

My Big Fat Secret

How Jenna Takes Control of Her Emotions and Eating



by Lynn R. Schechter

illustrated by Jason Chin

From: Lynn R. Schechter, PhD
To: Reader

Every kid just wants to fit in, to be accepted and liked by others. Nobody wants to be teased or picked on or bullied. That's the worst. If you're an overweight kid, then you know how hard it can be just to get through each day. Other kids at school and sometimes even your own family members can make you feel ugly, self-conscious, or ashamed of how you look and who you are. People might even make comments about what you eat and say things like, "You really don't need to eat that, do you?" or even worse, call you mean names.

This is Jenna's story in *My Big Fat Secret*. When you're like Jenna, you feel so hurt that you do the one thing that always seems to make you feel better—at least for a while—you EAT! This is what happens in Jenna's world. She eats to deal with her feelings, even though she realizes that it only makes her problem of being overweight even worse. She is caught in a vicious cycle of emotional eating, just like so many overweight kids are.

With the help of her friends, family, teachers, and professionals, Jenna finds healthy ways to deal with her feelings and that she can stop emotional eating. She realizes that she's not a bad person because she is overweight and that she is not alone. Jenna takes control of her emotions and eating and begins to make basic changes in her daily life which help her to become a healthier and happier girl.

If you are an overweight kid, please know that you are not alone. You can change what you do, take charge of your feelings, and get control over your eating. It won't be easy at first, that's for sure. But once you make up your mind, you can do it! You really can!

Your friend,

Dr. Schechter

AUGUST

From: Sara
To: Jenna
Sent: Sunday, August 30, 1:13 PM
Subject: Checking in cuz
Attachment: Funland.jpg



Hey Jenna! How's my favorite cousin? I haven't talked to you in forever, since my 15th b-day. One more year and I'm driving! Ok, I'll have a learner's permit, but whatever. How is everything? How are guitar lessons going? I'm sure you're an even more amazing player than you were the last time you played for me. Anyway, fill me in on your entire life.

Life here is fine, not too exciting. Gabe is as annoying as ever – you know how little brothers are. I'm off, Mom's calling me. Write back...right now! And check out the pic of us from Funland! Enjoy!

XOXOXO

Sarita



From: Jenna
To: Sara
Sent: Monday, August 31, 5:44 PM
Subject: RE: Checking in cuz



Hi cuz! I'm so sorry I've been totally lame about writing :(It's been so long and I just don't have good excuses so this is gonna be a long update :) I think of you a lot and wonder how you're doing out there in California, with all that sun and stuff, while I'm stuck here in NY. I so wish I lived out there near you, then we could go to Funland ALL THE TIME! Thanks for sending the pic of us from my last trip! It was so awesome and fun ;) I'll have to ask Mom and Dad to plan another trip soon!

So let's see, what's been going on over gere? (I meant here! LOL! I'm having a hard time typing b/c I still have chip stuff on my fingers!) I went to camp this summer and took guitar classes. Camp was okay but just like always I didn't fit in with the other girls. I made some friends but the really popular girls didn't like me. I don't know why...but I don't really like them either. They are so fake and so perfect...and you know I'm not that! So that was kind of hard. But I did make a couple of friends and I also really liked my counselor Sandra – she was so cool. It's a bummer that summer is totally over.

Can you believe I'm 12 now and in 7th GRADE! I used to think of the kids in 7th grade as being so much older and now I'm one of them! That's like I always think of you as being so much older since you're almost 16 (!)...I can only dream of being as cool as you are when I'm that OLD! LOL!!

Ciao for now,
J.

From: Sara
To: Jenna
Sent: Monday, August 31, 6:02 PM
Subject: RE: RE: Checking in cuz



Very funny cuz! Sixteen is cool though. I'll send you an invite to my sweet 16. Keep your fingers crossed and maybe your parents will fly you out here to celebrate with me!!

Sorry to hear that some of the girls weren't that nice at camp. I went through that. Middle school girls can be so mean. Sounds like you handled it well though. Trust me, high school is better!

Adios,
Sarita

From: Jenna
To: Sara
Sent: Monday, August 31, 6:19 PM
Subject: RE: RE: RE: Checking in cuz



I was really nervous about going to middle school, but so far it seems pretty okay. Thank goodness at least I have my best friend Chris. I think you met him last time you were out here, the guy with the cute smile :) We go to different schools but he's in my guitar classes. It's really awesome having someone like him here who likes the same things as I do, like music and animals. I know you like that stuff too, but you're so far away :(We both like to practice playing our guitars a lot. Chris is always there no matter what is going on in my life, and I was just realizing that we've known each other for 7 years – since kindergarten! I wish we went to the same middle school so we could see each other every day.

But my main problem still has not gone away. And you of all people know what that problem is...my weight and how big I

am compared to the other girls. It's been really hard. I just feel so down sometimes and like everyone's always looking at me and thinking how gross I look. I hate it. I REALLY, REALLY hate it!!!! And I HATE how I look too. I hate looking in the mirror.

6th grade was just so tough – kids at school were so mean to me. Especially in gym. These girls Allyson and Madison were the worst! Calling me names like Miss Piggy and Jenna the Hut. I really hope middle school is better. Bigger school, more people – maybe I can just kind of disappear. I'm trying to look forward to it, but I have a feeling things won't be that different...I hope they will be. I hope!

From: Sara

To: Jenna

Sent: Monday, August 31, 6:36 PM

Subject: RE: RE: RE: RE: Checking in Cuz



Things will get better, Jenna. I can feel it! And I know you think you're kind of big, and maybe you can lose some weight, but you're not HUGE! You remind me of my friend Marybelle who was also a little bit big. She did different things so she could feel better. Like, she started to exercise more and to eat different things – healthy stuff, like fruits and vegetables, instead of junk. Just something to think about Jen!