

# Youth Suicide

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*A LOOK INTO THE HIDDEN WORLD OF YOUTH SUICIDE*

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# Introduction

In 1998, while living in the United States, I received a certificate in suicide prevention. After that I worked as a volunteer for a 24 hour crisis phone line. That was the beginning of my journey into the hidden world of youth depression, self-harm and suicide.

I remember clearly in my training that they instructed us not to give any advice. In fact they said the three most important rules of helping someone who is suicidal were:

Never give advice  
Never give advice  
Never give advice

This surprised all of us in the class because we all thought that it was normal to give advice when helping someone. But they explained the reasons why, in their actual, hands-on experience, it was not a good idea. They said, for example, that it creates dependency and what people need most of all is to talk and be listened to and accepted, never judged.

When I moved to Canada in 1999 I had a chance to put my skills to work in helping a young girl who, who I will call Sarah, had put out a desperate cry for help on a website called [opendiary.com](http://opendiary.com). I don't know if it was by chance or the guiding hand of some higher power, that I happened to Sarah on that webpage at just the moment I did. I had never been to the site before and found it only because I had been reading some of

Henry David Thoreau's journals and there was a link to other sites which contained personal journals. This is how I found Sarah.

A few minutes earlier or later and I would not have seen her cry for help because it was one of many new posts which were quickly passing through the home page of the site. She said that her mother was dead, her father was hitting her and she had a "ton of homework" to do. She said she didn't know if she could take anymore stress and pain. She was only 11 years old at the time, just a few months before 12<sup>th</sup> birthday. She said that instead of helping her, people had been criticizing her spelling. At that moment my heart really went out to her. She had posted her MSN contact name and asked if someone would please add her and talk to her. So without hesitating I sent her a friend invitation, she accepted and we began talking.

It wasn't long before she told me about something she called "cutting". During my suicide prevention training this term had never been mentioned. It was from Sarah that I learned about this dark, hidden world in which so many young people live secret lives. Thankfully, nowadays the doors to this world are opening, but back then it was still an almost unknown topic.

Sarah introduced me to some of her online friends, all in the same website, and all of whom also cut and self-harmed. I feel so moved by reading their journals that I decided I must try to do what I could to help them all. So it was then that I began documenting their stories. It was my belief that somehow, something good would

come from my work. At the very least, I thought, other young people might find my work and feel less alone. Looking back, this in fact has proven to be true.

While I was collecting stories, mostly from teenagers writing in their online diaries or journals, I began my own online teen support group. I did this mostly out of necessity because I found I simply could not manage to help all the young people who needed someone to listen to them. I tried to get help from many organizations and institutions but for one reason or another it never worked out and thus I found myself working alone and at all hours of the day and night. Whenever I was online, someone wanted to talk to me. This quickly proved to be both emotionally and physically exhausting for me so I decided I would have them talk to each other. This, I can say with all honesty, was one of the best ideas I ever had.

It did not take long to see how they cared about each other and how they tried to help each other. They became each other's lifeline. I was literally moved to tears when I saw how they opened their hearts to each other. Of course there were some jealousies and conflicts, but for the most part it was pure, unbridled love and caring.

As I started to post the stories I was hearing, more teenagers sent in their own stories and wanted me to share them. It did not take long before I had received hundreds of letters from young people around the world. I have included a representative sample of those

letters in this book. They tell the story much better than I ever could.

One of the important things I learned from all the letters I received over the years is that when someone is depressed and self-harming, they need to talk to others who are also depressed and self-harming. One teen explained it this way. She said, "If I tell someone at school that I cut myself, they think I am crazy and I feel worse after talking to them. But if I talk to someone else who cuts, they will never ask me how I can do such a "stupid" thing. They know. They understand. That's why it only helps to talk to other people who cut."

This is something that with time I have come to understand myself more and more. I, too, feel very depressed at times. I too have had thoughts of ending my own life. In fact I have come very close on a few occasions. So when a young person asks me if I ever get depressed and if I have ever thought of killing myself, I can say honestly, "Yes, I have."

They sometimes also ask me if I have ever cut myself. Again I answer honestly and I tell them no. Fortunately, this answer has not seemed to have stopped anyone from trusting me, which I think is probably because they know that I do get depressed and feel suicidal. I used to also share a lot of my own journal writing with them so they felt they knew who they were talking to. This, too, has helped me establish a secure connection with them. More than one teen has told me they want to know something about the person

they are talking to and not just their academic credentials. In fact, now that I think about it, I can't recall one young person asking me what my credentials or qualifications were. They seem to have some kind of sixth sense which told them they could trust me. Although it sounds a bit like a cliché, I think they somehow actually could tell that I felt love for them. I don't really know how else to explain it. Or maybe they just desperate! Or a little of both. I really don't know. I do know that one day a 14 year old girl from England asked if she could see a picture of me. I showed her one and she said , "Ok, I can trust you. I can tell by your face."

Trust is something I learned a lot about from the young people I have talked to. I have learned that nearly in all cases, someone or even many people, have betrayed their trust I the past. I remember clearly the first time a girl from the USA told me that her school counselor promised she would not tell her parents that they had talked. But before the girl even got home from school that day, she had called the girl's mother. The girl said "I will never tell that woman anything again."

Honestly, I felt shocked to hear that a professional would betray someone's trust like that. In fact, and I feel a bit guilty to say it, I wondered if the girl had been telling me the truth. But I have had heard similar stories from other young people, from professionals and from parents, so I no longer have any doubts that this can and does happen.

I have mixed feelings about the work I have done over the years. Of course I feel very sad from the knowledge I have obtained. And I believe as you read some of their stories you will understand and share this sadness. But I also feel honored that they have trusted me enough to share so much of what is most difficult to share with others. I also feel a deep responsibility to make this information public, for if I do not, more lives will needlessly be lost and futures will be cut short.

It is my conviction that these suicides can be prevented. After I share some of the hundreds of letters I have received from young people, I will offer my recommendations.

But first I want to thank the many youth who have given me their permission to anonymously publish their stories because it is their hope that their stories will help save the lives of others.

Thank you for reading and caring.

Paul

## Letters from Youth

## **I began cutting when I was 13**

I got good grades and had a lot of friends but my life at home was something that I would hide from my friends.

My mom would get angry over simple things or come home angry due to problems at work and she would hit me or yell hurtful things at me.

When I would get upset I would just go to my room and she would follow me in there and continue. I felt that I couldn't tell anybody so my friends didn't know about it at all. I felt alone and I felt like I was put in an uncontrollable situation, so I began cutting.

After fighting with my mother or being hit, I would go to my room and cut and I'd feel relieved almost as if I was escaping from what just happened. Then I was sexually abused at 14 and that made everything worse. I felt like cutting was the only way to handle my emotions.

I've gone through counseling and have been to recovery centers, but I didn't really start to get better until I realized that I wasn't alone and that there were other ways of coping with my emotions. I never told anyone about the cutting until my freshman year of high school. My best friend found out and really helped me through it. If I ever needed to talk to someone she was there and she understood how I felt when I said that I felt like I was just alone in this uncontrollable atmosphere.

I would like to be a volunteer because I feel that having someone to talk to can really benefit a person, especially if you can relate to something that they are going through.

## **I'm supposed to be in bed, but I have to talk to you**

I have been reading your stories from other teens constantly. They make me feel like I'm not alone. I have had suicidal thoughts. But I'm too much of a coward to go through with them. Every night I lay in bed, with this weird hole in my gut. A black hole of emptiness.

My mom calls me lazy, selfish, and my favorite, "WHAT THE FUCK IS WRONG WITH YOU?????" Ahh yes.

So many times I have gone to school feeling like I'm going to puke. Breaking out in nervous sweat because I broke my cousin's pool thermometer. I have to go to bed, so read this, and email me back.

By the way I want to join your chat room.

## **I just want to get away from all of this**

I came to your chat room tonight and it said if I wanted to talk to someone that this was a place I could do it.

Well, let me start off with my story...

It started in November of 2009. I was dating someone and he cheated on me and started going out with the girl he cheated on me with. I was hurt and crushed. and i felt so alone.

I tried getting myself to think about my new school year that was starting. so i asked my mother if i could do honors or AP (advanced placement) classes this year and she told me that i wasnt smart enough for those classes and that i cant join them. my own mother told me that.

Your mother is supposed to be the person that always complements you and tells you how great you are and that you can be whoever you want to be. but then she tells me this and it makes me wonder...why did she lie to me when i was a child? and i have tried to get away from the thoughts but i just cant.

people told me that i would be going to hell if i killed myself. but im an atheist... just last week someone told me i was going to hell for that ...just for being an atheist. so whats the point of not killing myself?

I just want to get away from all of this. to get away from feeling alone like no one is there. no one to talk . i cry myself to sleep basically every night now. i cut and sometimes burn myself to take away the pain.

## **Things my mother has said to me**

If you don't stop it I'll make you go and live with your father

(an empty threat; she never wanted me to. Whenever I would go pack my bag or put my shoes on she would say, "You're not going now")

I think you're suffering from depression

I wish I'd never given birth to you

You're not my daughter, no daughter of mine acts like this

I really don't care about what you think

I will bring you up how I want to and there's nothing you can do about it

I don't want to hear your opinion unless you're asked

You make me feel really hurt

You're so selfish

All you care about is what people think of you

You're supposed to be the clever one, why can't you work it out?

I'm everything, you're nothing

You're a minor, I can stop you

There's nothing you can do about it!

You need to go to the doctors because your behaviour isn't normal

What did I do to deserve you?

Being with your father does nothing for your looks. You look much better now you're back with me.

Anyone that cuts themselves should be locked up in a mental institution.

Piss off and never come back

You don't deserve...

[insert object/feeling here]

You think you know everything.

## **Despair**

It grows inside of you.

You try to scream.

No one is there to hear you.

Only darkness is there,  
outside of you and inside.

You try to hide the past  
but it's there.

Right there on your arms.

It comes back even if  
you don't want it to.

You put on a little "act"  
of smiles and laughs so  
no one can worry.

But really you are just  
rotting inside, wanting  
to scream and show  
everyone your scars so  
they can know what  
you are going through.

But you don't.

You still put on that little  
mask for everyone.

No worries for them and yet  
why do you hate it when no one  
is there for you?

It makes you wonder if  
you ever disappeared would  
they notice?

Or would life just move on?

You want to cry.

No one is there to hold you.

## **I just want to die and no one even cares**

I dont know if im supposed to be emailing this or what but im soooooooooo angry and mad and fed up and sad and everything!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

i suffer from IBS, really bad, im very upset at least once a week and always have to cancel plans with my friends coz of it. im missing out on so much,

i had a crap childhood anyway and never went to school (school phobia), so ive missed out on like everything.

Doctors dont do anything, ive been in hospital loads, having tests but all they've 'found' is IBS and not done anything about it!

Then i got diagnosed with epilepsy after having a massive fit a few weeks ago so now im even more scared about doing stuff/staying out at friends' and things like that.

My whole lifes just one big waste of time!

Im gonna get old and look back at my youth and think what?! 'ooh what fun times i had as a teenager... oh wait sat in bed crying and being sad?'

THERE IS NO POINT TO ME.

The other day i told my mum i wanted to kill myself (and her of all people should understand me coz she tried to kill herself 3 times last year!) and she had a go

at me, rang the police (coz i was sat in my room with the door locked and music on!) so i got taken to hospital who did NOTHING just talked to some psychologist woman for an hour or so who gave me some leaflets on IBS and ... THATS IT.

Then my mum had the biggest go at me EVER and basically is sending

me to live with my dad about an hour and a half away as of next week. so BYE friends and what life i DID have.

