
Dragondale



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DRAGONDALE #3

Finally, holidays are upon us, and the hope for a better year looms through the crisp air. Explore and educate yourself on the holiday Hanukkah if you don't already know about it, get into the spirit with a Christmas playlist, and settle down with Marlenni and Dazhay about a woman who overcame severe domestic abuse and jail-time. We also have articles covering holiday grief, Epiphany dissociation, and new information on clubs! Curl up with your favorite warm drink and enjoy!

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Suicide hotline-800-273-8255 **Crisis text line**- text HOME to 741741
Trans hotline- 877-565-8860
Colorado crisis services-
1-844-493-8255 or Text "TALK" to 38255

Hanukkah

By: Victoria O'Neal

What Hanukkah is known for:

Hanukkah is known as a Jewish holiday that celebrates the victory of the Maccabees over the larger Syrian army. Maccabees, also spelled Machabees, (flourished 2nd century bce, Palestine), is the priestly family of Jews who organized a successful rebellion against the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV and reconsecrated the defiled Temple of Jerusalem. The Hebrew word hanukkah means rededication. The hanukiah (or Hanukkah menorah) is a candle holder, an important Hanukkah symbol. The candle represents the seven lamps allude to the branches of human knowledge, represented by the six lamps inclined inwards toward. This creates a symbolically guided by the light of God represented by the central lamp. The menorah also symbolizes the creation in seven days, with the center light representing the Sabbath. On each of the eight nights, a candle is lit in a special menorah (candelabra) called a 'hanukiah'. There is a special ninth candle called the 'shammash' or servant candle which is used to light the other candles.

to have three prayers named Transliteration: Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, shehecheyanu, v'kiyimanu, v'higiyanu la'zman hazeh.

When did Hanukkah start:

Hanukiah started According to I Maccabees, the celebration of Hanukkah was instituted by Judas Maccabeus in 165 BCE to celebrate his victory over Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Seleucid king who had invaded Judaea, tried to Hellenize the Jews, and desecrated the Second Temple in Jerusalem.

Interesting Facts:

1. What is Hanukkah? The word Hanukkah means "dedication."-The holiday commemorates the triumph of a band of rebel Jews known as the Maccabees in reclaiming their temple from the Greek-Syrians.
2. Hanukkah lasts for eight nights, to commemorate how long the holy light burned-The temple required a holy light to burn inside at all times, but the Jews had only enough oil for one night. Incredibly, the light burned for eight days.

3. A Menorah is lit each night of the holiday-A Menorah is a candelabra with nine candles. Four on either side and a candle in the center intended to light all the others. This is known as the shamash and it sits higher than (or somehow apart from) the other candles

4. Gifts were not always given for Hanukkah-It used to be a tradition for people to give money to one another for Hanukkah. But as Christmas became more popular, more and more Jewish people began giving gifts instead.

5. Hanukkah dishes are fried for a reason-Latkes, sufganiyot (jelly doughnuts), apple fritters, kugel-when you think of the food served at Hanukkah most of them are fried. This isn't a coincidence, people fry their food in oil for Hanukkah as a symbol for the miracle oil that burned for eight nights straight

6. Grand Army Plaza in New York Reportedly Has the Largest Menorah in the World-This year you can see the lighting of the 32 feet high and 4,000 pound Menorah every night from December 2nd to December 9th

7. Hanukkah is not the most important Jewish holiday-Jewish holidays like Passover and Rosh Hashanah are actually much more significant to the religion.



8. Harry Truman was the first president to celebrate Hanukkah at the White House-In 1951, he accepted a Menorah as a gift from the Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben Gurion.

9. There is no "wrong" way to spell Hanukkah-You may have seen the holiday spelled like Hanukkah, Hannuka, or Chanukah; the list goes on. The most common version is Hanukkah, but all of the spellings are actually accurate. Because there is no correct way to directly translate Hebrew sounds to English, it could be spelled in a variety of different ways, each equally correct.

10. The famous dreidel, or four-sided spinning top, was invented as a distraction-The Greek-Syrians had outlawed Jewish studies, so the Jews spun dreidels to pretend they were merely playing games while they engaged with their scripture.



11. Over 17.5 million jelly donuts are consumed in Israel throughout Hanukkah-To celebrate the miracle of the oil lasting eight days, many of the holiday's festive foods are prepared in oil, particularly: the family favorite sufganiyot (or jelly donuts)

12. The word "Hanukkah" comes from the Hebrew word "Hinuch," or "to teach."-Jews follow a tradition of incentivizing their children to learn Torah on this holiday by gifting them gelt, or golden-wrapped chocolates that resemble coins. Gelt can also be won in a game of Dreidel!

Christmas Playlist

By: Dazhay Aguirre

As we approach the holidays, Listed below are songs that will put you into the Christmas spirit as well as I have a Spotify playlist with all of the songs [here](#).

- Winter Wonderland* - Michael Bublé
- Last Christmas* - Wham!
- Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!* - Dean Martin
- Mary, Did You Know?*-Pentatonix
- It's the Most Wonderful Time of The Year* - Andy Williams
- Little Saint Nick*-The Beach Boys
- Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* - Gene Autry
- Sleigh Ride* - The Ronettes
- Jingle Bell Rock* - Bobby Helms
- Jingle Bells* - Frank Sinatra
- Frosty The Snowman* - Michael Bublé
- Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree* - Brenda Lee
- Here Comes Santa Claus* - Gene Autry
- Christmas Time is Here* - Vince Guaraldi Trio
- Baby, It's Cold Outside* - Dean Martin
- It's Beginning to Look a lot Like Christmas* - Bing Crosby

-Feliz Navidad - Boney M.

