

Introduction by Dan Savage Journal

Dan describes his and his partner's journey to creating the *It Gets Better Project*. He also describes the people and events that inspired him to follow through on the process. Mr. Savage hopes to change the lives of LGBTQ+ youth who are being bullied and tormented in schools, at home, and in the community.

A Message from President Barack Obama Journal

President Obama assured youth that things will eventually get better. He also reminded youth to seek help from their support systems whenever that may be when dealing with hardships.

You Will Find Your People by Laurel Slongwhite Journal

Laurel encouraged youth to hold out and persevere. She tells readers that it may not get better right away but it will as time goes on and you find your people.

The Life Almost Lost by Bruce Ortiz Journal

Bruce was given a second chance at life after overdosing on pills. He explained that for him, he needed to hit rock bottom and then he realized what kind of support system he had. His support system has allowed him to become confident in himself and prosper.

In the Early Morning Rain by Jennifer Finney Boylan Journal

Jennifer described the beginning of her gender journey. She described the spiritual experience that changed her life for the better.

Something Has Changed Within Me by Gregory Maguire Journal

Gregory encouraged his readers to choose being themselves.

Action Makes It Better by Urvashi Vaid Journal

Urvashi described that activism in social justice issues allowed her life to "get better."

You Are a Rubber Band, My Friend by Brinae Lois Gaudet

Brinae uses the metaphor of a stressed rubber band as a metaphor for high school experiences for LGBTQ+ youth. She encourages youth to preserve and know your potential will be seen within the world.

G-d Believes in You by Bishop Gene Robinson Journal

Bishop Robinson explains that G-d loves all people. He ensures LGBTQ+ youth that the Church is changing and so is the world. He tells his readers that they are loved and accepted not only in the community but also by the Church and G-d.

The Person Worth Fighting For Is You by Alex R. Orue Journal

Alex encouraged readers to find themselves and be true to themselves. He also told readers that everyone will eventually find the person that makes them happy and they make happy too.

A Message from Ellen DeGeneres Journal

Ellen memorializes the lives of Tyler Clementi, Seth Walsh, Asher Brown, and Billy Lucas. She tells youth that the world will change, and they should be alive to see it.

Life Unfolds Exactly As It Should (But Not As You Planned) by Sean Blane and David Rosen Journal

Both Sean and David express that being gay has been a blessing for both of them as it has allowed them to adapt and read people.

It Gets Better for a British Soldier by Lance Corporal James Wharton Journal

Lance Corporal Wharton states that his experience with the British Army has been transforming. He explained that since he had come out, he was able to more effectively served his country as he could be himself more authentically.

Getting Stronger and Staying Alive by Gabrielle Rivera Journal

Gabrielle encourages youth to not take their own life as it is extremely important for them to all tell their stories. Additionally, she states that it doesn't get better, you just get stronger and more beautiful.

Coming Out of the Shtetl: Gay Orthodox, Jews by Marc Tannen, Chaim Levin, Ely Winkler, Justin Spiro, Moishie Rabinowitz, and Mordechai Levovitz Journal

This group of Jewish individuals all expressed in their own way that the Jewish community will accept them with open arms. Youth just need to find their group of friends, family, and community support system and everything will get better.

Going Back In by Michael Cunningham Journal

Michael shared his story of his tough experiences from as long as he could remember to age 17. After he went off to college, Michael realized that he could be more of himself than ever. He tells youth that friends will always be there to support you.

And the Emmy Goes to...by Barbara Gaines Journal

Barbara describes her experiences in coming to terms with her sexuality. She states that everyone has different paths and not one path is perfect. She urges youth to hang on and push through and it will slowly get better.

A Message from U.S. Secretary of State Hilary Rodham Clinton Journal

Clinton urged youth to stay strong, ask for help, and remember their lives are valuable.

This I Know for Sure by A.Y. Daring Journal

A.Y. Daring encourages youth to keep their head up and remember who supports you. Also they put into perspective that high school is only four years out of someone's life. They encourage them to push through that it will be better on the other side.