I just want to die and no one will do anything about me, no one even cares!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

## **I feel hated by my mother when...**

She would shout at me.

She would compare me to my brother or step-sister or any of my friends, saying things like \_\_\_ doesn't do that, or I bet \_\_\_\_\_ doesn't behave like this.

She would shout at me and then cry and say "It's all your fault"

She would back me into a corner and come right up close, shouting, with this mad rage in her eyes and then shut me in my room.

She would laugh at me with her husband. She would give me these looks, then look at her husband, and turn away laughing.

She told everybody willing to listen about my "behaviour" and how "rude" I am etc. and make herself seem completely in the right and me completely in the wrong.

When she used to bitch about me, basically. (Probably still does.)

She would criticise everything I said or did.

She kept making out that she wished she'd never had me. I said to her once, "But you chose to have me!" and she said "Well, I wouldn't have had you if I'd known it was going to be like this"

She made faces, like rolling her eyes, when I told her something.

When I said something, she didn't believe me.

She placed blame on me for almost everything and then told me to say "sorry".

She never let me explain things to her when she was mad so sometimes she was mad for no reason because she didn't know the full story.

She shouted at me for not saying sorry and because sometimes I would say, "But it doesn't mean much if you've told me to say it, does it?" Then she would get even angrier.

She would get as many people as she could on her side, backing her up and reassuring her that she was right and I was wrong.

She would call up the rest of my family whenever I'd done something she considered really, really bad (like when I said "You're such a bitch, just leave me alone") and tell them the whole story, haha, and then get loads of sympathy.

She told one of my cousins about me wanting to live at dad's and my cousin said to my mother, "Don't worry, she's just being a brat. It'll pass" That hurt. Like it was just some phase. Like I'm not old enough to be able to judge things and make decisions

## **I am feeling so over whelmed its crazy**

I was on your support group chat and it says if ur feeling suicidal write to this email address so im gonna try it. not to worry im not going to kill myself.

im just feeling like i want to die.... i am a senior in high school and doing half high school half college and i am feeling so over whelmed its crazy...my mom and i have grown so distant...we moved last year and my best friends are now also distant and always too busy to hang out. it's a long drive and i dont have my license so i cant meet them often and me and my closest friend that i shared everything with she seems not to like me much anymore we just arnt close

I didnt make any friends since we moved at the new school since they all had their own clicks. i have a boyfriend but it seems like he just uses me and lately he has been acting weird ... i cant tell him much because he just doesnt understand and he might tell my parents...i used to cut but cant anymore because he sees my whole body.....and i promised him id stop

plus he might tell my mom....i miss it and need it and crave it so badly..... i just feel like i dont belong and everyone would be better if i was dead i think i will fail at life and id rather stop while im ahead

well I hope this gets to you

<< ----- >>

When I question my father, instead of giving me real explanations, he will say things like "Because I said so" or "Because I am the adult and I know more than you" or "When you are older you will understand."

<< ----- >>

i dont tell counselors anything cuz i know it will get back to "mom"

<< ----- >>

## **Is cutting really a bad thing though?**

Hi, I hope I got the right address. If I didn't, feel free just to delete this message.

So, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm 13 years old, and I just started 8th grade. I'm also a "cutter".

What I'm curious about is your perspective on this. I mean, I'm a straight A student, I'm a little different (the school's local goth/emo/punkette) and have many close friends. The only thing I can think of that could have started my cutting would be my dad living 900 miles away or my recent break up.

It doesn't seem like it to me. You're not killing yourself, only marking up your body. I'm very careful that I don't bleed to death even. But it feels good. Like it's some release that helps me through the day.

And don't worry, I'm not gonna die any time soon (some people I talk to seem to think I'm gonna get all sadistic and kill a mall full of people. Not the best conversation starter)

## **Words will make me shatter from the inside out**

My mother hurt me.

I'm not sure what other words to say, what to think even. I'm sorry if I don't make sense but I'm all torn up and spat out and upside down inside out.

She hurt me and I feel so lost, that all I have is emails and internet and nights alone with a keyboard.

Keyboards don't really help at all. It just sort of sits there and looks at me, waiting for whatever words come bubbling out of me.

Frankly, words are not enough. That's ironic isn't it? Cause it seems to me that all it took to break me apart was words.

You're lazy. You're fat. You're a whore.

You're a good for nothing bitch, you piece of shit, get out of my house.

Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will make me shatter from the inside out.

And no matter how many times my Dad tells me he's there for me, no matter how many times my sister tells me she loves me, or the therapist tells me it's okay, I feel bad. I feel shattered, lazy, fat, whorish, good for nothing, bitchy, shitty and homeless.

And I don't know what I need, cause words have failed me.

## **Tired of feeling like my feelings and opinions don't matter**

I would like to join your group. I have been doing some research lately and I feel that my mom matches the description of emotionally abusive exactly. I don't live with her but I do live with my step Dad and they sort of work together to control me and make me feel bad. It's really not fair because I love seeing my brothers and sister but I don't want to go see my mom.

I am tired of feeling worthless like my feelings and opinions don't matter.

I am 19 years old and I was told if I took on a full time job I would be required to pay tuition for college. But now they have decided that they can control everything because I don't have the money to pay for all of my bills. My mom convinced my grandfather to put my car under her name instead of mine and even though I pay for everything that is done to the car she still "owns" it and if she doesn't like that I am going somewhere she will tell me I can't take her car. I have tried talking to her but within the past year things have gotten out of hand.

She says that I don't make good decisions and criticizes everything I do. I feel like I can't even walk down the stairs correctly anymore! I would really like to join your group just to talk to other people in my situation so that I just don't feel so alone. I have tried talking to friends but it just doesn't seem to be helping anymore.

My mother seems to be the second generation of this emotional abuse and I am just trying to prevent a third generation from happening. Let's stop the cycle of abuse together!

## **Things I've noticed when I try to talk to my mother**

- She gets hurt and defensive very easily and takes things personally that were not about her.
- She will say things like "You can keep your comments to yourself" or "I don't want to hear any of your excuses." or "Save it. I am not interested." or "You know, all you ever do is complain." or "I don't remembering asking for your opinion." and "When I want your opinion, I'll ask for it. Till then just keep your big mouth shut."

Other favorites are: "I don't need your smart mouth," "I don't need any back talk from you" and "Who asked you?"

- She also likes to be in total control of our conversations by saying things like "I am the one who is supposed to be asking the questions."

## **I wanted my mom to die so I can be free**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm 16 years old. I've come to realize that my mom is emotionally and sometimes physically abusive. Ever since I became a teen, my mom and my relationship changed. Though one time when I was five years old, my mom punched me in my stomach. I don't remember all the reasons why but I began to dislike my mom a lot after that. Mostly I remember when I discovered the Internet and it helped me feel less alone at home, so I was on it all the time. Then she took it away from me. But still I would sneak on and get caught and made to feel like I was doing something wrong, which I never understood. Somehow though, she made me feel like I was a bad person for it.

When I was in 6th grade, I had an F on my report card, in math. Math has never been my favorite. I was scared of her, so I hid the report card, she found it and beat me. She left large bruises on my arm and sent me to school the next day. I kept my head down all day, my teacher later came up to me and asked what was wrong. I burst into tears and told her what happened about the report card. She sent me to the school counselor, who reported my mom to DHR (Department of human resources, they handle child abuse cases.).

That's when all hell broke loose. My mom never forgot that, she blamed it on me saying it was my fault and I'm trying to put her in jail. That has never been the case. I never wanted her to be put away. But she never believes me. She had beat me during my 7th grade

year of junior high (Gave me a black eye), once again the school called Child services on her.

But Child services never did anything.... and the abuse still continued so I stopped talking.

My mom is a single mother with four kids. She's a nurse and highly stressed all the time. And I understand that but she deals with it the wrong ways. By calling us bitches, ungrateful motherfuckers, stupid, assholes, we're all mistakes, we don't deserve shit etc, etc.

Every bad thing that I have done she thinks that my target is to hurt her. She'll call all her friends and play victim. Especially when Child services investigated her. "She's just wants me in jail." "She's trying to get my children taken from me." She has never thought she's done anything wrong.

I'm often told by her that I need mental help. I began to cope by keeping a diary (I was 13 then), writing down my emotions. I remember saying, I wanted my mom to die so I can be free. My mom found it and began crying hysterically, "you should see all the things I could write about you!"

She made me stand in the kitchen from 2 am to 4 am while she sat at the table mocking me and calling me names. She told how she hated me so much. If I would close my eyes, she would come and throw a bucket of water on me.

Since then she became obsessed over anything I would write. She would go in my room and search for anything she could get mad at me about or make fun of. I loved to write stories then about love and they would include sex even though I never had sex before. My mom found the story, showed it to my uncle and set it on fire in front of me. 17 chapters, gone.

I stopped.

Now, I'm 16 soon to be a mother because I felt that it would be the only sure way I could leave this place. I also believed it would help me focus better. I would no longer have to be responsible for my siblings or anything having to do with my mom. I feel that my personal well-being is being threatened more and more I stay here. Constantly being told you're nothing, it starts to get to you. Four weeks ago, I left home because mom put me out.

She has a boyfriend just got out of jail and has no income. I felt like he was just free-loading off my mom. My mom needs a helping hand, not a hand asking for help. But my mom believes that I don't like him because I can't sneak my boyfriend over. I don't need to! I can see him anytime I want to!

She called me an ignorant bitch and a cock-blocker. I told her I'll leave. So my boyfriend who lives in \_\_\_\_\_ came and picked me up. I planned on never coming back. I was so happy being away from home.

My mother never let me go out a lot like most teens do which contributes to my stress and pain. Then one day,

my mom texted my boyfriend telling him I was evil, crazy and I have anger issues. I was very hurt and ashamed. My own mother trying to turn someone I love against me. He already knows what I go through with her and he said that the messages proved that my mom has issues. The next day, we woke up enjoying our morning together then my mom called... she wanted me to come home.

She was crying and begging me to come home. I told her I wasn't ready but she said no, she was already on her way to come here and get me. I hung up the phone and cried like I just saw a massacre.

My boyfriend began to cry, begging me not to go with her. We haven't stopped crying since. My mom believes I got pregnant to hurt her. To her, hurting her is my main goal in life. Honestly now, I don't give a shit about her. I won't waste my life trying to get back at her. I believe in Karma. I don't wanna become like her. She's not happy and doesn't want anyone else to be.

Sorry this is so long, I just had a lot of torture locked in my heart all these years.

Thank you for reading.

## **I can't trust anyone**

I apologise in advance for sending this email, but I just wanted to tell my story...

In the later months of 2009 I was hospitalized for suicidal thoughts, anxiety, and depression. I later found out that I am a textbook case of Aspergers Syndrome. For those who are unaware, it is a disorder on the autism spectrum. All it means is that I have difficulty socializing, but do very well in academics, to put it simply. I would say more about it, but it would best be described by a professional.

Anyway, I am 15 years old; female; and though I have never physically harmed myself, I have come close to doing so. As I write this message, I have a blade next to me on the bed. I am thinking about cutting myself in a hidden location, like my upper thighs... I don't want attention, no. In fact, I just want to be left alone if all people are going to do is compare me to something I'm not.

I'm not perfect. I know this very well. I don't need people telling me what I already know. I can messup just as easily as anyone else, but it just seems like I'm the only one who gets punished for it...I do something good, just to get screamed at for something I did even slightly wrong.

It doesn't help me any... All it does is make me realize how hopeless and alone I really am. It just makes me want to leave this place, even this world. I can't trust

my friends. I can't trust my family. I don't want to go back to the hospital. I couldn't stand it there. All it did was make me want to leave more... I couldn't sleep because the room I shared was with a scary girl who would be quicker to rip out my throat than anything else.

