

What Our Annex Family Is Interested In

(A Systematic Survey of Courses and Reading Matter)

Mr. van Daan. No courses; looks up many things in Knaur's Encyclopedia and Lexicon; likes to read detective stories, medical books and love stories, exciting or trivial.

Mrs. van Daan. A correspondence course in English; likes to read biographical novels and occasionally other kinds of novels.

Mr. Frank. Is learning English (Dickens!) and a bit of Latin; never reads novels, but likes serious, rather dry descriptions of people and places.

Mrs. Frank. A correspondence course in English; reads everything except detective stories.

Mr. Dussel. Is learning English, Spanish and Dutch with no noticeable results; reads everything; goes along with the opinion of the majority.

Peter van Daan. Is learning English, French (correspondence course), shorthand in Dutch, English and German, commercial correspondence in English, woodworking, economics and sometimes math; seldom reads, sometimes geography.

Margot Frank. Correspondence courses in English, French and Latin, shorthand in English, German and Dutch, trigonometry, solid geometry, mechanics, physics, chemistry, algebra, geometry, English literature, French literature, German literature, Dutch literature, bookkeeping, geography, modern history, biology, economics; reads everything, preferably on religion and medicine.

Anne Frank. Shorthand in French, English, German and Dutch, geometry, algebra, history, geography, art history, mythology, biology, Bible history, Dutch literature; likes to read biographies, dull or exciting, and history books (sometimes novels and light reading).

Friday, May 19, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

I felt rotten yesterday. Vomiting (and that from Anne!), headache, stomachache and anything else you can imagine. I'm feeling better today. I'm famished, but I think I'll skip the brown beans we're having for dinner.

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Saturday, May 20, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Last night when I came down from the attic, I noticed, the moment I entered the room, that the lovely vase of carnations had fallen over. Mother was down on her hands and knees mopping up the water and Margot was fishing my papers off the floor. "What happened?" I asked with anxious foreboding, and before they could reply, I assessed the damage from across the room. My entire genealogy file, my note books, my books, everything was afloat. I nearly cried, and I was so upset I started speaking German. I can't remember a word, but according to Margot I babbled something about "unlíoersehbarer Schaden, schrecklich, entsetzlich, nie zu ersetzen"* [* Incalculable loss, terrible, awful, irreplaceable.] and much more. Father burst out laughing and Mother and Margot joined in, but I felt like crying because all my work and elaborate notes were lost.

I took a closer look and, luckily, the "incalculable loss" wasn't as bad as I'd expected. Up in the attic I carefully peeled apart the sheets of paper that were stuck together and hung them on the clothesline to dry. It was such a funny sight, even I had to laugh. Maria de' Medici alongside Charles V, William of Orange and Marie Antoinette. "It's a disgrace,"* Mr. van Daan joked. [An affront to racial purity.] After entrusting my papers to Peter's care, I went back downstairs.

"Which books are ruined?" I asked Margot, who was going through them.

"Algebra," Margot said.



But as luck would have it, my algebra book wasn't entirely ruined. I wish it had fallen upright in the vase. I've never loathed any book as much as that one. Inside the front cover are the names of at least twenty girls who had it before I did. It's old, yellowed, full of scribbles, crossed-out words and revisions. The next time I'm in a wicked mood, I'm going to tear the darned thing to pieces!

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Monday, May 22, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

On May 20, Father lost his bet and had to give five jars of yogurt to Mrs. van Daan: the invasion still hasn't begun. I can safely say that all of Amsterdam, all



of Holland, in fact the entire western coast of Europe, all the way down to Spain, are talking about the invasion day and night, debating, making bets and . . . hoping. The suspense is rising to fever pitch; by no means has everyone we think of as "good" Dutch people kept their faith in the English, not everyone thinks the English bluff is a masterful strategic move. Oh no, people want deeds-great, heroic deeds. No one can see farther than the end of their nose, no one gives a thought to the fact that the British are fighting for their own country and their own people; everyone thinks it's England's duty to save Holland, as quickly as possible. What obligations do the English have toward us? What have the Dutch done to deserve the generous help they so clearly expect? Oh no, the Dutch are very much mistaken. The English, despite their bluff, are certainly no more to blame for the war than all the other countries, large and small, that are now occupied by the Germans. The British are not about to offer their excuses; true, they were sleeping during the years Germany was rearming itself, but all the other countries, especially those bordering on Germany, were asleep too. England and the rest of the world have discovered that burying your head in the sand doesn't work, and now each of them, especially England, is having to pay a heavy price for its ostrich policy.

No country sacrifices its men without reason, and certainly not in the interests of another, and England is no exception. The invasion, liberation and freedom will come someday; yet England, not the occupied territories, will choose the moment. To our great sorrow and dismay, we've heard that many people have changed their attitude toward us Jews. We've been told that anti-Semitism has cropped up in circles where once it would have been unthinkable. This fact has affected us all very, very deeply. The reason for the hatred is understandable, maybe even human, but that doesn't make it right. According to the Christians, the Jews are blabbing their secrets to the Germans, denouncing their helpers and causing them to suffer the dreadful fate and punishments that have already been meted out to so many. All of this is true. But as with everything, they should look at the matter from both sides: would Christians act any differently if they were in our place? Could anyone, regardless of whether they're Jews or Christians, remain silent in the face of German pressure? Everyone knows it's practically impossible, so why do they ask the impossible of the Jews? It's being said in underground circles that the German Jews who immigrated to Holland before the war and have now been sent to Poland shouldn't be allowed to return here. They were granted the right to asylum in Holland, but once Hitler is gone, they should go back to Germany.

When you hear that, you begin to wonder why we're fighting this long and difficult war. We're always being told that we're fighting for freedom, truth and justice! The war isn't even over, and already there's dissension and Jews are regarded as lesser beings. Oh, it's sad, very sad that the old adage has been confirmed for the umpteenth time: "What one Christian does is his own responsibility, what one Jew does reflects on all Jews." To be honest, I can't understand how the Dutch, a nation of good, honest, upright people, can sit in judgment on us the way they do. On us-the most oppressed, unfortunate and pitiable people in all the world.

I have only one hope: that this anti-Semitism is just a passing thing, that the Dutch will show their true colors, that they'll never waver from what they know in their hearts to be just, for this is unjust! And if they ever carry out this terrible threat, the meager handful of Jews still left in Holland will have to go. We too will have to shoulder our bundles and move on, away from this beautiful country, which once so kindly took us in and now turns its back on us.

