**The Fray - How to save a life**

Step one, you say, "We **need** to talk"  
He walks, you say, "Sit down, it's just a talk"  
He **smiles** politely back at you  
You stare politely right on through  
Some sort of window to your right  
As he **goes** left and you stay right  
Between the lines of fear and blame  
You **begin** to wonder why you came  
  
Where did I go wrong?  
I lost a friend somewhere along in the bitterness  
And I would have stayed up with you all night  
Had I known how to save a life  
  
Let him know that you know best  
Because after all, you do know best  
**Try** to slip past his defense  
Without granting innocence  
Lay down a list of what is wrong  
Things you told him all along  
Pray to God he **hears** you  
And pray to God he **hears** you  
  
And where did I go wrong?  
I lost a friend somewhere along in the bitterness  
And I would have stayed up with you all night  
Had I known how to save a life  
  
As he **begins** to raise his voice  
You **lower** yours and grant him one last choice  
Drive until you lose the road  
Or **break** with the ones you've followed  
He will do one of two things  
He will admit to everything  
Or he'll say he**’s** just not the same  
And you'll begin to wonder why you came  
  
Where did I go wrong?  
I lost a friend somewhere along in the bitterness  
And I would have stayed up with you all night  
Had I known how to save a life  
  
Where did I go wrong?  
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How to save a life  
How to save a life

1. Fill in the blanks with following words

Need – smiles – goes – begin – try – begins – break – ‘s (is) – lower – hears

2. What kind of words are these? Which tense do you think it is (past, present, future)?

**Verbs.**

**Present.**

3. Complete following table – What do you notice?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Person** | **Conjugated verb** | **Infinitive** |
| *Ex:* **You** | stare | To stare |
| **You** | begin | To begin |
| **He** | begins | To begin |
| **We** | need | To need |
| **You** | lower | To lower |
| **He** | Hears | To hear |
| **He** | Smiles | To smile |
| **(you)** | Try | To try |
| **(you)** | Break | To break |

**+ s for 3rd person.**

**No change for ‘You’ and ‘We’.**

4. Answer following questions (work in pair):

A) To how many people does this song refer to?

**2.**

B) What is their relationship?

**Friends – the storyteller and the friend in need.**

C) What does the song mean?

**See 6.**

5. Work in pair (other group). “Lay down the list of what is wrong” : what would you put on the list?

(refer to question 4)

6. Song meaning

This song is about the lead singer helping a drug addicted teen.

**"step one, you say 'we need to talk'  
he walks, you say 'sit down, it's just a talk'**  
  
*He feels the first thing he needs to do to help his friend is to tell him "we need to talk". And reassure him that everything is going to be ok because after all "it's just a talk"*   
  
**"he smiles politely back at you  
you stare politely right on through  
some sort of window to your right  
as he goes left and you stay right  
between the lines of fear and blame  
you begin to wonder why you came"**  
  
*The friend - the storyteller is confronting- seems to know what the talk is about so he tries to stay calm by "smiling politely". But the storyteller can’t bare to look his friend in the eye so he "stares right on through the window" .The window could symbolize literally a window the storyteller is looking at to avoid eye contact with his friend because he is "fearful" of what his friend will think of what he has to say (and fearful for his friends life), especially if his friend is not willing to take the "blame" for his actions. And if his friend won’t listen to him it's all just a waste of time and he'll "wonder why he came". Referring back to the window, he could also be speaking figuratively, thinking of this as his window of opportunity to help his friend.*  
**"where did I go wrong?  
I lost a friend somewhere along in the bitterness  
and I would have stayed up with you all night  
had I known how to save a life"**  
He's asking himself "where did I go wrong"? How come I couldn’t reach my friend? And possibly feeling guilty for the "bitterness" he feels toward his friend because his friend hasn’t changed his ways. And the next part could mean two different things. The more symbolic: "staying up all night" would mean spending a lot of time trying to "save a life" "had he known how" by being there for his friend if he only knew how to help him straighten out his life. Or "staying up all night" could literally mean staying up all night while his friend was going through withdraw from the drugs he was taking and "had he know how to save a life" would then mean if he knew staying up all night with him to help him through his withdraw was what he needed to save his life, he would have done that.

**"let him know that you know best  
'cause after all, you do know best”**  
  
*He wants his friend to know that he knows what is best for him hence "let him know that you know best".*

**“Try to slip passed his defense  
without granting innocence**”  
  
*He also wants to " try to slip passed his defense" meaning he wants to be gentle enough to where his friend will let down his guard and listen to him but he doesn’t want to "grant innocence" meaning not letting his friend believe that his actions weren’t wrong. So basically find a balance between sensitivity and sternness when he is confronting his friend.*  
**“Lay down a list of what is wrong  
things you told him all along”**  
  
*Once his friend is listening he's going to try to tell him all the things that he has done wrong, like he's attempted to in the past.*  
**“pray to god he hears you  
and pray to god he hears you"**  
*The storyteller then realizes all you can do after that is "pray to god he hears you"*  
  
**"as he begins to raise his voice  
you lower yours and grant him one last choice"**  
  
*His friend get angry because of the things he is telling him, but he stays calm and lays it on the line.*  
  
**"drive until you lose the road  
or break with the ones you've followed"**  
*He tells his friend that he can drive himself to his end or choose a better path to follow.*  
  
**"he will do one of two things  
he will admit to everything  
or he'll say he's just not the same"**  
*His friend will either admit to his wrong doing or he’ll just say he’s not the same person that he used to be and that he can’t change who he currently is.*  
**“and you'll begin to wonder why you came”**  
  
*And obviously if his friend chooses not to change “you’ll begin to wonder why you came” because it was a unsuccessful attempt to help his friend.*

7. Vocabulary

**The fray** /freɪ/

an energetic and often not well organized effort, activity, fight or disagreement

With a third country about to **enter** (= take part in) the fray, the fighting looks set to continue.

A good holiday should leave you feeling refreshed and **ready for** the fray (= ready to work) again.

#### Defense /dɪˈfent s/

protection or support against attack, criticism or infection

**Bitterness** /ˈbɪt.ə.nəs/

a feeling of anger and unhappiness

**Blame** /bleɪm/

when people say or think that someone or something did something wrong or is responsible for something bad happening

# To slip (=to escape) /slɪp/

to get free from, leave or escape something

# To grant (= to accept) /grɑːnt/

to accept that something is true, often before expressing an opposite opinion

8. The Fray

The Fray is an American four-piece piano-rock band from [Denver](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denver), [Colorado](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colorado) formed in 2002.

Lead singer/piano: Issac Slade

Backing vocals/guitar: Joe King

Guitar: Dave Welsh

Drums: Ben Wysoki

Picture (from left to right): Joe King, Ben Wysoki, Dave Welsh, Issac Slade.

Music: alternative, rock, piano rock, indie, alternative rock

“How to save a life” came out in 2005.