The supervisors watching us had to drug me to make me sleep...

They took away my iPod, my only lifeline, and source of comfort... The entire time I was there I just felt more and more unwanted. Alone... Hopeless...

It doesn't help.

Now with all the medication I'm on I feel even more worthless. Do they really think it takes medication for me to do something that's second nature to everyone else? It hurts to know that they think that, it really does...

I just...

I don't know what to do anymore... I'm in therapy, which isn't helping. I can't trust anyone.

I don't expect to get a response quickly, or ever, for that matter.

Again, I'm really sorry for taking up space in your inbox.

## **Shouldn't she be protecting me?**

I want a hug. Unfortunately, when people touch me it really bothers me. I'm not exactly sure why but I bet it has something to do with dear old mom. Whenever my dad gives me a pat on the back or tries to comfort me it makes me feel really resentful and hateful. Everyone else, it makes me feel scared. I once had a panic attack that caused me to lose my vision for a few minutes just because a friend of mine gave me a great big bear hug and refused to let go of me.

I don't want it to be like this. I want to still be living with mom and doing things with her, but she's made it so I can't. Not safely anyway.

I don't understand why people have to be like this.

It's almost as if my mother has cancer. That's sort of how it feels to me :(

Only instead of losing all of her hair and getting really skinny she loses her temper and gets really mean. It's just fucked up. The more I read about it the more I feel baffled. My therapist gave me a book on abuse and ... god... my head keeps spinning. I never used to think about it before, it used to be normal.

But my mother called me a whore. I remember distinctly feeling guilty about it for days. Who calls a twelve year old kid a whore? :( It's so fucked up.

I was really confused about this whole thing at first, but I'm a scientific individual and the facts confirm my theories. If one person says that everything is your

fault, blah, blah, blah, and then everyone else on the planet says that that person is lying, and then you look up how the lying works, then it suddenly starts becoming very clear just how things are working.

I feel so completely betrayed too. She convinced we were both on the same side against my dad for the longest time (also fucked up, you don't turn your children into warriors against their other parent). Really, she's just been attacking me.

I still don't have any self esteem. I know this, logically, and yet I can't fix it emotionally. I keep attempting to but it's like I've got this great big hole where my confidence was supposed to go :(

I dream about being really outgoing and loud, and then the instant I'm around other people I can't make myself look them in the eye.

I'd definitely say I've been abused by my mother. It still feels bad to say that, but it's true. She does things to me for the sole purpose of hurting me, making me feel bad, getting even. She's my mother. Shouldn't she be protecting me from people who try to do that to me? Gah. It just makes me so upset. She's still getting at me too, even though I don't talk to her at all anymore.

She shows up in my dreams or I'll hear her voice in the back of my head.

Even though she's a million miles away it feels like she's still got me by puppet strings :( I'll have random, extreme moments of self-hatred. Again, it's illogical, but most of this is. Every once in a while, I feel like I'm

scum, and that I've done something unforgivably wrong. I get really mad at myself for the stupidest things. It's a weird, twisted sensation, but there are times when I just want to be able to kick myself in the shins repeatedly.

I'm not really sure what I need or what would make me feel better.

Well, what I'd really like is for someone to wave a magic wand and make my mom stop being a psychopath. But that's not really a realistic wish. Other than that nothing has really helped that much at all.

My situation right now is I suppose "stable". My dad is going to get legal custody of me, I'm moving to his town officially, blah blah blah.

I'm not really enjoying it that much at all, it's a whole lot of changes, really fast and it's dizzying.

I have been suicidal since I was nine years old, maybe earlier, but I only remember it clearly starting at around nine. My brother moved out of the house for the exact same reasons I'm leaving now, except mom lied to me about it. She blamed it on my dad, and yet at the same time made me feel really responsible and anxious about it. She's constantly put a lot of pressure on me too.

I used to cry that I didn't want to go to school because she would make homework absolutely miserable, and even in grade 9, it was do or die. I just remember staying up all night doing math homework she refused to help me with. And I thought that I wasn't ever going

to get it done, I wasn't going to get to go to sleep until it was done (she wouldn't let me) and that if I didn't get a good grade on it she would kick me out of the house like my brother : /

It was my only real "attempt" at suicide. I banged my head into the table repeatedly and then I held my breath until I got dizzy and started passing out. At nine, I didn't know that you can't kill yourself by holding your own breath, so I tried over and over. Obviously it didn't work.

Even when I was a little kid I was depressed. I remember being a tiny little kid and laying in my bed all day Saturday feeling too sad to move. :( I didn't get really bad again until I was about fourteen, which is when mom started getting worse and I started developing my anxiety disorders.

Fourteen was a really, really bad year for me. I had a hard time getting anything done, I started having trouble in school, I started having a lot of trouble with dance (I competed hardcore.). I found myself sleeping all the time or never, and thinking about death. Constantly. I used to daydream about really screwy stuff. Like, lying down in the middle of the road at night and waiting to get hit by cars, or drinking a gallon of bleach, lots of things like that. I used to think of what I'd write on my suicide notes or which way I'd like to go best. I still have moments when I'm so stressed that I'll envision myself self inflicting wounds in order to escape, for example, if I have a really important test I'll consider overdosing on pills just so I don't have to go. It's extremely fucked.

## **I end up feeling like I have lost**

You know how you talk about how much teens feel trusted by their mother or father from 0 to 10? Well when it comes to my mother, the answer is definitely zero.

She will not believe anything I tell her. She accuses me of ridiculous things I would never do, like using drugs, sleeping with my teachers for grades (she can't believe I earn them myself), stealing from her, and even having sex with my best friend's father for money.

It is really sad that she has been living with me for 16 years and still doesn't know me any better than that. And it is very draining to have to keep answering her questions. I feel exhausted and just want to sleep after one of her interrogations. Even when she finally gives up, she will never admit she was wrong or, God forbid, apologize, and I end up feeling like I have lost.

## Too broken to love

i dont know what to do.

i cut. and my mom caught me ...last year...and of course dad found out.

i didnt really care about mom because she was always drunk anyway.

but dad... dad cried. each tear hurt me so much inside.

i didn't mean to hurt him. i think he blamed himself... but it had nothing to do with him.

I knew that my dad loved me. I knew it.

I knew that no matter how many times my sister called me a loser, or was grouchy to me, she loved me, too. I knew, deep down, that when my mom was sober, she loved me, too.

But I felt so unloved. So hurt and afraid and guilty of being caught. They threatened to hospitalize me. Told me im not normal.

Dad cried (cried!) and told me that he hurt a thousand times, for each cut on my arms.

My cuts were scars. they didn't bleed anymore. but in the dark of night... i still bled inside

i feel so alone.

so so so a.l.o.n.e.

alone and loveless.

l.o.v.e.l.e.s.s.

even though i knew my family loves me. and im not  
truely alone.

i knew that. i know that.

but then my dad started telling me "No One Looks  
Pretty In What You're Wearing"

n.o. o.n.e

i just want to feel loved. not the family way.

no.

late at night i just feel so h.o.p.e.l.e.s.s.

i just feel so u.n.l.o.v.e.d.

and i just want someone beside me.

h.u.g.g.i.n.g. m.e. c.l.o.s.e.

and telling me

that i'm not too b.r.o.k.e.n. to l.o.v.e.

## **My mother always has to have the last word**

She believes "The adult is always right" so she always has to win all the arguments. I never win, even if I bring up very good reasons that would be very relevant to the subject.

When she doesn't want to talk about something anymore she will say, "I don't want to hear anymore about it." But if I am tired of her long lectures and verbal abuse she will shout "Don't walk away from me when I am talking to you!" She also likes to say, "Look at me when I am talking to you!", but I really don't want to because it just makes me feel worse. Her facial expressions intimidate me and sometimes the way she looks at me, along with her tone of voice, make me feel hated and despised by her, which is a terrible feeling that haunts me long after the shouting has stopped.

If I try to tell her about something about how I feel she will say things like "I didn't ask you what you wanted!", or, "Don't talk to me like that." or "That is no way you talk to your mother!" or "Don't ever let me hear you say that again" or "Don't be so disrespectful."

And she will dwell on a topic for hours on end. This morning I was yelled at for two hours just because one of my teachers emailed asking why I wasn't in class. And knowing her I'm not going to hear the end of it for a few weeks...

## **Having someone listen without judging would mean so much**

This is probably a pointless email and I doubt that I will get a response, but I was on your page about cutting earlier tonight. I don't know why but I just wanted to know if you would listen to my story it's kinda stupid but I just really want to share it with someone, and since I don't know you guys in real life and you don't like know my family or anything...that maybe you would listen to it because you listened to all those other people's stories...and just having someone to listen to it without judging me or anything like that would mean so much since no one else knows it but I can't really tell anyone that I know because they will try to "help" me and get me in trouble. I just want to get it out of my brain. So uh please just email me back if you want to listen to it or whatever...

Thanks by the way if you took time out of your day to read this and all, even if you don't respond...

## **I really do think I need some help**

First off, I think it would be good to give some back story of my childhood. It might help to understand.

My mother was bi-polar. She was always right no matter what she said, and everyone else was wrong. Including me. The stress of having me at h a young age (she was only 15), and my father (17) unable to support her was devastating. Her parents were not very happy, but they supported her. My father's parents though disowned him and kicked him out.

When she had me, no one really knew there was anything wrong with my mother, so no one knew she needed medication. The only thing my father knew was that he couldn't handle it anymore and left when I was about 2 years old.

I was raised by my grandparents and my mother jumped around from apartment to apartment for a few years, moved in with her friend, moved in with us, went to jail, and is now going to live with her boyfriend because the judge ordered her to.

I am now in my early years of high school, and am a very creative person and am also very emotional and in tune with other's emotions. Nearly everyone around me knows and I have a real talent for drawing. However emotionally, I am anything but stable.

I began to think more about my past and when the sudden realisation hit me that I might really need some help, I nearly broke down. By the way, I can't cry in

public solely on emotions. I can't. I would have to forcefully make myself cry or cause physical pain. This is not good.

I feel different than my peers and I usually try to avoid them. But that is impossible at school. They are the type of kids who act up, laughing really loud in public, get up in your face, and when you tell them your uncomfortable, they scoff at you ask and you what your problem is (but they don't really want to know. They want to hurt you and make you feel stupid or crazy.)

The teachers really have stopped caring at this point. If it's not (majorly) illegal they do nothing to stop it. As far as the teachers are concerned it is just words and I shouldn't let it bother me, according to them. But a lot of it definitely qualifies as verbal abuse.

Another thing about my home life is that I don't want to tell my mother how I feel because I really doubt she'll understand or listen to me. She tries to assume she knows what I'm saying, tries to solve it for me, or tells me it's stupid to worry about it. Then she'll get hurt if I don't tell her.

P.S. A friend of mine is also a very emotional girl, labeled "The" drama queen of the school and lies periodically. However, I feel sympathy for her, yet I can't get up and comfort her during class if she's crying because the teachers only dismiss her, or send her out to calm down. And once when I tried to go to her to support her, I was told to go sit back down.

But I feel that going to her after class will seem like a delayed reaction.

Is there any advice you can give me? I think I really need some help.

Somehow it scares me to admit this, but I think it is time to say it.

## **I didn't ask to be born and feel pain every day of my life**

I have to go to boot camp... back to the counselors whom I hate because they don't listen, and try to tell me who I am and what I do wrong. But it's not all wrong, because I do things for a reason. I hate being here.

I am doing horrible in school. I still don't want to live. I am going to go. I can't take it anymore. That's the only thing I can find myself thinking about: suicide.

