understand (something you know is true)

I say (something you believe in)

I dream (something you actually dream about)

I try (something you really make an effort about)

I hope (something you actually hope for)

I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

Activity 7: Representing

The final activity in this unit gives you an opportunity to bring together some of the work that you have done so far. Your task in this activity is to put together a verbal and visual representation of who you are.

Create a poster with the following:

- 1) your "I Am" poem or your personal statement
- 2) personal photos and/or pictures cut out from magazines that relate to your poem or statement
- 3) at least three personal characteristic words that describe who you are

Activity 2 and 6: Words that describe Personal Characteristics

Active	Difficult	Intelligent	Reserved
Adventurous	Disagreeable	Inventive	Respectful
Aggressive	Disrespectful	Joyful	Responsible
Ambitious	Dreamer		Rude
Annoying		Lazy	
Assertive	Eager	Light-hearted	Sad
	Energetic	Loner	Self-confident
Bold		Loveable	Self-conscious
Bossy	Fair	Loving	Selfish
Brave	Flexible	Loyal	Serious
Bright	Friendly	Messy	Shy
Busy	Fun-loving	Mischievous	Smart
	Funny		Social
Capable		Neat	Strong
Charming	Generous		Stubborn
Cheerful	Gentle	Opinionated	Successful
Compassionate	Good	Organized	Tactful
Conceited		Outgoing	Talkative
Considerate	Handsome	Quiet	Thoughtful
Cooperative	Happy		Timid
Courageous	Hard-working	Patient	Tireless
Crazy	Helpful	Popular	Tolerant
Creative	Honest	Pretty	Unselfish
Curious	Humble	Private	Vain
	Humorous	Proud	Weak
Daring			Wild
Demanding	Imaginative	Reliable	Wise
Determined	Independent		Witty

Heart Attack

It all started when I moved into my best friend Jonathan's house. It was like a month long party, every night. It didn't matter what day of the week, there were always people drinking, doing E or doing coke. I had been doing E and drinking for that past month and this was the night that would change everything.

It started like every other night at Jonathan's, the usual people came over; Danielle, Morgan, Alicia, Brittany and Mike. All of us were doing E except for Mike, who sold it to us. I had popped the cap of E and every one else decided to snort theirs. I had been told before that I would be high for two days straight and I was excited. It had just started kicking in and Morgan and Brittany wanted to go for a car ride to 7-11, so I decided to go along. I got into the car and did up my seat belt, I don't remember the car ride at all.

I walked back into the house. Jonathan was just about to snort something that I thought was another cap, it was actually coke. He failed to finish the line I went down and snorted it. I felt dizzy, everything was hazy and I was fucked up. All of a sudden I felt really sick, I ran outside and puked. There was a couch outside and I laid there for a couple of hours. When I woke up it was the next day and I was laying on Jonathan's bed. I couldn't move, I couldn't talk and I could barely breathe.

That night I had been in bed all day and still couldn't move or talk to tell any one I needed to go the hospital. I started to puke again, but this time it was a purplish fluid which I later found out was pulmonary fluid. One of my friends Savahna walked in and noticed my lips had turned blue, and told Jonathan that I needed to go to the hospital because I wasn't breathing. I got carried to the

We are the lost

I've done some pretty amazing things in my life. I've gone on an eight month trip around the world, been skydiving, bungee jumping, I've even gotten a massage by an elephant. Even with all my amazing accomplishments there are a few things that I would have changed and that's what this story is about.

I was going through a pretty rough week, my uncle had passed away and my mom was going through a mid-life crisis which took quite the toll on both of us. I needed to get away from it all and I found my solution somewhere I never thought I would look, drugs. My friend was selling some mushrooms for real cheap so I figured "Why not, it's only mushrooms." Only I didn't know I was stepping into what was going to be the worst night of my life. I bought an ounce and called my two friends. They agreed that I would come over to their house and we'd do them there.

When I got there everything was good. We made some pizzapops and stuffed the mushrooms in them and started eating.

