

# GLBT teens face challenges in everyday life

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**CENTRAL VALLEY**

Countless teens use the phrase "You're gay" every day and don't even give it a second thought as to if it hurts anyone's feelings. Some people, however, can't just brush that phrase off.

Samantha Verhei, 20, is one of the many bisexual members in the community. She is one of those people that can just brush off those kinds of comments. She doesn't want to get in any fights so she avoids them as best she can.

"I always sort of knew that I was bisexual but I didn't learn the name for it until seventh grade," Verhei said.

Her family each reacts differently to her sexuality. "My grandma and I don't talk, my mother tells me that I need to take sides on the fence; I can't be in the middle. My little brother is cool and open to this and my older brother is just,

like, whatever," Verhei said. When Verhei told her friends, she received more support than she did from her family.

"My friend was just a little mad that I didn't tell her earlier. All of my other friends are really open to my sexuality. Everyone has been so wonderful," she said.

When she came out to in her senior year of high school, some things did change. People would look at her differently in the locker rooms.

"It was like one little sentence had changed everything in that little environment," Verhei said.

When new people learn about her sexuality, some question it. Some don't mind. Sometimes, she will come across people who don't understand what bisexuality is so she will have to explain.

"There are those people who give off negative and positive vibes," she explained.

She has had a few bad experiences. When Verhei receives hurtful comments, she attempts to stay calm, but sometimes it is

hard. Some members of her old church were not very open and treated her poorly, she said. In her new church, Beautiful Savior, they are very supportive and tolerant.

When she was at a night class that she takes for college, she became good friends with a girl in the class. When the girl went to Verhei's MySpace page and found that she was bisexual, she asked Verhei why she didn't tell her.

"Well, you didn't tell me you were straight," Verhei replied. Her friend felt betrayed and seemed upset. Verhei said it bothers her that straight people don't have to come out as straight but those in the gay community feel obligated to give notice.

GLBT (gay/lesbian/bi/transsexual), teens in Spokane have several resource centers, like the Spokane Odyssey Youth Center (509-325-3637) or [www.teenwire.com](http://www.teenwire.com) for more information on GLBTQ issues.



Kennedy Krossen/ Staff Photographer

Samantha Verhei, 20, says she has received some hurtful comments concerning her bisexuality.

# Buddhists find peace through harmonious living

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**MT. SPOKANE**

In many Judeo-Christian beliefs, religion is about the people, and faith is more of a social activity than practice. For many, the allure is in the retreats, youth groups and the potlucks. At church, surrounded by family and friends, remaining devout seems simple. The next day however, after memories of sermons have become hazy and tepid, piety is not the first thing on people's minds.

Buddhist ideals have avoided this scenario for thousands of years. Followers across the globe have stated that Buddhism is more than mere religion.

"It's a philosophy in action. It's a way of life and an intimate way of seeing and relating to things," said Sicco Rood, a Buddhist practicing in the Spokane area. "It's not just going somewhere to a church or a temple, and you only practice it there. I like how it encourages integration of understanding and practice into daily life."

What separates Buddhism from the other religions is in the way it is imparted. Rather than reading from a book of concrete guidelines, Buddhism plants seeds of questioning.

"The traditional religion I grew up with

didn't work for me and wasn't satisfying. Understanding things on blind faith didn't appeal to me," Rood said.

In Buddhism, this perception is referred to as "enlightenment." Through meditation, discipline and dedication, it is believed that one can ultimately achieve peace and personal understanding.

An important aspect is the principle of "The Middle Way." It describes the balance of everything in action, in nature and in spirit. Finding this ultimate equilibrium is another step on the path to enlightenment.

While suggestions on how to structure lifestyles are certainly made, wise paths of actions aren't stated outright. Rather, these decisions are formed through a journey of personal discovery.

Detaching yourself from earthly desires is encouraged, in order to obtain freedom from earthly suffering. These vices include lust, anger, laziness, worry and doubt. It is believed that human suffering is derived from these desires. Realizing their emptiness is the only way to achieve true happiness. Consciously

avoiding these types of thoughts requires a continuous effort, making everyday encounters an exercise in faith.

However, ridding yourself of these temptations seems near to the realm of impossible. Yes, the life of a Buddhist can seem like nothing but an exercise in drudgery, if practicing means having to work so hard to shun habits of daily life.

It starts to seem especially difficult when you have to give up lazy Saturday mornings panting after the object of your affections or getting mad at the jerk who failed to repay the five bucks you lent out.

But Buddhism isn't about the "having to."

"People have to point themselves where they want to start, find out for themselves what works, and perhaps draw from the wisdom traditions they're most close to. There is no forcing or

converting," Rood said.

For others like Rood unsatisfied with the literal interpretation of traditional, Abrahamic religions, Buddhism caught on, becoming increas-

ingly popular in the West.