My mom thinks I have a problem. In her words, "a disease" because I hurt myself and because I draw things I feel. What reason does she have to judge me? Because she's my mother? Who gives a fuck? I didn't ask to be born, to be alive and feel pain every day of my life.



## **You've always made it clear I'm a mistake**

I wrote this letter to my parents a few days ago, but I got too scared to show them:

--

Where did you all go? I guess it's a good thing no one is ever here to see me cry. I know you hate it dad, you reckon only criminals cry.

I won't bother saying the usual crap here coz I know you guys won't give a damn. Dad, you'll go back to this other woman you love more than us and drink and sing and fuck and whatever else you two love to do. Mum, you'll carry on with your awful mood swings. I'll go to sleep listening to you cry and wake up to your angry screams.

No one will remember me or this stupid letter and every day will go back to what we call normal. There are things about me I had hoped you would never know about, but I'm sick of everyone BSing me and thinking I only act like I do because I want to.

I'm sure you don't care anyway. I guess it's selfish to not tell you but all I can think about is the shame. The people at school have stopped asking if I'm ok now. They know not to expect a big smile anymore, like what all the other good little kids give them.

I'm sorry for these 16 years of inconvenience.

You tried your best with me but I think life got in the way and fucked me up good and proper, or maybe

that's just the real me shining through. I'm sorry I can't be the normal pretty little girl you once wanted.

I can't imagine how you must feel knowing you got me instead, and having to watch me walk in the footsteps of that lovely daughter who was or was not meant to be. You guys gave me life, but in all honesty I don't think it's fair to say I owe you it. You've always made it clear I'm a mistake.

Mum I know you get mad at me for being down but I'm trying to tell you there are actual reasons for that. Well maybe there aren't, maybe I just dreamed a bad dream and haven't woken up yet. I couldn't tell you if this is reality or not.

So I'll go ahead and say it.

You guys probably already know a lot, but you of course hate me to the point of completely ignoring my shit. I don't think I'll ever understand that. Mum, Dad, I'm a much bigger fuck up than you give me credit for.

The guy from next door did things to me. That's all I want to say about that, but I thought you should know. Then I started the cutting. I did mushrooms. LSD. Cannabis. Solvents. Drinking. Smoking... Don't worry, I stopped the drugs now.

Oh, a different guy this time, much older boyfriend who dad sure wouldn't approve of. Running away (you knew that one right? Or didn't you notice?) Tried to jump off

that bridge down in town. Someone stopped me.  
Skipping school. Didn't eat and threw up when I did.

Stealing. Felt like murdering you guys.

I'm sure there's more. But do you get it now? I think I do. No wonder you don't love me like I want you to. And I'm telling you all this shit because I'm sick of having secrets and I'm sick of being crazy and I'm so tired... and I can't keep waking up feeling like this and always asking, asking the same question every morning; if today is the day I change my life for better or for worse or just to stay living in this same mundane existence. But surely anything's better than living this way?

I'm sick and crazy and tired, always tired, tired of living like this, but usually I'm just left laying on my bed staring at ceilings and wondering if this is the only existence I'll ever know, and asking myself for the millionth time whether any of this is actually worth it.

## **My mother, she scares me**

Oh, God, my shirt is not in the right place, she's going to come here and rip it apart because of it. I have to clean my room. Clean my room, clean my room, clean my room. My keyboard makes a sound, I'm afraid she'll hear that I'm writing again. I'm a bitch and a failure in life, she says, because I wash the dishes too slow. And why is it that I'm not as happy when she makes me do things in the kitchen as when I'm with my friends? And why is it that I'm always sick? And why is it that I have such a goddamn attitude, she says. I don't know Mom, why do you? I don't know mom; maybe I'm sick of life. I don't know Mom; maybe my friends treat me better than you do. But then again, when I whisper to them "my mom scares me" they ignore me every time. At least they don't scare me, Mom, at least they don't. Oh, God, she glanced at me, what if she sees me holding my tears back? Oh, God, help me, she'll start saying the same things to me again. I cross my legs, and suddenly I become a physically retarded person that can't sit or stand right in her eyes. Her eyes, scare me, too. And no, Mom, I don't want to be strong anymore. No, Mom, I don't want to be fast and smart like you anymore. I want to wash my dishes slow, I want to walk slowly, I want to be a failure who can enjoy life rather than to see myself as you. And then you wonder: why am I always away from you? And then you wonder: why don't I share my pain with you? And then you say out loud "What am I supposed to do if you can't even clean your room?" And then you punish me, and say I deserve it. And then you wonder: why is my towel always wet and not in the right place?

From tears, Mom.

From tears.

## **I don't like talks**

I just wanted to tell you how I feel.

I'm 13 years old and I was/am a cutter. I stopped for about three months and have recently started again. Sometimes I feel so empty, like everything inside of me is gone.

There's no real pain, but the lack of emotion in its self hurts. I cut because it gives me something to feel. My mom and me were talking about people who are "emo" and she asked me if I'd ever cut, I guess I'd finally gotten tired of lying, so I told her.

Later that night my parents and I had a talk... I don't like talks. It made me wish I'd never told anyone. Being told that I shouldn't "carve myself up" and that I was attempting suicide when I wasn't! They threatened to send me to a counselor if I ever did again and that was enough to get me to stop... for a while.

One of the things that has helped me the most is poetry. Writing to express the way I feel can help me resist the sometimes irresistible urges to cut or cause myself pain in some way.

I've also been accused of having an eating disorder by several of my friends. I don't eat breakfast or lunch, but I don't consider myself anorexic... Am I?

I'm including one of my poems... really just because I want to.

Left alone  
Waiting on my own  
I'm left my one small comfort  
To grip the blade  
To let it loose  
My long sleeves still hide the truth  
I tried to talk  
I've tried to cry  
But I just hold the tears inside  
They say it's wrong  
To cause myself pain  
But how would they know  
They've never felt the same  
The joy of a cut  
Shortly followed by the fall  
The only way I find to feel  
The blood that proves that its for real

## **My father is a verbally and psychologically abusive man**

My mother and father have been divorced for only six months now. Yet during that time, I went through some form of emotional exhaustion due to school and other aspects in my life. There were moments that I had a strong feeling of loneliness and felt that I needed to talk to someone.

My father is a verbally and psychologically abusive man (I deem him a sociopath, and all together, a toxic person) who has no real friends but rather fixed acquaintances. Like in most toxic relationships, we would get along at a "certain distance"... in my case, walking on eggshells to avoid his rebukes. But even when my mother and I managed to leave him, he would still call us. Although, my mother and I would avoid these calls.

However, during my period of exhaustion, I felt so alone that I didn't know what to do, so my mind reverted back to an old perception I had abandoned, and I decided to talk to my father. We would discuss things on a superficial level. I would keep my distance and only discuss things that were unrelated to my mother. It wasn't before long that I began to realize I was seeking comfort from someone I knew could not help me at all. It is this perception that he could help me that I've got to overcome.

I've managed to avoid my father on a safe level. The divorce papers state that I have a say in what we do, and so far, we've not done much of anything, but even if they didn't, I'd still be avoiding him. I'm not anyone's puppet, that's what I know for certain.

I have stopped talking to him and I am beginning to regain some energy.

## **Would anybody care?**

I'm so stupid, I don't know what to do  
I wish everything was over now

So I could move on  
But I'm trapped

And I'm afraid I'll never escape  
Trapped in this life forever

Until the day I'll finally be dead  
That rings a bell on me,

What would happen if I die?  
Would anybody notice?  
Would anybody care?

Or would they just remember me  
As a simple girl who just killed herself?

## **I just need a support group**

I don't feel cared about, and I can feel so alone at times. The only three people I have are my best friends. I don't know what I'd do without them.

My good friend \_\_\_\_\_ is always there when I need her. When I cry buckets of tears at school, \_\_\_\_\_ is there for me and so is \_\_\_\_\_.

I have cut myself and I think about hurting myself all the time. I've drunk before and thought of suicide. I need help from someone. I have all my physical needs met, but emotionally, it's awful

I just need a support group. I mean, I feel like a freak. I don't want to be around my family because they have hurt my feelings so many times and I can't take this feeling anymore. I feel like there's a huge hole in my heart and I cry myself to sleep so much. I just want to be happy. Can anyone help me?

## **I'm just gonna have to ship you off to your dad's**

I am 15 and I have thought of committing suicide before. I truly think I have an emotionally abusive mother. I saw a list of all the signs, and everything matched. Out of 10 sample questions my mom had about 8 fitting the profile. I then talked to my dad (who lives about in another city) to see if I could live with him. He said agreed to let me live there after the school year was over. He called my mom, who always says to me "I'm just gonna have to ship you off to your dad's..." etc., and she told him no, and got real upset and angry with me.

## **He said that my opinions don't mean anything and don't count**

My step-father yells at me a lot and accuses me of things I do not do. The other night we got in a fight. I was wearing a tight shirt over a long one, so I came home and he said it was too tight. He told me to take it off and I said, "No, I will not. It is not inappropriate in any way", and then I tried to walk out. But my mom and him both told me to stop or I'd be sorry... so I stayed and things went from bad to worse. I admitted that I may be wrong and was not saying I was right. But he said that my opinions don't mean anything and don't count... so that blew me off and I yelled, "My opinions will always count and they do". And then I said, "My counselors said they do and always will, even if they are wrong".

So he yelled back at me that they don't. He was in front of the door so I couldn't get out. My mom yelled and told me to go to my room when I didn't do anything wrong in my "opinion". So the next day after I came home, I was watching t.v and he came up and punched me as play fighting. I said stop and he didn't. He punched me again (mind you, he hurts and doesn't listen to me at all no matter what) so I stood up and yelled, "Stop! I am not kidding!" and I went to my room. He yelled, "Don't be such a fucking baby... toughen up!" and I yelled back of course, saying, "I will not and I am proud to be this way and not your way." My mom came home later and came to my room. She was kind of yelling and talking, asking why I spazzed

out on him. So I told her what happened and said, "Go ahead, ground me! You always take his side anyways", so he left. I was already grounded and was stuck in my room with nothing...

I am so upset with her letting him do this to me. He emotionally abuses me and she lets him. He even came in my room when I told my mom I was going to bed, and he threw a pillow at me. I said, "Don't!" and grabbed it. He tried again, so I held my hand over the pillow and he saw the new cuts on my arm. He grabbed me and threw me on my bed again and left.

## **All she can offer are cold looks and rude remarks**

I don't know what more to do.

My mother constantly lies to me. I tell her something in confidence, but she always goes back and tells it to her boyfriend no matter how embarrassing it may be.

If I'm ever on the phone with her and I say something she does not want to hear she hangs up in my face. She has a horrible memory. When I ask something of her, I'll normally call her to make sure she remembers, but all she does is scold me when she should have approached me in a more polite manner.

She has never once said sorry to me when she says something rude and nasty. Sometimes I bet she doesn't even realize when she's being rude, which should not be hard: the look on my face alone should give some clue. Sometimes I pour my heart out to her, but all she can offer are cold looks and rude remarks.

## **My parents make me feel like a failure**

Hi,

I have a list of stuff that my parents do and say that makes me feel... like a failure.

1) They go ahead and actually SAY that I will amount to nothing and that I will never succeed in anything I do.

2) At the same time, they indirectly expect me to do good, be the best etc. Like they say to me, "Oh, you made a B? Alright... why don't you study more?" or "Why did you not get on the principle's list? Yeah, you got on the honor roll, but guess who made the principal's list? Mary Sue, Billy Bob, and Jimmy Joe! They are sooo bright. Some people just excel at everything they do! Oh! Look, here are some more of your class mates!" Or sometimes they say 'good job' to me with a less-than-proud expression on their face. Even when I get a low A, like a 93 or so, they will ask me why my grade is so low.

