

FYL?

you need a care package

So far there have been care packages for . . .
breaking up, being single, giving up smoking, moving city (or living in the moving city,
Christchurch), being sick, & job-seeking. Feel free to commission a new one; if it sucks,
there is a care package for it.

Care packages are just a small gesture of love and compassion, but it will help.

standard- \$10

a condolence card, a mixtape, some chocky.

de Luxe - \$60

the above, as well as AMAZING things I haven't even thought of yet.

The care packge for Denis, a kid who came out in the newspaper, follows.

xo,

Drus

drusdrus@gmail.com

Sb

sensitiveboyfriend.com



Denis care package

derision of gays made me suicidal

Michael Dickison

The 17-year-old son of a former Cabinet minister says he struggled as a closet homosexual boarder at King's College, and was pushed to contemplate suicide on several occasions.

Denis McLay, son of former Deputy Prime Minister Jim McLay, who is now the New Zealand ambassador (permanent representative) to the UN, is calling for harassment to stop.

There was a culture where everyone - especially young men - callously derided homosexuals in private, not thinking that among them could be some who kept their sexuality a secret, Denis said.

"It was painful to hear those comments while in the closet," he said.

"They made me feel depressed, unwanted and not normal.

"I used to get very depressed. The feeling that you have to hold this secret and not tell anyone, it kind of destroys you. Holding that secret so long, I felt I couldn't hold on any longer."

Denis wrote to the Herald hoping to raise awareness about how hard it is to be gay at school.

"I would like an article in the paper speaking out against harassment at schools," he wrote.

"I have contemplated suicide several times due to this harassment. It must stop. It is not acceptable for this to happen in today's society."

He recently told his friends and family of his sexuality, and since then everything had become easier and he said everyone had been supportive.

"The statistics say it's about one in 10 who are homosexual. We have nearly 1000 kids at King's, so there must be 100 in my situation," he said.

He was speaking out for the possible 100 peers who would be struggling as he had been, Denis said. "To be honest, it's not a fun place to be.

"There might be six others in the house who are gay. To feel that society is compelling them to hide ... I want more people to be able to be honest about who they are."

The situation was sensitive at a boarding school.

"If you tell people you're gay, they might think, 'he might like me'," Denis said.

"You can't control who you love, but people have nothing to fear. There's no basis for it. You might tell someone you like them, and if they say, 'Sorry, I'm straight', that's the end of it."

It was neither boarding school nor King's College that was the problem. "It's society in general," Denis said.

King's College had a difficult year last year, when three students died - one in his sleep, one after falling from a motorway over-bridge, and one after drinking alcohol.

Denis said the school, including its counsellor and chaplain, was supportive if you reached out.

"The system is there but people are afraid to use it."



Sb

sensitivoboyfriend.com

hi Denis,

I used to go to King's. I was in Averill, and left in 1997. I saw the article in the Herald and thought you might be able to use a 'coming out' care package. I found school hard enough as it was, I can't imagine what it's like to have to deal with extra pressures on top of it all.

So . . .

some people have written to you, you might recognise one of them.

an old friend from King's' Uncle Peter donated his book about his Uncle Peter. If you want to write him to say thanks, he's on "Peter Macky" <Peter@mackyroberson.com>, this is a poster for your study wall, and I think you've earned this badge.

there's a web project called 'it gets better.' Look it up. itgetsbetter.org

. . . and some teenage dating advice from the same guy. It's advice for dating girls, but that you can just change a few words to make it applicable, shows how we're all just the same.

Brooke, the most stylish girl I know, recommended you check this blog bryanboy.com if you haven't seen the film 'Milk', here it is . . .

. . . and there's probably a few other surprises in there too.

One thing I wanted to say is that you and your buddies at school are really young, and a lot of you won't really know who you are, yet. The reason why some kids are homophobic is because they're trying to work out who they are, by saying what they think they're supposed to say. They don't hate gays, until you told them, they probably didn't know anyone openly gay. They're not homophobic, they're uneducated and inexperienced. Less now, because of you.

You should be very proud: it takes courage to stand up for yourself. You're much more of a man than they are. You know who you are, much more than they do. You will have inspired people reading about you, whether they're gay or not.