It Gets Better Broadway by Members of the Broadway and New York Theater Community Journal

The many individuals who shared their stories had a common theme. They said to think about dream futures because dreams do come true. They all also alluded to the statement of telling youth that “You matter.”

Rockin’ the Flannel Shirt by Krissy Mahan Journal

Krissy mentions that even in rural areas, it will get better. She states that the progress of it getting better may be slow but it will turn a corner and get better.

How it Got better for an Ordained Christian Minister by Professor Stephen V. Sprinkle Journal

Professor Sprinkle urges youth to never lose hope.

Out of the Darkness by Philip Deal Journal

Philip encourages youth to not give up until they get what they want and when life gets hard to turn to the one thing that you love most. For him, this attitude helped his life get better.

I Was a Teenage Lesbian by Alyson Bechdel Journal

Alyson discussed her journey of discovering her sexuality while in high school. She tells youth by continuing to be herself, it got better.

Something Special by Sia Furler Journal

Sia explains that at some point you will learn to love yourself and life will get better.

The Dinner Party by Adam Roberts Journal

Adam reminded readers that even when it seems like it may not get better, give the people around you some time to adjust. It will get better.

What I Wish I Knew by Ivan Coyote Journal

Ivan reminds readers that it gets better by you paving the way for it to be better. They encourage you to advocate for yourself and believe in yourself to make the world a better place for you and others.

Freedom from Fear by Michael Feinstein Journal

Michael tells youth to look for the difference between falsity of fear and ignorance, and their life purpose will evolve into love and peace. He also expressed that he wants youth to know that they are never alone.

A Message from Prime Minister David Cameron Journal

Prime Minister David Cameron urges youth to talk to someone, regardless of who it is and it will allow things to get better in the future.

You Will Meet People Who Celebrate You by Jenn and Erika Wagner-Martin Journal

Jenn and Erika both explain that as you are yourself, you realize that you are not that different from the people who bullied you in high school. With that said, by persevering and going about your life, you will meet people who love you and accept you.

An Identity Unfolded by Mark Ramirez Journal

Mark reminds youth that they are not alone. He also states that as you build your support system, it will get better.

A Message from Suze Orman Journal

Suze tells youth to hang in there, live their truth, and stick with their community and support system. By doing this, it will get better.

Brothers: It Gets Better by Lenox Magee, Rannon Harris, David Dodd, and Kean Ray Journal

The brothers accounts of their coming out stories and their message can be summarized by saying that they want youth to believe in themselves.

Drop Dead, Warlock by David Sedaris Journal

David encourages youth to not settle and surround yourself with people who love and support you.

Gwendolyn Gone by Meshell Ndegeocello Journal

Meshell describes her years throughout school and how her strength allowed her to become a better person. She told youth that if they are brave enough to not hate their tormentors, they will see a brighter side of life.

Growing Up Gay...and *Kinky* by Dart Journal

Dart explained that y=if you just hang on and focus on yourself, you will start to love and accept who you are.

The Biggest Gift by Stewart Taylor Journal

Stewart describes his coming to terms with his sexuality and coming out process. He wants youth to take away that if you are accepting of yourself and others it won't matter how many people are against you because you will always have yourself and your support system.

A Message from Senator Al Franken Journal

Senator Franken reminds youth that he knows middle and high school can be hard. He encourages youth that it will get better after high school and reminds them that there are people out in the world who care for them deeply.

Transsexual Prairie Girl by Tamsyn Waterhouse Journal

Tamsyn stated how powerful it is to admit who you are. She encourages youth to do so and right your support system.

Art from Rage by Jake Shears Journal

Jake reminds youth that they are special and they have a multitude to offer the world.

It Gets Better by Bashar Makhay Journal

Bashar tells youth that even through hard times, discussion and time will allow it to get better.

Too Good to Be True by Cameron Tuttle Journal

Cameron described her inner conflict of coming out being from a small town. She explains that everything has their own way of working things out and life gets better.

