

The Phoenix



Summer 2011

Sharks: Surface Water to the Deep Sea

The Scallop Hammerhead will grow to about 10-13 ft. long and has a bizarre head. The structure is called a cephalofoil and it provides an expanded sensory area which helps it find its prey. Their prey consists of smaller fish, squid and other foods. In the 18th century, Benjamin Franklin took various diplomatic trips by ship across the Atlantic. He was intrigued by the phenomenon of the gulf streams warm waters and the abundance of life within.

The Shortfin Meko Shark is a very fast, agile and clever hunter. It lives closer to the shore line and its diet consists of a wide variety of oceanic fish and squid. A Meko shark will grow up to be 13 ft long and can swim as fast as 22 mph. When a Meko gets agitated by the smell of blood in the water, he will go on a rampage and his brain will swell and it produces a chemical reaction that scientist are using to find a cure for Alzheimer's. Mekos can smell blood from miles away. Sharks are responsible for approximately 50 attacks and 6-10 deaths per year. You are more likely to be hit by lightning.

The Great White is one of the biggest sharks in the world; only the Whale Shark is bigger. The Great White rarely sleeps and is constantly on the move for food.



It preys on seals, penguins, fish, and sea lions, and is normally found in the Pacific and Australian waters. After the female gives birth to its pup, the pup can hunt and only stays with the mother for 3 months. The Great White has a bad reputation for killing people, but there are only about 4-5 attacks per year.

~D.D.W.

Mental Illness

*Dear Mental Illness,
In the beginning we were arch enemies, but over the years I've noticed we were closer peers, becoming closer, not fighting each other with spears, causing me to always doubt what or if my thoughts were, or are, right. Not having a confidant in site, always wishing I could fit in just rite, be part of the kewl crowd tonight. It sucks always dealing with the whole flight or fight, like walking on a tight rope, always being full of*

thought of no home, knowing you have to cop or choke. Wishing it was all a joke. Wondering if my life is real or if it's just a dream. Are there people making fun of me, laughing at me, fucking mocking me? Oh my god what the fuck is wrong with me, why can't I fix me? Are these fucking pills gonna fix me? How are they going to fix me? I don't wanna take these damn things. They're not doing anything for me. God, why did this have to fucking happen to me?! Please help me. Help me learn how to be ok with these issues for ever dwelling within me, crazy thoughts delusional dream-like states. Being always knowing there is something wrong with me.

~T [REDACTED]



Untitled

Hi, my name is Katrina, and I was addicted to crack. Crack makes you do things that you never thought of, I started smoking crack because of my low self-esteem I had about myself. I thought I was too fat and I was curious because people I knew that did the drug said they were losing weight. So I tried it. And at that moment my whole life

changed. Crack is a very bad drug. But now, I'm at CenterPointe to get my life back. That person on crack wasn't me: it was somebody else. That's how I felt. I never want to go through that trauma. So, I just take it one day at a time and pray to my Higher Power to keep me strong and to take the cravings out of my system. I'm so ready to get my life back on track.

~K [REDACTED]

Tattoo You?

Bikers, sailors, convicts and people on the fringe of popular culture are stereotypes that most people associate with tattoos. However, tattoos have become extremely popular and accepted by people from all walks of life. The art of tattooing has had a long history dating back over 5,000 years. Within tribal groups throughout the world, both men and women have attained higher social status directly associated with body art. Social stigmas did not exist. The rise in the major religions of the world changed that. Tattoos were considered evil, only to be used by people who did not practice any major religion. As exploration of the world opened doors and minds to new cultures and traditions, adventurous travelers brought back bizarre practices with them, one of which was the art of tattoo. Slowly over the years, life embraced the exotic and unique ways in which individuals expressed themselves. New methods of applying tattoos were developed in the early 20th century. These included the eclectic needle (oscillating) and templates. Ink representing all colors of the rainbow were also used giving the tattoo a 3D appearance. In the mid 1960's, tattoo parlors were opening up in every corner of the United States. Still most Americans did not accept tattoos as a proper way of expressing ones individuality. However, the appeal for more and more people was growing until the 1980's when the numbers exploded. After the turn of the century this momentum are carried on to present times. Tattoos were here to stay.