At the beginning of the night the baggie was packed to the top and full. When we were done eating them it was almost empty, only about three or four grams left. I had eaten most of them not knowing you only needed four to six grams to get pretty messed up. Nothing was happening to us so we decided to go to the nearby Shell gas station to get some Gatorade. On our way there a cop pulled up beside us and started asking some questions about our involvement in a fight that had just happened. We were just on our way to the gas station and had no idea about it. Ironically when the cop started questioning us it started to kick in. I'm going to assume it had something to do with our adrenaline from the worry of being caught high. We answered the cop's questions and she let us go.

We arrived at the gas station and it looked like everything was color organized and it looked really cool, we started laughing and the other customers and the clerk just stared at us like we were crazy but we didn't care because we were ripped out of our trees. We got out and started walking back.

When we got back to the house I have no recollection of the events that occurred for the most part while I was there. However, at about 4:30 am I remember we were getting ready to go to bed.

My friend said, "Alright you can sleep on the couch, goodnight." For some reason I followed them into the bedroom and sat on the bed. I couldn't comprehend what either of them were saying to me. I started to see Disney commercials on the television but it wasn't on. I got scared and decided to leave. I got up and started walking out of the house and down King George highway. Decided it would be a good idea if I went to the Gateway sky train station then to Surrey Central to catch a bus home. On my way there I was seeing dark figures in the bushes so I just kept my head straight and tried to focus on the close destination.

"Just get there."

"Just get there."

When I got to Gateway Station the gate was closed so I tried to lift it. I tried to lift it for a good ten minutes with a camera staring me in the face but I tried as hard as I could to open that damned gate. I realized it was not going to budge so I moved my way down the stairs. The black figures were following me so I started running to the bus stop. When I got there I seemed to have lost them and I looked for the next bus time. My cell phone told me it was 5:06 and the bus came at 5:14 so I was relieved. Not thinking that it meant p.m. and not a.m. after sitting there for 20 minutes and hearing nothing but people behind me. I wouldn't look back for the fear of them realizing I noticed them and they would come after me.

True Beauty by Kate Schweitzer

More than skin deep.

—Unknown

Twelve or thirteen second-graders had already clamored around Kyle's desk. I knew what they were doing, but I stayed across the room, finishing my art project. I chiseled at the large piece of construction paper until the tip of my crayon wore down to the nub.

Whatever you do, Kate, don't look up.

They began to snicker. Kyle's squeaky laugh pierced the air. I could feel their eyes drilling into me, begging me to lift my head.

You'll be sorry, Kate.

I stood up from my chair and nervously stumbled over to them. I brushed my way past the others and saw Kyle. He was fiercely sketching on a piece of stark white paper. I forced my eyes, red with fear, to look over his shoulder.

It was a picture of me. I could tell only because it had my name at the top with an arrow pointing to a crudely drawn figure. The face was ugly. Kyle had made my nose take up the entire piece of paper. He drew it in the shape of a mountain, with snowcaps on the tip.

Don't cry. Don't let them see you cry.

Salty tears burned my eyes and rushed down to my lips where I could taste their bitterness through muffled gasps and forced inhales. In a blur, I grabbed the paper and ran from the classroom. I could hear laughter follow me.

That was not the first time I had been teased and tormented. That was not the first time I had run out of a laughing classroom, cried in my mother's arms or prayed that I would open my eyes and be someone different, nor was it the last.

But after that day in second grade, I no longer looked in the mirror and saw a girl with silky black hair, big charcoal eyes, a crooked smile and a nose that, according to my mother, "added character." I no longer saw the beautiful little girl my mother saw.

All I saw was ugly.

For the next four years, I spent hours each night pushing my palm against my nose, trying to flatten it. I would sometimes push too hard and get headaches. In junior high, I dreamt of plastic surgery and researched how nose jobs worked, what they cost, and figured out how much money I had. During freshman and sophomore years, I covered my nose every time I looked in the mirror. Subconsciously, I covered it whenever I talked to friends, teachers, boys. I would rub my eyebrows, scratch my forehead or twirl my bangs—whatever I could do to take the focus off my nose.

Without realizing it, I spent most of my life trying to hide. I was so afraid of what others thought that I refused to let them see my flaws. I believed that if they saw me as vulnerable and unaltered, they would see me the way Kyle saw me—ugly.