3) They complain about every little thing I do wrong. My mother even goes as far as to tell me that her way of doing things is the ONLY RIGHT WAY of doing things. For example, I was once sweeping the kitchen floor after dinner. I would go around, with the sweeper, and sweep up whatever dust I see. Then my mother came up to me, yelling at how I wasn't doing it right and that I was doing the job only halfway thoroughly. She told me that I had to hold the broom a certain way, sweep the dust a certain way... place the dust pan in a certain

direction... She said that the way I was doing it was wrong and that hers was the right way--yes I know I am being redundant, but I am only trying to exaggerate the harming effects of her words.

4) They will talk about me while I am around them as if I WASN'T around them. They will talk to each other about why I am such a lazy, ungrateful, stubborn person.

5) They will list out my faults. They will talk about how other teens are smarter, prettier, and basically just WAY better than I am. They will talk about other parent's children and how they wished I was as determined, kind, caring, obedient, and intelligent as them.

6) They will ask me about --when I make a B or something below an A--other students and how they did. Of course, they only ask about students that are WAY, WAY smarter than me, like Jenny Jane or Jim Bob Joe... and I am forced to tell them that they received a higher grade than me.

Then they will say "Oh, how smart they are! Why can't you be like them?"

7) They will talk bad about me to my FRIENDS. They will say, "Oh, Lucy Loo, your room is always so clean. My daughter's room is a pig sty ( that's how to spell it, right?)! You need to teach her how to clean her room!"

8) Also, they take every suggestion I voice as a blatant argument that

whatever they think is wrong. For example, earlier today, I asked my father, as I was helping him move out all the furniture so we could put the carpet into the computer room, "Why didn't you put the carpet before you put the furniture in it?" He snapped back, "What is your problem? Don't you think we already thought of that? I hate people who have loud mouths and only talk and don't help!"

9) My mother uses me as an excuse to buy things that she wants. She'll tell my dad that I want something when she's the one that wants it. When my dad says 'no', he says 'no' to me and fusses me out on my bad habits and how I always want stuff that I don't need.

10) My parents tell me that I never do anything good without them having to tell me first. They say that I have NEVER EVER done any of my chores or any good things of my own volition.

Well, I could list more things, but, seeing as my fingers are about to freeze off--its about 30 degrees right now-- I think I'll stop and drink some hot tea. Oh, here is how I feel when my parents are being unfair, which only happens about once a week—I'm not one to go around saying that I am right and my parents are wrong just because they punished me for something that I REALLY did wrong. When my parents are unfair, I usually try to wait until they are finished until I storm up to my room and scream into my pillow or pummel my bed with my karate gloves (or, if I'm really lucky, I get to go to karate class and spar with my sensei/instructor). Sometimes, I get so mad at them

that I yell and scream back... and get hit upside the head by my father because of my attitude. Of course, sometimes I just get grounded. Other times, I get so verbally abused (you're so stupid and idiotic and dimwitted!) that I start crying. This only makes them more mad and when I try to explain how I feel, they interrupt and say that I should not be feeling that way.

Well... ok... my fingers are REALLY losing any sort of feeling in them... so... thanks for listening/reading.

## **I feel so criticized about everything I do**

### **1. Verbal abuse**

I get lots of this from my stepdad. Whenever we have a family argument he calls me some of this stuff (lazy, ungrateful, inconsiderate, uncaring, manipulative) He also has called me cuss words when he's really mad. And my mom, I don't think, really ever verbally abuses me, although she doesn't really do much when he does :-/

### **2. Afraid**

Some of my recurring fears are as follows: Fears of not succeeding. Fears of disappointing a lot of people if I don't make it to college. Lots of fears that if I'm not perfect academically, physically, and psychologically, that I won't be accepted...by anyone.

### **3. Criticized**

This is a big one! I feel so criticized about everything I do. It's like if my grades aren't A's, then I'm criticized about it. If I ever settle for anything less than the best, no matter what, I'm criticized heavily, I'm judged on how my friends are!! I hate that!

## **What's the point of living if I am not loved and accepted?**

Hello,

I have recently been researching emotional abuse because I think my mother may be doing so to me. I second-guess this though, because I do have clinical depression in addition to a slew of other conditions including ADHD, Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder, Borderline Bi-Polar Disorder, and Anxiety. It's taken me months to even consider that my mom is a trigger.

After she and I argue, she stops talking to me as much as possible for days at a time and only speaks to me when she has to (like, "It's time for dinner") but in a much harsher tone. She also doesn't say "I love you" or even let me hug her in some cases during these days. When she does this I feel like no one loves me and I have tried to kill myself a couple times because, the way I see it, what's the point of living if I am not loved and not accepted?

I am seeing a therapist and she hasn't ever used the term emotional abuse with me, so I never thought my mom was abusive, until my aunt mentioned it. My mom will say things like, "I am tired of dealing with your problems", "You can be such a brat sometimes", "You have to stop talking to your dad about our problems because it's hurting my relationship with your father." I hate when she subtly blames me for her and dad's problems, and I feel like I have been a poison to their relationship -I do feel guilty.

She will often say, "You're misperceiving things" and "You're being too sensitive." This is often in response to when I say that she has said something hurtful. I honestly can't remember most of the hurtful things she has said. I just know she has. I think that my mind blocks out the exact words 'cause they are so hurtful. It just makes me feel like shit. In her defense, she is under a lot of stress. She has a temper and that's not her fault. I do to. It's just... she got so angry once that she swung her hand to slap me in the face. She didn't, but she almost did, and even admitted she was going to.

I think my mother is a trigger of my suicide attempts. I hate saying that because I feel like I'm blaming her for my problems and that last thing I want to do is not take responsibility where responsibility is due. I'm trying to get better.

## **It's impossible to be what she needs**

My mom was emotionally abused as a child and she brings it up all the time to make me feel guilty. She tells me I'm her only hope though I'm her third child and expects me to be perfect in school, in my social life and everything. It's impossible to be what she needs... I can't be perfect. I've tried.

She tells me how she thinks one of my friends is nice and how another is too crazy and how it seems like the other has some sort of problem. Whenever we get into a fight she leaves and goes into her room and starts crying. Later I apologize or she never mentions it again.

## **Her words--god, her words**

Realizing my mother is emotionally abusive tore me apart and yet gave me strength. She had a messy childhood... I suppose that sounds very stereotyped. But she did. She suffered from clinical depression and was completely unaware of it. Her father was emotionally and physically abusive to her and her brothers. Her mother was manipulative, cold, heartless, and basically came under every term you can think of that qualifies for emotional abuse. As she got older, I'm told that my mother became more and more depressed, and that while she was pregnant with my older brother and myself, she suffered numerous panic attacks, and even became suicidal.

Don't know why she had children. I don't think she is a bad person, but I think she is a damaged, weak, low and selfish person. She is doing her best to live through me, and abusing me every day of my life, and yet she has no idea. She has always been this way.

She never swears at me, she hardly hits me, and she never neglects me. But her words--god, her words. She gets angry and insane over the simplest of things- me forgetting my school books, staying up a little late, voicing my opinion at a family dinner....she just blows up. She has this cold, hard, sharp, cutting voice, and she uses it so often. She tells me that I'm worthless, that she should've killed me when I was pregnant, that I ruined her life. She screams, 'what did I do to deserve you?!' She calls me a bitch behind my back, I've heard her so many times.

She tells me I'm a little loser, that it's no wonder I haven't got any friends, that if I go on the 'way you are' then I will end up with no future, isolated and hated by everybody. She continually tells friends, family, even hairdressers and shop keepers, that she 'always gets abused' by me at home, that I'm a 'horror' and that she can barely handle me. She talks about my flaws in public, even the stupidest things like me forgetting to clean my room or getting in trouble at school. She tells me I make her want to kill herself.

My father, though, also plays a big part in this issue. I genuinely, solely believe that deep down, he's a good person. When I was little, my dad and I used to be friends. He would comfort me when me and my mother fought, and if he saw fit, he would stand up to her, defend me, even if it meant her raging on him.

He was my protector and my hero and the only family member I could trust.

But as I got older, my eyes have opened. I no longer see my dad as brave because he isn't. He's confused and lost, desperate and depressed, and I can tell. He has confided in me many times that he "made a mistake" marrying my mother, and that people like her "weren't meant to be mothers". He's so afraid of fights that he will do anything to prevent them, even if it means ignoring my feelings and pressuring me to shut up about them. He is such a coward that while my mother abuses me, he'll hide out and ignore us, pretending I don't exist.

But when HE gets mad, there's hell to pay. He's always paranoid about my schoolwork and my social reputation. If I have a falling out with a friend and he thinks it's my fault, or if I do badly in a test, he just blows up. He screams and he rages, he's so loud that everybody can hear him. He throws stuff at me—books, boxes, anything. He hits me, he screams in my face. He swears ALL THE TIME. He calls me a fucking bitch and tells me that he's going fucking crazy. He claims that he is a very patient and generous man, and that I am continually breaching his trust and disappointing him. When I was little, he always had a bad temper, but he was reasonable. Now I just think he's mental. When he sends me to my room after screaming at me, I curl up and sit there, and when I hear his footsteps down the hallway I can almost scream out in all consuming fear and horror.

Teamed up with my mother, my dad is ten times worse. When they're both mad at me, things are as bad as they can get. Together they swear at me, insult me, and my mother laughs and watches as my dad hits and throws things at me. He also says some disgusting things. When I was about seven and I was struggling to do mathematics that he'd set me, he told me that unless I stop being lazy and start concentrating, I'll wind up a loser who has sex and children with every “fucking Tom, Dick and Harry you meet on the street”. During all of this, my mother watches or laughs, often adding her own harsh thoughts.

Since I was in grade four, I have been suffering from clinical depression. I haven't actually been diagnosed

with it, but considering it runs in the family and I have all the symptoms, it's basically a fact. I remember when I was ten and I looked "Depression" up on the internet. I knew my mum had it, and I was wondering whether this was the reason I felt sad and lonely and empty for no reason.

The following morning, I went to my dad and told him that I thought I had depression. His first reaction was to smile, shake his head and say, "No." Later, he looked up the symptoms and skeptically asked me if I had any of them. When I told him about feeling isolated and empty, and guilty for no reason, he actually laughed, and said "No" again.

It took a long time for my parents to realize the severity of my depression, and they still really haven't, since I have learnt not to confide in them. They did all the "Right" things-they forced me to exercise, they took me to the doctor, they talked to me about it, but when they realized that text book instructions weren't working, they gave up.

My mum wouldn't allow my father to take me to a psychiatrist and get me properly diagnosed with clinical depression. I think it was because she's in denial- or maybe because she has clinical depression herself and wants to keep the attention. She convinced me that I was "upset for real reasons, not depressed", and that I was "really okay, just fine". I agreed to these statements because I felt guilty for worrying her.

My dad has promised to make me an appointment with a psychiatrist many, many times, but he never has. I stopped taking him seriously a few months ago. My mum always burdens me with her problems. She never goes to my dad, because he doesn't understand depression or anxiety. My older brother is 15 and happy, free spirited and loud, as well as slightly obnoxious and predictably insensitive. So she comes to me, because I feel depressed and because I feel pain, and instead of sympathizing, she just dumps on me.

She asks me whether I'm still depressed. Usually I lie and say I'm fine, but occasionally I'll tell her I am. If I tell her I'm depressed, she'll ask why. When I tell her, she says something like "Oh, but that's just because you're upset. You're not actually depressed. I'M the one who's REALLY depressed..." or she'll just jump in and say, "Just imagine- it's ten times worse for me, I'm really bad. You're not that bad." Then she goes on to tell me about all of her life problems.

