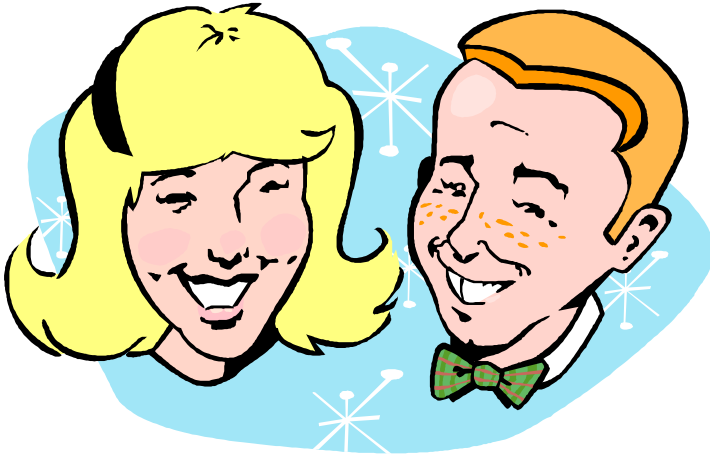


Booklet 4

Helps for Young People



17 Truths

Stressed Out

I'm Worried About You

17 Truths You Won't Learn from Ads

by Chris Lutes

1 You will never see a six-inch-tall man standing on top of a public telephone.

2 Your teeth will never look as perfect as the models' in Colgate ads.

3 A group of singing male dancers will never appear suddenly out of nowhere and start shampooing your hair.

4 No matter how dry your skin gets, you will never turn into an alligator or any other type of reptile.

5 Your love life will never significantly improve because of a breath mint.

6 You'll never be completely satisfied by eating a Snickers—or any other candy bar.

7 If you drive an SUV up a mountain, across a desert and into a crocodile-infested swamp, it will get dirty, it will get scratched and it will most likely get totalled.

8 What looks great on a fashion model usually looks pretty goofy on anybody else.

9 No matter how many Mountain Dews you guzzle, you won't be able to chase down a cheetah or leap the Grand Canyon in a single bound.

10 Your average house pet cannot open refrigerators, talk on the telephone or surf the Net.

11 Unlike the celebs you see in the "Got Milk" ads, you will never look hip with white stuff spread across your upper lip.

12 Cold cuts and sandwiches do not enjoy being eaten, nor are they waiting for you to open the refrigerator door so they can talk to you.

13 When you put on Calvin Klein jeans, your hair won't suddenly look like it's being blown to one side of your head.

14 Skittles and M&Ms are never as large and colourful as they look in ads.

15 Mermaids do not drink Evian—or any other brand of bottled water.

16 Fast-food hamburgers are never as big and juicy as they look in a McDonald's or Burger King commercial.

17 God will never love you more because you're wearing Tommy Hilfiger. And he will never love you less if Clearasil hasn't made you zit-free. He thinks you're beautiful, and he loves you just the way you are!

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Baby dinosaurs fit into 'small' eggs.
Juvenile dinosaurs fit on a HUGE ark!



Even the largest full-grown creatures were once small!

Stressed Out!

Christy Simon

I had a big headache. Not one of those measly, I'll-take-a-Tylenol-and-it'll-go-away ones. This was a gigantic headache. So bad it hurt to think.

Not that I would have been able to think anyway. My brain felt frazzled, like it would burst if I tried to cram in one more geometric theorem or atomic number. Late-night study sessions had begun to take their toll on my eyes, which refused to stay open. I couldn't stand the thought of getting up and doing the same old thing-eat, study, work, sleep-again the next day. *How in the world did I get so stressed out?* I wondered as I collapsed on my bed in total exhaustion. A peek at the calendar added to my despair. *It's only Monday. I'm not sure I'll be able to make it through this week, much less this semester.*

What I was experiencing was more than a case of the winter blues. I was burned out-to a crisp. Thankfully, this condition wasn't permanent. Life eventually got better. My algebra teacher, who for three long weeks dished out double homework assignments, suddenly vowed to lighten up on the daily workload. In time, I caught myself actually smiling at my favourite newspaper cartoon-something I hadn't been able to do for a long time. Then there was that encouraging word from a favourite teacher.

Those sorts of things helped me get through it all. But I did other things, too. Like getting a little more sleep. I also talked to my friends and family about my feelings and frustrations. They listened to me. And they prayed for me.

Now, when I find myself sensing the beginnings of burnout, I stop and ask myself some tough but important questions: Am I over-committed? Do I need to say "no" to certain activities? Have I become spiritually lazy, forgetting to spend regular time with God? Am I getting enough exercise? Am I doing fun things to release pent-up tension? Have I been stuffing my feelings deep inside? Thinking through these kinds of questions helps keep me from total burnout.