The Geek

by Ben Richards

Don't judge a book by its cover.

—Unknown

Raymond taught me many things, but the most important was never to judge or tease people, and always help others. Raymond was your average, all-American "nerd." He wore strange clothes, talked very properly and never did anything that would be considered bad. He always came to class in high spirits, but no one was ever nice to him.

When I walked into class, there was Raymond, always smiling. Some kids were giving him bunny ears, but he didn't notice, or at least he did a good job of ignoring them. I almost felt sorry for him, but it was hard when he was such a geek. There were only two empty seats, one next to Raymond and one next to Bob, a bully. So I sat down next to Bob, thinking he wouldn't bother me. Now everyone was pelting Raymond with spitballs. I wanted to tell them to stop, but couldn't because of how dumb I would look. Finally, we heard the familiar clip-clop of our teacher's shoes, and everybody tried to look angelic. She told us to get ready for a spelling test.

As I numbered my paper, Bob flicked the back of my head and said, "I sure hope you studied, because I never waste my time when I can copy." I guess Raymond had heard Bob, because he had this fiery look in his eyes.

"That's cheating," I said, trying to sound confident. The test began, and I knew I only had until lunchtime to live. I hadn't studied either. The words were foreign to me. I knew I—and Bob—were going to fail the test.

After we graded each other's tests, Bob once again flicked the back of my head and said, "See you at lunchtime. Hope you enjoy your last meal!" He leaned back in his chair, laughing. Raymond had this evil look again, and it was giving me the heebie-jeebies.

Finally, my death bell rang, and then Raymond did something very strange. He walked over to my desk and said, "Come on, we've got work to do." Although I was confused and reluctant, I followed him. He was leading me straight to my death. I saw Bob, who made eye contact with me and sneered.

In the cafeteria, Raymond stopped right in front of Bob and said, "Ben has something to say."

"What the heck do you think you're doing?" I hissed in his ear.

"I think what Ben was going to say was that you need to do your own work. You need to be independent," said Raymond.

"Huh?!" snorted Bob.

"Chew your own food!" yelled Raymond, and with that he walked to an empty table. While Bob tried to figure out what he had just been told, I followed Raymond. "Hey, why'd you stick up for me?" I asked him.

"Well, you were in trouble, so I thought I should help."

Locked Up

by Terrence McLaurine

Where there's a will, there's a way. —Aesop

When you're a twelve-year-old boy sitting in a cell charged as an adult for first-degree murder, it feels like the whole world has turned against you.

I was given a fifteen-year sentence. Now at seventeen, I've been locked up for half a decade. During that time, I've looked back at my life and seen the bad choices I made. I realize now the world wasn't against me, but I was against myself. I was raised by a single, independent mother of seven children in a housing project. At the age of eight, I started selling drugs and roaming the streets with older guys. I was determined to provide my family with the necessities of life: food, clothing and shelter, but there were times when we had nothing and even slept in cars.

Growing up without a positive male role model led me deeper into the tangles of violence. I looked up to the big-time drug dealers, admiring them for the cool things drug money gave them: cars, clothes, girls and plenty of pocket change. As you can see, my priorities started changing and were definitely wrong.

With my mind set on satisfying my many needs, I was led to the streets. At first, my life seemed better, but in reality it was worse. I had already stopped going to school on a regular basis. When I went, I would be suspended for fighting. I also started getting into trouble with the law, racking up charges including assault, possession of a weapon, curfew violations, reckless endangerment, resisting arrest and theft. The streets were making me smart, but at the same time they were making me very, very stupid.

I smoked weed and drank alcohol to take my mind off my family's struggles. I often snorted cocaine to help me stay awake so I could make money. Although most of the money went to my family, that wasn't everything I gained. Hanging with the older guys gave me the big brother or father/son relationship I had never had. I guess I was looking for love in all the wrong places. This type of behavior continued until I was twelve years old, when I committed the biggest mistake of my life—and was charged with first-degree murder.