She tells me stuff no 12 year old should know about her own mother. She says that every day she wants to die, that life generally "is a bitch", that she's divorcing my dad as soon as "you kids move out". She told me that she envies people who kill themselves, and that the only reason she doesn't commit suicide is because it's her "duty to look after you kids. It's wrong to kill myself." Not because she loves us, but because we're her duty.

Both my parents want to live a story book perfect life. They dote on my brother because he's energetic and

happy and "normal". My brother has all kinds of privileges that I'm constantly deprived of, such as calling and seeing friends, having MSN and going down to the local shop. My mum told me that I'm not allowed to do these things because I'm "not very practical, not very smart", and because she's too afraid to let me.

My dad gets angry when I'm depressed. He also often ridicules my

depression. For example, one day he burst into my room while I was crying. He asked me what was wrong. I shrugged, still crying. He replied, "Oh, you don't know. You just feel like crying, because you're so depressed and you want to die." He doesn't understand it, so he makes fun of it.

When my mum asks me how my day was, and I reply, "Not so good", or even, "Crappy", she'll say, "Oh well, that's life-a bitch", or "I don't want to know about it." Often when my brother is telling her some happy, jolly story about his friends, she'll be smiling at him sickeningly. Once I asked her why she appears to favour him over me. She replied, "You have to admit, you're a very nasty, rude child. I'm a very good mum to you, and you're horrible to me. Your brother is a happy child."

Even when my brother is rude, he gets away with it. Once, my dad was teasing him about something, and my brother snapped, "Get lost, you ass!" If I had ever said this, I would've been dead. But when my mother

confronted my brother about his behaviour, my dad said, "No, no, I provoked him. It's okay."

I've recently fallen out with all of my friends, and my parents never hesitated to tell me "what you did was wrong. It was your fault. I knew this was going to happen- why don't you listen?" and so on. I have been hanging out with some new people, and although they treat me well, I feel more alone than ever. Since December last year I have been continually waking up at 3 o' clock in the morning. Sometimes I'd wake up at midnight, or one thirty. Then I would lie there for a few hours, unable to sleep, until I eventually cried myself into a deep and fretful slumber, usually where I had nightmares. I DID tell my parents, but after they tried the usual text book solutions-exercise, a warm drink, etc, and they didn't work, my mum told me to "just get over it".

I am not a cutter, but I used to hit myself, as stupid as I know that sounds. I used to bang my head hard against the wall, and then I'd feel dizzy and sick, but strangely calm and tender, and then I'd cry the rest of my pain away. I don't do that anymore, for I fear I have lost my senses. I don't FEEL anymore. I have not confided in anyone for a long time. I am known- or, rather, my mother has made people believe- that I am an outgoing, loud, and open person. Recently, though, as I scraped away the layers of lies that my parents, family and numerous abusive friends have laid upon me, I have discovered that I am far from this description. Instead I am a quiet, almost shy person. The fact my "friends" have abandoned me, and my

mother's usual abuse, has caused me to have deep trouble with trusting anybody. I feel scared and confused when people are nice to me, „cause I don't get why they like me. Why don't you hate me, sir? Why aren't you running from me, miss? Aren't I disgusting? Cause that's what mummy says.

Sometimes I wish I was cutting or drinking or high on drugs, because that would guarantee people's attention. Because I'm so quiet, because I'm such an accomplished and skilful liar and hider, and I have built a wall around me, people don't ever think there could be something wrong with me. But inside, I'm so damn lonely. Sometimes I think that if I took a razor and slit my wrists and watched them bleed, or if I drank that poison under the sink, nobody would even realize that I was gone. I can't even cry anymore, because when I do, my mum mocks me.

I am right now craving attention. Most people will think I'm a selfish little brat, and an attention seeker, and I suppose I am. I want love so much that I would probably, literally kill for it. For someone to appreciate me and love me and want me in their life, I would kill for. I want to be nurtured and loved and cared for and now I am looking for it, searching so hard, screaming its name, and yet all of it continues to hide from me.

What is scariest is that when they're not angry, my parents are completely normal. I just forget about everything they said, and then everything's perfect and fine until next week when it happens again and then it's starting all over.

I'm lost and confused. I was so shocked when I realised what my parents do could even be considered emotional abuse. I almost wanted to wipe out this fact from my memory, forget it and pretend things were okay. 'Cause it's so easy to forget, to open up and love again, rather than face the truth.

Everybody in my life who I've trusted has either abandoned me or betrayed me. The people who have helped me, I have been forbidden to make further contact with. I'm so lonely that even when I'm surrounded with "Friends", I feel like I'm standing by myself at the end of the world. I will never kill myself, for some reason. I don't want to die, and this is what scares me. After all of this hell, some part of me is still okay. That's what's confused me. Some little part of me is unbroken, and as I sit here and type this at 1:00 AM on Saturday night, I know I don't want to die. I want to survive and to be able to say, "Yeah, this was shit. So? I'm alive."

Already I seem to "know too much for my age". A lot of people who don't know my real age come and tell me their problems, and they tell me I'm a listener, that I "have such good emotional awareness". I know why. All this pain, all this sorrow and confusion and loneliness and desperation in the world...I know it all! Why? Why me?

## **A list of ways people have made things worse for me**

Remember when u asked why i dont want to tell people about whats really happening at home and i said because they have make things worse...

well here's a list of ways they make it worse:

- they treat u differently
- they make u see pple u dont want to
- they lie to you
- they make u feel worse
- they dont trust you any more
- they dont give u another chance at anything
- they cant keep secrets
- they tell other pple who dont need/want to know
- they make u feel like ur wrong & stupid for feeling the way you do
- they stop ur freedom
- they judge you
- they dont believe in u

## **Making things worse - Letter two**

I would like to add these to the ways people make things worse, but not just adults, sometimes my friends or others my age who may really be trying to be helpful and have good intentions, but still end up making me feel worse, not better.

-They blame you

-They make you feel like you hurting yourself is actually ruining their lives

-They think giving up 'addictions' to hurting yourself is easy to do

-They don't listen

-They tell you everything is gonna be okay

-They tell you tons of people are there for you even though most of those people cause how you feel

## **I feel the need to know 'the truth'**

Hi. My name is \_\_\_\_ and im 16. I read your journal and I have some questions in my mind that I hope you can help me to answer.

The more i read what you write about, the more things start to somewhat makes sense in my life, like depression.

There are many things that are considered emotional abuse that I have noticed have occurred in my family, especially in my mother's behaviors. It's hard for me to call her emotionally abusive because im not even sure if those behaviors count as emotional abusive. and even if they do, i would feel guilty for doing so.

but still, i know i need to face the facts. i feel the need to know 'the truth'. lately i've been trying to look back at my past. so that i can make some sense out of it and feel less confused. suppose that theres always a cause of all these things. like why i feel the way i do. and that it probably has to deal with childhood.

you said that teens may write to you and join a chat group. if thats true, i hope i can talk to you too. it would be something like telling you as many details as i can about what i remember of my life from as early as i can since the beginning of my childhood to recent days. most of all i just want you to tell me if what my parents did was emotionally abusive. that's something i really need to know and it has been in my mind lately a lot. it would be so helpful. and you have no idea how much it actually means to me.

Though i lack any talent, i love music, especially singing, ever since i was very little. ive always wanted to sing because that seems to be my natural way of expressing all the emotions in me. with all the artists i look up to, i want to sing beautifully so bad. yet sadly and pathetically, i cant. i was born with love of music and singing, but lack of any of its talent.

i want to sing not only because i feel like thats my only way i can truly express how i feel, but most of all i want to reach people's heart with my voice. i want to sing the songs that i write because i want to let people know that they are not alone. that i understand it and that i get it. that they can listen to music and know that they are not alone with what they have to go through in life and how they feel.

when i was in seventh grade i started going through major depression. i cant even describe how much emotional pain and sadness i had to go through and how i thought i was the only one and that no one will ever understand. how i wanted to die everyday. some people think those who commit suicide are selfish. now that im not as depressed as i used to be, i have realized that suicide isnt the solution for me (tho i still struggle with suicidal thoughts and feelings) but it also isnt an act of selfishness. not like in the situation i went through. i used to believe that me leaving the world was doing the world a favor. because i believed i was the fault of everything. and then of course, people would be like but what about your family? well, i was so depressed to the point that i thought if i ended my life i would actually make lives of others easier, especially maybe my family. what about that? is that coming out

of a selfish heart? i dont think so. its sad that some people dont understand and they never think about that.

(okay, got a lil off from what i was saying.)

i not only love music and singing but also want to help people. i know that i have always wanted to doing something good. but it was not until i felt so very, very depressed that i realized how badly i wanted to help people. with such passion on both subjects, i want to help people through my voice. my songs. my music. and get messages out about teens and children. about depression and emotional abuse. and a whole bunch of other things. in albums and interviews. whenever i think about it, i feel stupid cuz i know that will never happen. knowing that i perhaps might never be able to do so, i have decided that my second alternative choice, which to me is my only choice left, is to become a psychologist. i began to study psychology in middle school. i started to study body image. (im interested in both psychology and feminism and body image happens to relate to both. so yeah.) and i also began to do more research on psychology.

im not an expert. and im definitely far away from it. but im willing to learn and wanting to study. i want to travel the world. to see different places and different people. to learn and experience different things like different cultures. traveling the world, studying and observing people and helping people around the world. to make a difference in their lives and help them. i feel the need to save lives. i used to feel also stupid about that cuz its like, okay im depressed and im the one who

needs help, and im saying that i want to help other people? but then again as stupid as i feel about it, i feel a responsibility to do so.

i hope i can travel the world and observe children. to hear a language that u cant understand yet see the bond between children. to see children smile. to see children cry. and to give them a hug to let them know that someone cares. even if its a stranger doing such a strange thing. to listen to a teen talking about his or her difficult life.

i feel the need to travel everywhere in the world. not simply just having a 'vacation' with good sight-seeing. but to really meet different people and all. i admit one of the reason is because i want to get out of my life. i feel trapped where i am now. i have always constantly thought about others before me when i was a kid. but my deep depression kind of made me forget about that. i mean it made me worry a lot if i made anyone around me upset or mad. but i forgot to do the whole think-of-others-before-me in a positive way. during my depression i did it in a negative way. i have always felt that my life is hopeless and that there is no reason to live. and that i cant do anything.

thats what i believed when i was 12. now that im 16, my thinking becomes like this: my life is so hopeless that im not going to even bother with it. so forget about my life. im just going to try to do whatever i can to help other people. im just going to work on other people's lives. and thats why i want to travel the world and connect to other's hearts.

because if i cant even do that, then i really cant see any reason to live anymore.

sometimes i ask myself if im selfish for wanting to talk so i can figure out my life and recognize the emotional abuse, or for wanting to help people. but then i realize maybe im not. because if that makes me selfish, that makes every teen who needs help selfish too. and thats definitely not true. i know that they deserve it and need it. and as for helping people, its not for wanting to be a hero (tho i have to admit that i do have feelings of wanting to be somewhat a hero. to touch a heart and save a life. to make a difference in the world.). and its not for filling my own emotional needs, because it doesnt. or maybe it does. maybe it would make me feel better. i dont know. but i ask myself so i know for sure i didnt want to help people for myself. but i want to help people for people. i was going to say its for fulfilling their emotional needs. but i know it doesnt work that way. no one can just snap out of it. so im not saying i can fulfill their emotional needs. but maybe it helps. a little bit. or so i hope.

sorry for such a long email. not only is it long. but i kind of got off topic.

and maybe some of the things i said are kind of unclear and confusing. so i think i just made myself look really weird.

but anyway thanks for reading it. i really appreciate it.