I love Holland. Once I hoped it would become a fatherland to me, since I had lost my own. And I hope so still!

Yours, Anne M. Frank


Thursday, May 25, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Bep's engaged! The news isn't much of a surprise, though none of us are particularly pleased. Bertus may be a nice, steady, athletic young man, but Bep doesn't love him, and to me that's enough reason to advise her against marrying him. Bep's trying to get ahead in the world, and Bertus is pulling her back; he's a laborer, without any interests or any desire to make something of himself, and I don't think that'll make Bep happy. I can understand Bep's wanting to put an end to her indecision; four weeks ago she decided to write him off, but then she felt even worse.

So she wrote him a letter, and now she's engaged.

There are several factors involved in this engagement. First, Bep's sick father, who likes Bertus very much. Second, she's the oldest of the Voskuijl girls and her mother teases her about being an old maid. Third, she's just turned twenty-four, and that matters a great deal to Bep.



Mother said it would have been better if Bep had simply had an affair with Bertus. I don't know, I feel sorry for Bep and can understand her loneliness. In any case, they can get married only after the war, since Bertus is in hiding, or at any rate has gone underground. Besides, they don't have a penny to their name and nothing in the way of a hope chest. What a sorry prospect for Bep, for whom we all wish the best. I only hope Bertus improves under her influence, or that Bep finds another man, one who knows how to appreciate her!

Yours, Anne M. Frank

THE SAME DAY

There's something happening every day. This morning Mr. van Hoeven was arrested. He was hiding two Jews in his house. It's a heavy blow for us, not only because those poor Jews are once again balancing on the edge of an abyss, but also because it's terrible for Mr. van Hoeven. The world's been turned upside down. The most decent people are being sent to concentration camps, prisons and lonely cells, while the lowest of the low rule over young and old, rich and poor. One gets caught for black marketeering, another for hiding Jews or other unfortunate souls. Unless you're a Nazi, you don't know what's going to happen to you from one day to the next. Mr. van Hoeven is a great loss to us too. Bep can't possibly lug such huge amounts of potatoes all the way here, nor should she have to, so our only choice is to eat fewer of them. I'll tell you what we have in mind, but it's certainly not going to make life here any more agreeable. Mother says we'll skip breakfast, eat hot cereal and bread for lunch and fried potatoes for dinner and, if possible, vegetables or lettuce once or twice a week. That's all there is. We're going to be hungry, but nothing's worse than being caught.

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Friday, May 26, 1944

My dearest Kitty,

At long, long last, I can sit quietly at my table before the crack in the window frame and write you everything, everything I want to say. I feel more miserable than I have in months. Even after the break-in I didn't feel so utterly broken, inside and out. On the one hand, there's the news about Mr. van Hoeven, the Jewish question (which is discussed in detail by everyone in the house), the invasion (which is so long in coming), the awful food, the tension, the miserable atmosphere, on the other hand, there's Bep's engagement, the

Pentecost reception, the flowers, Mr. Kugler's birthday, cakes and stories about cabarets, movies and concerts. That gap, that enormous gap, is always there. One day we're laughing at the comical side of life in hiding, and the next day (and there are many such days), we're frightened, and the fear, tension and despair can be read on our faces.

Miep and Mr. Kugler bear the greatest burden for us, and for all those in hiding-Miepin everything she does and Mr. Kugler through his enormous responsibility for the eight of us, which is sometimes so overwhelming that he can hardly speak from the pent-up tension and strain. Mr. Kleiman and Bep also take very good care of us, but they're able to put the Annex out of their minds, even if it's only for a few hours or a few days. They have their own worries, Mr. Kleiman with his health and Bep with her engagement, which isn't looking very promising at the moment. But they also have their outings, their visits with friends, their everyday lives as ordinary people, so that the tension is sometimes relieved, if only for a short while, while ours never is, never has been, not once in the two years we've been here. How much longer will this increasingly oppressive, unbearable weight press down on us?

The drains are clogged again. We can't run the water, or if we do, only a trickle; we can't flush the toilet, so we have to use a toilet brush; and we've been putting our dirty water into a big earthenware jar. We can manage for today, but what will happen if the plumber can't fix it on his own? The Sanitation Department can't come until Tuesday. Miep sent us a raisin bread with "Happy Pentecost" written on top. It's almost as if she were mocking us, since our moods and cares are far from "happy."

We've all become more frightened since the van Hoesen business. Once again you hear "shh" from all sides, and we're doing everything more quietly. The police forced the door there; they could just as easily do that here too! What will we do if we're ever... no, I mustn't write that down. But the question won't let itself be pushed to the back of my mind today; on the contrary, all the fear I've ever felt is looming before me in all its horror.

I had to go downstairs alone at eight this evening to use the bathroom. There was no one down there, since they were all listening to the radio. I wanted to be brave, but it was hard. I always feel safer upstairs than in that huge, silent house; when I'm alone with those mysterious muffled sounds from upstairs and the honking of horns in the street, I have to hurry and remind myself where I am to keep from getting the shivers. Miep has been acting much nicer toward us

since her talk with Father. But I haven't told you about that yet. Miep came up one afternoon all flushed and asked Father straight out if we thought they too were infected with the current anti-Semitism.

Father was stunned and quickly talked her out of the idea, but some of Miep's suspicion has lingered on. They're doing more errands for us now and showing more of an interest in our troubles, though we certainly shouldn't bother them with our woes. Oh, they're such good, noble people! I've asked myself again and again whether it wouldn't have been better if we hadn't gone into hiding, if we were dead now and didn't have to go through this misery, especially so that the others could be spared the burden. But we all shrink from this thought. We still love life, we haven't yet forgotten the voice of nature, and we keep hoping, hoping for. . . everything.

Let something happen soon, even an air raid. Nothing can be more crushing than this anxiety. Let the end come, however cruel; at least then we'll know whether we are to be the victors or the vanquished.

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Wednesday, May 31, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday it was too hot to hold my fountain pen, which is why I couldn't write to you. Friday the drains were clogged, Saturday they were fixed. Mrs. Kleiman came for a visit in the afternoon and told us a lot about Jopiejshe and Jacque van Maarsen who are in the same hockey club. Sunday Bep dropped by to make sure there hadn't been a break-in and stayed for breakfast. Monday (a holiday because of Pentecost), Mr. Gies served as the Annex watchman, and Tuesday we were finally allowed to open the windows. We've seldom had a Pentecost weekend that was so beautiful and warm. Or maybe "hot" is a better word. Hot weather is horrible in the Annex. To give you an idea of the numerous complaints, I'll briefly describe these sweltering days.