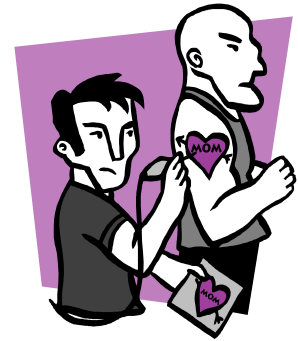
So, the obvious question is why do people want to get a tattoo? The answer to that question is varies from one individual to the next. There are some common reasons and motivation that influence any given individual to tattoo their body, a decision that will last for the rest of their lives. With most people, the desire to have the tattoo seen by others is very important. A tattoo has the power to express ones internal ideas and beliefs without speaking a single word. Tattoos are also used to bind groups of people together. The most notable example is an anchor on the arms of sailors. When total strangers meet, tattoos that are common create an instant connection, liked by ink and blood. Events such as marriage, birth of a child, a loss of a loved one, or any other significant date or experience are forever commemorated in the skin, reminding ones self of events that are close to the heart. There also exist people who put little thought or time into such profound decisions, many under the influence of mind/mood altering substances. It is estimated that 50% of tattoos are regretted within one month. Some people get tattoos simply because they think body art is beautiful. A tattoo artist usually possesses skills that, when given the opportunity, enable him/her to create incredible works of art. Forget 10 to 15 years down the road.



Think about what your tattoo will look like when you're 80 years old. The fact is, no one really cares what their tattoo will look like when they're 80. People have more important things to think about when they are getting up in years. Most people with tattoos look back on them when they are older and reflect on that time in their lives. Whether good or bad, it's always a bittersweet testament to the past. Men and women seeking spirituality, a connection with mystical entities and the answers to the great questions of the universe, tattoo themselves in an attempt to connect to forces that they hold dear to their life.

So, is your mind made up? Is it wise to consider the reasons why not to get a tattoo? It is always prudent to consider both sides of

the argument. The first reason not to get a tattoo is that you'll regret it. Many people get caught up in the moment,



especially when accompanied by loved ones or friends that already have a tattoo. What you decide to have put on your body should be strongly considered. More people regret choosing a random or popular design (such as tribal symbols on the upper arm and body) just because, on any given day, your tastes usually change. It's an awkward situation when you meet someone that has the same tattoo as you. Do other people have the same beliefs as life experiences as you? Probably not. It is usually a bad idea to have a girlfriend or wife's name put on your body — I speak from personal experience. I had a heart with my ex-wife's name on it put on my left shoulder. We were married for 15 years at that time. I believed we would be together for the rest of eternity. We divorced 5 years later and the heart does commemorate 25 years of my life, and as such, there is a soft spot in my heart. However, I do regret the decision every day of my life. As you go through life, chances are you will work for many different employers. Usually as you climb the social and economic ladder tattoos generally become less tolerated, or outright banned. Even some fast food restaurants require that tattoos be covered up. It is very difficult to cover up tattoos on your neck, hands or arms (if you are required to ware a uniform with short sleeves). The sterile conditions required to apply a tattoo are also not always followed. If you don't ask the artist weather they are using new needles and ink you might be putting your health at risk. Even if conditions are perfect, there still exists a chance of infection. As both you and your tattoo age, skin will sag and colors will fade. The dragon you thought was so cool on your 21 year old body may look like nothing but meaningless colors folded into layers of skin. Real cool, right? Finally, a tattoo can be removed by a dermatologist. The results will vary depending on where the tattoo is, what

colors were used and the age of the tattoo. With large tattoos, multiple visits are usually expected. There will always be some remnant of the ink left. The cost of such a procedure is very high (not covered by insurance), usually thousands of dollars along with pain and regret. Temporary tattoos are a safe, pain free alternative. They usually last from several days to a week. The quality of temp tats has greatly improved. No longer are the days when temp tats were only found in the bottom of a Cracker Jack box. With software, almost any design can be printed out on specialized paper, ready to be applied without pain or regret. One weekend you can look like a cool woman with butterfly tattoos covering your body, the next, become a shrine to your spirituality.

