

Cliques, Phonies & Other Baloney



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Cliques, Phonies & Other Baloney

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Illustrated by Steve Mark

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PUBLISHING®



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A wise person once said this.
Maybe Oscar Wilde, maybe
Thomas Merton, no one knows
for sure. But from now on, you
can say it and sound **really,**
really
smart.

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Why You Need This Book (No Baloney)

Clique: It's a word that's spelled funny and sounds funny and (like a vampire) can be a pain in the neck. The word *clique* sounds like *trick*. It's tricky being "cliquey" as you go through school.

Here's one definition:

CLIQUE (noun): a narrow, *exclusive* group of people—especially one held together by common interests and views.

Exclusive means having the power to *exclude* certain people, or keep them out. So, cliques like slamming the door on others. BANG!

Cliques can make you feel:

SHUT OUT

Lonely **SCARED**

worried

angry

unwelcome

unhappy

unpopular

PRESSURED

Any of those feelings make it harder for you to have fun, pay attention in school, or be confident about who you are.

If you're bothered by cliques, this book is for you. If you're dying to be in a clique, this book is for you, too. Even if you're in a clique, you can learn something from this book.

This book is about what cliques are, what they do, and what *you* can do about *them*. It's also about making friends—those important people in your life who don't mind if you act goofy or make mistakes. You'll learn that having good friends isn't always the same thing as being popular or being in a clique. You'll also discover that the best way to get along with people—at school or anywhere else—is to be friendly and respectful.



Best of all, you'll see that being yourself—not someone else—can help you grow up with greater confidence.

Are You Sick of Cliques?

Does a clique at your school leave you feeling annoyed, uneasy, and a little queasy?

If cliques make you sick, you might have **cliques vomititus**, otherwise known as the clique sickness. Maybe you feel like throwing up because a clique is being cliquey. This means clique members:



1. Leave out other kids on purpose.
2. Act like they're better than everyone else.
3. Set rules or standards about how others "should" dress, behave, or be.

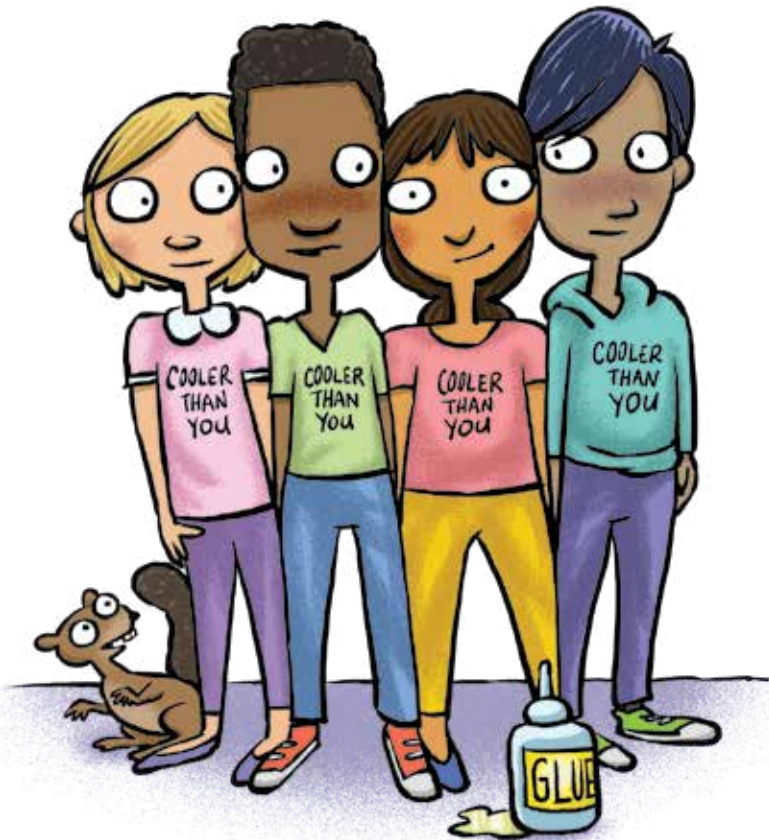
Clique sickness might make you want to skip school. It's hard to get out of bed and face another day of feeling like you don't belong. But each new day is a chance to kick that sickness. It may help to look closer at what makes a clique a clique.