Saturday: "Wonderful, what fantastic weather," we all said in the morning. "If only it weren't quite so hot," we said in the afternoon, when the windows had to be shut.

Sunday: "The heat's unbearable, the butter's melting, there's not a cool spot anywhere in the house, the bread's drying out, the milk's going sour, the

windows can't be opened. We poor outcasts are suffocating while everyone else is enjoying their Pentecost." (According to Mrs. van D.)

Monday: "My feet hurt, I have nothing cool to wear, I can't do the dishes in this heat!" Grumbling from early in the morning to late at night. It was awful.

I can't stand the heat. I'm glad the wind's come up today, but that the sun's still shining.

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Friday, June 2, 1944

Dear Kitty,

"If you're going to the attic, take an umbrella with you, preferably a large one!" This is to protect you from "household showers." There's a Dutch proverb: "High and dry, safe and sound," but it obviously doesn't apply to wartime (guns!) and to people in hiding (cat box!). Mouschi's gotten into the habit of relieving herself on some newspapers or between the cracks in the floor boards, so we have good reason to fear the splatters and, even worse, the stench. The new Moortje in the warehouse has the same problem. Anyone who's ever had a cat that's not housebroken can imagine the smells, other than pepper and thyme, that permeate this house.

I also have a brand-new prescription for gunfire jitters: When the shooting gets loud, proceed to the nearest wooden staircase. Run up and down a few times, making sure to stumble at least once. What with the scratches and the noise of running and falling, you won't even be able to hear the shooting, much less worry about it. Yours truly has put this magic formula to use, with great success!

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Monday, June 5, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

New problems in the Annex. A quarrel between Dussel and the Franks over the division of butter. Capitulation on the part of Dussel.

The van Daans don't see why we should bake a spice cake for Mr. Kugler's birthday when we can't have one ourselves. All very petty. Mood upstairs: bad. Mrs. van D. has a cold. Dussel caught with brewer's yeast tablets, while we've got none.

The Fifth Army has taken Rome. The city neither destroyed nor bombed. Great propaganda for Hitler.

Very few potatoes and vegetables. One loaf of bread was moldy.

Scharminkeltje (name of new warehouse cat) can't stand pepper. She sleeps in the catbox and does her business in the wood shavings. Impossible to keep her.

Bad weather. Continuous bombing of Pas de Calais and the west coast of France. No one buying dollars. Gold even less interesting.

The bottom of our black money box is in sight. What are we going to live on next month?

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Tuesday, June 6, 1944

My dearest Kitty,

"This is D Day," the BBC announced at twelve. "This is the day." The invasion has begun!

This morning at eight the British reported heavy bombing of Calais, Boulogne, LeHavre and Cherbourg, as well as Pas de Calais (as usual). Further, as a precautionary measure for those in the occupied territories, everyone living within a zone of twenty miles from the coast was warned to prepare for bombardments. Where possible, the British will drop pamphlets an hour ahead of time.

According to the German news, British paratroopers have landed on the coast of France. "British landing craft are engaged in combat with German naval units," according to the BBC.

Conclusion reached by the Annex while breakfasting at nine: this is a trial landing, like the one two years ago in Dieppe. BBC broadcast in German, Dutch, French and other languages at ten: The invasion has begun! So this is the "real" invasion. BBC broadcast in German at eleven: speech by Supreme Commander General Dwight Eisenhower. BBC broadcast in English: "This is D Day." General Eisenhower said to the French people: "Stiff fighting will come now, but after this the victory. The year 1944 is the year of complete victory. Good luck!"

BBC broadcast in English at one: 11,000 planes are shuttling back and forth or standing by to land troops and bomb behind enemy lines; 4,000 landing craft

and small boats are continually arriving in the area between Cherbourg and Le Havre. English and American troops are already engaged in heavy combat. Speeches by Gerbrandy, the Prime Minister of Belgium, King Haakon of Norway, de Gaulle of France, the King of England and, last but not least, Churchill.

A huge commotion in the Annex! Is this really the beginning of the long-awaited liberation? The liberation we've all talked so much about, which still seems too good, too much of a fairy tale ever to come true? Will this year, 1944, bring us victory? We don't know yet. But where there's hope, there's life. It fills us with fresh courage and makes us strong again. We'll need to be brave to endure the many fears and hardships and the suffering yet to come. It's now a matter of remaining calm and steadfast, of gritting our teeth and keeping a stiff upper lip! France, Russia, Italy, and even Germany, can cry out in agony, but we don't yet have that right!

Oh, Kitty, the best part about the invasion is that I have the feeling that friends are on the way. Those terrible Germans have oppressed and threatened us for so long that the thought of friends and salvation means everything to us! Now it's not just the Jews, but Holland and all of occupied Europe. Maybe, Margot says, I can even go back to school in October or September.

Yours, Anne M. Frank

P.S. I'll keep you informed of the latest news!

This morning and last night, dummies made of straw and rubber were dropped from the air behind German lines, and they exploded the minute they hit the ground. Many paratroopers, their faces blackened so they couldn't be seen in the dark, landed as well. The French coast was bombarded with 5,500 tons of bombs during the night, and then, at six in the morning, the first landing craft came ashore. Today there were 20,000 airplanes in action. The German coastal batteries were destroyed even before the landing; a small bridgehead has already been formed. Everything's going well, despite the bad weather. The army and the people are "one will and one hope."

Friday, June 9, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Great news of the invasion! The Allies have taken Bayeux, a village on the coast of France, and are now fighting for Caen. They're clearly intending to cut

off the peninsula where Cherbourg is located. Every evening the war correspondents report on the difficulties, the courage and the fighting spirit of the army. To get their stories, they pull off the most amazing feats. A few of the wounded who are already back in England also spoke on the radio. Despite the miserable weather, the planes are flying diligently back and forth. We heard over the BBC that Churchill wanted to land along with the troops on D Day, but Eisenhower and the other generals managed to talk him out of it. Just imagine, so much courage for such an old man he must be at least seventy!