Three of my close friends ended their lives. All were creative, smart, hilarious, and it was just incidental to me that they were gay. I miss Tobi, Michael and Josh a lot, but I'm glad we've still got you. Even if ten people think more about how they act towards each other because of you, that will have made a real difference to peoples' lives.

You've got a lot to look forward to, falling in love for the first time, if that hasn't happened already. And, fck-it, having your heart broken, not by some idiots, but by someone you love . . . it's all part of it.

I hope things are going a bit better at school, and you're getting on well with your dorm mates. In a couple of months school will be over, and then your life will really begin . . . super exciting.

From,

Drus

drusdrus@gmail.com



keep cool 'till after school poster : Allen Huang & Drus

letters : Drus, Hannah McArdle & Peter Orlov

perfect badge & 15 songs I liked when I was 15 mixtape : Drus

wartime correspondence : Peter Macky

lunch invitation : Colin Mathura-Jeffree

. . . and a Tolberone, and 'Milk' the movie



aychblog.com
fashion / people / the planet

Denis, thank you so much for sharing your story.

Your courage to speak out against the heteronormative and homophobic pressures you faced in school is huge.

A close friend of mine is a queer Kings graduate and it pains me to hear similar hurt in his story. How amazing for you to share your journey for the country to hear!

I hope that one day our little island country will be a place we truly can feel happy, safe and free. Until that day let us continue to stand up against bigotry, fear and hate.

Continue the good fight!

XX

Hannah McArdle,
editor of aychblog.com



hi Denis,

In life you have to be strong. You have to be powerful. You are to be unashamedly your own person.

*If someone is to judge you, then they're to be judged by **YOU**.*

People can be so boring. People often are their own worst fears...remember that when someone is cruel in a statement.

I'd love to hear all about what's happened to you, so would you do me the honour of allowing me to shout you lunch? We can chat all about it...I'm sure it will be a laugh! At the moment I'm shooting NZ's Next Top Model. As soon as I'm free from my filming obligations let's catch up! I know some great restaurants in the city!

cheers,

Colin Mathura-Jeffree



Denis,

Even though you're on the other side of the world, I read the article about you in the Herald and it made me feel happy that kids around the world are finding the courage to deal privately and speak out publically when faced with the sort of homophobic bullying that you have experienced. Good for you. The bad news is that the bullying isn't going to completely stop for others any time soon; the good news is that life gets so much more fun and exciting once you leave school and move into the real world.

To tell you a bit about me: I'm Russian, born in Switzerland and living in London (having spent chunks of time in Sydney and Amsterdam, too). I'm a gay guy living in London with my boyfriend of three years; I'm a lawyer in one of the biggest law firms in the world; I have a small, pretty flat with a nice terrace and I like to travel. I went to a private boys' school that is similar to yours just outside London (although I never boarded) and I came out at school when I was fifteen. It was pretty rubbish at first, I had a crush on one of my best mates and I couldn't wait to get out of there to get on with life. And I am very glad I did.

Adults are fond of telling kids about the joys of childhood and come up with pithy quotes like "the youth is wasted on the young" because (as you will find out) they tend to remember the good things and forget the bad things. That's just how memory works and if it didn't, you'd never get over the heartbreak of your first pet dying. However horrible and stressful and annoying one's experiences in school, you move on and tend to remember the good stuff.

There are a couple of things that help with that. The first is choice. Life gets better as you grow up because you no longer have to do things - sure, you'll need to get a job and pay bills and mow the lawn, but there will never again be a time when you have to go to a particular place for seven hours a day and endure people who are too stupid, too narrow-minded or too dull for you to bother with: you can always move on. And not just move to a different job, but to a different city or country, if you want - take my word. If someone is nasty to you (and it happens much more rarely as a grown-up, because those kids grow up too and stop acting like jerks), you don't have to spend time with them any more.

The other thing that helps is networks of friends. When I was growing up - and it really wasn't that long ago, I'm not even thirty yet - I used to worry that there wouldn't be enough gay people out there for me to find enough people that I liked, or found attractive, or respected (let alone all three). But statistics and human behaviour are on your

side: once you find one person you like, you'll have also found their friends, and their friends' friends and, chances are, you'll get on with a whole bunch of them (what with similar people sticking together and all that). Before you know it, you are surrounded by interesting, mostly-well-dressed people who share your passions and find you interesting in return. That's a great feeling and it's made all the better by the knowledge that you have chosen them and they have chosen you: you're spending time together because you want to, not just because you have to.