The Ins and Outs of Cliques

Remember that definition of a clique (see page 1)? An important word in it is *exclusive*. A clique *excludes* others, or leaves them out.

A clique is different from a "group of friends." You may have a few close friends you hang around with. Maybe you live near each other, participate in the same sport or club, sit by each other at lunch, and share interests. Nothing wrong with that—especially if you make room for others to join in.





A clique has a different approach. Cliques are sticky—they stick together like glue. The members of the clique are almost always together. Maybe they take up a whole lunch table or block the hallway as they walk side by side in a line. The message is: “We’re **IN**. You’re **OUT**.”



Experts say that some cliques behave like this to feel stronger and more powerful. Kids in the clique might feel better about themselves if they say, “Let’s not hang out with *them*.”

Think about how wild wolves form packs in the wilderness. Cliques aren’t as dangerous, but the idea is the same. They stick together because there’s safety in numbers. Being cliquey can make the clique *seem* secure (because being part of a group is a kind of protection).

So, are others left out because the clique members are somehow “better”?

NO!

People in cliques are not “better” or “above” or “more.” People outside of cliques are just as important as anyone inside. That’s the truth, even if it doesn’t always *feel* true to you.



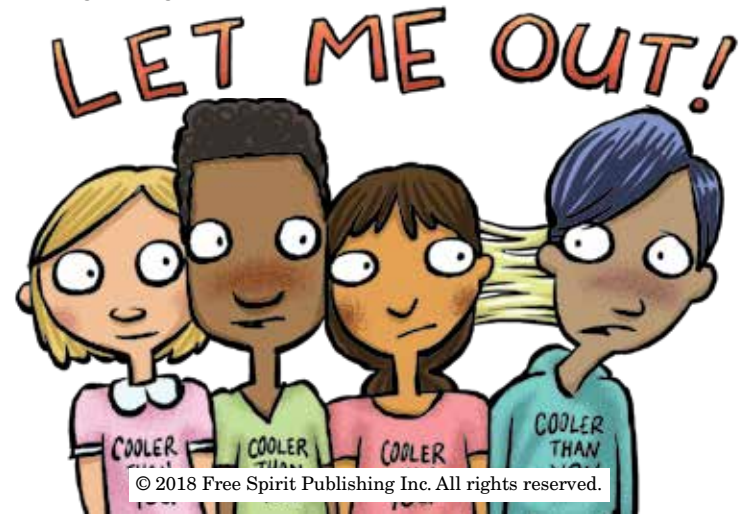
The #1 Clique Myth

Kids in cliques are the most confident, happy, and popular kids of all.



Some clique members may be confident and feel good about themselves. But others are insecure, and being part of a group makes them feel better. Kids in cliques often worry a lot about how they look, how they act, and what people think of them. (People *inside* the group and *outside* it.) That adds up to a lot of pressure! So, clique members may appear happy on the outside but feel intense pressure on the inside. That’s no fun at all.

It’s also a myth that kids in cliques are always popular. Actually, they may have trouble getting to know other classmates if they hang out with the same people all the time. That whole “sticking like glue” thing can get old after a while.



Another Clique Myth

Cliques are easy to spot.