The excitement here has died down somewhat; still, we're all hoping that the war will finally be over by the end of the year. It's about time! Mrs. van Daan's constant griping is unbearable; now that she can no longer drive us crazy with the invasion, she moans and groans all day about the bad weather. If only we could plunk her down in the loft in a bucket of cold water!

Everyone in the Annex except Mr. van Daan and Peter has read the Hungarian Rhapsody trilogy, a biography of the composer, piano virtuoso and child prodigy Franz Liszt. It's very interesting, though in my opinion there's a bit too much emphasis on women; Liszt was the greatest and most famous pianist of his time. The parts of the book dealing with music and the other arts are much more interesting. Some of the people mentioned are Schumann, Clara Wieck, Hector Berlioz, Johannes Brahms, Beethoven, Joachim, Richard Wagner, Hans von Bulow, Anton Rubinstein, Frederic Chopin, Victor Hugo, Honore de Balzac, Hiller, Hummel, Czerny, Rossini, Cherubini, Paganini, Mendelssohn, etc., etc. Liszt appears to have been a decent man, very generous and modest, though exceptionally vain. He helped others, put art above all else, couldn't bear the sight of tears, was a gentleman, couldn't refuse anyone a favor, wasn't interested in money and cared about religious freedom and the world.

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Tuesday, June 13, 1944

Dearest Kit,

Another birthday has gone by, so I'm now fifteen. I received quite a few gifts: Springer's five-volume art history book, a set of underwear, two belts, a handkerchief, two jars of yogurt, a jar of jam, two honey cookies (small), a botany book from Father and Mother, a gold bracelet from Margot, a sticker album from the van Daans, Biomalt and sweet peas from Dussel, candy from Miep, candy and notebooks from Bep, and the high point: the book Maria Theresa and three

slices of full-cream cheese from Mr. Kugler. Peter gave me a lovely bouquet of peonies; the poor boy had put a lot of effort into finding a present, but nothing quite worked out.

The invasion is still going splendidly, in spite of the miserable weather – pouring rains, gale winds and high seas.



Yesterday Churchill, Smuts, Eisenhower and Arnold visited the French villages that the British have captured and liberated. Churchill was on a torpedo boat that shelled the coast. Like many men, he doesn't seem to know what fear is – an enviable trait! From our position here in Fort Annex, it's difficult to gauge the mood of the Dutch.

No doubt many people are glad the idle (!) British have finally rolled up their sleeves and gotten down to work. Those who keep claiming they don't want to be occupied by the British don't realize how unfair they're being. Their line of reasoning boils down to this: England must fight, struggle and sacrifice its sons to liberate Holland and the other occupied countries. After that the British shouldn't remain in Holland: they should offer their most abject apologies to all the occupied countries, restore the Dutch East Indies to its rightful owner and then return, weakened and impoverished, to England. What a bunch of idiots. And yet, as I've already said, many Dutch people can be counted among their ranks. What would have become of Holland and its neighbors if England had signed a peace treaty with Germany, as it's had ample opportunity to do? Holland would have become German, and that would have been the end of that! All those Dutch people who still look down on the British, scoff at England and its government of old fogies, call the English cowards, yet hate the Germans, should be given a good shaking, the way you'd plump up a pillow. Maybe that would straighten out their jumbled brains!

Wishes, thoughts, accusations and reproaches are swirling around in my head. I'm not really as conceited as many people think; I know my various faults and shortcomings better than anyone else, but there's one difference: I also know that I want to change, will change and already have changed greatly!

Why is it, I often ask myself, that everyone still thinks I'm so pushy and such a know-it-all? Am I really so arrogant? Am I the one who's so arrogant, or are they?

It sounds crazy, I know, but I'm not going to cross out that last sentence, because it's not as crazy as it seems. Mrs. van Daan and Dussel, my two chief



accusers, are known to be totally unintelligent and, not to put too fine a point on it, just plain "stupid"! Stupid people usually can't bear it when others do something better than they do; the best examples of this are those two dummies, Mrs. van Daan and Dussel. Mrs. van D. thinks I'm stupid because I don't suffer so much from this ailment as she does, she thinks I'm pushy because she's even pushier, she thinks my dresses are too short because hers are even shorter, and she thinks I'm such a know-it-all because she talks twice as much as I do about topics she knows nothing about. The same goes for Dussel. But one of my favorite sayings is "Where there's smoke there's fire," and I readily admit I'm a know-it-all.

What's so difficult about my personality is that I scold and curse myself much more than anyone else does; if Mother adds her advice, the pile of sermons becomes so thick that I despair of ever getting through them. Then I talk back and start contradicting everyone until the old familiar Anne refrain inevitably crops up again: "No one understands me!" This phrase is part of me, and as unlikely as it may seem, there's a kernel of truth in it. Sometimes I'm so deeply buried under self-reproaches that I long for a word of comfort to help me dig myself out again. If only I had someone who took my feelings seriously. Alas, I haven't yet found that person, so the search must go on.

Is it because I haven't been outdoors for so long that I've become so smitten with nature? I remember a time when a magnificent blue sky, chirping birds, moonlight and budding blossoms wouldn't have captivated me. Things have changed since I came here. One night during the Pentecost holiday, for instance, when it was so hot, I struggled to keep my eyes open until eleven-thirty so I could get a good look at the moon, all on my own for once. Alas, my sacrifice was in vain, since there was too much glare and I couldn't risk opening a window. Another time, several months ago, I happened to be upstairs one night when the window was open. I didn't go back down until it had to be closed again. The dark, rainy evening, the wind, the racing clouds, had me spellbound; it was the first time in a year and a half that I'd seen the night face-to-face. After that evening my longing to see it again was even greater than my fear of burglars, a dark rat-infested house or robberies. I went downstairs all by myself and looked out the windows in the kitchen and private office. Many people think nature is beautiful, many people sleep from time to time under the starry sky, and many people in hospitals and prisons long for the day when they'll be free to enjoy what nature has to offer. But few are as isolated and cut off as we are from idle joys of nature, which can be shared by rich and poor alike.

It's not just my imagination — looking at idle sky, idle clouds, idle moon and idle stars really does make me feel calm and hopeful. It's much better medicine than valerian or bromide. Nature makes me feel humble and ready to face every blow with courage! As luck would have it, I'm only able — except for a few rare occasions to view nature through dusty curtains tacked over dirt-caked windows; it takes idle pleasure out of looking. Nature is idle one thing for which there is no substitute! One of dle many questions that have often bothered me is why women have been, and still are, thought to be so inferior to men. It's easy to say it's unfair, but that's not enough for me; I'd really like to know the reason for this great injustice!

