

Do you like who you are when you're with your friends? Are you able to act the way you want to act? Are you able to have many friends or only a select few? Do you wear clothes that you're comfortable in, or dress to please your friends? Do you pick on another student because your friends expect that of you? Do you ever worry that your actions could cause your group of friends to reject you?

If you answered yes to any of the questions above, you may not be with a group of friends; you may be in a clique. When you find yourself looking in on a group, wanting to become part of their inner circle, or looking outside the group because you're tired of the rules, think about what you want for *yourself*. What type of friendship gives you the most independence? Who accepts you for YOU?

Cliques often...

- enjoy social status and popularity.
- have a strict membership code (demanding).
- think they are better than others.
- exclude others.
- have rules.
- pressure the group to be the same.

Groups of friends...

- usually have something in common.
- allow you to be yourself.
- don't mind if you have other friends.
- do not exclude others from hanging out.
- are not focused on popularity.
- do not follow strict rules.



What can I do?

The most important thing to remember is that you must be a friend to others to have friends. *What kind of friend would you like to have? Become that friend to others! *Know who YOU are and what makes you comfortable. Don't let yourself down by following others. *You may miss out on great friendships if you allow others to tell you who your friends are. You decide! *When something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't. Stick up for others; stand up for yourself.

**How do cliques make YOU feel?
Think about the questions below. If you know where you stand and how you feel, you will most likely make the right decisions when it comes to friends.**

Why are some cliques popular?

Are students who are in a controlled clique *really* happy?

Do you think cliques are powerful or “just for show?”

Describe the kind of friend you would like to have.

Are you the kind of friend you just described? Be honest!