-Deck the Halls - Pentatonix

-Santa Claus is Comin' to Town - Michael Bublé

-Mistletoe - Justin Bieber

Santa Tell Me - Ariana Grande

-All I Want For Christmas Is You - Mariah Carey

-It's Beginning To Look a Lot Like Christmas - Michael Bublé

-Mele Kalikimaka - Bing Crosby

Game Review!

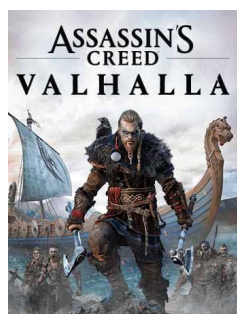
By: Gabe Duke

If you're anything like me then you're a massive fan of video games, sometimes you just need help finding a new game to play, or maybe you need to hear a second opinion on a game you are excited for. Hi I'm Gabe I am the assistant editor for the Dragondale newspaper, and I am obsessed with video games. I have done video game streaming, competitive gaming, and played practically every genre known to man. But even I still feel that I have a lack of knowledge of video games and haven't played as much as I feel I should, I constantly look for new games, perspectives, and information. That being the case I often look to video game reviews to see if I should play a new game or not.

Game reviewers are a special breed of people within the community that help connect gamers, they help bring new people into their favorite games, and help hype up games. These people are the people behind the numbers shown on Google; the percentage of likes or dislikes or the one to 10 rating games and these numbers help persuade gamers.

My goal for this article is to introduce possibly a monthly recurring series of me recommending either many different games of the month or games I recommend.

Starting off this month, I will be reviewing Assassin's Creed Valhalla: a game that has seen a fair amount of hype and that I've played a pretty moderate amount. Assassin's Creed Valhalla is the latest entry into the Assassin's Creed series. Valhalla really changes the theme in the gameplay that is customary to the series and breaks some boundaries that were previously set by Odyssey and Origins. In my opinion, this game provides a pretty fluent and solid story experience.



You play as a Eivore, a male or female Viking who is moving with the remnants of their clan from Norway to England. You and your clan will create a settlement and fight for alliances across Britannia. I was originally attracted to this game because I am fascinated by Vikings, Viking society, and culture. But I think what really got my attention was teasers of a similar combat system that was seen in Assassin's Creed Odyssey, a game I enjoyed and completed. Another contributing factor that helped my interest in this game was a settlement building system, now being a strategy game enthusiast my hype for this game exponentially increased. I was skeptical about coming into Assassin's Creed Valhalla, although the game and its systems looked fun and intriguing, I was primarily worried that the game was being too hyped up and that it wouldn't provide a riveting experience or entertaining gameplay. This was likely due to the mixed comments I read from other game reviewers and fans. I was even more worried that this bias that was building within my brain would harm my gaming experience or my general thoughts on this game. This has happened previously when I have tried reviewing games, a prominent example was a couple of months ago when I played Ghost of Tsushima.

Despite these biases, I found that this game had a lot of story building flaws, especially within the introductory/prologue section of the game. I was somewhat disappointed with how shaky the story was, but I found myself still having a blast, the core gameplay was very enjoyable. Not only that but my issues with the story started to fix themselves throughout my playthrough, I started to feel involved within the story, and each character and arc fascinated me. The best analogy I could explain how I felt was similar to a tv show; where the pilot episode was rough and hard to get through, but throughout the season it gets progressively better. During the 'rising action' portion of the story, I found some of my most intriguing arcs and gameplay situations. Although I found myself enjoying the first 30 hours of this game, I found that my next 17 were starting to make me lose interest. The problem I came across, and more specifically the problem that thwarted my excitement for playing, ended up coming at 40%- 44% of my gameplay. More specifically post-climax 'declining action' if you will. Now you might be thinking 40%-44% is not a lot, that's not even half; you wouldn't be wrong but at the same time, you are. There is so much to do in Valhalla, which initially I was like "Woah I'll have a lot to do, so much content, I shouldn't be bored soon!".

I got to a point in the story where it didn't guide you through what you're supposed to do, you were just supposed to kind of free ball it until you hit a certain point, and the game didn't make it clear to what that point was. At this point, it gave me a few options for alliances I could pursue next, storylines or arcs I can pursue, but no main storyline. So me being a semi-masochistic collector person who likes the idea of going for a hundred percent in a game, I went through and tried to get all the collectibles. This was kind of a broad statement, there are mini-challenges, side quests, world events, and collectibles. Collectibles can be anything from tattoo designs, money, or resources you can use to upgrade your weapons, really just anything that can help change the appearance of your settlement or character. As for world events and side quests, these can be new arcs with small-time side characters, I found that these side characters in these world events were quite funny and entertaining. But overall there was just too much to do there's too much to collect, and without purpose, it makes continuing playing difficult. When you are just aimlessly walking around exploring finding hidden treasures, or hitting your Saxon enemies with your axe, or doing these little world events, gets repetitive.

Although for the last paragraph I have explained my frustrations, I love this game it's very enjoyable, the combat felt so satisfying. The combat felt like having the perfect amount of skill but also combat readiness like there are a lot of opportunities for you need to dodge or Parry or attack at a certain time and that's where those that skill comes out but there's also times worth like if you will level up your character a little bit level up your gear you will have a much easier time. That system melds the casual and more serious audiences, covering the skill aspects that can really punish you helps keep casual players playing. I think that's a pretty positive system in my opinion. And to add to that system, the combat revolves around the unique gear sets you create, gained from the limited gear you are given throughout the game. The gear system is good, unlike odyssey you are not given a piece of gear every five seconds, you are encouraged to the side content to upgrade and get better gear, or gear that plays to your strengths and the weaknesses of your enemies. The game rewards you with a gear system that involves no selling of loot, making each piece of gear a unique experience, incentivizing player creativity.