## **Letters From Adults**

## Letter to those who cut

If you really want to keep it a secret, you can't tell /anyone/. There are some people who understand--some doctors, some social workers, whatever. They know that we cut to make the thoughts that are even worse go away; they understand that this IS our coping mechanism. It may be flawed, but it does what it does. Unfortunately, even now--many years on--most people don't understand, and panic when they see the blood. They don't understand that the blood is a comfort.

The only safe place is with other people who cut, or the rare adult who has seen it all and understands. Even as an adult myself, I can't tell you that other adults are safe. Only trust those who offer you safety first.

For me, cutting is where I go when the internal hurt is worse than anything external--it's an abnormal coping mechanism, but a very effective (though socially naughty) one. I would not discourage anyone from cutting if that was all they had left, because it's probably still better than suicide. I'm fairly pragmatic about it--it's where I go when things get bad, but I also know that, to be 'normal,' one has to replace the urge with something more sociably acceptable. You can tell people that this is from someone who's been very successful by society's standards (an MD).

## **I didn't get that support**

The description of \_\_\_\_\_'s home life mirrors so much of what my sister and I dealt with as a child (my dad was an alcoholic and my mum couldn't deal with emotion and her own pain so took it out on us and also hit my dad). I felt so trapped I left home at 15) and I went through a very dark patch in my late teen into my 20s.

I have never fully lost the insecure little girl who had to become an adult quick but I've learnt to use these insights to make me stronger. I think that's why I give so much to teens because I remember myself at that key time and how I needed someone to tell me I could do things because I didn't get that support.

Some of the decisions I made in life came from that vulnerable time too and I totally agree with \_\_\_\_\_ that if someone explains things to young people and they are shown how things get so bad, then they can be empowered to recognise stuff themselves and to believe their gut feeling when teachers, parents or whoever are having an unhealthy effect on them. Then they have a better chance of coming through things less hurt and more armed to fight it.

## **I never knew why I am like this**

I'm in my thirties now and all my life I never knew why I am like this, I just thought it's just the way I am, my own stupid fault, I have hated myself since I can remember, I've felt such a failure, I used to self harm, even now I sometimes have to cut, although nowhere near how I used to.

I feel like a waste of space, like a bother on other people. I mean, the check list about characteristics of someone who was emotionally abused sums it up.

Growing up was miserable. I was never good enough, I was told constantly I need to eat less, that I'm fat (I was 6.5 stone) my siblings would make up fat jokes about me to please my mum and she would laugh.

I was made to go to bed at the same time as my younger siblings, who are years younger than me so this ended with me not at all tired but having to lay in bed in the dark in the room I shared, all I did was lie there for hour after hour hating my life, I wasn't allowed out after school ever, I could never socialise.

I was told constantly that I'm too sensitive. I am always blamed openly for causing my mum to become an alcoholic and that this led to my sibling having learning disabilities.

When she discovered I cut myself she laughed in front of everyone and said I was only doing it because I wanted attention. She called me 'Sarah the Slasher' and everyone laughed.

The emotional blackmail was endless. If she wanted me to do a little task, like to Hoover up, she wouldn't just tell me to do it, she would begin, 'You're so lazy, you never help me do anything, you always just sit there, I don't know why I bothered having you, why won't you Hoover for me?'

I have no confidence now and didn't growing up. I didn't know how to talk to people my own age or to grown ups, I was deadly shy and this was something else I was ridiculed for. She seemed to love to show me up or embarrass me. She will always tell people in front of me of things that had happened to me which were humiliating. She constantly told me, and still tells me, that I was the first baby so naturally I was the experiment and that's why I've turned out this way.

I got great grades for my exams, but my mum focused on the one bad one and told me I had let her down and how could this have happened.

Money was always tight at home but I wasn't allowed to get a part time job until I left school. So until I got a job I had no money at all. This meant anything I needed including personal goods I had to ask her for.

And a lot of the time was refused most things. If she did buy something necessary I knew the effort it caused her, the waste of money I caused, the trouble maker I was for asking for it.

When I was a bit older I had a pen friend. We would write letters weekly, I really looked forward to getting his letters.

I had nothing else to look forward to then. My mum used to open his letters when they came because I was at school. She would read them and then give them to me. When I needed a stamp to post my reply she refused to give me one unless I let her read it. I felt so deadly embarrassed and so angry but I had to let her do whatever she wanted or I couldn't send it.

When I started going out with someone, she wanted to find out if I was sleeping with him because we weren't married. It was so embarrassing and again involved screaming and slapping till she got her answer. I told her what she wanted to hear but it wasn't until she had made me cry that she seemed satisfied and left.

Even now I'm so afraid of being on my own with her. My husband knows this as I always ask him to stay in the room. On the occasions where he has been working and I've had to stay with her alone, he says he gets home to find me crying or extremely upset, feeling my life is worthless and pointless. I mean, I'm in late twenties now and she doesn't even live in the same area as me, but the power she has over me is just as strong as ever.

I know I'm a disappointment to her, I can see why in some sense. Everything I do seems to mean nothing to her.

All the time she has been away from me, I am still like I was when she left. Compliments by other people make me feel panicked and sick, I can't talk to people, I am still very introverted and shy, I am worrying

constantly that people will leave me or no longer want me, I am only truly happy when I'm doing something, like the housework because I can control it and do it to my standards, although I notice I am very compulsive in this.

I still have problems when it comes to eating, I either refuse to eat at all or the bare minimum. I believe I am fat. Officially I am underweight. From waking up in the morning, to picking my clothes for the day, to going to bed at night, all I think about is being fat and what to do about it.

The thing is, I love her so much. I know she must have her own problems and I feel I should have been there for her or done more to help her. I feel there is no bond between us at all. I'm sure she must love me in her own way. I wish I knew what to do to make her think more of me.

Sorry to go on for so long, I didn't mean to, I haven't ever written or thought all this through before. Again, thank you so much for what you are doing, its shown me it's not all my fault that I'm like this, and that other people are the same.

It is so true, if you are being emotionally abused you don't know it while it's happening, you just think it's you and this is how your life is.

## **My biggest dream was for hidden cameras in the house**

I knew what my mom was doing to me was very wrong, but it was nearly impossible to get others to believe my reports about her behavior, as everyone shrugged it off as typical "mother/daughter" conflicts and never saw the severity of it all.

My biggest dream growing up was that I wished I could somehow have hidden cameras installed in the house to capture the behavior she adamantly denies, to this day.

Proof would have meant the world to me, growing up. Even now. She was so secretly manipulative that no one saw her other side.

A few finally caught on, to a decent degree, but aside from one relative who really understood I was telling the truth about her malicious behavior, I felt discounted by most everyone else. Even to this day.

I wound up moving 1500 miles away to escape much of her impact.

She was hospitalized twice for clinical depression when I was about 14. It was actually a relief for me, as I could be out of her control for a while.

I lived with my father, but they were divorcing amidst all of this. (I now see why he couldn't stay with her he was abused by her as well.)

## **My mother has been punishing me my whole life**

I just had to escape my mother in the state of \_\_\_\_\_ to be practically homeless in \_\_\_\_\_ and I am pregnant.

My mother has been punishing me my whole life and I am 31 years old. I keep going back to her hoping to have a good and loving relationship with her but this last time I reached out to her for help and support it ended with me going completely mad and breaking some things in her living room. So now I am the one who is a crazy psychopath. I am so broken down by her.

When she is mad she tells me that she hates me, that I have been trouble to her since the day I was born, she wishes that I was never born, that I will be a bad mother and that I need to have an abortion, that I will abuse my child, she tells me in a voice mail (that I still have) that in her reports about me I am a sociopath, I am out of the will, and to call her \_\_\_\_\_ from now on.

She also told me that she will make sure that I will never get to see my daughter that I gave up for adoption, who I had contact with up to the falling out about a month ago. She is very resourceful and has contact with the family that has my daughter. The family now will not take my calls. I am not even under the same roof with her and she still torments me. My mind cannot shut off her voice. I can't get a job because I am blowing job interviews because I can't get her and her words out of my head. I am so stressed about having this baby and turning out like her.

When she tries to call and I see her number on my caller ID I get sick. There is so much more to this and I don't know what to do with it. I am going insane.

## **I honestly believed that I was just a bad person**

It really begins with my mom's story. She was the oldest girl of nine children, brought up in a rural Catholic household. My grandpa is probably the most angry and critical person I have ever met, and I cannot imagine what my mom must have gone through in that house. He used to punish his kids with belt beatings, although I guess that was more normal back then. A lot of his male children don't speak to him.

I know that so much of this stuff sounds over-dramatic, made up, or right out of a clinical history, but I want you to believe that this is just the facts, it's all true and unexaggerated.

Anyway, my mom was great when I was little. She spent all her time with me and my younger sister, since she was a stay at home mom.

She was so attentive and loving. She loved being a mom, and caring for others. Because she needs others to need her. (She's since become both a school teacher and a nurse, but she has had trouble keeping a job because of her issues.)

She told me later though that her marriage was basically irreparable before we were born. My Dad was nice, but he wasn't around much. He bounced from job to job, and got work outside the US to get away. When I was four and my sister was two he began an overseas affair with the woman who would later be my stepmom (she's awesome, by the way. We're close). My parents

disagreed about money (my mom refused to work any job, even when we were in financial trouble, because she wanted to be a full-time mom) and religion, although I never saw any open conflict between them, which I'm grateful for. My Dad left when I was nine, and he became the bad guy in my eyes.

My mom is an ENFJ and I'm an INTP.

I was born with a very high IQ and some special vulnerabilities. Not to mention that I was one of those "gender atypical" children who later realizes that they aren't straight. It was a recipe for conflict. When I was nine, my mom and I started to get into arguments, mostly about house cleaning or my "tone of voice" or my lack of "respect" for her. I was a very smart, very unusual kid. I needed explanations for her behavior, for her frequent bad moods. She just said that she should be obeyed, that she was the parent, that I can't talk to her like that etc.

Every Saturday was a hell for me and my sister because it was cleaning day, and she would be angry all day long. I spent all my time outdoors or reading to get away from her. I felt like her slave, I had all these theories about justice and children's rights. I daydreamed that she wasn't my real mother, that my real mom was a beautiful blonde woman who would take me away and teach me how to do girly stuff.

She was always angry about how messy the house was, how our family was constantly late for things. I don't know how many times she would assign us chores,

then forget about them, then yell at us weeks later for not doing them every day. It's funny because she idolizes the idea of a clean home, of being a mother. The house is covered with pictures of babies and mothers, she loves anything to do with mothers and children.

We never once had regular chores and we were never grounded-those things require consistent parenting over many days, and she was incapable of that. It was the constant arguing with her that made things so awful.

She would always have to have the last word. I would get upset and leave, and later she would come after me with more arguments about why she was right ("I just want to tell you one more thing").

When we argued, she told me over and over, in these exact words:

"You're a very selfish person."

"You think you're sooooo smart."

"You think we should all obey you"

"If you're so smart, I guess you should be the parent."

"You can be a real brat."

"We should just bow down to how smart you are."

"You are a [disrespectful, argumentative, hateful, mean, angry, uncaring, inconsiderate etc.] person."