Since I've been locked up, I've changed my life by doing something that I've never done before—setting positive goals and trying my hardest to accomplish them. Changing a negative life into a positive and productive one has not been easy, nor will it be easy in the future. My life has always been rough, but recently it has become a little smoother with just a few bumps. I plan to go to college for a degree in business. I'd love to have a wife and a couple of children. I want to give them love and be the father figure my father never was for me.

The point of this story is to show that you can change, no matter where you come from or what you've been through. It can happen if you really want it to. The road may be long and rough, and at times may seem like you are driving in circles, but you can change. You must be strong, have self-discipline, work hard and be willing to accept the consequences of your actions. I learned the hard way, but now I'm on the right track—where I'm planning to stay. Keep in mind that no matter where you are in life or what difficulties you are experiencing, there are others who are in worse shape. You have the freedom to change your circumstances and situation. To make these changes, all you need is to remain focused, be dedicated to your cause and have the courage to try.

was definitely checking us out."

"Where is the mystery section?" Carrie asked. This time he said, "Oh, let me show you." He then politely took her to the section. Looking around, I noticed the store was just as busy as it had been before. Obviously, our clothing affected some people's reactions to us.

At one point, our gothic style had made a mother steer her kids away from us, and another woman had walked by with a look of utter disgust. As she passed, I heard a great, loathing sigh of disapproval. One commented, "Isn't that weird?" Her older companion replied, "I think it's cute." That was the best comment of the day.

We even passed three young military men. There are stereotypes that go with military men just as with goths. I expected the three to be stiff, but mostly respectful. That's why it surprised me when the man in the middle coughed and muttered "hoes" as he looked at us, and the other two laughed.

When it came time to change, I looked one last time in the mirror at an outfit I had come to enjoy, despite the comments. In some ways it was fun to get a rise from people and see how they responded. It amazed me that some seemed so mad when they had no idea who or what I really was.

Dressed in my usual clothing, I noticed an immediate change. I wasn't anything to anyone anymore, just another teenager roaming the mall. I was looking for people to stare at me in my jeans, but they didn't. I was looking for a whisper, a sign of my existence in someone's eyes, good or bad, but there wasn't any. One woman did stop and ask where a particular store was, and we politely told her as we would have in our other clothing, although I'm sure we never would have been asked.

As we were leaving the mall, I noticed a short, over-weight man in a funny little poncho and almost whispered to Amanda, "Look over there." But I stopped myself as I realized that he, too, had probably been followed by whispers and stares all day.

Photo by Johnny Vukovic

The moral of the story is heard many times, but I'll repeat it because a lot of people-don't get it: Don't judge people by the way they look. It's what is on the inside, not the outside, that counts.

A Backward View

by Gordon, 18, from a small town in the South

As Sherwood Anderson once said in *Winesburg, Ohio*, "There is a time in every boy's life when, for the first time, he takes a backward view." I guess that this is my problem right now.

I live in a small rural town. Some people stay here forever, but I know that I need to get out of this place. One of my favorite books of all time is *The Catcher in the Rye*, by J. D. Salinger. I love that book because the main character, Holden Caulfield, did what probably every disgruntled teenager has ever wanted to do—he left. After a lot of reflection, I've decided that now it is my turn to leave. I'm ready to move on.

But looking back and looking forward are both difficult for me. By turning eighteen, society has deemed me something that I have always profoundly disliked—a man. I have had practically nothing but bad experiences with males, except for my grandfather, who I called Paw. I always say that all that I am or ever will become in some way has a link to that man's knee (me sitting on his knee and he discussing things with me). Paw is one of the only positive male role models that I have ever had as a boy in this world.

Paw received little more than an eight-year formal education and lived his life illiterate. But Paw was the wisest person I have ever had the chance to meet. In life, with a little luck, one is blessed with a person who always knows what to say in any given situation, who seems to know everything about everything. This is my grandfather.

I can still remember his deep, baritone voice, his hearty Southern laughter and the way it would make his big belly shake, the way he smelled. To me, English Leather is probably one of the most horrific-smelling aftershaves you could ever buy, but on Paw it smelled good. I can still see him in the kitchen, which was his home, frying some of his famous chicken or whipping up his other notable delicacy, chili sauce, whistling a made-up song he would adamantly refuse to admit he had invented. Everyone loved his fried chicken and chili sauce and I was a big fan of the songs that came out of him.