Journey to a Better Life by Juan Carlos Galan, MS Journal

Juan reminds youth that no matter how hard it gets that there will be people to love and support you regardless of what your family, friends, and community says.

The Gay Guy in the Band by Kevin Samuel Yee Journal

Kevin encourages youth to keep in mind that there is a place for them in the world. Everyone is special and deserves love.

Will I Grow Up to Be Paul Lynde? by Andy Cohen Journal

Andy states to youth that it will get better. Once you find yourself and become confident in yourself, the negative comments will no longer matter. He says that life will get better.

Finding Who I Am by Hunter Adeline Brady Journal

Hunter expresses that once you find a safe haven and a support system, life will begin to get better.

Community by Chaz Bono

Chaz reminds youth that there is nothing wrong with them and to hang in there. Additionally, they encouraged youth to live their truth and it will allow them to breathe and feel like life is getting better.

A Message from Nancy Pelosi Journal

Representative Pelosi informs youth that there are people in Congress working to pass laws that protect them. She encourages youth to keep their head up and that diversity is a strength of the United States.

Gunn's Golden Rules by Tim Gunn Journal

Tim tells youth to create a strong support system as it is very difficult to go through life alone. He states that by youth reaching out to talk to someone they know or at crisis hotlines, life will get better.

Perfect Just the Way You Are by Darren Hayes Journal

Darren reminds youth that they are perfect just the way they are. There is no reason for them to change because them being unique is who they are meant to be.

Where Happiness Is by Natalie Sperry Mandelin Journal

Natalie stated that creating a support system and a group of people who unconditionally love and accept you will dramatically help life improve.

Not-Normal by Michael K. Wells Journal

Michael described that his journey was about finding the right place and that felt like home. He stated that by youth finding their "home" that life could begin to get better.

Born This Way by Perez Hilton Journal

Perez tells youth that they are born as they should be. He states that youth should embrace who they are and if they are struggling to talk to someone but know it gets better.

Darn It by Kate Clinton Journal

Kate describes her journey of coming out to her community. She also states that she is not out and proud.

Look at the Moon by Agustin Cepeda Journal

Agustin encourages youth to educate themselves on the LGBTQ+ community. Additionally, they state that the world needs people like these youth.

Critical Shifts by Jesse Barnes Journal

Jesse encourages youth to remember their strength and worth. Also, he reminds that to not give up because there are people out there that will accept you for who you are.

For Aideybear by Ava Dodge Journal

Ava wrote in memoriam of Aiden Rivera-Schaeff who was bullied so severely for being transgender that he died by suicide. Ava thanks those who are spreading a positive message and participating in the *It Gets Better Project* for truly caring.

A Message from John Berry Journal

John Berry tells youth that even if their core support system does not support them right away that they will come around. Additionally, he states that youth can be anything they want to be as long as they learn to love themselves first.

The Show Must Go On by Kyle Dean Massey Journal

Kyle reminds youth that the best days of their lives are yet to come. He also states to never give up on your dreams.

Survival Tools by Ellen Forney Journal

Ellen illustrates that there are many ways for youth to deal with the anxiety, stress, and depression youth may face.

Dear Uncle Ronnie by randy roberts potts Journal

Randy describes his life growing up as a gay Evangelical Christian. Randy also wants youth to know that it gets better when you realize you can unapologetically be yourself.

My Office Wall by Trevor Corneil, MD Journal

Dr. Corneil reminds youth to hang in there. He states that what helped him get there was his will to survive and the support system he was lucky enough to build.

Keep on Livin' by JD Samson Journal

JD illustrates that no one can make you feel inferior because this is your time and your life.

It Gets Better *Because* You're a Little Different by Dave Holmes Journal

Dave encourages youth to remember that their time in isolation can be used to reflection how they want to spend their life and how they want to love. He also stated that it is a big world and it will eventually get better.

