

## **Table. Themes and illustrative quotes by gender (with counterexamples)**

### **THEMES AMONG MALES**

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#### **Feeling abnormal or “broken”**

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“Maybe in my head something did not develop properly or there is something missing. If I had never come to the United States maybe I would not be the same person I am now. I would be more normal.”

“My immigration was the end, and then I was a loser and a social misfit pariah/weird.”

“Things that happen in the brain and things that I experience are probably just in my genetic code. I was born with it.”

“What I am is sort of contrary to man’s social nature and outside of nature.”

“It is the whole zodiac thing – if you’re born under this sign, you have these characteristics.”

*“It really feels like my brain is an engine and no one has changed the oil and everything is not lubricated properly and it’s just grinding and not working...I really miss feeling like myself.”*  
(Counterexample in a female)

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#### **Focus on going “crazy”**

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“I started to think some crazy thoughts.”

“I worry about having mental problems.”

“The anxiety of going crazy was worse than forgetting a meal. I knew I wanted to see a therapist. I thought I was crazy.”

“I sound a bit schizophrenic.”

“I have no real concerns or problems in my life, except sometimes some of the crazy stuff that goes on, like seeing shadows and feeling watched all the time.”

“Because of everything I had to deal with that I am supposed to in this world, I don’t think I could even function, as even partially a human being. I would become a primitive animal. I’d go completely insane and do horrible things.”

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#### **Fantasy and escapism**

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“I really just wanted to travel and wander.”

“If I could I’d drop everything and move some place different. It’s like a clean slate, a fresh start. Life would be simpler if we had never evolved from the Neolithic area.”

“I want to just build a boat and sail wherever.”

“I have a rich fantasy life. I fantasize about living in worlds with different laws of physics, different cultures, societies, ways of life, everything. What would it be like to live like an animal?”

“I started developing this place – to pick up certain things or to concentrate my imagination.”

“I personally wouldn’t mind living as a cyborg. I was always the kid that lived in my own head, who was able to do everything to myself, by myself, keep myself entertained.”

“I was always interested in stuff like bohemianism and hitchhiking.”

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### **Alienation and despair**

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“I always felt homeless...I feel completely nihilistic, like why the hell am I living, why am I here in the first place?”

“I want to communicate to other people, but sometimes I feel like I’m just mumbling over some kind of mountain. I’m trying to make myself understood, but they just can’t hear me, no matter how hard they try.”

“I became very depressed for a little while, and then after a point it just felt like the end of the world was coming to me and I had to go to the hospital.”

“When you have a certain illness or a certain thing, people alienate you.”

“There is no place that feels like real safe, or fully comfortable.”

“The future feels bleak. I feel pointless right now. I’m getting old. I didn’t finish college. I don’t have a girlfriend, never really had a girlfriend. It feels like a shard of glass in my mind. You know, it irritates. I don’t plan to find the future, because somehow in my mind the future always ends up with me with a big beard, very dirty and homeless.”

“I was really depressed. I think I felt really stuck and trapped, but at the same time I didn’t really know exactly how to deal. I spent a lot of time staying home from school being sick.”

“I’ll just be completely suicidal and depressed and I will curl up on my floor and sleep next to my bed.”

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### ***Desire for relationships***

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“I just want to have a special someone.”

“I’d like to share things.”

“I should be meeting other people so I wouldn’t then feel so left out.”

“I’d like to find a person that I could really spend the rest of my life with. I do want to get married. And I do want to have children.”

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### **THEMES AMONG FEMALES**

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#### **Psychotic illness in family members**

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“It’s not easy when you have a mother who is mentally ill, and I take care of her.”

“My mom is a schizophrenic. She’s been schizophrenic my whole life.”

“Living alone with my mother since I was four and she was an unmedicated schizophrenic. As

soon as I got to high school, I got very involved, to kind of escape being at home because my mother thought I was possessed.”

“There is such a history in my family of thought disorders and I have pretty much known my whole life that I had a higher chance of going nuts than other people.”

“My maternal grandfather was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. That’s a fear of mine.”

*“I thought I was crazy. I thought it was the same thing that happened to my sister.”*  
(Counterexample in male)

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### **Personal Trauma**

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“I had to watch my mom getting taken away in handcuffs by the police when I was two or three years old.”

“My brother tried to rape me when I was eleven.”

“I grew up completely neglected and abused – they didn’t explain to me why I was getting hit.”

“I think it did traumatize me to be separated from my mother, not having that mother-daughter normal relationship.”

“My dad was a veteran – he died when I was eleven years old – he committed suicide – I was a foster child until I was thirteen.”

“It was hard growing up – I had death staring me in the face all the time.”

“There was one summer we went like entirely without food – we lived in a homeless shelter for a year.”

“She was like really pretty abusive when we were little.”

*“I had a teacher who was extremely abusive.”* (Counterexample in male)

*“I’ve been jumped, sexually abused.”* (Counterexample in male)

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### **Struggle with intimate relationships**

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“My boyfriends were controlling – one was manipulative and the other one was just more macho controlling.”

“I have a boyfriend, but I am scared of getting close to him to the point where he is going to hurt me or he is going to just disappear somehow or something is going to happen to him where he is not like in my life anymore.”

“I try to really detach myself emotionally from people because I feel if I attach myself emotionally to people, I am just going to let myself down”.

“I have relationship troubles.”

“I grew up in that strict home and having a lot of the pressure and guilt and feeling like you are the one person that has to keep people together”.

“My stepsister was very mean to me. She was completely jealous of me. She tormented my

life because she felt tormented, and I blame my father and I blame how he raised her”.

“Most of the time I really have no interest in other people, because what they’re concerned with is really just like not what I’m concerned with.”

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### **Career Development**

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“I use the analogy of the staircase – I’m on the college step right now. The next step after college will be the interim job.”

“I want to study to become a guidance counselor in a school to prevent children from dropping out of high school, or attend a graduate program, in the sciences - physics or a mathematics-related field.”

“I don’t have an MD or PhD, I just have a life PhD.”

“Most of my life, kind of the goal I have for myself was just being able to be independent in any way, to have a little apartment – it’s kind of like my ultimate goal.”

“I want to be a well-rounded person academically and personally.”

“I want to attend a graduate program, in the sciences, physics, and mathematics related field”.

“I kind of see my life as like, just a series of almost like credentials, like my experiences are compartmentalized and everybody for their life just gets like a big bucket, you get to add like a block into your bucket, and I just wanted like a really good block in my bucket or tool, you know, like a tool in a tool chest.”

*“In the future I see myself mentally in a better place, thinking more positively and accomplishing goals. I’ve come to realize that I’m just a human being; I can only do so much in terms of my capacity.” (Counterexample in male)*