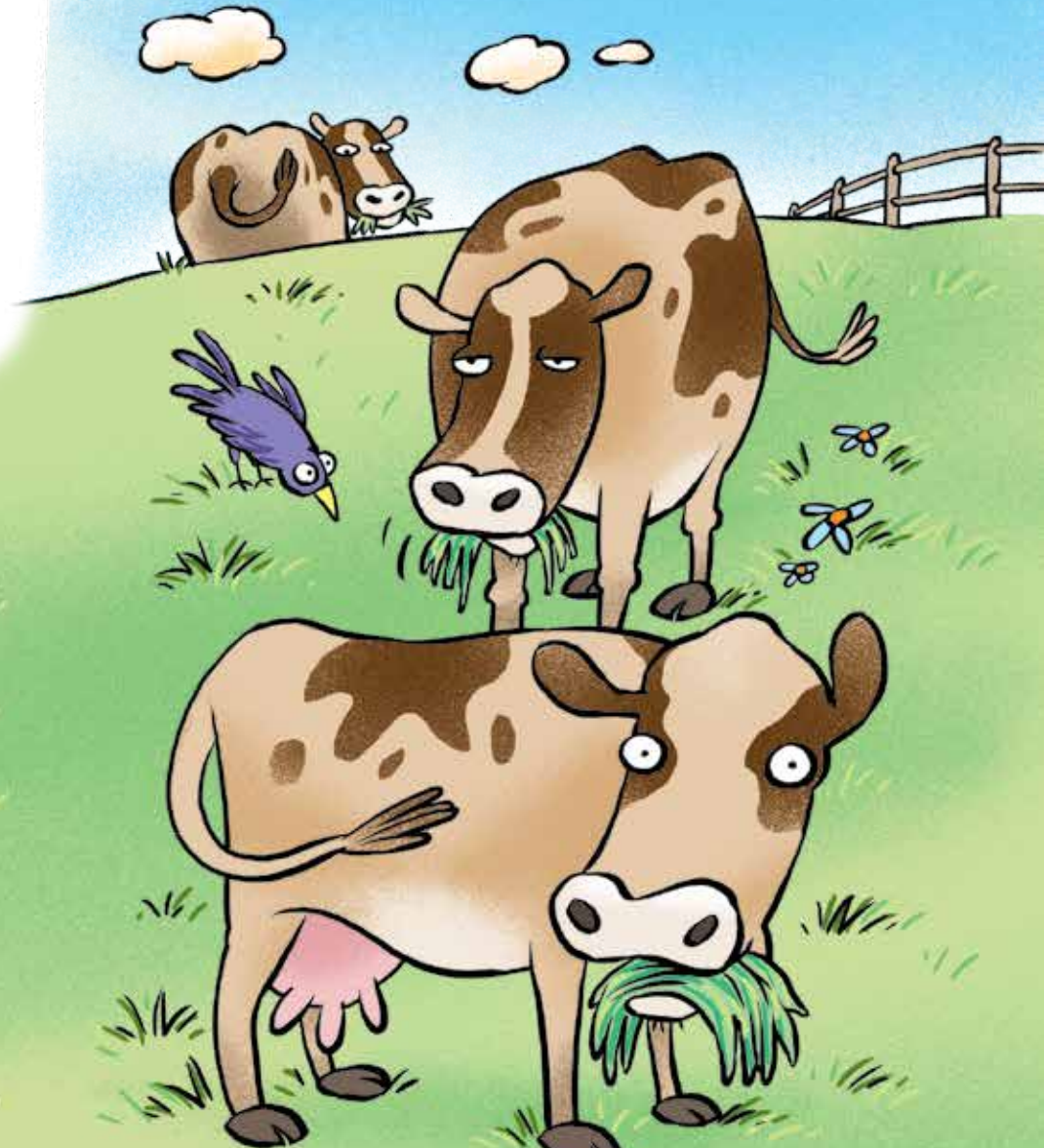
Some cliques are cliquey on the internet. And that makes them sort of invisible. The people in online cliques hide behind their computer screens and spend time putting down others on social media. With the *click* of a mouse, these clique members gossip, spread rumors, make rude comments, or post hurtful words and images. To avoid this type of interaction, think carefully about what you do when you're online. Don't use social media sites without your parents' permission, and be sure to use the privacy settings available. Think hard about what you post or how you respond to others. Never share your passwords, even with your BFF. That's just part of staying safe online.



Weird Things Cliques Do

#1: They always travel in a group. They go everywhere together, like a herd of cows.

Why do they want to behave like an animal that spends eight hours a day “chewing its cud”? (Barfing up grass and then swallowing it again.)