The side I remember best is his giving side. Though it has been nearly four years since his death, I still meet up with old friends of his who recount stories about his generosity—about a child who received presents for Christmas for the first time through my grandfather's anonymous donation; about how Paw had braved a deep snowstorm to go to the grocery store for a homebound elderly woman; about how he had cooked a dinner from scratch for our church's entire five-hundred member congregation, yet refused payment for his labors.

Paw taught me the basics of life: how to treat other people, how to conduct myself in public, the importance of charity. The lessons I received while firmly planted on his knee stay with me until this day. Many of them I still use as my life guidelines. It is by my grandfather that I try to measure my manhood.

Unfortunately, my father wasn't the nicest person to my mother and me when I was growing up. He hit and punched me. I have burn marks on my stomach. I had to get stitches on the back of my head. Scars are there to prove that, and you can physically see them. But those aren't the ones that I'm worried about. It's the emotional scars that hurt. For regardless how much vitamin E may be applied to them, they will never, ever go away. It has been almost ten years since my last encounter with physical abuse at his hands. But I still live with the memories. They will never go away.

These days, when I see a parent in Wal-Mart haul off and smack a crying child, the wounds are reopened. I just want to rush up and beat the shit out of the parent, to give that parent a taste of his or her own medicine

Activity 5: Values: What Is Important to Teenagers

BY REGINALD BIBBY AND DONALD POSTERSKI

Things have changed on the surface for us, but otherwise we are the same as our adults were when they were young. — an eighteen-year-old female

Late in 1984 a group of 27 American educators and scholars issued a Thanksgiving Statement expressing alarm over "soaring rates of teenage homicides, suicides, and out-of-wedlock births." These rates, they said, had risen more quickly than those of adults. The group attacked schools in the United States for being silent and timid about instilling good character traits. The group called for a correction of the situation, through steps ranging from more rigorous grading and better discipline to subsidies for competitive, private schools.

The lament is not new. A major concern that seems to be expressed about over coming generation centers on values. Society seems almost paranoid about the possibility that the next generation will somehow reject the aspects of life their parents and grandparents claim to cherish most. Every new generation is anxiously viewed as more decadent and less responsible than the previous ones.

It is doubtful that a new generation has *ever* been seen as possessing a superior level of value endorsement by an earlier generational cohort. Such vindications seem to be the exclusive prerogative of historians. Educator Anthony Kerr has said, "I have a pretty fair idea of history over the past twenty-five centuries and cannot recall a time when the old were fully satisfied with the young... And yet the world has gone on, apparently getting no worse." Our findings, in the main, support Kerr's position.

The Canadian Situation

Social psychologist Milton Rokeach, who taught for a time at the University of Western Ontario, has carried out extensive research on values helpful to our present quest.

We asked Canadian teenagers to rate the importance of some of these values. Eight values were drawn from Rokeach's work: a comfortable life, excitement, family life, freedom, friendship, acceptance by God, being loved, and recognition. We also added three values that we felt might be particularly pertinent to young people: being popular, privacy, and success.

The reader does not have to be familiar with psychologist's writings to recognize that he has isolated sentiments that are highly valued in our society. But to what extent do Canada's teenagers also view them as important

Table 1. Values Nationally

VALUE	% viewing as "very important"
Friendship	91
Being Loved	87
Freedom	84
Success	78
A Comfortable Life	75
Privacy	68
Family Life	65
Excitement	58
Acceptance by God	41
Recognition	41
Being Popular	21

Hallway Between Lunch and English
(Freud Can Kiss My Sexually Ambiguous Arse)

we all like to strut
(squeak of black boots on yellow linoleum) and
show our teeth
in primitive smiles
(crack of bubble gum
like the sound of a slamming locker)
we put on our chatter
like red lipstick
with the same amount of
greasy enthusiasm
all our secret glances are pulled on
like a fishnet stocking over white thigh
oh the brittle irony slips
out

