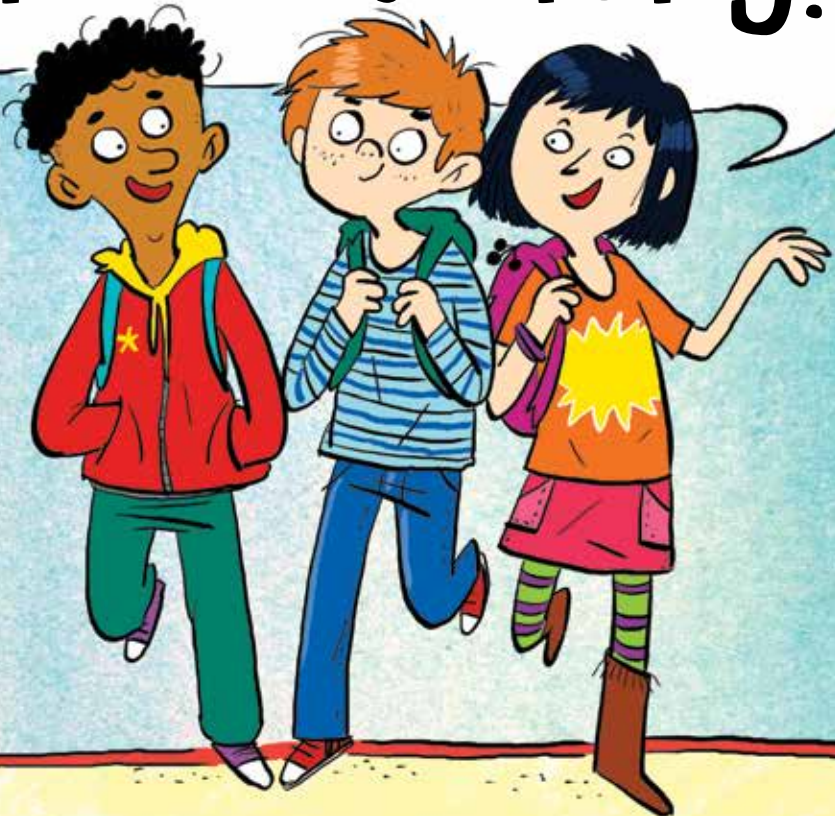


REVISED AND UPDATED EDITION



# SPEAK UP and Get Along!



Learn the Mighty Might, Thought Chop,  
and More Tools to Make Friends,  
Stop Teasing, and Feel GOOD About Yourself

free spirit  
PUBLISHING®

**SCOTT COOPER**

© 2019 Free Spirit Publishing Inc. All rights reserved.

# **SPEAK UP** and Get Along!

Learn the Mighty Might, Thought Chop,  
and More Tools to Make Friends,  
Stop Teasing, and Feel GOOD About Yourself

**BY SCOTT COOPER**  
illustrated by Joelle Driedemy

free spirit  
PUBLISHING®



Text copyright © 2019, 2005 by Scott Cooper  
Illustrations copyright © 2019 by Free Spirit Publishing Inc.

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. Unless otherwise noted, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without express written permission of the publisher, except for brief quotations or critical reviews. For more information, go to [freespirit.com/permissions](http://freespirit.com/permissions).

Free Spirit, Free Spirit Publishing, and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Free Spirit Publishing Inc. A complete listing of our logos and trademarks is available at [freespirit.com](http://freespirit.com)

### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Cooper, Scott, author.

Title: Speak up and get along! : learn the mighty might, thought chop, and more tools to make friends, stop teasing, and feel good about yourself / written by Scott Cooper.

Description: Revised and Updated Edition. | Minneapolis, Minnesota : Free Spirit Publishing, 2019.

| Revised edition of the author's Speak up and get along!, c2005. | Audience: Age: 8–12.

Identifiers: LCCN 2018058560 | ISBN 9781631983856 (pbk. 13) | ISBN 1631983857 (pbk. 10) | ISBN 9781631983863 (Web PDF) | ISBN 9781631983870 (ePub)

Subjects: LCSH: Interpersonal communication—Juvenile literature. | Children—Conduct of life—Juvenile literature.

Classification: LCC BF637.C45 C687 2019 | DDC 155.4/136—dc23 LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2018058560>

Free Spirit Publishing does not have control over or assume responsibility for author or third-party websites and their content. At the time of this book's publication, all facts and figures cited within are the most current available. All telephone numbers, addresses, and website URLs are accurate and active; all publications, organizations, websites, and other resources exist as described in this book; and all have been verified as of April 2019. If you find an error or believe that a resource listed here is not as described, please contact Free Spirit Publishing. Parents, teachers, and other adults: We strongly urge you to monitor children's use of the internet.

The swimming metaphor referred to on page 112 is from *Best Friends, Worst Enemies: Understanding the Social Lives of Children* by Michael Thompson, Ph.D., and Catherine O'Neill Grace with Lawrence J. Cohen, Ph.D., copyright © 2001 by Michael Thompson, Ph.D., and Catherine O'Neill Grace. Used by permission of Ballantine Books, an imprint of Random House, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. All rights reserved.

