

JERKS: Them, Us, and the Kingdom of Jerkdom!

There is some honest talk about jerks below and how we may become one ourselves!

Kids are often difficult in middle school and high school. In middle school, kids seem to be the MOST difficult. Each one of us can be a difficult person in the eyes of others.

What makes people difficult? Here are some ideas:

- **Being mean**
People get our attention by saying or doing things to us that are upsetting.
- **Ignoring us**
People ignore us when they pay attention to others. People discuss what we say and act like we don't exist.
- **Making us feel stupid**
People make comments about what we say that make us feel like they think we're stupid.
- **Putting us off**
People act really nice to others in general, but when they do things we perceive of as mean only when others aren't looking.
- **Lying**
Kids lie. They try and make people think things that aren't true to make us feel bad or at least to make themselves look better.
- **What else?**

The reality is that none of us are "innocent" and each of us has been a difficult person to someone else, whether it's our friend, acquaintance, someone we don't know, our sibling, and others in our families.

There are some things we need to do to handle the difficult person or difficult moment in our life:

I. Deal with anxiety

- a. All of us have anxiety some part of each day, if not all day, like a monster.
- b. We need to be able to appreciate that all people feel some level of social anxiety. Think on strategies with your teacher, counselor, or parent to help you accept that you can become anxious without letting it stop you from thinking clearly about how to react and respond to others in a way that keeps people feeling pretty good about you.
- c. We're still in control even when we're anxious. Being a little bit anxious is something that most of us get used to. Even though we're "reacting to," we don't let it take us over.

II. Evaluate the person who you are talking to, the one who is treating you like a jerk, how far over the line crossing another's boundaries. He may even have started all this by having led you into trouble! Perhaps the person is just having a jerky moment himself or he may be a real jerk. Think of ways to combat the jerk inside your own head when you have to talk to this person.