Remember, each argument for or against tattoos should be your and only your decision. Not to be influenced by others. To be an individual and unique is always a great goal in life.

~Anonymous



Untitled

I wanted to write a little story about my mother and what she did for me in my time of need. I was in prison in a state of psychosis; a very traumatic time in my life. I was very manic at the beginning which led me to having hallucinations,

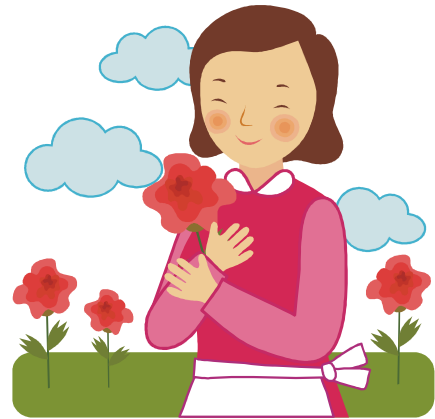
delusions, and also hearing voices. I can remember bits and pieces but I'm not going to get into that, however I will share a little bit of what I went through. The main thing I'm going to focus on is how my mom brought me back to reality.

First, I don't remember the whole thing, only parts of what I went through. I didn't eat for about 2 weeks and, as a result, I lost thirty five pounds. I was very scared to eat. I physically felt like there were needles going down my throat and that made me not eat. I got to the point where I didn't know how to eat. I normally didn't go a week without seeing my mom and now she was trying so hard to find out what was going on with me. The prison wouldn't tell her where I was.

So, my mom went to the Ombudsman, she went to the FBI and she went to the Attorney General all of whom couldn't help her. All said it was up to the prison system to allow a visit from my mom. So the last think she could do is tell the prison guards she wasn't going to leave until she saw her son. Finally, after about two and a half weeks, while I was in the hospital completely insane, Dr. Perez and the Prison Captain allowed my mom and step dad to come up and see me.

In my mind, the world was all over the place. When they came in, the room was going back and forth, tilting in a way that I thought was real. When I saw my moms face and eyes, it was like seeing her for the first time when I was born. We cried in

unison. It was the saddest time in my life – we all cried and cried together. It's hard for me to write about. It was like being born again. I had my dinner delivered to me while they were there and my mom had to teach me how to eat again, I was so lost at this time in my life.



I am so thankful for her and my step-dad for bringing me back to life. I just didn't know what was real and not real. I was starving myself for tow and half weeks and I truly believe that if she wouldn't have been there, I wouldn't have been able to come back. The guard that was there the whole time I wasn't eating either didn't care or honestly didn't notice that I was so sick. I could have easily died from lack of eating. I'm so blessed to have a mother and step-dad who care about me.

~J.M.

There is an "end" in friend, there is an "over" in lover, there is an "us" in trust, there is a lie in believe. Just something to ponder...





Recipes



Chocolate Chip Cookies

Ingredients:

- 2 1/4 cup flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 cup butter
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups chocolate chips
- 1 cup chopped nuts



Directions:

Preheat the oven to 375°. Combine flour, baking soda and salt in a small bowl. Beat butter, sugar, brown sugar and vanilla in a large mixer bowl until creamy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Gradually beat in flour mixture. Stir in chocolate chips and nuts. Drop by rounded tablespoons onto ungreased baking sheets. Bake for 9-11 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on baking sheets for 2 minutes, remove and place on wire racks to cool completely. Enjoy!!

~L [redacted]



Hamburger Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. hamburger
- 2 1/2 cups tomato juice
- 7 potatoes, diced
- 2 cans of corn
- 2 cans of green beans
- 1 box chicken broth
- 1 head cauliflower
- 1 head broccoli

Directions:

In a large pot, brown the hamburger and drain the grease. Add broth and vegetables to the pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and let stand for 30 minutes.

