

# Perspectives



Published in *Perspectives* in 2009 by Future Leaders ([www.futureleaders.com.au](http://www.futureleaders.com.au))

## White Noise

Naomi Cunningham

**It starts** with anger. You wake up already seething with resentment at the day because you know you're going to have to struggle through it. However, depression isn't angry, nor is it painful. It is simply a lack of existence. You feel nothing, you absorb nothing and you personally see yourself as nothing. There is no reason to cry, there is no reason to smile, just a neutral feeling that is absurdly strong. I like to think of it as white noise, the kind of silence that is so powerful it shatters you.

As she drives me to the clinic my mother is quiet, even though I can see a million questions desperately trying to escape from her mind. She stopped asking what was wrong a long time ago after realising she would not receive a detailed response on my deepest thoughts and darkest feelings, because not only does she ask me that question; I ask myself. Even if I could find words that compare to how I feel, she would have to listen for weeks to hear it all, and she would have to live for a lifetime to find the empathy to understand.

I only just finish reading my first instalment of outdated Hollywood trash when my name is called. 'Emily Golder? Down the hallway and second on the left', the receptionist shows me to the door that will soon become very familiar to me, as I would be seeing it three arduous days a week. Her directions are followed by a smile with an intention to make me feel comfortable as she knows I am about to be emotionally drained. However, I know a fake smile when I see one. I guess you could call me an expert.

Average height, thick mid-length brown hair, wide and attentive eyes and dressed even more elegantly than the dark-green leather chesterfield on which she is perched. 'Hi Emily, I'm Carrie.' Unlike the receptionist, her smile that follows seems genuine. Her grin is chased by a sparkle from the light in her eyes that is something I have never been able to master, due to the simple fact that it requires inner energy; life. She lifts her hand, motioning towards the slightly smaller chesterfield chair across from hers. 'Take a seat, Emily.'

As I sit down, I quickly scan her office. That's when I saw it, a blank white notepad with a pen placed in the binding ready for my tainted words to stain the clean page. They all have them, the innocuous paper that would seem harmless enough, but a notepad symbolises that you are not sitting comfortably sharing your thoughts and feelings. It symbolises that you are practically on the stand in court being probed, and worst of all; analysed. I expect to find the seemingly regulation pot plant, and fail. I now approve of her for the absence of the plant, slightly forgive her for the notepad and reward her for being my first counsellor to show any true heed; for once in the past two years, I am finally going to offer myself as an open book. My spine will crack as my crisp pages begin to reveal my enigma; a dark mind.

I am prepared to talk, but I then realise the only thing sitting inside my head is fog and I have no idea where to start. She obviously starts to sense I am having trouble, so she asks me a question. This is the first question that every counselor seems to think would be the simplest, 'When did you start feeling like this?' It isn't exactly the type of thing you mark down in your diary; it's like the rain. It starts lightly and there is no harm done. You know it will get worse, but now it appears to be too late — it falls heavier and heavier and eventually all you can do is wait for it to stop. The only difference is you know the rain will stop; however, in your mind, you feel as though there is no light at the end of the tunnel; there is no way out.

When our time is up, relief rushes over me knowing that I can once again close up and not have to try and explain myself

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to someone who will never understand. I disregard her endless number of diplomas. Her mind isn't geared the same as mine.

On the way home I walk through the park and watch as I am reminded of the happiness I have trouble remembering. The people in the park showing such joy baffle me as they make it look so effortless. My favourite infatuation is whether I ever enjoyed anything more than forceful joy. My mind doesn't stretch far enough to remember when a laugh flowed with ease or a smile flourished from any simple bliss.

My jealousy kills their smiles that radiate like the sun that shines upon them. They smile the way that is felt, it warms your body — flooding you with elation. I stand in the park, watching them shine; wishing the clouds would form so they can feel the same rain as me.

I arrive home and wander into my bedroom exhausted from living. I collapse on my bed hoping to catch up on the few hours' sleep my body wouldn't allow last night. My eyes could sleep for days, but my body seems restless. I lay there, frustrated by the fact that my mind has become so isolated that not even my body will cooperate. I feel useless, and usually tears would begin to glide over my cheeks. However, I can't remember the last time I cried. I miss the trail of saltwater left on my face; I miss feeling.



**Naomi Cunningham** wrote this in 2008 when she was in Year 11 at Annesley College in South Australia.