Overall Assassin's Creed Valhalla was a good change-of-pace even having a style bred from Odyssey, it felt like a completely different experience. It's not a carbon copy of odyssey, it feels like its own combat system as a combat system any equipment system that rewards leveling gear and doing that side stuff, it's a game that even fixed the flaws within the systems from its predecessor. I would recommend Valhalla but before you get into the game please understand that it's not like the original Assassin's Creed games it's not a very assassination stealth-heavy game, the game is way more action and melee combat-oriented. Which despite popular opinion isn't a bad direction for this game, many people cling to the idea that this game should be assassinations, stealth, and everything that the series has really trademarked, but simply this game isn't like the rest of the games. This game is a solid action RPG, and I personally believe it is a step in the right direction to break the boundaries of the assassin's creed series.



If I had to rate this game from a number 1-10, I would rate it a 7.5/10. The game is solid, enjoyable, but the repetitiveness, grinding, shaky story, and at times poor direction of the plot, really loses points in my end score.

Next month's review: Cyberpunk 2077

Looking for a new game to play?

Here are 5 games I personally recommend (playable on pc):

- Final Fantasy 14 Online
- Total War: Shogun 2
- Mount and Blade 2 Bannerlord
- Team Fortress 2
- Star Wars Jedi Fallen Order

if you would like me to review a specific game, please contact me at my email: 718366@dpsk12.net

Personal Articles: Even if you are not in the newspaper, but want to submit your writing to the current month's newspaper, you are more than welcome to! Whether it be a poem, a short story, a movie analysis, etc. you will always be welcome to submit an article to the paper. If you choose to contact Gene Knapp at 740261@dpsk12.net, or Gabe Duke at 718366@dpsk12.net, or Ms. Hempe at ahempe@dpsk12.net and they will get back to you!

Art Gallery: If you want to submit art that you have done to the newspaper's very own art gallery, feel free to! Use Gene's contact information up above to submit. The only requirements are your first and last name and grade. We will not accept any NSFW art, gore art, or heavily triggering art. Teachers, you can also submit students' artwork into the paper if you so choose.

Suggestions: If you have any suggestions on how we could improve the newspaper, what you want to see, or just ideas for cool stories, feel free to tell us.

Events: In a club or class that is doing a remote event? Email Gene about it! He will put it in the paper and advertise it!

Afterschool Clubs

Dragon Crew

4:00-5:30 on Tuesdays

Mr. Starn: wstarn@dpsk12.net

Culinary Club

December 17th, 4:00 pm

Mrs. Burke:

Krtistie_burke@dpsk12.net

Newspaper club:

Tuesdays or Thursdays at 3:50 pm

Gene Knapp: 740261@dpsk12.net

Ms. Hempe: ahempe@dpsk12.net

classroom code: ryks3xm

MSU tutoring:

Monday-Friday 4:00-6:00 pm

Classroom code: alhp65y

Kemba Smith

**By: Marlenni Oritz-Perez and
Dazhay Aguirre**

*TRIGGER WARNING: TALKS ABOUT
SEVERE DOMESTIC ABUSE*

Introduction

[Kemba Smith Biography](#)

Kemba Smith grew up in Richmond, Virginia as an only child. Currently, at the age of 49, she has experienced various challenges during her young adult years. She was sentenced to 24 years and six months in prison to use and distribute cocaine, lying to authorities, and other conspiracy charges. Through being pardoned by President Clinton, she only spent six years in federal prison. What led her to jail? Why was she released from her full sentence? Moreover, what is she doing today to reform and help younger generations and understand her mistake?

Kemba's Relationship With Peter Hall

As Kemba started settling down in school, she and her friends had begun to lose focus on their priorities, which were supposed to be school and getting good grades. Peter was a popular UpperClassmen who attended Hampton University with Kemba. She was in love with him. She felt confident that someone famous was talking to her and interested in her, even if he would end up taking advantage of her.

Peter was controlling and manipulative. Soon it progressed to him becoming an abuser. Once he used physical abuse, she was shocked as she thought he was going to kill her. He beat her and strangled her to the point where her blood vessels had popped all over. The more he abused, the more he sold drugs, and once he had killed his best friend, her love for Peter had turned into fear. She was scared in general of Peter because of how he was (abusive) and because he took his best friend's life. She traveled with him from state to state until they arrived in Seattle, WA, and she chose to go back home as she was pregnant with her son Armani. What led her to serve time in prison, and her time in prison Kemba was a sophomore at Hampton University in Virginia. This occurred during the 1990s when she became involved in a relationship with Peter Hall. During this relationship, Peter Hall created a business amongst the distribution of drugs, and soon after, he began to use Kemba in his business. Making her rent space for drug storage, bailing him out of jail, and carrying money for him. Kemba followed Peter in fear of his abusive tendencies towards her. Although she never once handled these drugs, she was charged with trafficking 255 kilograms of crack cocaine.

During her case, she had many different kinds of people involved; one doctor testified that she was a classic victim of battered woman's syndrome (Battered woman syndrome is a pattern of signs and symptoms displayed by a woman who has suffered persistent intimate partner violence unable to break from their abuser). But Federal District Judge Richard B. Kellam said, "I think there isn't a soul alive that can understand how any woman or girl would permit some man to beat on her and then continue to live with him and to love him." (Source: [Kemba Smith Freed](#)) The judge decided and sentenced her to 24 years and six months in prison. The NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) Legal Defense and Educational Fund took her case because her conviction was more significant than the average state sentence for murder or voluntary manslaughter.