~ Breanne



Tater Tot Casserole

Ingredients:

- 1 bag tater tots
- 1 lb hamburger
- 1 can beans
- 1 can corn
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 onion

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 375°. In a large pan, brown the hamburger and drain the grease. Add to the pan the soup and onion and cook. Transfer the contents of the pan to a baking pan. Add the corn and green beans (corn on one half, green beans on the other, or mix together). Top with the tater tots and bake in the oven for 45 minutes.

~B [redacted]



Potato Soup

Ingredients:

- 6-8 potatoes, diced
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1/2 box of Velveeta
- 1 box chicken broth

Directions:

In a large pot, boil potatoes and drain the water. Then add the cheese, onion and chicken broth and cook on med-high heat for about 20 minutes. Enjoy!

~B [redacted]



Poetry

Anhedonia

Anhedonia: a complete loss of emotion, a blank face, expressionless, not revealing anything, sums up the last 7 years of my once-hopeless life

Lost in a state of no expressions, no feeling whatsoever, lost in a state of nothingness, lost in a state of fucked up oblivion, substance-fueled emotions, completely artificial – sums up the last 7 years

The road I've drudged has been a rough one, filled with several stops along it's path; locked jail cells, unlocked emergency rooms, and several broken hearts line my path

But the fact that I can look back on this road, and smile, is a miracle of gargantuan size! A monumental miracle this is!...

You see, it's taken each of these mishaps to mold me into the person I am today... and if I could do it all over again I would

As my pen moves frantically about the white, lined page, I think to myself: "I wouldn't change my mind for any other in the world," and for this, for this simple thought, I will hold my head high... the opposite of anhedonia defines me on this day and on the day, I will greet others with a smile and a warm embrace, as I walk the new path that I've chosen...

A path filled with smiles and warm embraces, is the path I've chosen for myself

A complete 180 degree turn from the

state of mind that filled my head 4 short months ago is where I'm at... and, for this, I am happy

~N [REDACTED]

One Day...

One day you will awake from your covering and that heart of yours will be totally mended.

And finally, finally there will be no more burning within.

The owl, calling in the setting of the sun will no longer beckon a song of sorrow.

There will no longer be a requisite for invalid love, invalid lovers, or rear of losing invalid lovers.

And then you will leave behind the husband, toxic flames, and all your disenchanting desires.

You will forgive the dark days of dusky eyes, unwarranted bruises, and supplemental scars.

And you will forever end your downward spiral into the depths of destruction and disaster.

The thick air will be vanquished with the tide, and the river that was once corrupted by lies.

You will be mended, cleansed, and completely free.

And the owl will soon call, in the setting of the sun, beckoning a foreign, new song of certitude and survival.

...and the moon will beckon the foreign, longed-for home... of warm winds and lullabies of love in my heart.

~M [REDACTED]



A Beast/Way Too Tired

"I am just way too tired," wails a Mr. Julian Casablanco, in a monotone voice that could lure the most severe insomniac to sleep

I too, am just "way too tired," on this November morning, as the winds howl against the windows outside, my eyes have 100 pound dumbbells on them

Sleep could come so easily on mornings like this, but today, I will work to maintain my consciousness, in attempt to tackle the grizzly beast that has been hindering my existence for these past 8 years

This beast is beyond scary, his fur is rugged and dirty, as rabies leaks out of his mouth, slithering between his sharp carnivorous teeth

He is behind every tree and under every bed, always waiting for my next move, a master chess player if you will. "Checkmate" he's yelled throughout my life, confirming that he has me in a corner, that he is my master

Yet today, I am armed with bow and arrow, as my Sioux ancestors were so many summers ago, and as the beast moves toward me in a swift motion, I am my sharpest at him... and let go

The arrow hits the beast directly between the eyes, taking him down, making a sound like a giant sequoia falling in the forest, this morning I am victorious, but it is my duty to attempt to mimic this morning in the days to come.

~N [REDACTED]

Self Explanatory Poem/Eyes

Wide Open

The beginning of another poem...

When I first began writing "poetry," I would almost force myself to write it...