Men presumably dominated women from the very beginning because of their greater physical strength; it's men who earn a living, beget children and do as they please. . . Until recently, women silently went along with this, which was stupid, since the longer it's kept up, the more deeply entrenched it becomes. Fortunately, education, work and progress have opened women's eyes. In many countries they've been granted equal rights; many people, mainly women, but also men, now realize how wrong it was to tolerate this state of affairs for so long. Modern women want the right to be completely independent!

But that's not all. Women should be respected as well! Generally speaking, men are held in great esteem in all parts of the world, so why shouldn't women have their share? Soldiers and war heroes are honored and commemorated, explorers are granted immortal fame, martyrs are revered, but how many people look upon women too as soldiers?

In the book *Soldiers on the Home Front* I was greatly struck by the fact that in childbirth alone, women commonly suffer more pain, illness and misery than any warhero ever does. And what's her reward for enduring all that pain? She gets pushed aside when she's disfigured by birth, her children soon leave, her beauty is gone. Women, who struggle and suffer pain to ensure the continuation of the human race, make much tougher and more courageous soldiers than all those big-mouthedfreedom-fighting heroes put together!

I don't mean to imply that women should stop having children; on the contrary, nature intended them to, and that's the way it should be. What I condemn are our system of values and the men who don't acknowledge how great, difficult, but ultimately beautiful women's share in society is.

I agree completely with Paul de Kruif, the author of this book, when he says that men must learn that birth is no longer thought of as inevitable and

unavoidable in those parts of the world we consider civilized. It's easy for men to talk — they don't and never will have to bear the woes that women do!

I believe that in the course of the next century the notion that it's a woman's duty to have children will change and make way for the respect and admiration of all women, who bear their burdens without complaint or a lot of pompous words!

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Friday, June 16, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

New problems: Mrs. van D. is at her wit's end. She's talking about getting shot, being thrown in prison, being hanged and suicide. She's jealous that Peter confides in me and not in her, offended that Dussel doesn't respond sufficiently to her flirtations and afraid her husband's going to squander all the fur-coat money on tobacco. She quarrels, curses, cries, feels sorry for herself, laughs and starts all over again. What on earth can you do with such a silly, sniveling specimen of humanity? Nobody takes her seriously, she has no strength of character, she complains to one and all, and you should see how she walks around: von hinten Lyzeum, yon vorne Museum.*

[Acts like a schoolgirl, looks like a frump.] Even worse, Peter's becoming insolent, Mr. van Daan irritable and Mother cynical. Yes, everyone's in quite a state! There's only one rule you need to remember: laugh at everything and forget everybody else! It sounds egotistical, but it's actually the only cure for those suffering from self-pity.

Mr. Kugler's supposed to spend four weeks in Alkmaar on a work detail. He's trying to get out of it with a doctor's certificate and a letter from Opekta. Mr. Kleiman's hoping his stomach will be operated on soon. Starting at eleven last night, all private phones were cut off.

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Friday, June 23, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Nothing special going on here. The British have begun their all-out attack on Cherbourg. According to Pim and Mr. van Daan, we're sure to be liberated before October 10. The Russians are taking part in the campaign; yesterday they started their offensive near Vitebsk, exactly three years to the day that the

Germans invaded Russia. Bep's spirits have sunk lower than ever. We're nearly out of potatoes; from now on, we're going to count them out for each person, then everyone can do what they want with them. Starting Monday, Miep's taking a week of vacation. Mr. Kleiman's doctors haven't found anything on the X rays. He's torn between having an operation and letting matters take their course.

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Tuesday, June 27, 1944

My dearest Kitty,

The mood has changed, everything's going enormously well. Cherbourg, Vitebsk and Zhlobin fell today. They're sure to have captured lots of men and equipment. Five German generals were killed near Cherbourg and two taken captive. Now that they've got a harbor, the British can bring whatever they want on shore. The whole Cotentin Peninsula has been captured just three weeks after the invasion! What a feat! In the three weeks since D Day there hasn't been a day without rain and storms, neither here nor in France, but this bad luck hasn't kept the British and the Americans from displaying their might. And how! Of course, the Germans have launched their wonder weapon, but a little firecracker like that won't hardly make a dent, except maybe minor damage in England and screaming headlines in the Kraut newspapers. Anyway, when they realize in "Krautland" that the Bolsheviks really are getting closer, they'll be shaking in their boots.



All German women who aren't working for the military are being evacuated, together with their children, from the coastal regions to the provinces of Groningen, Friesland and Gelderland. Mussert* [* The leader of the Dutch National Socialist (Nazi) Party] has announced that if the invasion reaches Holland, he'll enlist. Is that fat pig planning to fight? He could have done that in Russia long before now. Finland turned down a peace offer some time ago, and now the negotiations have been broken off again. Those numbskulls, they'll be sorry!

How far do you think we'll be on July 27?

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Friday, June 30, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Bad weather from one at a stretch to the thirty June* [Anne's English.] Don't I say that well? Oh yes, I already know a little English; just to prove it I'm reading *An Ideal Husband* with the help of a dictionary! War's going wonderfully: Bobruysk, Mogilev and Orsha have fallen, lots of prisoners. Everything's all right here. Spirits are improving, our super optimists are triumphant, the van Daans are doing disappearing acts with the sugar, Bep's changed her hair, and Miep has a week off. That's the latest news! I've been having really ghastly root-canal work done on one of my front teeth. It's been terribly painful. It was so bad Dussel thought I was going to faint, and I nearly did. Mrs. van D. promptly got a toothache as well!

Yours, Anne M. Frank

P.S. We've heard from Basel that Bernd* [Cousin Bernhard (Buddy) Elias]. played the part of the innkeeper in *Minna von Barnhelm*. He has "artistic leanings," says Mother.

Thursday, July 6, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

My blood runs cold when Peter talks about becoming a criminal or a speculator; of course, he's joking, but I still have the feeling he's afraid of his own weakness. Margot and Peter are always saying to me, "If I had your spunk and your strength, if I had your drive and unflagging energy, could. . . Is it really such an admirable trait not to let myself be influenced by others? Am I right in following my own conscience?"