Many took her case and overlooked it. After giving birth to her son, she was forced to the bed with her hands and feet handcuffed. At this moment, a U.S. marshal commented and told her, "If you were white you wouldn't be going through this." Ultimately, the severity of her case was atrocious. [Steve Schell](#) states, "Under mandatory sentencing, if you are found to have possessed or distributed a specific amount of a particular substance, you will serve a legislatively-mandated number of years. Regardless of the circumstances of your crime, your character, or any other mitigating factors. The judge has zero discretion and must impose whatever sentence the legislature requires. Conspiracy laws are even worse. People who sell even small quantities of drugs can wind up with extreme prison sentences under mandatory sentencing. But under conspiracy laws, even those who don't sell drugs but who merely have a bad fortune, or judgment, to be associated with people who do, can wind up with those same sentences." she was promised 24 months and then being able to get out and unite with her family. Still, because of the circumstances of her crimes and the speculations, she was sentenced to 24 years. Word started to get out through many newspapers, media, and magazines.

Support arose from people around the world. " [After the Emerge article](#). People and organizations began to take notice – even those that initially ignored the Smiths. Although publicity regarding the case was increasing, Smith's time behind bars remained challenging." Her parents took most of the tragic risks, from retiring and quitting jobs to file for bankruptcy, all for speaking about Kemba's case and the injustice in the sentences. Elaine Jones had gotten an interest in her case and provided help free of cost. With that, she was able to get a presidential pardon by December 2000. Just three days before Christmas, Kemba Pradia Smith "walked out of prison a free woman--and she has President Clinton to thank for it. [Kemba was among 62 men and women](#) who were granted clemency, pardoned, or had their sentences commuted by the President as he prepares to leave office in January."

Once She Was Released From Prison

Since Kemba's release, she has gotten more into advocacy and the criminal justice system. Along with that, she takes responsibility for the crime because she realizes whom she had associated herself with and how she could have avoided going to prison by not being so invested in those friendships and relationships. After she was released from prison, she had to learn how to trust again.



She had also begun attending counseling and finding relief because she was able to understand herself, understand how to create boundaries, make sure she does not repeat history, and make sure she does not give in to her insecurities. She had also realized that self-confidence was crucial for how she learned to love herself (as well as a marching band that she participated in, in high school). Now that she is out, she mentioned that she had helped her with her journey, and dealing with everything she went through was her faith in God.

Her Takeaways After the Situation

Once Kemba was released from prison, she had many takeaways and lessons that she had learned. If it were not for this experience, she never would have realized that if she had valued herself the way she knows how to now, she would have known to stop associating herself with the "popular" students, and she would not have progressed the relationship with Peter.

She also had learned to pick friends/relationships cautiously and set boundaries amongst others, which had led her to associate herself with students who prioritized school once she got out of prison and went back to college.

Kemba's Family Life

While Kemba was in prison, her son Armani lived with her parents until she was released, and he was six years of age. Her son had to see his mother with handcuffs for just about every holiday for six years as he and Kemba's parents chose to visit her instead of the rest of the family. As Kemba's son Armani grew older, she realized that she did not want to demonize his father Peter and make him out to be a total monster so her son can be a better man than he was. While he was in high school, he had introduced her to his peers/teachers, as they had reached out to her, as well as her son wanted her to speak, so she could talk to his peers as they could do better and learn from her story. As for her 10-year-old daughter Phoenix, she is doing well, and Kemba wants to be fully transparent with her now that she is getting older. While everything with her case was going on, her father was publicly speaking about her ordeal, and he lost his job for it, which was a sacrifice. She says that the one thing that she regrets was what she had put her parents through during this time.

After she came home from Seattle 7 months pregnant, her parents were welcoming to her and encouraged her to turn herself in, which she did. If it were not for her parents, her son would have been put into the Social Justice system as she had him while being sent to prison.

Kemba's Help With Identifying Physical Abuse

While conversing and learning more about Kemba, she had mentioned some ideas on how to identify someone going through abuse. She mentioned that it is essential to talk about everything with children/parents, even if it may be uncomfortable. She had also noted that in order to overcome domestic violence, we must use our voices and learn from each other. Another thing is that "systems should be empathetic and see the human element in all of us" so we need to continue to push forward and recognize the ugly to be able to improve and overcome things as well as not repeat history. In order to recognize if someone is being abused, she had said that some signs of a victim are the person/child being more reserved(to themselves), behaviors change such as distance from family, not wanting to share/have the same or regular conversations, the friends start disappearing and are consumed with the one person(their abuser), they lose focus with goals/school, seeming depressed all around.

To help this person, the person must get the right exit from abusive relationships to be safely taken out of it.

[If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse, we highly encourage you to report it immediately.]

Resources For Reporting:

Call 1-800-799-SAFE(7233)

Call the Police (911)

<https://www.thehotline.org/>

If anyone wants to learn about more stories similar to Kemba's, visit <https://jlusa.org/>

If you want to get in contact with Kemba to learn more, email:

kemba@kembasmithfoundation.org

Learn More About Domestic Violence:

<https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/what-is-domestic-abuse>

<https://centerforfamilyjustice.org/faq/domestic-violence/>

<https://ncadv.org/learn-more>

Three Kings Day

By: Alberto Arroyo-Martinez

Three Kings day, also known as Epiphany, is a Christian feast day that celebrates the revelation of God incarnate as Jesus Christ. In Western Christianity, the feast commemorates the visit of the Magi to the Christ Child, and thus

Jesus' physical manifestation to the Gentiles (people who are not Jewish). Therefore it is sometimes called Three Kings' Day, and in some traditions celebrated as a 'Little Christmas'. Eastern Christians, on the other hand, commemorate the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River, seen as his manifestation to the world as the Son of God. The spot marked by Qasr el Yahud in the West Bank, and Al-Maghtas in Jordan on the east bank, is considered to be the original site of the baptism of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist.

