

Chapter 9 The Clique



General Information

Topic

Being true to self and one's ideals even when under adverse peer pressure.

Content

- ▶ Conformity/Peer Pressure.
- ▶ Integrity.
- ▶ Cliques.

Objectives

Knowing

- ▶ Accepting the importance of belonging to a group, but resisting peer pressure to control personal beliefs and actions.
- ▶ To show how group bullies often feel inferior themselves.
- ▶ To identify attitudes and activities of positive and negative groups.

Accepting

- ▶ To reject negative peer pressure.
- ▶ To value one's own convictions.

Doing

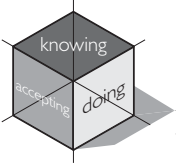
- ▶ Resisting the desire to conform at all costs.
- ▶ Rejecting peer pressure by avoiding conflicts, without compromising one's beliefs.

Areas of Human Development to be Emphasised

- ▶ Psycho-sexual and personality development.
- ▶ Manners and personal control.
- ▶ Assertiveness.

Class Plan

1 Knowing



Motivation

Ask the students their opinion of the story in the student book, in particular, what they think of cliques. What do they think of the pupils' code of not telling on one another?

Story context:

Alice is being pressured to join a clique that keeps others out by belittling them.

Introduction

Accepting some people in a group does not mean that others have to be excluded.

Presentation

Key Ideas

- ▶ Cliques are a painful adolescent reality.
- ▶ Shutting others out simply isolates the people in the cliques themselves.
- ▶ Conformity to peer pressure may be good or bad; it is important to discern.

Topic Development

A Conformity/Peer Pressure—good and bad

Since humans are social beings with a tendency to conform, members of a society will gradually adopt similar habits of acceptable behaviour, dress codes, food preferences, speech patterns, styles of home, etc.

The strong influence we exert on one another is often good. However, human beings can be wrong too. If they conform to wrong things, a 'non-conformist' is needed to break the pattern and show a better way. Because the force of conformity is strong, however, conformists sometimes make non-conformists suffer.

Peer pressure can be good or bad. In Alice's story, it is bad because she is pressured to do something against her beliefs and which is harmful to others. If she conforms to this she will lose her *integrity*.

B Integrity

Point out that integrity means adhering firmly to one's code of values; in essence it is the quality or state of being complete and undivided (from Latin *integer*—whole, morally upright).

It went against Alice's values to put some people 'down' for others to feel 'up'. She told Charlie that Mary and Rosa want her to join them in putting everyone else down, but "*I don't want to have to make other people 'out' so a few can be 'in.'*"

If Alice had acted against her conscience and violated her own values, she would have felt inner conflict, or been divided against herself, which is unpleasant. When we keep to what we believe to be true, we feel whole inside.

Integrity means being true to what one believes right, and constantly seeking the truth.

You could tell students about Sir Thomas More, who lived under King Henry VIII. He stands out in history as a man of great integrity. When asked to go against his deepest beliefs to satisfy his long-standing friend and monarch, King Henry VIII, he refused. The king wanted a divorce, which would create religious upheaval; Sir Thomas More disagreed. His property was confiscated, his family reduced to poverty, he was imprisoned, and finally executed, but right up to his death he quietly but steadfastly refused to compromise his beliefs. He did not rashly court death, believing the preservation of life to be an imperative as long as it could be done with integrity, but, when no path of escape remained without unfaithfulness to God and his conscience, he accepted the inevitable. (He explains this in detail, e.g. in his book *The Sadness of Christ*, which was written when he was imprisoned in the Tower of London).

Sir Thomas More was a great statesman, much admired in his own time. His execution caused outrage throughout Europe and he was later canonised (named a saint) by the Catholic Church. More recently, Pope John Paul II created him patron of statesmen and politicians "*because of the witness which he bore, even at the price of his life, to the primacy of truth over power*".

Ask students, "Is being true to your beliefs and values always easy?" Of course, the answer is no.

