

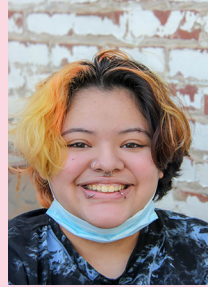


Minnie Prado, she/her, Los Banos.

Something that the community should know about young people is that we are dedicated and know what we want to fight for.

Malachi Sanchez, he/him, Merced

I want people to know that young people are more passionate about issues than people give them credit for.



Nevaeh Mendoza, she/her, Merced

I want my community to know that just because we are the youth, it doesn't mean that we should be looked down upon, or viewed as less important. We are striving to make a difference here, and that should be appreciated just as it would be appreciated by a more developed person in the community.

Akina Westmoreland, she/her, Merced

I want people in the community to know that the youth hold the future and that we as the young people are capable of anything we wanna do in life, we need to be seen and heard.



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Arjuna Monroy, he/him, Merced

I want people to know that younger people can be more educated than someone older than them on certain topics, so keep an open mind when talking to anyone about anything.

Brijeanae Foster, she/her, Vallejo

I want people to know that young people are more compassionate and attentive than ever before and want to see the change everyone deserves.



Laisha Fernandez, she/her, Palmdale

I want my community to know that young people are passionate.

Natalia Stewart, she/her, Merced

They may not know all of us, but we are passionate about changing societal problems. We advocate for people in our community because we strive for our purpose "to make the world a better place."





Issue 10: Not So Happy Memories 2022

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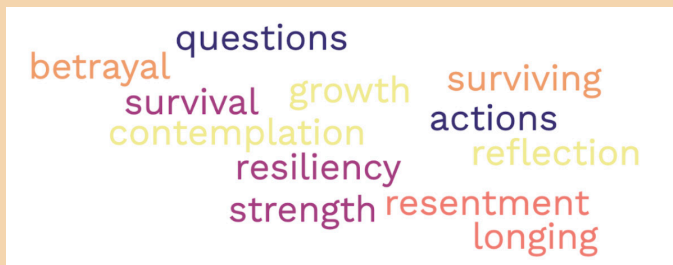


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Editor's Note



While reading Not So Happy Memories, this word cloud will provide insight into some of the themes you may read throughout the 10th issue. Even though the title suggests this zine is not so happy, we are reminded that **reflection & resiliency** guide us through unpleasant, toxic memories.

Some pieces may include content warnings. Content warnings are used to warn readers, listeners, or viewers of content that might cause a strong or potentially harmful response so they can prepare themselves to adequately engage or, if necessary, skip the content for their own wellbeing.

This language was adapted from Cassandra Lopez Fradera •
cafeconccass.com



Being outside is a constant reminder that the temporary toxicity we are forced to deal with is just that... temporary. I enjoy getting outside no matter the time of day because it is healing in new ways every time

A toxic household will not hold me back from being grateful or realizing how beautiful the outside world truly is.

A Loving Home

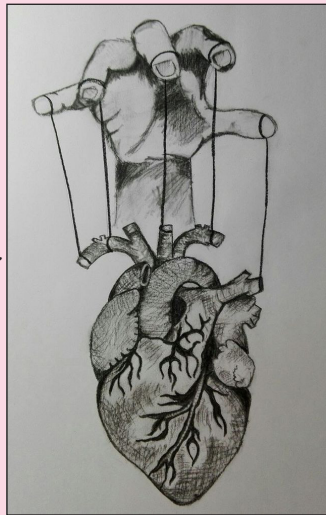
A home with no lights
I cannot see
My past, present, or future
All shrouded in dark shouting

A home with no doors
No one to welcome me home
No opportunities to go through
No way out

A home with no bed
My comfort is restricted
My safety is stripped
My mind is always running rampant

A home with no one to call friend
A home with no peace and silence
A home with no love
A home with nothing at all
While I am not empty but filled
Filled with fear

Toxic like the unfiltered water I drink when there's nothing left, toxic like the love I get, one minute you want me the next minute you don't, Shattered the feeling I felt when you broke me, broken like a glass that's all I'll ever be, hurtful like the toxic words that slip out of your mouth with such ease, do you really love me?, but toxic isn't what I can be, I'm not like you and you're not like me, toxic like air I breathe while bombs go off around me, I hope that I survive but I can't help but breathe, save me as I say to myself in hopes that you'll hear me, toxic is what I'll never be because I'm not like you and you're not like me, toxic is what you are but you're too blind to see that you and I are not the same, you flood the air I breathe in hopes I'll burn to flames, angry is what you want me to be but calm is all I will ever be, toxic is what you are but you'll never see, what you want me to be so you hurt me in hopes I'll grow to be the same but instead I grow differently, I've learned from you but you haven't learned from me that isn't the way to be, toxic is what you taught but isn't what I have to be, responsibility changes me and embraces me as I wait patiently, to be free from your shackles, free your restraints, free from all your lies you tell in hopes that I'll stay, free from the cage you put in me but didn't expect me to outgrow, grow differently it will always show, toxic







no one
cares
about you
my dearest

Stay Strong

Content Warning: This story contains depictions of familial physical and verbal abuse.