History

Epiphany originated in the Greek-speaking eastern half of the Roman Empire as a feast to honor the baptism of Jesus. Clement of Alexandria wrote, "But the followers of [the early Christian Gnostic religious teacher] Basilides celebrate the day of His Baptism too, spending the previous night in readings. And they say that it was the 15th of the month Tybi of the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar. And some say that it was observed on the 11th of the same month." The Egyptian dates given correspond to January 6th and 10th.

Epiphany Season

In some Churches, the feast of the Epiphany initiates the Epiphany season, also known as Epiphanytide. In Advent 2000, the Church of England,

Mother Church of the Anglican Communion, introduced into its liturgy an optional Epiphany season by approving the Common Worship series of services as an alternative to those in the Book of Common Prayer, which remains the Church's normative liturgy and in which no such liturgical season appears. An official publication of the Church of England states: "The Christmas season is often celebrated for twelve days, ending with the Epiphany. Contemporary use has sought to express an alternative tradition, in which Christmas lasts for a full forty days, ending with the Feast of the Presentation on 2 February. It presents the latter part of this period as the Epiphany season, comprising the Sundays of Epiphany and ending "only with the Feast of the Presentation".

Epiphany in different Christian Traditions

Epiphany is celebrated by both the Eastern and Western Churches, but a major difference between them is precise which events the feast commemorates. For Western Christians, the feast primarily commemorates the coming of the Magi, with only a minor reference to the baptism of Jesus and the miracle at the Wedding at Cana.

Eastern churches celebrate the Baptism of Christ in Jordan. In both traditions, the essence of the feast is the same: the manifestation of Christ to the world, and the Mystery of the Incarnation. The miracle at the Wedding at Cana is also celebrated during Epiphany as a first manifestation of Christ's public life.



Living With Dissociation

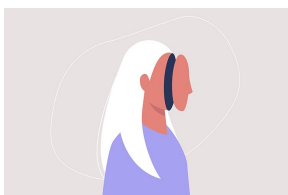
By: Sophia Porreca

Do you ever feel like you're not real and the moment your living doesn't exist? Do you convince yourself that you simply don't exist, that everything is an illusion? This is an example of dissociating. Everyone dissociates from time to time such as daydreaming or zoning out; It's a way to keep the mind creative and function but there are people who dissociate to the point where the line of reality and illusion begin to become blurred. To the point where it can cloud your perception as well as your senses. Imagine you were at the train station and as soon as you board the train, things start to feel off and your mind starts obsessing about theories that you're in a simulation or that

reality is a trick. Your body becomes a shell while your mind floats away shifting into your own 'world' and before you know it you've made it to your destination. Suddenly your back in your body and you wonder how you got to your destination when you were floating around in your own thoughts just a minute ago. What happens a lot of the time when someone dissociates is their body goes on autopilot and once you go back to your senses you can become triggered and agitated due to the disconnection.

What causes someone to dissociate? Dissociation is caused by uncomfortable trauma or traumas. Dissociation is a way to cope with trauma by keeping difficult memories buried down so as to not be reminded of them. This can be helpful but difficult. Symptoms of dissociation can impact someone's life greatly and can go to the extent where the mind creates different personalities within themselves-hence Dissociative Identity Disorder-but that's a topic for another time.

While dissociation is uncomfortable, it's not as suffocating as anxiety or depression but some argue it is more dangerous.



When you dissociate it can often feel like you're in a nightmare yet you're actually still conscious. There can be a feeling of being watched, intense flashbacks, and a mild form of hallucination. This can lead to self-destructive behavior and/or a panicked mindset. People who struggle with dissociation might explain their mind as a prison to be in with no real escape. Due to the endless disconnect from reality, your mind could lead the imagination to go wild.

How do people cope with dissociating? If symptoms of dissociation occur more than once a day, it's recommended to seek professional help. That way you can learn healthy grounding skills such as art, sensory activities, and many more, it's a trial and error process of finding what is right for you. Overall dissociation is a complicated subject that is very hard to explain even with the knowledge we have on the matter. If you know someone who struggles with dissociation please be mindful around them and be a source of calmness, security, and stability. If you wish to learn more about dissociation this link [Dissociation and dissociative identity disorder \(DID\)](#) has lots of information and resources for you to access.

Emotional Well-being and Growth mindset

By: Marlenni Oritz-Perez

In this article, various examples of both wellbeing and growth mindset will be discussed. The following topics addressed include, what is emotional wellbeing? What are some essential factors to keep in mind when maintaining your mental state and emotional health intact? What is a growth mindset? How does a growth mindset help us as people develop to make better choices in life?

What is emotional wellbeing, and what are some essential factors to keep in mind when maintaining your mental state and emotional health intact?

Emotional wellbeing refers to the connection your mind and body have. Through that connection comes cause and affects. If you are emotionally unstable, you are prone to be physically erratic. When basing off emotional wellbeing, you are putting to practice mindfulness or awareness. In other words, you are making the emotions that get directed to your brain and around your body be shown and connecting further to your consciousness. Being emotionally well leads to a happier and more blissful life and allows you to attain your full potential.

As human beings and as people, we face challenges from day to day, but the purpose of emotional wellbeing is knowing how to cope with the challenges. By having emotional and physical awareness, you can embrace the goodness in a situation and find more positive solutions.