To be honest, I can't imagine how anyone could say "I'm weak" and then stay that way. If you know that about yourself, why not fight it, why not develop your character? Their answer has always been: "Because it's much easier not to!" This reply leaves me feeling rather discouraged. Easy? Does that mean a life of deceit and laziness is easy too? Oh no, that can't be true. It can't be true that people are so readily tempted by ease. . . and money. I've given a lot of thought to what my answer should be, to how I should get Peter to believe in himself and, most of all, to change himself for the better. I don't know whether I'm on the right track. I've often imagined how nice it would be if someone were to confide everything to me. But now that it's reached that point, I realize how difficult it is to put yourself in someone else's shoes and find the right answer. Especially since "easy" and "money" are new and completely alien concepts to me.

We're all alive, but we don't know why or what for; we're all searching for happiness; we're all leading lives that are different and yet the same. We three have been raised in good families, we have the opportunity to get an education



(July 6, 1944)

(Attitude)

Anne mentions the *dissatisfied and grumpy faces* all around and writes *honestly, things are only as bad as you make them*. She is an amazing person- full of hope and with a maturity that defies her age.

In our everyday experiences, we constantly appraise events or changes occurring around in the environment. This appraisal or perception may be positive, neutral or negative. Negative events are often assessed for their possible harm, threat or challenge with a view to deal with them in future. Very often one's temperament determines the meaning of any event and defines the nature of response. This temperament is often called our attitude or our outlook towards life.

Victor Frankl, a holocaust survivor very famously wrote "*Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms- to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way*" Anne's attitude is similar. She is confined to a limited space along with others; has no longer access to school, friends, market and other public places; has been bereft of the little pleasures of life- food, treats that are a part of a young girl's life and yet, she is determined to approach life head-on with a positive attitude.



and make something of ourselves. We have many reasons to hope for great happiness, but. . . we have to earn it. And that's something you can't achieve by taking the easy way out. Earning happiness means doing good and working, not speculating and being lazy. Laziness may look inviting, but only work gives you true satisfaction. I can't understand people who don't like to work, but that isn't Peter's problem either. He just doesn't have a goal, plus he thinks he's too stupid and inferior to ever achieve anything. Poor boy, he's never known how it feels to make someone else happy, and I'm afraid I can't teach him. He isn't religious, scoffs at Jesus Christ and takes the Lord's name in vain, and though I'm not Orthodox either, it hurts me every time to see him so lonely, so scornful, so wretched.

People who are religious should be glad, since not everyone is blessed with the ability to believe in a higher order. You don't even have to live in fear of eternal punishment; the concepts of purgatory, heaven and hell are difficult for many people to accept, yet religion itself, any religion, keeps a person on the right path. Not the fear of God, but upholding your own sense of honor and obeying your own conscience. How noble and good everyone could be if, at the end of each day, they were to review their own behavior and weigh up the rights and wrongs. They would automatically try to do better at the start of each new day and, after a while, would certainly accomplish a great deal. Everyone is welcome to this prescription; it costs nothing and is definitely useful. Those who don't know will have to find out by experience that "a quiet conscience gives you strength!"

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Saturday, July 8, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Mr. Broks was in Beverwijk and managed to get hold of strawberries at the produce auction. They arrived here dusty and full of sand, but in large quantities. No less than twenty-four crates for the office and us. That very same evening we canned the first six jars and made eight jars of jam. The next morning Miep started making jam for the office.

At twelve-thirty the outside door was locked, crates were lugged into the kitchen, with Peter, Father and Mr. van Daan stumbling up the stairs. Anne got hot water from the water heater, Margot, went for a bucket, all hands on deck! With a funny feeling in my stomach, I entered the overcrowded office kitchen.

Miep, Bep, Mr. Kleiman, Jan, Father, Peter: the Annex contingent and the Supply Corps all mixed up together, and that in the middle of the day! Curtains and windows open, loud voices, banging doors— I was trembling with excitement. I kept thinking, “Are we really in hiding?” This must be how it feels when you can finally go out into the world again. The pan was full, so I dashed upstairs, where the rest of the family was hulling strawberries around the kitchen table. At least that’s what they were supposed to be doing, but more was going into their mouths than into the buckets. They were bound to need another bucket soon. Peter went back downstairs, but then the doorbell rang twice. Leaving the bucket where it was, Peter raced upstairs and shut the bookcase behind him. We sat kicking our heels impatiently; the strawberries were waiting to be rinsed, but we stuck to the house rule: “No running water when strangers are downstairs — they might hear the drains.”

Jan came up at one to tell us it had been the mail- man. Peter hurried downstairs again. Ding-dong. . . the doorbell, about-face. I listened to hear if anyone was coming, standing first at the bookcase, then at the top of the stairs. Finally Peter and I leaned over the banister, straining our ears like a couple of burglars to hear the sounds from downstairs. No unfamiliar voices. Peter tiptoed halfway down the stairs and called out, “Bep!” Once more: “Bep!” His voice was drowned out by the racket in the kitchen. So he ran down to the kitchen while I nervously kept watch from above. “Go upstairs at once, Peter, the accountant’s here, you’ve got to leave!” It was Mr. Kugler’s voice. Sighing, Peter came upstairs and closed the bookcase.

Mr. Kugler finally came up at one-thirty. “My gosh, the whole world’s turned to strawberries. I had strawberries for breakfast, Jan’s having them for lunch, Kleiman’s eating them as a snack, Miep’s boiling them, Bep’s hulling them, and I can smell them everywhere I go. I come upstairs to get away from all that red and what do I see? People washing strawberries!”

The rest of the strawberries were canned. That evening: two jars came unsealed. Father quickly turned them into jam. The next morning: two more lids popped up; and that afternoon: four lids. Mr. van Daan hadn’t gotten the jars hot enough when he was sterilizing them, so Father ended up making jam every evening. We ate hot cereal with strawberries, buttermilk with strawberries, bread with strawberries, strawberries for dessert, straw- berries with sugar, strawberries with sand. For two days there was nothing but strawberries, strawberries, strawberries, and then our supply was either exhausted or in jars,

safely under lock and key.

"Hey, Anne," Margot called out one day, "Mrs. van Hoeven has let us have some peas, twenty pounds!"

"That's nice of her," I replied. And it certainly was, but it's so much work. . . ugh!