Your twenties will be an excellent time - the messing-around with the good-looking guys, the new adventures, the silly drunken nights, the loves and heartbreaks, all of them are a great thing to live through. In a few years' time, you'll look back on the bad times with a mixture of pity and understanding for the guys that caused you so much pain and be so glad that you stuck it out to create the great life that you have made for yourself and so grateful that you have found your niche in the world, surrounded by all these fun new fun friends. It is absolutely worth it.

Living well is always the best revenge Denis; don't forget that,

Look after yourself,

Peter Orlov
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sex advice to teenage boys

Dan Savage

sfweekly.com/advice/savage-love-411

Longtime reader, first-time mailer. A long while ago, you wrote an incredible piece of general advice for teenage boys. The advice was so excellent that I clipped it out to keep in case I ever had a son. Well, years later, I have a son. But I have since moved a gazillion times and across several continents, and I no longer have that precious piece of paper.

My son is only nine months old, but I am worried that by the time he is a teenager, you will have retired to some fancy ranch where you will spend your days raising organic cattle, being nasty to the local genetically-modified-wheat farmers, and passing the afternoons on the porch sipping gin from a teacup while terrorizing the local boys with a Super Soaker.

I digress: any chance you could reprint your advice for teenage boys? I know that I, my partner, and my son will all appreciate it. — GGG Lady Lover And Mama

Congrats on the birth of your son, and here, at your request, is my advice for the hardup teenage boy:

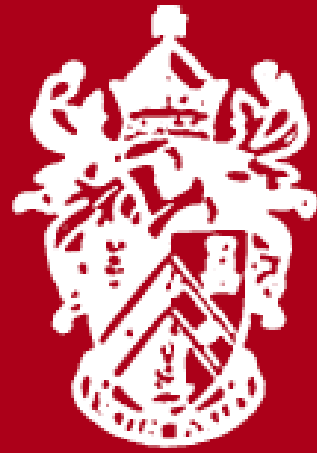
You're having a hard time getting girls. That sucks. I remember what it was like when I was a young teenager and wanted boys and couldn't get any. It sucked. But the sad fact is that most young teenage boys are repulsive — that is, they are half-formed works in progress. Girls mature physically more quickly than boys, which means most girls your age already look like young wen and they're generally attracted to (slightly) older boys — and there you are, aching for your first girlfriend, but still looking like a short, hairless chimp.

But don't despair, HUTB. Your awkward/repulsive stage will pass. In the meantime, here's what you need to do: worry less about getting your young teenage self laid and start thinking about getting your eighteen- or twenty-year-old self laid. Join a gym and get yourself a body that girls will find irresistible, read — read books — so that you'll have something to say to girls (the best way to make girls think you're interesting is to actually be interesting), and get out of the house and do shit — political shit, sporty shit, arty shit — so that you'll meet different kinds of girls in different kinds of settings and become comfortable talking with them.

Some more orders: get a decent haircut and use deodorant and floss your teeth and take regular showers and wear clean clothes. Go online and read about birth control and STIs, and learn enough about female anatomy that you'll be able to find a clitoris in the dark. Masturbate in moderation — no more than ten times a day — and vary your masturbatory routine. I can't emphasize this last point enough. A vagina does not feel like a clenched fist, HUTB, nor does a mouth, an anus, titty-fucking, dry-humping, or e-stim. If you don't want to be sending me another pathetic letter in five years complaining about your inability to come unless you're beating your own meat, HUTB, you will vary your routine now so that you'll be able to respond to different kinds of sexual stimulation once you do start getting the girls.

Good luck, kiddo.

(The above advice was for a straight teenage boy. Gay teenage boys should read “boys” where I said “girls,” “anus” where I said “vagina,” “prostate” where I said “clitoris,” and “fist” where I said “fist.”)



**KEEP
COOL
'TILL
AFTER
SCHOOL**