

## TEEN TALK (an original column from The Daily Record)

May 1, 2005

Hey! We're waiting to hear *your* questions! Put "Teentalk" in the subject and email us: teentalk@the-daily-record.com

**YOU:** Ever since the shootings at Red Lake High School, I've been afraid of going to school. I still go—I *have* to—but I'm always looking over my shoulder. The other day I heard a clicking sound that I imagined might be a gun, and I got so scared the teacher asked if I was sick. I know I should just let it go. I wish I could. Or I wish I could just stay home and not have to go to school.

**TEENTALK:** The news is scary these days, and sometimes it *is* really hard to just "let it go." Your feelings are perfectly normal—it's really common to take what we hear and personalize it. (Mention it to your friends and you're likely to find that you're not the only one worried about something happening at your school.) To get past it, you need to give it time and talk through your feelings—and keep talking until you finally do "let it go." (It *will* happen!) Open up to your parents, a school counselor, uncle, aunt...any adult you feel comfortable with. It may also help to keep reminding yourself that a kid who would do something like that is *deeply* troubled. Your odds of winning the lottery are probably greater than the odds that a student at your school is going to open fire. If the feelings don't fade in a few weeks, you may need to talk to a therapist. Bad things *do* happen—we can't deny it—but we can do our best to minimize the chances of anything happening to *us*. And we can try to enjoy each day without clouding it with constant worry and fear.

**YOU:** What do you do if you like a guy who does drugs and you've tried to stop him but you can't? What do I do?

**TEENTALK:** Kudos to you for trying to get him to stop—you're a great girlfriend for caring so much. The sad thing is that you can't make him stop. It's one of life's tough lessons: You can't control anyone's behavior but your own. If you've made it clear how you feel and he still keeps using...well, there's nothing more you can do. Not only that, as harsh as it seems, it's time to walk away. You can't keep hanging out with him. Not only does doing so increase the pressure on you to try what he's into, you could get into major trouble just for being there. What if he gets busted? You could get arrested right along with him, *even if you've never touched the stuff*. So, girlfriend, it's going to be rough riding for a while. Remind yourself *why* you're doing it—and it's worth a last ditch attempt to remind him, too! Maybe losing you will be the jolt he needs to bring him back down to earth once and for all. (You're obviously out of his league in good sense and maturity.) But if not, stick with it and follow through. You deserve so much better!