

1) Before reading the excerpts answer the following questions:

- People often write to advice columns in magazines for help. Why do people resort to this type of help?
- Do you think the sort of advice is useful? Is it reliable? Why? Why not?
- What do you usually do when you are in trouble?

2) Read the two excerpts to find out what the problems are.

I'm a 15 year-old boy and I need a girl's opinion. The boys in my class are always making fun of me. They say my hair looks like a wig. Also, I'm in too tight clothes while they prefer the baggy look, so they call me a beanpole. The real problem is no girls come near me because of their comments. It's so unfair. Surely everyone should be allowed to be an individual?



Dear Peacemaker,
I am very worried about my relationship with my son. He has eight holes pierced in each ear, his eyebrow, lip, nose and tongue, and most in other areas I don't care to know about. I am very worried and frustrated because I am having difficulty in understanding this behaviour.

- Who writes these letters?
- What problems do these letters talk about?
- What feelings are expressed by each person?

3) Read the replies.**A**

Teens need to express themselves. They feel the need to create a physical image for others to see, whether it's through clothing, hairstyle, or forms of self-expression. It gives them a sense of individuality. If your teenage son or daughter has recently got some body part pierced, such as their navel, eyebrow, or even nose, there is no real reason to worry. This is simply a popular trend of our generation and it will soon fade. It can be helpful for you to remember when you might have been in a similar situation as a teen.

B

In an ideal world, people would admire individuality. However, as you've discovered, the real world isn't like that. People get scared by things that are different, and rather than trying to understand them they criticise. These boys feel threatened because you've got the guts to wear what you like, so they pick on you. Ignore their remarks. In time they'll get fed up. I'm sure girls are just afraid to show any attention in case they get picked up on too. Just be true to yourself and you will meet friends, and girls, who respect your individuality.