"On Saturday, you've got to shell peas," Mother announced at the table.

And sure enough, this morning after breakfast our biggest enamel pan appeared on the table, filled to the brim with peas. If you think shelling peas is boring work, you ought to try removing the inner linings. I don't think many people realize that once you've pulled out the linings, the pods are soft, delicious and rich in vitamins. But an even greater advantage is that you get nearly three times as much as when you eat just the peas.

Stripping pods is a precise and meticulous job that might be suited to pedantic dentists or finicky spice experts, but it's a horror for an impatient teenager like me. We started work at nine-thirty; I sat down at ten-thirty, got Up again at eleven, sat down again at eleven-thirty. My ears were humming with the following refrain: snap the end, strip the pod, pull the string, pod in the pan, snap the end, strip the pod, pull the string, pod in the pan, etc., etc. My eyes were swimming: green, green, worm, string, rotten pod, green, green. To fight the boredom and have something to do, I chattered all morning, saying whatever came into my head and making everyone laugh. The monotony was killing me. Every string I pulled made me more certain that I never, ever, want to be just a housewife!

At twelve we finally ate breakfast, but from twelve-thirty to one-fifteen we had to strip pods again. When I stopped, I felt a bit seasick, and so did the others. I napped until four, still in a daze because of those wretched peas.

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Saturday, July 15, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

We've received a book from the library with the challenging title *What Do You Think of the Modern Young Girl?* I'd like to discuss this subject today.

The writer criticizes "today's youth" from head to toe, though without dismissing them all as "hopeless cases." On the contrary, she believes they have

it within their power to build a bigger, better and more beautiful world, but that they occupy themselves with superficial things, without giving a thought to true beauty. In some passages I had the strong feeling that the writer was directing her disapproval at me, which is why I finally want to bare my soul to you and defend myself against this attack. I have one outstanding character trait that must be obvious to anyone who's known me for any length of time: I have a great deal of self-knowledge. In everything I do, I can watch myself as if I were a stranger. I can stand across from the everyday Anne and, without being biased or making excuses, watch what she's doing, both the good and the bad. This self-awareness never leaves me, and every time I open my mouth, I think, "You should have said that differently" or "That's fine the way it is." I condemn myself in so many ways that I'm beginning to realize the truth of Father's adage: "Every child has to raise itself." Parents can only advise their children or point them in the right direction. Ultimately, people shape their own characters. In addition, I face life with an extraordinary amount of courage. I feel so strong and capable of bearing burdens, so young and free! When I first realized this, I was glad, because it means I can more easily withstand the blows life has in store. But I've talked about these things so often. Now I'd like to turn to the chapter "Father and Mother Don't Understand Me." My parents have always spoiled me rotten, treated me kindly, defended me against the van Daans and done all that parents can. And yet for the longest time I've felt extremely lonely, left out, neglected and misunderstood. Father did everything he could to curb my rebellious spirit, but it was no use. I've cured myself by holding my behavior up to the light and looking at what I was doing wrong.

(Saturday, July 15, 1944)

(Life Skill of Self-Awareness)

Anne Frank writes on 15 July, 1944, / *have one outstanding character trait that must be obvious to anyone who's known me for any length of time. I have a great deal of self-knowledge.* This is an example of an adolescent who is **self-aware**.

Self-awareness is one of the Life Skills among the ten core skills identified by World Health Organization. These Life Skills, namely, **Self-Awareness, Problem Solving, Decision Making, Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Interpersonal Relationships, Effective Communication, Empathy,**

Managing Emotions and **Coping with Stress** are interrelated and reinforce each other. Together, they are responsible for our psycho-social competence; build our self-esteem and self-efficacy and promote holistic development.

Self-Awareness includes the recognition of *self*, one's character, one's strengths and weaknesses, desires and dislikes. It is the precursor of recognizing one's functioning and bringing about self-improvement. In her diary, Anne mentions reflecting on her statements and telling herself, '*You should have said that differently.*' Besides this, she recognizes her strengths when she writes / *face life with an extraordinary amount of courage*. This is exactly the spirit that we all must possess, especially in difficult times.

You should also try to become more self-aware. Looking at life experiences purposely and reflecting on them enhances Self-Awareness. Writing one's thoughts in journals or diaries is another practical way to enhance it. Greater Self-Awareness makes one feel comfortable with one's own self vis-a-vis the environment around and at the same time helps us to manage our weaknesses while building on the strengths.

Why didn't Father support me in my struggle? Why did he fall short when he tried to offer me a helping hand? The answer is: he used the wrong methods. He always talked to me as if I were a child going through a difficult phase. It sounds crazy, since Father's the only one who's given me a sense of confidence and made me feel as if I'm a sensible person. But he overlooked one thing: he failed to see that this struggle to triumph over my difficulties was more important to me than anything else.

I didn't want to be treated the same as all-the-other-girls, but as Anne-in-her-own-right, and Pim didn't understand that. Besides, I can't confide in anyone unless they tell me a lot about themselves, and because I know very little about him, I can't get on a more intimate footing. Pim always acts like the elderly father who once had the same fleeting impulses, but who can no longer relate to me as a friend, no matter how hard he tries. As a result, I've never shared my outlook on life or my long-pondered theories with anyone but my diary and, once in awhile, Margot. I've hid anything having to do with me from Father, never shared my ideals with him, deliberately alienated myself from him.

I couldn't have done it any other way. I've let myself be guided entirely by my feelings. It was egotistical, but I've done what was best for my own peace of mind. I would lose that, plus the self-confidence I've worked so hard to achieve, if I were to be subjected to criticism halfway through the job. It may sound hard-hearted, but I can't take criticism from him either, because not only do I never share my innermost thoughts with him, but I've pushed him even further away by being irritable.

This is a point I think about quite often: why is it that him annoys me so much sometimes? I can hardly bear to have him tutor me, and his affection seems forced. I want to be left alone, and I'd rather he ignored me for a while until I'm more sure of myself when I'm talking to him! I'm still torn with guilt about the mean letter I wrote him when I was so upset. Oh, it's hard to be strong and brave in every way! . . .

So if you're wondering whether it's harder for the adults here than for the children, the answer is no, it's certainly not. Older people have an opinion about everything and are sure of themselves and their actions. It's twice as hard for us young people to hold on to our opinions at a time when ideals are being shattered and destroyed, when the worst side of human nature predominates, when everyone has come to doubt truth, justice and God.