Pure emotions were vacant from those stanzas and couplets, real genuine feelings did not fill the pages that I wrote on so long ago

The whole point of poetry, in my opinion, is to let everything go, to use your brain as a tool; to cleanse the soul, to "let it bleed out" on to the paper

A common theme in my new poems is optimism, as opposed to the dreadful theme of depression, that dominated my earlier works

And if someone would have told me 5 years ago that "optimism" would be the apex of my writing, I would have calmly told that person to "go fuck themselves," and probably would have written a depressing poem about that encounter

A complete 180 degree turn is where I'm at currently

I mean, sure, I go through my bad days, everyone does, but the failure to appreciate what I do have in life, the positive things that I have going on, defined my earlier poems

And I feel as though I've wasted so much time, in the pit of despair, that I have to shake my head and smile... "what a dumbass" I think to myself... "what a dumbass"

But the fact that I can look in to the pit of despair and smile... this is a beautiful thing... a beautiful thing... a miraculous thing!

I know at times that my current state of mind can be perceived as

grandiose, but grandiosity couldn't be further from the truth

My eyes are simply open these days, they are not closed, for I am trying my best, with each scribble on to a page, to break down the wall that I've put up for so many years

And as I end this poem, I reflect back on my life; the "shitty" childhood, the abuse I went through, all the heartbreak and tears that I've caused... have led up to this exact moment; as I sit in the bathroom reminiscing on my past... I wouldn't change where I'm at for anything in the world and for this, I'll keep smiling, and continue on, with my
Eyes
Wide
Open

~N [REDACTED]



Closed Eyes/Aware of Surroundings

An elitist, atheist, egotistical, liberal and former self-centered young man sits down in a chair, remembering his past. He closes his eyes, and thinks...

Oh how I used to drudge, drudge through the wilderness that is the world, pessimistic ideals and negative overtones dominated my brain, how I used to self-consciously walk around, pinpointing the flaws in others, while taking for granted what was directly in front of my face

What was right in front of my face was this beautiful world, beautiful people, scenery, and ideas

Today I am embracing these things of beauty, and what a miracle this is!

Opening my eyes, I am aware of my surroundings, as I sit with my left leg folded gently over my right, I reminisce on a time that was stormy. The clouds today are clearing, however, and I am smiling... And I am happy

~N [REDACTED]





Favorites Foods Served at CenterPointe

- L [redacted] - Salad Bar
- Anon. - Sliced Beef
- M [redacted] - Chicken fried steak, Mashed Potatoes and Corn
- N [redacted] - BLT
- T [redacted] - Chicken Sandwich
- D.D.W. - Pork Riblet Sandwich
- T [redacted] - Fried Chicken
- J [redacted] - Riblets
- I [redacted] - Salisbury Steak,

- Tater Wedges
- I [redacted] - Fried Chicken
- Anon. - BLT Pita
- B [redacted] - BLT Pita
- J [redacted] - Potato Salad, Pork Riblet
- Lazy Lightning- Spaghetti and meatballs
- B [redacted] - Ensure
- C [redacted] - Chicken Fried Steak, Mashed Potato and Corn
- N [redacted] - Tacos
- E [redacted] - BLT
- T [redacted] - Tater Wedges, Tater Tots, Baked Potato Bar
- A [redacted] - Nachos
- K [redacted] - Beef and Noodles
- A [redacted] - Ham

Michaela - Pizza, Spaghetti
Cat - Baked Fish, Baked Potato Bar



We ignore those who adore us,
adore those who ignore us, hurt
those who love us and love
those who hurt us. [Ironic, huh...]



Photo taken by T [redacted] at the Huskers Memorial Stadium



My Happiness Depends On Me

Today I react positively to my environment, and to the people around me. I look at life with a new understanding of what is important. My happiness depends on ME - and only I can make a hell or a heaven on earth for myself. My happiness does not depend on other people or outer circumstances.

My happiness does not depend upon another's feelings toward me - it depends on how well I like myself. My happiness does not depend upon my income, on where I live or what I own. My happiness depends upon how clearly I can see the spiritual reality behind all appearances.

I take responsibility for my happiness today, and I let cheerfulness and goodwill prevail all that I do.

Taken from
"Daily Affirmations for Adult Children of Alcoholics"
by Rokelle Lerner