

*Prologue by Suna Senman-Lane*

*If sexuality is such a critical component of life, the vehicle of creating families to build societies and maintain humanity through a continuum of history, why do we demonstrate so much ignorance to our young people? Is it possible that if we could impart a more complete understanding of sexuality in not just the medical, but the emotional, sociological and soulful aspects, then we can empower our young people to build stronger relationships, secure families and more fulfilled lives?*

## Growing up and getting older

By Elisa Hack, 19 years old

In every young person's life there comes a time when they grow up. It is inevitable to grow whether you want to or not. With time comes growth. A person's growth is affected by circumstances, environment and the other people that surround them. While growing up, a young person will come across many questions, confusions and doubt. Often times the adults that are around them are not the first people they go to for answers. The young people learn a lot from peers at school and these friends make an everlasting impact on the person he or she will become. For a young person acceptance and approval is essential to growing up to be the best you can be.

When a young person hits adolescence he or she begins to form his/her own sexuality. They have many questions about why their body is changing and don't always have someone to talk to about it. The person begins to realize that parents do not have all the answer and the answers that they do provide seem foreign to you anyway. Once you begin to ask questions about sex, parents all of a sudden become sweaty and nervous. Meanwhile they tell you a complex story about the birds and bees, which makes absolutely no sense. The young person wants the real facts not some more confusion.

In my experience as a young person, the first place a young person goes after having been given that completely confusing discussion by their parents is to friends who seem knowledgeable about life. When the friend explains the whole story of making love, the young person is blown away. This was my experience. Of course the friend mentions that "you need to be far more mature than you are at your age to have sex". The two young people agree to that statement and innocently go to school that day.

While these young, curious and confused persons are in school they learn that they have an assembly and topic will be sex. The assembly brings out "all the facts", including detailed pictures. The speakers also mentioned that you can receive STDs while having sex, which can sometime result in death. The speaker mentions something about using protection. "All the facts" is actually limited to some medical facts based on the presumption that teenagers all naturally have biological sexual intercourse. Finally at the end of the long "informative" talk a student gets up and speaks about abstinence as the number one preventive of STDs.

At lunch there was a huge buzz in the cafeteria. Everyone is discussing the assembly on sex. The questions arose in my discussion, "Why couldn't my parents just explain it to me?" Another person exclaims, "I am staying out of that crazy business." Another young person says proudly, "I have already done it". Then a young person shyly expresses that growing up isn't easy and "I think this assembly just made the topic more confusing." Absolutely growing up and getting older certainly is not as easy as they make it look on TV.