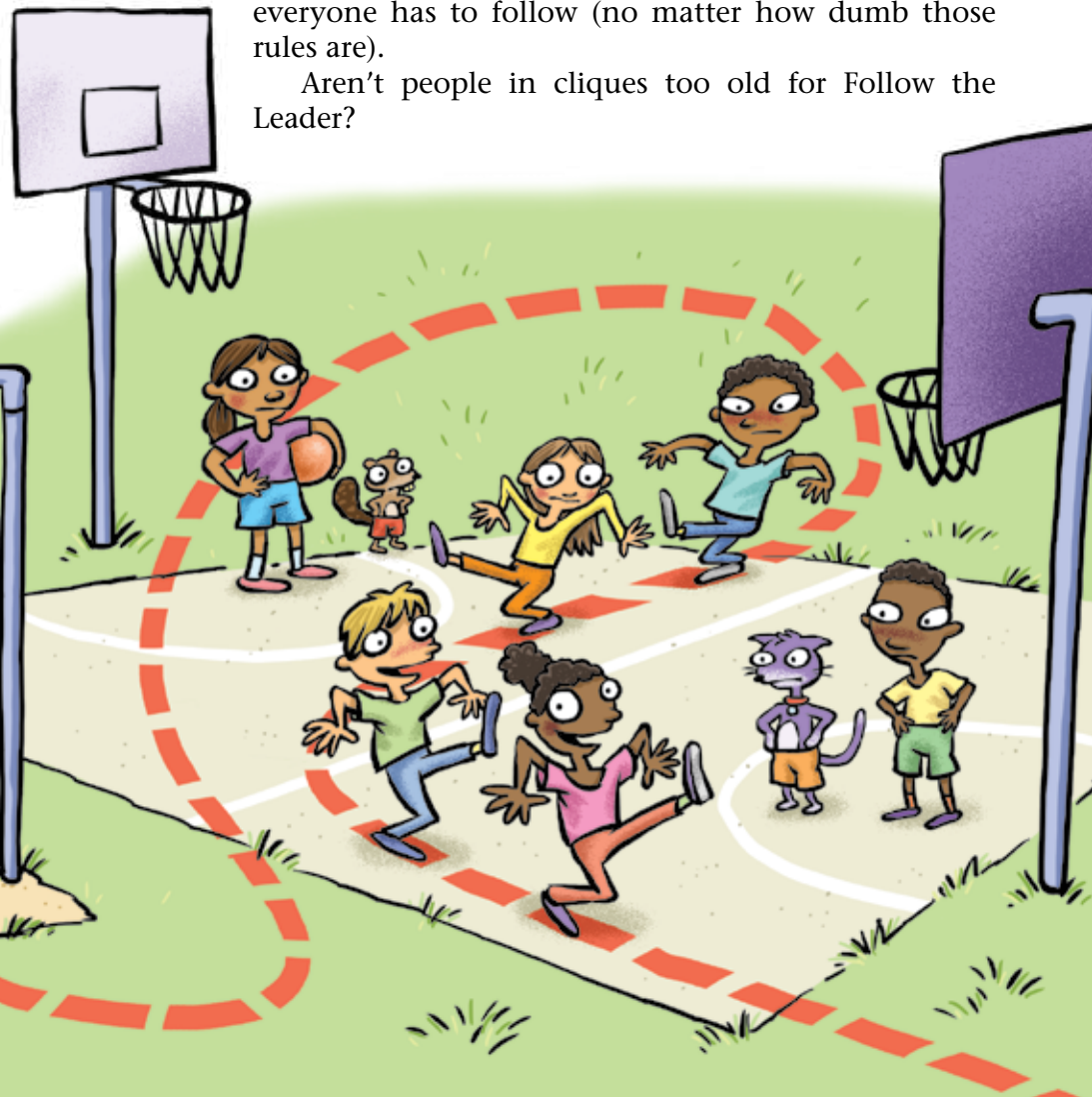
#2: Cliques have rules. The rules say who's cool and who's not, and what members can and can't do.

Some of the rules are really stupid. For example, maybe kids in the clique start pressuring each other to smoke or drink alcohol. Maybe they bully others. Maybe clique members make each other tell personal secrets. Maybe they laugh at each other's mistakes or call each other out for trying to make new friends. Who needs *extra* rules—especially ones that make you feel bad?



#3: They have leaders. The leaders make rules that everyone has to follow (no matter how dumb those rules are).

Aren't people in cliques too old for Follow the Leader?





#4: They have a dress code. Most people in the clique wear the same kinds of shoes, T-shirts, jeans, jackets, and caps.

They might have to wear sneakers so big they look like snow boots.

Try this out: Say the word “clique” to yourself ten times fast. You sound like a machine or a robot. *Hmmmm*—what does that tell you?

You’re not a robot. You’re not a cow or a sheep that has to follow the herd. You’re not some cookie-cutter person who has to be just like all the other snickerdoodles. You’re **YOU!** You can learn not to get caught up in cliques. You can make friends and *be* a good friend. Keep reading to find out more.