When Alice first stands up to the ringleaders Charlie could see it was hard for her: *She was trembling slightly and her cheeks were bright red.*

It gets harder for Alice, too: *School became a nightmare for her...Finally Alice broke down and ran crying into the girls' cloakroom. Mary and Rosa followed, taunting her, and all the other girls went in too, just to see what was going to happen.*

Fortunately, with the support of her friend Tiffany, her cousin Charlie and a teacher, Alice does not give in. She defends and lives out what she believes to be good and true. Her rewards in the end, beside her own self-respect and a more integrated personality, are new friends and popularity.

Charlie tells her, "*You're the most popular girl in Year 8.*"

In fact, Mary and Rosa change heart and ask Alice if they can join her circle of friends.

C Assertiveness

Write this quote from Alexander Hamilton on the board: "*Those who stand for nothing fall for anything.*"

It is important to act according to personal convictions. Yet there are ways to make one's position clear without rudeness. Being rude puts us in the wrong too. If Alice had been aggressive with Mary and Rosa, she might have said, "No, I don't want anything to do with you idiots!" If she had been too passive, she would have silently complied. Instead, Alice maintains her own politeness and manners but still does not give in:

"Alice!" Mary darted at her

Everyone stared at Alice.

"Yes?" answered Alice politely.

"Come and walk down the corridor with us."

It was a command, not a request. Alice searched for the strength not to obey. Just then, she caught Charlie's eye.

"I'm talking to Tiffany right now," said Alice.

Alice also maintains her politeness when Mary and Rosa come begging to join her service club. This keeps Alice in a position of dignity.

She looked round to see Mary and Rosa coming towards them.

"Alice, can we talk to you?" Mary asked.

Alice looked at them calmly and with dignity. "What do you want?" she asked evenly.

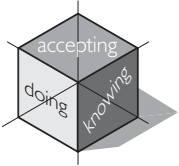
"Could we join your service club?"

Alice thought for a few minutes. Mary and Rosa were looking at her anxiously—as though they were afraid she was going to reject them. Alice guessed that they'd been lonely for the last few weeks, and that they genuinely wanted to join in.

"Yes, of course you can," she said. "I'm glad you asked."

It is important to assert our positions without rudeness but in a firm dignified way, so that we retain our self-respect and command the respect of others.

2 Accepting



Guided Work

Activity 1

Ask students to find quotes from the story to back up their answers to questions 1-4 of Activity 9 in their Student Book (p.221).

Activity 9

1. Do students like Mary and Rosa in this story?
2. Do they like Alice, Charlie, and Tiffany?
3. What did they think of the girls who followed whatever Mary and Rosa said, even if they didn't agree with them?
4. What did Charlie think of these other girls?

Activity 2

Ask the students to read the Inset about Mother Teresa in their Books (p.62). Ask students to name some famous non-conformists who changed things for the better.

Mother Teresa

You have probably heard of Mother Teresa. She features on every 'Most Admired Person' list. She was a Catholic nun, but people of many beliefs acknowledge her as a saint.

To Mother Teresa, no one was 'out'. Everyone deserved to be respected and loved, even if they were living on the streets or in an alley. If a person was diseased or abandoned, Mother Teresa saw that as even more reason to love and care for them.

When Mother Teresa received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, she accepted it in the name of "all those people who feel unwanted, unloved, uncared-for throughout society, people who...are shunned by everyone."

Mother Teresa showed that by loving everyone a person may come to be loved by everyone.

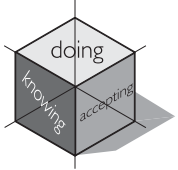
Activity 3

Ask students to copy into their notebooks any quotations or examples from this chapter that they find inspirational.

Activity 4

Hold up an object such as a piece of chalk. Say, "This is a piece of cheese". Ask students to pass the chalk to one another, each saying while doing so, "This is a piece of cheese". Then ask: "Did calling this a piece of cheese make it one? Does what I say make a person acceptable or unacceptable, attractive or unattractive, cool or not cool?"

3 Doing



Evaluation

Ask students to give examples of good conformity and bad conformity to show comprehension. Ask them to write a short essay or speak about an incident when they showed integrity or stood up to peer pressure. Evaluate their comprehension from that.

Specific Resolutions

To memorise two good examples and apply them in real life peer pressure situations.

Daily self-questioning: "Was I true to my values and beliefs today? What improvements should I make?"