Unapologetically, Me by Demetrius Gittens Journal

Demetrius urges youth to come out when they are ready because it is extremely liberating. He also believes this can help things start to get better.

A Collective Voice by Gabe Milligan-Green, Addy Cahill, and Russell Peck Journal

The trio showed that there are challenges associated with identifying as gay, however, there is always someone in the world that will love and adore you.

I Didn't Always Wear a Tuxedo by Murray Hill Journal

Murray told youth that it got better for them when they created their own inclusive community, essentially a support system.

How I Got Over by Tuan N'Gai Journal

Tuan reminds youth to keep their head up and continue to fight for their basic human rights regardless of the wedding.

A “Better” Evolution by Joseph Odysseus Mastro Journal

Joseph admits that he was that kid in high school who threw around gay slurs. However, he admits now it's one of his biggest regrets. Now he is encouraging you to reach out to someone to talk and create a support system. It will get better.

Save Yourself, Save the World by Khris Brown Journal

Khris tells youth that people change and their perspectives develop as well. She suggests that it takes time until it gets better.

Becoming an Authentic Person by Nicholas Wheeler Journal

Nicholas expresses that all that matters is if you are a good person. Your sexual orientation should not impact how people look at you. He says that being open and honest about who you are allows it to get better.

On the Other Side by Jay A. Foxworthy and Bryan Leffew Journal

Both Jay and Bryan encourage youth to find their chosen family and push through adversity. They state that once you find your person after persevering life will get better and even feel like a dream.

Bully Me by Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum Journal

Rabbi Kleinbaum expresses that G-d has created us all to be unique and to be ourselves. She urges youth to continue to be proud of who they are.

To the Bullies by Tristian Jackson Journal

Tristian writes an open letter to all his past tormentors. He expresses that bullying others gets you absolutely nowhere but showing those who you bully that they are better than you and you will always be a loser.

The Good Fight by Kristel Yoneda Journal

Kristel encourages youth to talk to someone about how you are feeling. She states that your support system will allow life to get better.

A Message from Kevin Hague, MP Journal

Kevin Hague urges youth to be open and honest about who they are when they are ready. He also suggests that youth talk to parents, adults, and friends to build a solid support system.

Haters Can't Hate Someone Who Loves Themselves, and if They Do, Who Cares by Lynn Breedlove Journal

Lynn tells youth that they are lovable and have something no one else has to offer the world: their heart. He also reminds youth that they are not alone and it will get better.

Not Playing at a Cinema Near You by Rebecca Brown Journal

Rebecca encourages youth not to watch or believe what the mainstream media tells you about how a lesbian “should” look and be like. She also states that youth should be proud of who they are and who they become.

From “Faggot” to Field Biologist by Christopher A. Schmitt, PhD Journal

Dr. Schmitt discusses that it is extremely important to create a safe space for yourself.

It Got Better by Stephen D. Lorimor Journal

Stephen tells youth to persevere and find your community. By doing this, life will start to get better.

Our Parents as Allies by Lawrence Gullo, Fyodor Pavlov, Eileen Charbonneau, and Ed Gullo Journal

Eileen and Ed are parents and shared their perspectives. They expressed that each person is unique and that is how the world is supposed to be. Additionally, they urged youth to remember that even if a time is bad that it is only a moment in time and there are many more moments to come.

Lesbian Teacher Believes in You by Kristin Rivers Journal

Kristin expresses that youth are not alone. She also says that there are people out there who love and respect you. Kristin also reminds youth that they are needed and absolutely mean something.

Stepping Off the Sidelines by Wayne Knaub Journal

Wayne describes the journey of his father's acceptance. He states that it may take time for your parents to come around but it will get better.

My Own Worst Enemy by Jessica Leshnoff Journal

Jessica urges youth to not bully themselves into not accepting who they are. She tells youth that we all need to be here and deserve to be here.

You Are a Beloved Child of G-d by Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson Journal

Bishop Hanson tells youth that they are loved and there is a place for them in this world and in the Christian church.