Having negative emotional feelings can lead to instability, influencing further adverse, and even physical effects. Some essential factors when working with emotional wellbeing involve the idea of personal self-reflection. By reflecting on yourself, you can alter your mind. You can determine life purpose, the amount of gratitude you hold, and how you treat others in your life. Maintaining a sense of well-being in our everyday lives can relate to our daily routines' positive and harmful activities. "Good emotional health leads to better physical health prevents diseases, and makes it possible to enjoy life and be happier. In this way, one can become a "medicine person" through mirror neurons, leading to empathy and fire to imitate others' emotions. Mirror neurons make people feel good when they are positive, cheerful, and motivational. At the other extreme are the so-called "toxic people," who make others around them feel bad" (source: [Wikipedia](#)); negative emotions and negative thoughts can contribute or lead to depression and mental challenges later in life.



What is the growth mindset?

While many assume growth mindsets are easy and obtainable, they may confuse them for 'praising and rewarding,' having a 'positive outlook towards things,' and 'thinking positively good things will happen.' Even when trying to correct these mistakes, we are still having something known as a 'Fixed Mindset.' We face challenges daily, some of them relying on the critical idea of criticism and comparison. "We can easily fall into insecurity or defensiveness, a response that inhibits growth. Our work environments, too, can be full of fixed-mindset triggers. A company that plays the talent game makes it harder for people to practice growth-mindset thinking and behavior, such as sharing information, collaborating, innovating, seeking feedback, or admitting errors." (source: [Harvard Business Review](#)) What is a growth mindset? A growth mindset is simply the belief that our necessary abilities can be developed and improved through dedication and hard work. It is just that without a growth mindset, we do not exert the imperative effort and so we remain perpetually stuck.

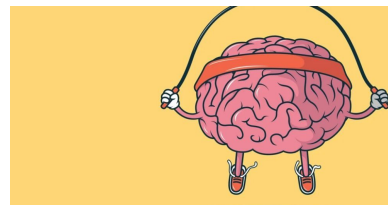
With a growth mindset, we can pierce through the stuck-ness and achieve the results we desire, whether at work, in our relationships, or in other aspects of our lives.

How does a growth mindset help us as people develop to make better choices in life?

A growth mindset helps us determine many factors, but to develop a growth mindset requires mental stability and dedication. According to Psychology [Today](#), some ways to build a growth mindset include:

1. Acknowledge and embrace imperfection
2. Facing your challenges bravely
3. Stop seeking approval from others
4. Value the process over the result

And so on. One of the key ideas was to notice that a growth mindset is based on yourself. Determining your own goals, complying with them, and dedicating time to be yourself without criticism or approval from others. It is the reason why "practice makes perfect." You can make your mental processes work for you, resulting in a greater probability that you get the results you are looking toward.



Holiday Greif

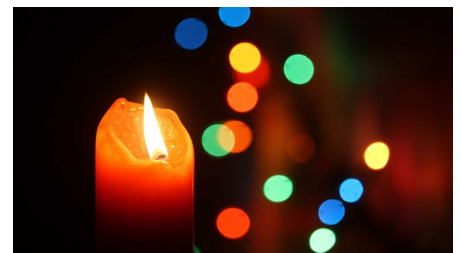
By: Gene Knapp

Almost all of us have experienced grief in one way or another. Whether it's losing a beloved animal, a job, a home, or a family member, it is a fate we all dread. For some, it can affect them harder than others depending on the person/family and their relationship with the person/persons/things they have lost. While it is different for everyone, grief has been known to cause severe depressive episodes, crying spells, disturbances in sleep, and sometimes, spirits of anger or aggression. These are normal, for there is no correct way to grieve, the most important thing is to give yourself and your family time to process loss but that can be hard since holidays can make this grief even harder to process.

One may wonder, how do you even begin to cope with this holiday grief? But-as always-the answer isn't easy to find. The main theme of holidays is to celebrate family and spend time with them, but it's hard to do that when a member of the family is deceased or missing. Those who have lost a loved one may see the holidays as more of a chore than a celebration, this could be due to the fact that someone may have

memories with the person they lost which affected their holiday spirits. They may not feel their spirit because they think it won't be the same without their loved one. Some ways to cope is to connect with others who have lost someone or your own family and talk about it. It can be quite reassuring knowing that you're not alone in your feelings and a helpful way to discover other coping mechanisms. You can also try to celebrate that person's life and remember them by continuing to celebrate old traditions in their memory. Whether this is leaving an open chair at the dinner table where they would once sit or enjoying their favorite meal alongside family. If you feel the old tradition would be too triggering for you to handle, try making new traditions while still coming to value the life of your loved one. This could include visiting the cemetery where they lay with family to mourn before a holiday festivity. Asking for help or helping someone else is a good way to cope as well. Psychology Today says *"Even when you're in the midst of grief, you still have something to offer the world. Performing a few acts of kindness can be really good for a grieving person's spirit. Donate gifts to families in need, serve meals at a soup kitchen, or volunteer to help people at a nursing home make holiday crafts if you're up for it."*

Asking for help is important in any situation of despair, especially grief. Online grief counseling is offered by the [Colorado Counseling Center](#) where you can schedule an appointment with a licensed professional who will give you advice, [Better Help](#) where you can search through many online grief therapists in Denver to find the one who is right for you. There are also online grief groups such as [My Grief Angles](#) who not only offer regular grief groups but Covid-19 grief groups for anyone who has lost someone during this everlasting pandemic and [Grief In Common](#) where you can find groups that have been in similar situations as you to get a better feeling of comfort.



Throwback

This month, we asked teachers for recommendations on what they watched/listened to when they were our age!

