



**IT'S ABOUT TO
GO DOWN**

You don't have to fit in!

FOREWORD

It's about to GO DOWN is a series that looks at the dilemma's we all face - Peer pressure! From the playground, to the school grounds, even in Corporate America, it's something that everyone has to deal with! There are many influences society makes by promoting what we may think gives us an opportunity to "fit in". It's time to break away from this attitude - It's about to go down: You don't have to fit in!

FEELING THE PRESSURE?

PRINCIPLE 1: Dealing with the many things that life throws at us (expected and unexpected), it is difficult to decipher how to handle the situations, but becomes even more difficult when others get involved. With that being said, when others get involved, you have to determine their motives. When your'e feeling the pressure, ask yourself these three things about those who are trying to influence you:

1. Are they there to encourage you?

Encouragement is a _____, but not all encouragement is _____ encouragement.

2. Are they there to see what they can get out of it?

Not everyone has the _____! Some people will gain great _____ in knowing that you dismissed your _____.

3. Are they there to influence how you act/respond to do something?

Peer pressure works _____. Peers can have a _____ and _____ influence on each other.

Peer pressure is defined as: social pressure by members of one's peer group to take a certain action, adopt certain values, or otherwise conform in order to be accepted.

If this definition stands out to your current situation, and you can clearly see individuals around you that meet the criteria of the questions above, but more favorable towards the three indicators in the boxes - You're feeling the pressure. This should be your epiphany, a glimpse into your social network. These peers have been influencing you all this time without you even knowing it, that is of course, until now! Let's talk about ways you can handle it. It's about to go down" You don't have to fit in.



In the next few segments, you will see how: 1. Influence is not just your problem, but exists everywhere, 2. That self-esteem plays a big role in how you're influenced, 3. How powerful thinking helps in powerful responding: encouraging yourself then actuating that encouragement, and, 4. How you can step up, and step out: resources to winning the "fitting in" dilemma.

INFLUENCE! IT'S EVERYWHERE

PRINCIPLE 2: Never feel like you're in this alone! From world leaders, to tiny tots in playrooms, influence is everywhere. What matters most is not about the influence, but how you react to it. More often than not, people give more control to the influencer, rather than something they have control of - themselves. Too many teens give into peer pressure to "fit in", be "liked", or worry that they will be defined as anti-social because they "don't go along with the crowd". Of course, there are those who strongly believe that it's not about the pressure, as much as it is about the "experience". You know who they are, it may even be you, that's right, I'm talking about the "everybody's doing it" type. No matter which category you fall in, influence is everywhere, how can you walk away from the wrong choices.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

(use your Academic Notes sheet for this exercise)

1. List ways the media influences society.
2. List ways the media influences you personally.

After you have completed your lists, you will see how media influences appearance, behavior, and so much more. Some of your classmates may have the same ideas as you. Do a Think-Pair-Share activity, and you'll be surprised at the outcomes. When it comes to you personally, ask yourself:

**How much of you is influenced by media?
To what extent does that media influence you?**

Whether you are clueless or just plain in denial, influence is a reality for everyone, so we have to deal with it whether we like it or not! From television, magazines, text messages, internet, radio, and so many other forms of media, one thing is clear - We are inundated and impacted by influence. If influence is the springboard of how you live your life, something has to give. Show a little courage and step out of that comfort place. Don't conform, be ready to transform - you don't have to fit in!

"The _____ of courage in our society is not _____, it is
_____." - Rollo May



SELF-ESTEEM

PRINCIPLE 3: Self-esteem plays a big role in how you're influenced. A lot of times, the less self-esteem you have, the more likely you are to give into peer pressure, or be influenced to fit in. Self-esteem is often confused with "bragging rights", and is often mis-identified as arrogance. Now before I move on, allow me to address this one point that is often soft spoken, but critical. There is a clearly defined difference in being arrogant and confident. Simply said, self-esteem is your confidence, or quiet strength. You don't have to tell anyone how great you are, but it's quietly knowing that you are worth far more than what someone creates or thinks of you that carries your esteem.

When we talk about not fitting in, keep in mind that everyone will always have something to say, but consider this:

Be _____ and _____ to others ideas, but always remember, you don't have to _____, just be a _____.

Being a good listener allows you to hear and clearly think about what's being expressed to you. It also gives you time to decipher the message. Whether you have high, or low self-esteem, it's alright, we all go through fluctuations. Now if your spending too much time in the low esteem area, we have to work out a solution. Here are some tips to boosting your self-esteem.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

(use your Academic Notes sheet for this exercise)

- 1. Make a list of the stuff you're good at.** It can be anything from drawing or singing, to playing a sport, or telling a good joke. If you're having trouble with your list, ask someone (parent / family / faculty or staff). From there, add a few things to the list that you'd like to be good at.
- 2. Give yourself three compliments every day.** Don't just say, "I'm so great." Be specific about something good about yourself." While you're at it, before you go to bed every night, list three things in your day that really made you happy.
- 3. Remember that your body is your own, no matter what shape, size, or color it is.** If you are worried about your weight or size, you can check with your doctor to make sure that things are OK. Remind yourself of things about your body that are cool, like, "My legs are strong and I can skate really well."
- 4. Remember that there are things about yourself you can't change.** You should accept and love these things — such as skin color, your culture, beliefs...— because they are part of you.
- 5. When you hear negative comments in your head, tell yourself to stop.** When you do this, you take the power away from the voice inside that discourages you. Powerful thinking goes a long way.

(Adapted from Division of Behavioral Health, David V. Sheslow, PhD, 2008)



POWERFUL THINKING

PRINCIPLE 4: Powerful thinking helps in powerful responding: encouraging yourself then actuating that encouragement. The last few segments in this series uncovered topics that if not carefully understood and looked at in your life now, could lead to destructive behavior. What you have learned so far, has already given you the advantage to sit back and take inventory of life so far. As you take charge, powerful thinking should be your primary motivator. After you motivate your mind, it's time for a tangible change (in other words - DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT). I titled this series "It's about to go down" because sometimes it takes a struggle and even a fight to change what may seem comfortable.

Here are some keys to helping you fight peer pressure and the struggles of fitting in. I adapted these from Tony Dungy, New York Times Bestselling Author and NFL's Super Bowl winning Coach. Out of the many expressions of achieving significance, these three stood out as beneficial principles for the context of this series.

1. Choose friends for the sake of friendship, based on values.
2. Be open to taking advice from people whose judgements you trust.
3. Be yourself. Others may need your example, whether you realize it or not.

STEPPING OUT

PRINCIPLE 5: Stepping out also means "stepping up". Stepping out often means you have to stand alone. Don't worry! Standing alone means that you are grassroots. Every new beginning has to start somewhere, so why not with you?

If you are confronting, or are surrounded by peer pressure! Take a stand, you don't have to fit in. There are resources available to you if you need help in dealing with life 24 hours a day. Highly-trained counselors can respond to you even when you may not be able to reach that teacher, staff member, family, friends... Your school has resources if you need them as well, but the added advantage of this hotline, is that it is available to you at a moments notice when you're not at school. I encourage you to place it in your cell phone as a resource! If not for you, then someone else.

The Boys Town National Hotline is here to help kids, parents and families. In 2008, nearly 175,000 children and families were helped through the Boys Town National Hotline, and over the past decade, more than 8 million callers have found help at the end of the line.

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