Of course, despite my best efforts to prevent future problems, there's no guarantee I'll never burn out again. Until someone decides to scrap pop quizzes, final exams, and all of life's other hassles, stress is bound to be a part of my life. Even so, I now have a few important questions to ask myself *before* my brain becomes burnt toast.

Christy occasionally relieves a little stress with a double dip of mint chocolate chip ice cream.

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January/February 1997. Page 58



Hey Man, I'm Worried About You

One friend, one e-mail, one life-changing message.

fiction by Elesha Coffman

Hey Jared,

Thought I'd shoot you an e-mail about some stuff I've wanted to say for a long time, but I hadn't figured out how to say it. Please read to the end before deleting, OK?

It might be kinda dorky to mention it, but I was thinking lately about how you were the first person I met when we moved here. Other kids on the street just ignored me, but you let me play with your trucks in the driveway while my parents unloaded boxes.

After a week, you'd introduced me to everyone on the block. You told them I was your new friend and they'd better be nice to me or else. I thought you were great. I don't think I ever thanked you for being my best friend back then. Maybe it's a little late, but thanks.

There's a point to all this. Really. And it's not just that I'm getting all sappy about this being our last year in high school. Yeah, our senior year starts next week, and, yeah, it will be hard to say goodbye to everyone. But I needed to e-mail you for another reason.

Since we've been in high school, we haven't been as tight as we were when we were kids. There's nothing wrong with that. We're into different things, and we've got our own groups now. But, some of the people you hang with—I mean, I hate to sound like your mom—but they seem like bad news.

I know when we both were in elementary school it was cool to hang around James and Scott. I mean, they were big eighth graders, right? They didn't seem so bad. But then I remembered when they tried to get us to smoke some weed with them. Scared us to death. Now I see you hanging out with them behind the baseball fields, smoking and drinking. I don't know if James is really into crystal meth, like some people say, but just what I've seen is bad enough. Those guys are three years out of high school, and they can't come up with anything better to do than stand around and harass the girls on the softball team? They might end up in jail (again, for James).

I also know some of the guys in your group brag about sleeping with their girlfriends. I've even heard some stuff about you and Mindy. I hope it's not true. Call me weird and uncool, but I believe sex is for married people only. I just see too many people from school hurt by all the mixed-up emotions caused by having sex. I don't want to see you hurt like that.

I can imagine that you're thinking right now, *Who does he think he is to tell me how to live my life? He has no idea what it's like to be me.* And you're totally right. I have this family that must seem like it has it all together. You have a step-dad who hates you. I'm

sure you're also still frustrated about how much your mom drinks. You have more hassles than I can even imagine. Even though life's been hard on you, there are some things I kind of envy about you.

You're an awesome skateboarder, of course, and the stuff you did for art class last year was incredible. And you're so good with people. When you're in a group, everybody listens to you. You're like a magnet. I know you do a lot of stuff I couldn't begin to do. I remember even thinking in sixth grade that you'd end up more successful than me.

I guess that's what I worry about—that you'll never find out how good you could be at business, or professional skateboarding, or art design, or whatever you want to do these days, because you're going to get stuck in this town like James and Scott. You used to want to get out of here as bad as I do. Does that still matter to you? I hope it does.

It probably sounds like I'm judging you and your friends. Maybe I am. I know it's a problem for me. I'll never forget when we were arguing about something freshman year, and you said to me, "It's like you think you're God." If I ever think that, or if it even seems that I think that, I'm so wrong. And if some stuff I did ever made you want to stay far away from God, I'm so, so sorry.

I've talked to you about God before, but I don't think I ever did a good job. I probably won't now, either, but I'm going to give it another shot. God doesn't sit up in heaven and give out A's to people who seem to have it all together and F's to everybody else. He doesn't want to ruin anyone's life, and he doesn't want to send anyone to hell. He's always loved you.

What God wants is for people to love him back. He wants it so bad that he sent his son, Jesus, into the world to die a gruesome death so that you and I (and anyone else) could be totally forgiven for all the bad stuff we've ever done. You know, like in that *Passion* movie. And the cool thing—he came back to life and proved he was who he said he was! Anyone who believes that really happened, and thanks God that it happened, has a chance to start all over.

I tell you all of that not because I get some prize at church for "telling people about God," but because I really believe it's true. I really believe that my life wouldn't be worth living without God. Anything I do right is because of him. Anything good that happens in my life is because of him.

I would really like to talk with you about this stuff. We could get some pizza or go camping, or whatever you want to do. Or, if you never want to talk to me about this or anything else ever again, I'll feel awful, but I'll understand. It makes me sick to think I might have ruined our friendship with this one stupid e-mail. But I finally decided it would make me more sick if I went off to college next fall and didn't say what I've said here.

I'm sorry I took up so much of your time, and I'm even more sorry if I sound like a stuck-up jerk. I probably am a stuck-up jerk. But I'm also, I hope, a friend who cares.

Michael

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