What are some favorite movies from the 70's/80's/90's that you'd recommend to the students?

Ms. Hunt: *Back to the Future, Good Will Hunting*

Ms. Wilkin: *Chariots of Fire: shows determination, deals with discrimination + has great music; Babe: that'll do, pig; Sound of Music: my all time favorite movie and answer to my password questions; Mr. Holland's Opus: one person can make a difference!*

Ms. Waugh: *The Breakfast Club, The Lost Boys, St. Elmo's Fire*

Ms. Wenick: *Good Will Hunting, Forrest Gump, Home Alone, The Nightmare Before Christmas*

Ms. Brusseau: *Ghost busters, Terminator, The Breakfast Club*

Mrs. Burke: *1989 Film: The Little Monsters*

Mr. Abel-Pype: *80s: The Warriors; The Goonies; Breakfast Club; The Outsiders; The Neverending Story; Uncle Buck; Stand By Me; Ferris Bueller's Day Off; Do the Right Thing*

90s: The Crow; Tombstone; Seven; What's Eating Gilbert Grape; Office Space; The Rock; Con Air; Mars Attacks; 12 Monkeys; Event Horizon; Fallen; The Usual Suspects; Stir of Echos; Flatliners (original);

Mr. Jessen: *Tommy Boy*

Ms. Hempe: *Empire of the Sun*

What is some favorite music from the 70's/80's/90's that you'd recommend to the students?

Ms. Hunt: *Third Eye Blind, Counting Crows*

Ms. Wilkin: *Led Zeppelin, Heart, Tom Petty, Pearl Jam (I think Abel-Pype MAY have already turned kids on to them), Van Halen, The Beatles, Jefferson Airplane, Jerry Jeff Walker, Fleetwood Mac, John Denver, Captain and Tennille, Rich Mullins, Michael Jackson, Prince, The Bangles, Cyndi Lauper... and many more.*

Ms. Waugh: *Anything from Def Leppard, Aerosmith, AC/DC, Black Sabbath/Ozzie, ABBA (Yeah I know, lol!), Marty Robbins, Johnny Cash*

Ms. Wenick: *Alanis Morissette! Weezer!*

Ms. Brusseau: *Billy Idol, David Bowie, Metallica, Abba*

Mrs. Burke: *Janet*

Mr. Abel-Pype: *Oh, man, if you thought my movie list was long....*

For me, it is that early 90s Grunge/Alternative: Pearl Jam, Nirvana, Soundgarden, Alice in Chains, Smashing Pumpkins, Stone Temple Pilots, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Beck, Fiona Apple, Tool, Dinosaur Jr., Rage Against the Machine, Nine Inch Nails,

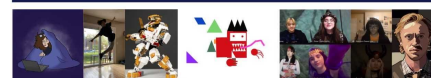
R.E.M., Weezer, Jane's Addiction, Pixies, Sonic Youth, Blind Melon, A Tribe Called Quest, Beastie Boys, Public Enemy, Garbage, L7, Temple of the Dog, Mad Season,

Also, what you don't want to listen to from the 90s is: Smashmouth, Nickleback, Creed, and Matchbox 20.

Mr. Jessen: *The Smiths*

Ms. Hempe: *Upstairs at Eric's*

KUNSMILLER CREATIVE ARTS ACADEMY VIRTUAL ART SHOW



Join us for a virtual show featuring performing and visual arts from K-12 KCAA students!

DECEMBER 16, 2020 - 7:00 PM

Join here: meet.google.com/lookup/KCAAarts

Stay tuned to our website and facebook.com/KCAAdragons for more info!

Art Show! December 16th, 2020 at 7pm

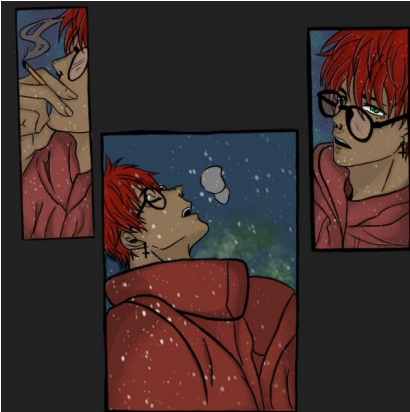
Where to join:

meet.google.com/lookup/KCAAarts

Student Art Gallery

Come see your peer's amazing artwork! - Submit [here](#)

FayeEtta Johnson
11th
(Self Submission)



Sophia Porreca
11th
(Self Submission)



Sophia Porreca
11th
(Self Submission)



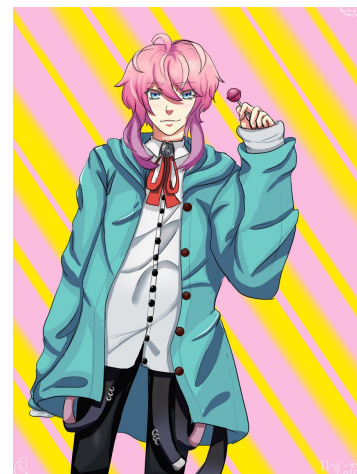
Sophia Porreca
11th
(Self Submission)



Rose Bowers
11th
(Self Submission)



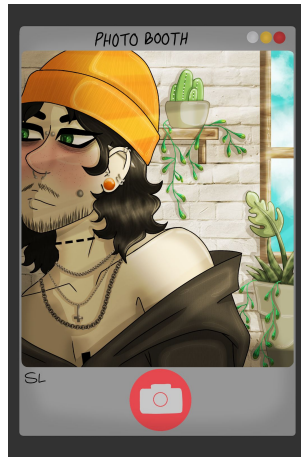
Rose Bowers
11th
(Self Submission)