I consider toxicity to be when someone's behavior constantly affects your life negatively and upsets your life. What makes a person toxic is when you're using your trauma or whatever you went through as an excuse to upset others on purpose. My experience with living in that atmosphere was mentally and physically exhausting. I would get beat, bullied, used, and manipulated.

My relative, who I thought would never hurt me in that way, caused more pain than my biological parents. Before being in their care they convinced my little sister and I to live with them and they promised to take care of us better than our mother who struggled with addiction and mental illness.

Two years into living with them, they were already putting me down about my body and how I should look. 15 years old is when I started developing insecurities and image issues. I would try starving myself and working out, and out of spite and jealousy, they would make remarks like "It's not working why are you even doing it still" or "You look the same" and also "You'll never be as skinny as me, you're always gonna be big."

My relative was a Jehovah's Witness, so the household was strict already. Whenever we didn't want to attend Bible study we would either get slapped or hit with a wooden or metal spoon and get yelled at. While living in their house, they would always remind me how I shouldn't go to college for too long because it

would "drift me away from God." So trying to pursue a career in that house was nearly impossible.

They always kept me busy. My everyday routine was wake up, feed the children, get them ready for school, take them to school, turn on zoom meeting for school, and clean the house that their 5 kids, my sister and I make a mess in. When school was over, I tried to finish all my work to keep my good grades but there was always something they wanted to nag at me for. Let them catch me doing something they didn't like or I wouldn't agree with them about and I would get beat.

When they would be in the wrong they would manipulate us and try to excuse their behavior. What makes it worse is they didn't just do all of that to me but their own kids and my little sister as well. I would try my best to help them with everything so that they wouldn't hurt them physically or mentally. Even if we did listen, they were never happy.

Generational Father Figures

My mother grew up while her mother battled depression. There was constant fighting, yelling, crying, and self-loathing. Her mother so desperately wanted to be better but didn't even know what was wrong.

And through it all, she saw her father by her mother's side. She saw a man so enamored with his wife he would do anything to help her.

And she saw them overcome.

You see, my grandfather has always been deeply, madly, truly in love with my grandmother. When they were teenagers, he would call her just to

show her songs on the radio he liked. He didn't have much to say, was never really one for conversation, but he wanted to be around her whenever he could.

When he realized that he wasn't just drinking "sometimes," and that it made his beloved uncomfortable, he stopped. When he went to college and learned English, all he would think about was providing for her and their kids.

And when she was diagnosed with clinical depression, he went to the public library and read as many books as he could about depression so he could be a better

husband for her. He would tell her later that he was trying his best to understand, and that he would do anything for her.

My mother grew up watching these two people, each with their own flaws, learning how to grow with each other. Even though there were so many chances to grow apart and harbor resentment, they never did. My grandfather never stopped looking at her with hearts in his eyes, and my grandmother never let anyone speak ill about her husband.

When I hear stories of my mother as a teenager, after growing up in this household full of triumph and love,

it feels like I'm being told about an entirely different person. The stories sound closer to fiction than fact.

My mother got tattoos behind her parents back. A treble clef on her toe, theater masks on her pelvis and a dolphin on her hip before she was caught; they were symbols of her passion. She had piercings and went to parties, snuck out of the house and lived as if there was no tomorrow.

My mother once kissed her boyfriend after he smoked a cigarette and broke up with him right after because she hated the way he tasted so much. She told him never to kiss her after smoking, and when he

disregarded that she never spoke to him again.

My father is not like my grandfather. There is no exceptional romance story for him to boast about. There's hardly anything for him to boast about at all. In all honesty, I think my mother would have bullied my father in high school.

When I look at my father, I don't see a man that's called his wife just to play her songs. I don't see a man that would change his way of life for her. I don't even see a man that would care to learn about the things my mother struggles with.

When I look at him, I see a man

who called the dolphin tattoo on my mother's hip ugly so many times that she went into a tattoo parlor and had it changed. I see a man that has turned my mother from a loud and unapologetic woman into a mouse. I see the reason why hearing about my mother's teenage years is so foreign.

And I see my mother, and I wonder what she could have been had she not settled for my father.

I have experienced feeling emotionally drained, being with toxic people has put me in bad situations and damaged my self worth. Toxic people are those who gaslight and manipulate others, among many other characteristics.

My experience dealing with toxicity was during a time I had to choose sides with a person who knew they were wrong. Being in this position made me very uncomfortable because I felt like if I didn't agree with them there would be negative consequences. I worried about being made to feel guilty and hearing statements like "why are you agreeing with this person if I did more things for you!" and would throw all the things they did for me in my face and would say how ungrateful of a person I was. This also made no sense because they would always say that we can be very honest with them, but then later would start saying hurtful things and get mad about how I felt. Dealing with this made me not want to talk about my feelings with anyone at all, so I would shut myself out from the world and keep a lot of things to myself. I suffer in silence because I choose not to tell anyone how I feel because of the experience I had with telling others my emotions and what's been going on in my head. These types of situations really affected my communication skills with the people I love and my friends as well. I've felt really drained and had no motivation to do anything. I felt completely distant from the world. The moment

I realized that those moments were toxic was when I left that environment. Having other people show me what a home truly feels like made me realize that toxicity was a major big deal and that I was able to break that cycle. Sometimes I look back and I realize how bad the situation really was and wished how I could have handled them if only I had spoken up for myself, my sister, and my little cousins who were all victims of a toxic household.



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