In the early 1800s, with a surge of Chinese immigrants traveling to America, Buddhism was introduced to the United States. It caught the attention of intellectuals, including Thoreau, of Walden fame, who were captivated by its millenniums-old philosophies. Since then its popularity in the United States has waxed and waned.

Current estimates put Buddhism as the fourth largest religion in the world, behind Christianity, Hinduism and Islam. Today, Spokane boasts several temples and Buddhist gathering sites of its own.

Even for those reluctant to leave behind their past religious backgrounds, Buddhism still remains an option. The philosophies behind it coincide with those of many other common faiths. One can still practice the teachings of Buddha without ever converting. Even more appealing is the lack of confrontation Buddhists face with other religious affiliations.

"It's understanding. It's cultivating wisdom and compassion and moment-to-moment mindfulness of one's thoughts, speech and actions. Therefore it doesn't separate from other religions. It isn't in conflict with science or other religion," Rood said. "I don't necessarily say 'I am a Buddhist.' It's better to just be human first, because that is something we all share."



Caitlin Harris/ Staff Photographer

## HOW TO PREDICT YOUR FUTURE

BY SOPHIA LAWHEAD

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LEWIS AND CLARK

High school is the time when many young people begin to look towards the future and what careers they could possibly pursue. Here is a useful career-aptitude quiz to help you in your search for the perfect job.

**You're spending spring break in New York City. The first thing(s) you pack is/are:**

- A) Your First Aid kit
- B) Your Bible or other religious gear
- C) Your best travel mugs
- D) Stock tips
- E) An extra duffle bag, so you can bring all the shoes you buy back home

**Your favorite movie is:**

- A) Patch Adams
- B) Saved!
- C) Reality Bites
- D) Wall Street
- E) Zoolander

**A person walking down the hall in front of you falls and scrapes their knee. You:**

- A) Squirt him with your travel-sized tube of Neosporin
- B) Pray for his knee's forgiveness
- C) Laugh so hard you choke on your caramel macchiato
- D) Advise him to sue
- E) Tell him that the new rip in his jeans is all the rage in Paris and Milan

**You could not live without:**

- A) Clogs
- B) The good Lord above
- C) Sugar-Free Hazelnut Lattes
- D) Your day planner
- E) Marc Jacobs

**Your idol is:**

- A) Florence Nightingale
- B) God
- C) The person who invented Starbucks

- D) Oprah
- E) Kate Moss, although sometimes you cheat on her with the Olsen twins

**Your favorite thing to read is:**

- A) The Journal of the American Medical Association
- B) The Good Book
- C) Ironic poetry scrawled on bathroom walls
- D) The Wall Street Journal
- E) Vogue

**Your darkest secret is:**

- A) You vomit and faint at the sight of blood
- B) You once went to a Marilyn Manson show and you LOVED it.
- C) You hate green tea
- D) Your one o'clock "power lunches" are actually lonely trips to Burger King
- E) Sometimes, in the dead of night, you buy your underwear from K-Mart

## Results

Mostly A's

Be a Nurse!

Your hatred of germs and caring attitude make you the perfect applicant for a job as a nurse. Life as a nurse may not always be as glamorous as Grey's Anatomy, or have as good of a soundtrack, but you will find assured happiness in cleaning up bodily fluids, performing colonoscopies and wearing saucy, leopard-print scrubs. For a full list of things you should be wary of, including floods, falling helicopters, escaped convicts and John Stamos--please watch seasons one through thirty-six of ER.

Mostly B's

Be a Clergyman!

You are a thoughtful and mild-mannered individual much of the time, but when it comes to your faith, you are fired up like a flaming bag of microwave popcorn, ready to burst with good morals and zeal. You will go far if you remember to keep your mind open, and to always keep the collection plate away from the scruffy looking delinquents.

Mostly C's

Be a Barista!

Man, you don't have a lot of goals, but you have a lot of heart, and in a crazy world like

this, that's what really matters. Don't be discouraged by your parents, teachers, friends and strangers telling you to get a real job, because what is real anyways? What is truth? Is there truth? Is this even happening right now? As a barista you'll have time to contemplate that, and many other things, while grinding all those decaf lattes with soy.

Mostly D's

Be a High-Flying Executive!

Let's get down to business: you've got goals, you've got a briefcase, and you know how to tie a tie. You're already well on your way to become a powerful business leader with zillions of dollars at your every beck and call. But a word of caution: don't become too greedy, for either clout or coinage, because you don't want to end up like poor Martha, now do you?

Mostly E's

Be an International Style Icon!

You've been voted Best Dressed every year since second grade, and the year before that was only a fluke because that damn Tammy Schnitzelbaker rigged the elections. Sometimes you feel pity for the sad, polar-fleece wearing citizens of Spokane, who do not yet understand the glamour of wearing trash bags as headbands, but when they're all fighting over the paisley trash-bags-slash-headbands down at The Gap, you will be having the last laugh.