Gabe Duke
11th
(Self Submission)



Gene Knapp
11th
(self Submission)



Gene Knapp
11th
(Self Submission)



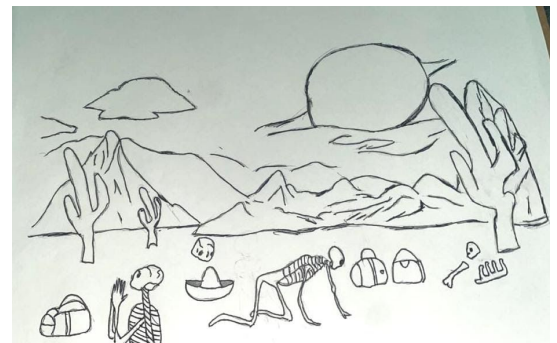
Celica Munoz
11th
(Submitted by Mr. Able-Pype)



Evan Winkenhofer
11th
(Submitted by Mr. Able-Pype)



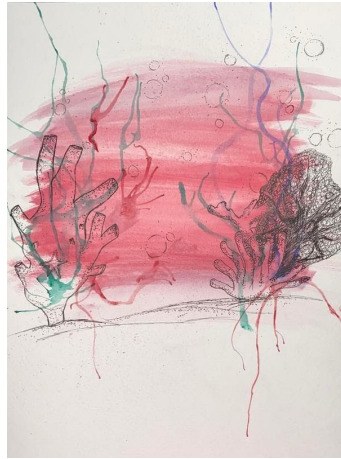
Alexandra Flores-Plata
10th
(Submitted by Ms. Harkey)



Alexa Gonzalez-Ravelo
10th
(Submitted by Ms. Harkey)



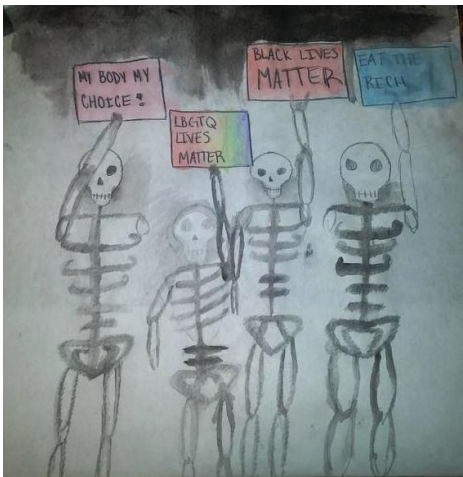
Alexa Gonzalez-Ravelo
10th
(Submitted by Ms. Harkey)



Alexa Gonzalez-Ravelo
10th
(Submitted by Ms. Harkey)



Ashley DeHerrera
10th
(Submitted by Ms. Harkey)



Daya Constantine
10th
(Submitted by Ms. Harkey)



Daya Constantine
10th
(Submitted by Ms. Harkey)



A vibrant, hand-drawn illustration of a flower. The flower has five petals, each filled with a bright pink color. The center of the flower is a dark, textured black. The background is composed of several distinct, textured areas: a top section with light blue and white wavy lines, a middle section with a dense black cross-hatch pattern, and a bottom section with horizontal black lines. The entire drawing is set against a plain white background.

Citlali Mares
11th
(Submitted by Ms. Ayres)



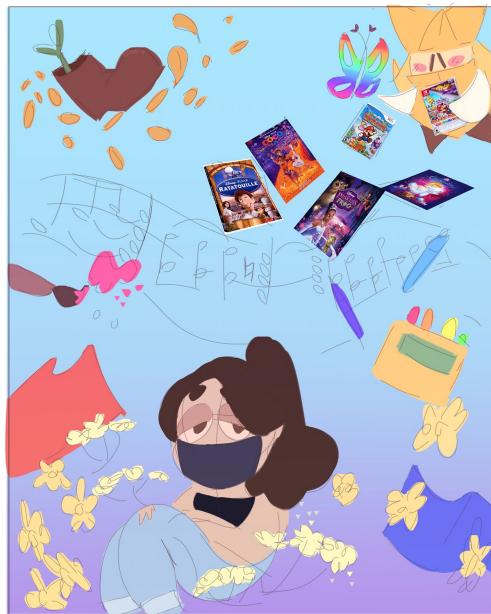
Evan Winkinhofer
11th
(Submitted by Ms. Ayres)



Maksym Obrochan
11th
(Submitted by Mr. Able-Pype)



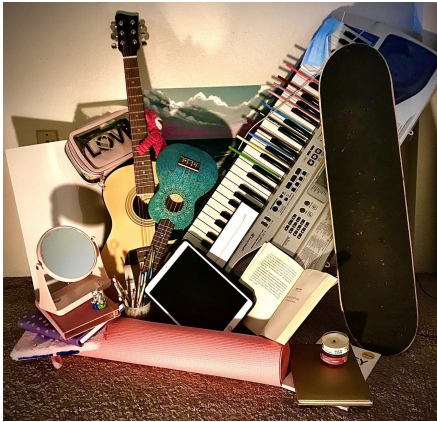
Ariana Koon
11th
(Submitted by Mr. Able-Pype)



Gunnison Custer
8th
(Submitted by Ms. Fulton)



Celica Munoz
11th
(Submitted by Mr. Able-Pype)



Jayden Castaneda
11th
(Submitted by Mr. Able-Pype)



Haven Chase
8th
(Submitted by Ms. Fulton)



Cain Purdy
9th
(Submitted by Ms. Fulton)



Lily Holmes
8th
(Submitted by Mr. Neal)



Shea Anderson
12th
(self-submission)