Transgendered and Self-Educated in Maine by Jean Vermette Journal

Jean describes her experience in coming out as transgender. She states that it will get better by finding support systems. She also acknowledges that your family may not be a part of your support system but it will get better.

The Power of “You” by Luan Legacy Journal

Luan encourages other youth to stay strong and know that to experience happiness and love you must be alive.

It Gets Better for Small Towners, Too by Dwayne Steward Journal

Dwayne describes his coming out experience as a small townner in a conservative religious home. Additionally, he, like many others, suggests that youth build a support system within their community of their chosen family.

To Me: With Love and Squalor by Terry Galloway Journal

Terry describes her coming out experience and her years of self-loathing. She explains that life does get better. You will come to accept yourself and others will accept you too.

Happiness Is Inevitable by Henry Winfile Journal

Henry expresses that by being gay and showing you are proud, especially after high school, you are showing the bullies that they did not get the best of you. He also states that life after high school get infinitely better.

I Wish I'd Been Sassier! by Brian Gallivan, aka Gay Sassy Friend Journal

Brian uses a metaphor to describe his high school years to the rest of his life. He states that life is like a book, high school may be the bad part but the best part of the novel is yet to come.

Protect and Serve Loves Semper Fidelis by J.D. Davis and Allen D. Stone Journal

Both Allen and J.D. encourage youth to be themselves and not worry about how others perceive your sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Doors of Acceptance by Shaun Ridgway Journal

Shaun described her experience in high school being outed. She also urged youth to ignore the bullies and wholeheartedly accept yourself.

Hope Out of Tragedy by Matthew Anthony Houck Journal

Matthew used his strength to make a difference at his high school, Columbine. He started a GSA, that was able to begin to make a difference during his time there. He also described that both high school and the closet are scary places to be, but by coming out his life started to get better.

Patience Makes Perfect...Sense by Angelo D'Agostino Journal

Angelo reminds youth that there is a large loving community out there waiting for you.

Christian LGBT Kids: You're Part of the Plan by Raven Mardirosian Journal

Raven expresses that LGBTQIAP+ people are put into this world to help individuals expand their limitations and their perspectives.

Terrible Day by Patrick Murphy Journal

Patrick describes his turning point in life that allowed him to come out to all of his family and friends. By doing so, he was surprised by the unconditional support he received.

The Worst of Both Worlds by Michelle Faid Journal

Michelle describes her senior prom experience in high school. She explains that even if high school is a miserable time period, it gets better after high school because people only care about what type of person you are, not who you love.

Closets on Fire by Anthony Antoine Journal

Anthony describes his revolution that it is okay to be gay. He listens to "Chante's Got a Man" and is instantly inspired to write and record his CD *Closets on Fire*. Anthony says that by following your dreams and realizing there is a support system, that it will get better.

The King Brother by Dick and Mark S. King Journal

Dick and Mark explain to youth that it doesn't matter when, how, or to who you come out to. All that matters is that you feel safe and confident in doing so. They state that once you come out things will begin to get better.

Community Found by Taylor Bailey Journal

Taylor makes a suggest for youth that they find a group or community, like art or theater, that will unconditionally accept them for who they are.

From Scared to Proud: The Journey of a Gay Medical Student by Jake Kleinman Journal

Jake reminds youth to believe in yourself and your potential. He also states that it will get better and there are people who truly care about you.

Authentic Self by Sara Sperling Journal

Sara describes her coming out experience to her peers in her sorority. She also encourages youth that it will get better and people will come to accept you even if it takes a little time for them to adjust.

You Can Live a Life That's Worth Living by Kate Bornstein Journal

Kate Bornstein describes that what makes life get better is doing whatever it takes to make your life worth living without being mean.

Epilogue by Terry Miller Journal

Terry wraps up the book by reminding youth that he understands middle and high school can be hard. However, he wants youth to know that there are a multitude of people that went through what they are experiencing now and who love, support, and are prepared to fight for our rights.