Anyone who claims that the older folks have a more difficult time in the Annex doesn't realize that the problems have a far greater impact on us. We're much too young to deal with these problems, but they keep thrusting themselves on us until, finally, we're forced to think up a solution, though most of the time our solutions crumble when faced with the facts. It's difficult in times like these: ideals, dreams and cherished hopes rise within us, only to be crushed by grim reality. It's a wonder I haven't abandoned all my ideals, they seem so absurd and impractical. Yet I cling to them because I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart. It's utterly impossible for me to build my life on a foundation of chaos, suffering and death. I see the world being slowly transformed into a wilderness, I hear the approaching thunder that, one day, will destroy us too, I feel the suffering of millions. And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too shall end, that peace and tranquility will return once more. In the meantime, I must hold on to my ideals. Perhaps the day will come when I'll be able to realize them!

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Friday, July 21, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

I'm finally getting optimistic. Now, at last, things are going well! They really are! Great news! An assassination attempt has been made on Hitler's life, and for once not by Jewish Communists or English capitalists, but by a German general who's not only a count, but young as well. The Fuhrer owes his life to "Divine Providence": he escaped, unfortunately, with only a few minor burns and scratches. A number of the officers and generals who were nearby were killed or wounded. The head of the conspiracy has been shot.

This is the best proof we've had so far that many officers and generals are fed up with the war and would like to see Hitler sink into a bottomless pit, so they can establish a military dictatorship, make peace with the Allies, rearm themselves and, after a few decades, start a new war. Perhaps Providence is deliberately biding its time getting rid of Hider, since it's much easier, and cheaper, for the Allies to let the impeccable Germans kill each other off. It's less work for the Russians and the British, and it allows them to start rebuilding their own cities all that much sooner. But we haven't reached that point yet, and I'd hate to anticipate the glorious event. Still, you've probably noticed that I'm telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. For once, I'm not rattling on about high ideals. Furthermore, Hitler has been so kind as to announce to his loyal, devoted people that as of today all military personnel are under orders of the Gestapo, and that any soldier who knows that one of his superiors was involved in this cowardly attempt on the Fuhrer's life may shoot him on sight!

A fine kettle of fish that will be. Little Johnny's feet are sore after a long march and his commanding officer bawls him out. Johnny grabs his rifle, shouts, "You, you tried to kill the Fuhrer. Take that!" One shot, and the snooty officer who dared to reprimand him passes into eternal life (or is it eternal death?). Eventually, every time an officer sees a soldier or gives an order, he'll be practically wetting his pants, because the soldiers have more say-so than he does. Were you able to follow that, or have I been skipping from one subject to another again? I can't help it, the prospect of going back to school in October is making me too happy to be logical! Oh dear, didn't I just get through telling you I didn't want to anticipate events? Forgive me, Kitty, they don't call me a bundle of contradictions for nothing!

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Tuesday, August 1, 1944


Dearest Kitty,

"A bundle of contradictions" was the end of my previous letter and is the beginning of this one. Can you please tell me exactly what "a bundle of contradictions" is? What does "contradiction" mean? Like so many words, it can be interpreted in two ways: a contradiction imposed from without and one imposed from within. The former means not accepting other people's opinions, always knowing best, having the last word; in short, all those unpleasant traits for which I'm known. The latter, for which I'm not known, is my own secret.

As I've told you many times, I'm split in two. One side contains my exuberant cheerfulness, my flippancy, my joy in life and, above all, my apathy to appreciate the lighter side of things. This side of me is usually lying in wait to ambush the other one, which is much purer, deeper and finer. No one knows Anne's better side, and that's why most people can't stand me. Oh, I can be an amusing clown for an afternoon, but after that everyone's had enough of me to last a month. Actually, I'm what a romantic movie is to a profound thinker — a mere diversion, a comic interlude, something that is soon forgotten: not bad, but not particularly good either. I hate having to tell you this, but why shouldn't I admit it when I know it's true? My lighter, more superficial side will always steal a march on the deeper side and therefore always win. You can't imagine how often I've tried to push away this Anne, which is only half of what is known as Anne-to beat her down, hide her. But it doesn't work, and I know why.

I'm afraid that people who know me as I usually am will discover I have another side, a better and finer side. I'm afraid they'll mock me, think I'm ridiculous and sentimental and not take me seriously. I'm used to not being taken seriously, but only the "lighthearted" Anne is used to it and can put up with it; the "deeper" Anne is too weak. If I force the good Anne into the spotlight for even fifteen minutes, she shuts up like a clam the moment she's called upon to speak, and lets Anne number one do the talking. Before I realize it, she's disappeared.

So the nice Anne is never seen in company. She's never made a single appearance, though she almost always takes the stage when I'm alone. I know exactly how I'd like to be, how I am . . . on the inside. But unfortunately I'm only like that with myself.



And perhaps that's why-no, I'm sure that's the reason why — I think of myself as happy on the inside and other people think I'm happy on the outside. I'm guided by the pure Anne within, but on the outside I'm nothing but a frolicsome little goat tugging at its tether.

As I've told you, what I say is not what I feel, which is why I have a reputation for being boy-crazy as well as a flirt, a smart aleck and a reader of romances. The happy-go-lucky Anne laughs, gives a flippant reply, shrugs her shoulders and pretends she doesn't give a darn. The quiet Anne reacts in just the opposite way. If I'm being completely honest, I'll have to admit that it does matter to me, that I'm trying very hard to change myself, but that I I'm always up against a more powerful enemy.

A voice within me is sobbing, "You see, that's what's become of you. You're surrounded by negative opinions, dismayed looks and mocking faces, people, who dislike you, and all because you don't listen to the ; advice of your own better half." Believe me, I'd like ;' to listen, but it doesn't work, because if I'm quiet and serious, everyone thinks I'm putting on a new act and I have to save myself with a joke, and then I'm not even talking about my own family, who assume I must be sick, stuff me with aspirins and sedatives, feel my neck and forehead to see if I have a temperature, ask about my bowel movements and berate me for being in a bad mood, until I just can't keep it up anymore, because if when everybody starts hovering over me, I get cross, then sad, and finally end up turning my heart inside out, the bad part on the outside and the good part on the inside, and keep trying to find a way to become what I'd like to be and what I could be if . . . if only there were no other people in the world.

Yours,

Anne M. Frank