When I really pushed her, when I was a real "brat", she would start raising her voice and being sarcastic. She'd say things like "Oh you want me to be happy all the time? Ok, I'll never be angry with you again" or "Oh forgive me, if it's that offensive to you, I'll never scold you again" or "Obviously you're so much smarter than I am, so I'll never correct you again. You should just be the parent because you know everything and I'm an idiot." "I'm just a monster, isn't that right? And you know everything"

Or one time "I'll just go about my work and SING because I'm so happy." (Then she actually started sweeping the floor and singing like "lalalala"). When I pushed her to the limit, she would yell or bite her lips to keep from yelling and her eyes would bulge out and her hands would get all jerky like she was trying to keep from grabbing me.

Then she would end the argument ("you will not speak to me like that!") and go away, or send me away, or a lot of times, just keep arguing. This was day in, day out.

I caught the worst of it, because I was older and just more rebellious than my sister I guess. We were sheltered from the world outside my mother's conservative family. All of them, including us, didn't watch anything except black and white movies and cartoons, because of their religious beliefs. We were both timid around people outside the family. Other adults often told us to "stop apologizing so much" or "don't be so worried".

In grade school and middle school, I had almost no friends. I was the tomboy that no one wanted to hang out with. There were lots of good things in my life though.

The most difficult part of the conflict with my mom is that she can seem so nice. She always gave me little presents, she doted on us when we were sick. She's always been so sappy and emotional about how much she loves us. It made me feel guilty and evil to be angry with her. She did everything for us basically, and rarely helped us to do things ourselves. She could never leave us alone, she was always "hovering" around.

If she saw me and my sister being happy without her, she would get in a bad mood about something, until then me and my sister got sad and angry too when we failed to cheer her up. Then she would be happy and try to cheer us up.

The really isolating thing for me was that she never showed any interest in my childish interests, like whales or dinosaurs or birdwatching or anything that wasn't HER basically. She rarely asked about my schoolwork or friends, or talked to me about what I liked. She still doesn't. Even when I was into her religion, and wanted to be a nun, she never talked with me about it. I always got the feeling that she was unhappy that I was so successful at school. She rarely taught us to do anything, or explained things to us. I've broken down crying when I've seen other parents do

things for their children that no one ever did for me, not once. She was basically a non-parent.

When I was 12 I didn't want to see my Dad because I wanted to spend more time at home (lord only knows why). My mom took my dad to court, trying to reduce or end our visits with him. The court decided that she was turning us against him, and ordered us to spend more time with him.

High school was fewer, but bigger arguments, about religion, about dating, about curfews, about politics. But most of all about our dog. I wanted her inside to be a real pet, but mom insisted "it" stay outside because it would get her house dirty. She's never liked animals.

From 16 on my life reads like a case history: Sexuality that was unconventional, or promiscuous, depending on your views. Drugs and alcohol, bulimia, physical violence toward others, cutting, depression, medication, shrinks, suicide wishes, "attitude problems" at school, horrible nightmares and night terrors. I graduated at the very top of my class, and went to college in another state on a government scholarship, so I could be away from my mom and her family. I even changed my name legally, all the while maintaining a strained relationship with my mom. I worked to put myself through school, and was totally financially independent, so she could never manipulate me with cars, phones, tuition etc. I had a terrible time my freshman year, but I never missed home.

I started having serious mental problems that year: drug-induced psychosis, panic attacks, more cutting, disorganization, paranoia. I thought I was becoming schizophrenic.

After accidentally missing my finals, I dropped out and my mom came to take me home. She was sympathetic and patient. She even let me smoke cigarettes, and never gave me a hard time about it. I got a shrink and he immediately diagnosed me as having Borderline Personality Disorder. At that point, I couldn't figure out how I got BPD since I had never been sexually abused by anyone. It never occurred to me that my mom was the abuser. I put myself in a hospital twice that summer, and was put on anti-psychotics. But I kept going, eventually started dating a nice girl, and my mom seemed resigned to it. We started getting in more fights though, about the dog, about nothing at all, about the boyfriend that I had later that year. (She's only liked one guy that I've dated. I've only dated good men. No abusive relationships). I can't tell you how many times she kicked me out of the house, and I had to go stay with friends until she calmed down. Maybe four or five times. She has locked me out of the house and frequently hung up on me.

One day she decided she had had enough of my "attitude", and tried to hit my face. I put up my hand to block her and she screamed "How DARE you try to stop me?" I will never forget it. She tried to hit me a few more times later, to "discipline" me and teach me "respect under her roof" etc. etc.

One time, I tried to stand in a doorway and block her way, so she

shoved me aside into the wall, hard. I took a picture of the big bruise I got so that I would never forget that no matter how many times she calls me and tells me she loves me and gives me presents, she can still be hateful. She lies also. Without meaning to.

I started having nightmares about her hitting me and yelling. I woke up screaming a lot. I'm 24 years old and I still have nightmares almost every week, mostly about her threatening me.

I had my first psychotic break when she was holding me in her arms after a nightmare: I thought she wasn't really my mom, but a demon. Sometimes I dream that I'm doing violent things to her.

She wants me to be a little girl still, to need her. She asked me to sit on her lap when I was nineteen. She makes me feel violated and I hate her. I have done everything possible to get away from her. She's put herself in my soul, crossed all my boundaries of self and I am still trying to get her out of me.

Until I was 22 and in therapy, I honestly believed that I was just a bad person: rebellious, egotistical, selfish, proud and evil. Only when my therapist(s) suggested that I had been abused by my mother did I come to see myself as anything other than a bad girl.

But I am healing: my life is very stable and happy, and I'm no longer BPD although I still struggle with

paranoia and depression. I still don't feel like someone who has been "abused". I don't feel like I've been abused the way other girls have been abused I guess, but the emotional abuse, and its effects on my life, are real. I talk with my mom and tell her I love her, but I don't.

Even when I told her I thought she had abused me, she has never admitted it or apologized. She never thinks she's wrong.

## **I was sexually abused by an uncle**

Hi there my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm from Brazil, so I'm sorry if my English is not perfect, but I'll try to make myself understood. I can't remember how I found your support group but... I'm glad I did.

I'm no teenager anymore, I'm 21, but I cut myself (do lots of self-harm) since I'm 12 or 13. My scars, I can't tell you how many I have so far... But my wrists, my chest and the top of my legs are all very very taken (occupied) by them. And I have suicidal thoughts since I'm 15 approximately... And I tried to kill myself June 30th this year.

Anyway... just telling you this things cause... I've never found, in almost 10 years, anyone who understands me at all... And I felt glad by reading your writing, so I knew someone would understand me.

I was sexually abused by an uncle when I was 10 or 11, and just the same way you wrote... maybe this was the very beginning of all this...

My parents didn't believed me and... forced me to live together with my uncle (who sexually abused me) since then. I felt guilty of what happened, I thought it was my fault. That he would never had done that if I were "normal".

Anyway... I really need some help though. Medicine just doesn't make me feel any better... Just like a zombie you know!

So if you can...answer me in any way... I would be very glad... I don't know who I could talk to when I want to self-harm myself just like Im feeling now...

Thanks 4 your attention.

## **I never really felt loved growing up**

I cut this morning at 2 am because things were simply too much.

Anyways, I am no stranger to abuse. Me and my friend (who also cuts) are in college right now. Winter break will be over soon enough, so we will be on our own, living our own lives and creating our own families. That's the day I have been looking forward to since forever.

When I was 8 my parents split up. Huge fights between mom and dad, lying in court, and unfairness to my brothers and I, etc. We once got locked in our rooms at my dad's for hours. No bathroom or water. My brothers and I had windows in a triangle shape and we passed notes and the little candy I had hidden in my room. I remember the hold my dad would put on us. It was awful. I also remember his now-wife-then-girlfriend throwing my brother into the corner and kicking him. Things I wish I never went through.

Dad came to see us less and less... and eventually, even with the court order, he'd only come for holidays, even though he lived 20 mins away. But I hated going there. My brother and I would run away from him and lock ourselves in the bathroom. Once we were 14, we had the say in if we wanted to go to his house. My oldest brother got out of it the quickest.

I never really felt loved growing up. My friends up the

street were more of a family to me than him. As I got older, nothing got better, except the fact that I didn't have to go to my dad's house, and I was big enough and old enough that he couldn't do anything. If we reported him though, we risked getting taken away from my mother.

I started cutting when I was a junior in high school. It wasn't a big thing at 1st, but then it got worse, and I was cutting every few days. Then near the end of the year my mom found out. She threatened to take me to the hospital if I didn't agree to see a therapist. So I agreed. But I never talked to the therapist about my cutting. I only went to see him twice before I made sure my schedule would conflict with our sessions - all because I hated him.

I didn't and don't have a good relationship with my mom. She doesn't listen. If I don't do what she asks, I am yelled at... yet if I do what she asks, I am still yelled at. And she constantly goes through my room so that I keep it clean, and I have to have password locks on my computer.

In the summer before senior year I cut less because it was getting harder to hide it. But when senior year came, I went back to it. My mom never knew that, but the family doctor knew I had cut. He asked once if I cut before my college check up and I lied and said no. I was cutting less, but he believed me. Actually he doesn't even say 'cutting'. He points to his wrist.

The same friend who is in college with me right now was like, "Try counseling. Just try it." So I went to some random workshops. At first I just wanted to see the inside of the place to make sure I felt safe, and then I started going. It's helped me a lot and I'd recommend it to anyone.

I have my good times and my bad times, but right now that's how it is. It also didn't help that I lost my grandma in April. It was a complete shock. The next week we were supposed to be at her house. So my mom couldn't help me with things at school, because she has been too busy dealing with estate crap with her brothers. Basically I've gotten left out. I have to listen to her crap, and if I ask her to stop telling me something about a family member, I get yelled at. But listening to it is no better.

I haven't told my therapist yet about my dad when I was younger. But I'm afraid to.

I've had my times where I wanted to die. I wanted to end it all. But I push through these thoughts. That's the easy way out. Instead, I have to fight and do the best I can. Soon enough, I will have my own life and I can control it and not have to deal with my mom and brothers and dad and family.

## **Moving away from her was the most positive change ever**

Hi again! I'm going great, thanks very much! I took a big leap this last month in fact! I moved into my bf's place after yet another fight with my mother! And this week has been the best in a long time! I have a new lease of life that I haven't had in years. I'm still in uni and things have been hectic but that's to be expected.

About my art, no my mom doesn't pay much attention to it. But it's not like I'm seeking approval from her anyway. I realised I don't need her :D

I'm kind of lucky that I was smart enough to realise getting away from her and breaking free from her control would be the best option. Moving out was a HUGE drama, she was saying some horrid things as I was getting my stuff. And for some reason I don't think she can accept that it was her that caused me to leave, which she did by asking to borrow another £150 after I had just given her £400 for her to pay her rent at the beginning of the week, and then yelling at me 'cause I didn't give it to her at 8:30 the next morning as I was still sleeping!

She keeps blaming my boyfriend for all of it too, saying things like "he's manipulating her into leaving me." And even still she's sending me abusive text messages calling me a "selfish bitch" as well as threatening to commit suicide. But one thing I have learned is to take her words with a pinch of salt. She will say something but not wholeheartedly mean it.

According to my cousin she hasn't stopped crying for days. So I know that inside herself she knows it was her own doing, but she's too cowardly to admit her mistakes.

Since I have moved out and proved to my myself that I am in control of my own life, and I wasn't the person my mom told me I was, I've never felt stronger as a person. I have decided to be happy with myself, to seek acceptance from those who value me, and it was the best decision I have ever made!

And sure! By all means you can use my mails, if they help others to feel more empowered to make a stand against abusive people like my mother.

I swear moving away from her was the most positive change I have ever made in my life. Only a few months ago I was too afraid to travel alone, I wouldn't go out, I was lethargic and unmotivated I just was horribly depressed and I was so timid.

I can only wish that my words could help other people in the same situation as me to also find the courage to take charge of their own lives!