Clouds Rolling In

my friend and i
got caught in a storm
with tears for rain,
and shouts for thunder,
lightning fists
lashing out.
i pause,
puzzled.
we fight all the time,
don't know why
i want to ask
but am afraid of the reason.
it's my fault
(always is).
he says so.
he's never wrong.
uses this weather to prove it.

like smoke pouring from sultry lips we are all armed
with our polysyllabic' sabers
uniformed by our lust
united by our laughter
unique by our will
we march together toward
the war we cannot name
but at least we are dressed for it

Danya Goodman, age 15

i am afraid of lightning.
don't let it strike me again
again
again
i am the sun
that these black clouds cover up.
why won't they go away
and let me shine for once?

i'm afraid of storms.

Melissa Leigh Davis, age 14

Born at 15

A childhood of

repeated molestations,

suffocation by drugs,

tragedy replacing

hopscotch, I grew crooked in the
sunlight.

A smart kid,

"teacher's pet"

whom no boys liked,

tall, socially inept, and awkward,

I broke my own heart so many times.

A teenager,

backward but witty,

someone stopped

to look at me.

I fell in love with a horrible person.

A year lost spinning on drugs,

drowning in tears, burned in loud music.

A disease had forced himself

into more than my physicality.

Just because I love
darkness Doesn't mean I'm
depressed Doesn't mean I
can't love

Doesn't mean I'm blind.

Just because I love my Mom

Doesn't mean I'm not a rebel

Doesn't mean I can't love

others Doesn't mean I'm a
mama's boy. Just because I

act psycho

Doesn't mean I need medication

Doesn't mean I can't be

compassionate Doesn't mean I don't
cry.

Marcel Mendoza, age 16

Balled up in a corner, tasting salt,

I went numb while he read a magazine.

I took a mountain vacation,

wet green health soothed

my swollen eyes,

I met a broad, scarred man, never without his
bicycle.

I watched the white gold moon over a mountain,

the black tree outline trying

to hide it, my soul, from me.

I talked to myself pretending

it was to the man next to

me, about past and present

about my horrible fearful

future. I realized I had given all

my power to the things I hated.

A warm, fluid feeling

rushed inside my spirit,

so unusual.

It must have been myself being born.

Melissa Parker, age 16

Sometimes

But not always

Well hardly ever it seems

Something is truly fulfilling.

A shame.

Michael Tobias Bloom, age 16

I see the two blonde babies,
 wiggling their tiny bodies as they lean over the
 mini mart counter,
 letting their chests fall out,
 out of leopard print tank tops,
 and milky white push up bras.
 Both hoping to make up for all they have yet to
 conquer,
 all the things their minds have yet to learn. And
 as they scoop up coke bottles
 as wet with tiny balls of moisture as
 their hair is with banana scented gel,
 I just shake my equally blonde head.
 For I can see the innocence lost
 with every shuffle of a platform sporting foot,
 every stride of a pair of shimmering lycra
 pants.

And I wonder,
 is that how I lost my innocence too?

< <kelly alessio, 17> >

ODE TO CARING

Careless child I am
 wandering off into the night
 I make my mother stir at small hours
 she makes herself
 words in books fused together
 like so many lies to soothe her angst
 lies of where I've been
 when I'll return
 my father wishes my integrity
 he doesn't know I wish the same
 who knows in what completeness I'll return
 but the propaganda is posted
 and the party rages
 someday the dissension will end until.
 then she'll read the lies

Benjamin D. Martin, age 17

Words

Words fly across the paper like blackbirds across the sky
 and I think to myself why oh
 why oh why
 why why,
 Why would anyone use words like
I hate and
I can't and
I quit therefore I won't and
Goodbye.
Good bye?

Why not take that beautiful skill and use words like
I love and
I can and
I will or

at least I'll try and

Hello . . . hello,

because I believe in word conservation

and if you're going to use a word at all

it should be one that glides off of your tongue
 and floats around to sit comfortably in someone's ear.

So the next time I see you

I'll be using words like

I love and

I can and

I will or

at least I'll try and

Hello . . . hello.

Yeah, words.

Mahogany Elaj Foster, age 16