Reading Level Grade 4; Interest Level Ages 8–12;  
Fountas & Pinnell Guided Reading Level S

Edited by Eric Braun

Cover and interior design by Emily Dyer

Illustrated by Joelle Dreidemey

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America  
V20300619

**Free Spirit Publishing Inc.**  
6325 Sandburg Road, Suite 100  
Minneapolis, MN 55427-3674  
(612) 338-2068  
[help4kids@freespirit.com](mailto:help4kids@freespirit.com)  
[freespirit.com](http://freespirit.com)

**Free Spirit offers competitive pricing.**

Contact [edsales@freespirit.com](mailto:edsales@freespirit.com) for pricing information on multiple quantity purchases.

## **DEDICATION**

*To Adam, Jackson, and Brooke*

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Sincere thanks to those who shared their ideas and expertise, listed here alphabetically:

Cordelia Anderson, M.A., speaker, trainer, and consultant to schools on promoting well-being and preventing harmful behaviors, including bullying and violence prevention; Stefanie Capps, superintendent of the Dunham School District in northern California; Thomas S. Greenspon, Ph.D., licensed psychologist and licensed marriage and family therapist; Sam Humleker, seventh grader at Ramsey International Fine Arts Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Scott Mahoney, Ed.D., superintendent of the Waugh School District in northern California; Dorothea M. Ross, Ph.D., past research psychologist in the Division of Behavioral and Developmental Pediatrics at the University of California, San Francisco; KaTrina Wentzel, M.Ed., fifth- and ninth-grade teacher in St. Paul, Minnesota, and past curriculum coordinator and diversity director; all the kids who reviewed and commented on the material; and my wife, Julie, for her very helpful review and input.

Thanks also to the great people at Free Spirit Publishing and their commitment to helping children: my very talented editor Eric Braun, editorial director Marjorie Lisovskis, and special thanks to Judy Galbraith for providing the opportunity to publish this book.

# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
What Do Birds Have to Do with Getting Along? .....	2
How to Use This Book .....	3

## **EXPRESSING YOURSELF**

<b>The Tools of the Blue Jay</b> .....	6
<b>Tool #1:</b> The Power I .....	10
<b>Tool #2:</b> The No Thanks .....	14
<b>Tool #3:</b> Asking Questions .....	19
<b>Tool #4:</b> The Squeaky Wheel .....	22

## **MAKING AND KEEPING FRIENDS**

<b>The Tools of the Blackbird</b> .....	26
<b>Tool #5:</b> The Sherlock Holmes .....	29
<b>Tool #6:</b> Sharing .....	34
<b>Tool #7:</b> Kind Talk .....	37

## **ENDING ARGUMENTS AND FIGHTS**

<b>The Tools of the Dove</b> .....	44
<b>Tool #8:</b> The Coin Toss .....	47
<b>Tool #9:</b> Solution Time .....	49
<b>Tool #10:</b> The Cool Down .....	55

## **STOPPING TEASING AND BULLYING**

<b>The Tools of the Hummingbird</b> .....	59
<b>Tool #11:</b> The Power I for Teasing .....	64
<b>Tool #12:</b> The Shrug .....	66

<b>Tool #13:</b> The Mighty Might .....	69
<b>Tool #14:</b> The Comeback Kid .....	71
<b>Tool #15:</b> The Disappearing Act .....	77

## **DEALING WITH BLAME**

<b>The Tools of the Crow</b> .....	80
<b>Tool #16:</b> The Mea Culpa .....	83
<b>Tool #17:</b> The No Way .....	86

## **TALKING BACK TO NEGATIVE THOUGHTS**

<b>The Tools of the Owl</b> .....	89
<b>Tool #18:</b> The But Twist .....	94
<b>Tool #19:</b> The Thought Chop .....	97
<b>Tool #20:</b> Solution Time 2 .....	104
<b>Tool #21:</b> The Balloon Belly .....	106

<b>SOME FINAL THOUGHTS</b> .....	110
----------------------------------	-----

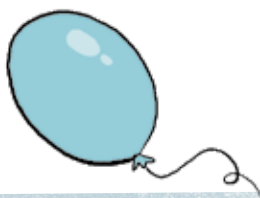
<b>NOTE TO ADULTS</b> .....	112
-----------------------------	-----

<b>RESOURCES FOR KIDS</b> .....	121
---------------------------------	-----

<b>RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS</b> .....	123
---	-----

<b>INDEX</b> .....	125
--------------------	-----

<b>ABOUT THE AUTHOR</b> .....	129
-------------------------------	-----



# INTRODUCTION



School can be a lot of fun. It's great to learn new things and hang out with friends. But school can also be hard—and not just because you have to learn fractions, world history, or how to play C-sharp on the trumpet. It's hard because you have to work, play, and spend all your time with other kids and adults. You have to get along with people:

- in class
- in the hallways
- on the playground
- in the gym
- on the bus
- and just about everywhere else

That's a lot of getting along! And sometimes it's tough, because all those people have their own thoughts, feelings, and needs.

## 2 Speak Up and Get Along!

One way to make getting along easier is to show respect for others. Respecting other people means thinking of them as important individuals. It means accepting them and treating them the way you'd like to be treated. Showing respect for yourself is just as important as having it for others. Always remember that YOU are an important person. If you treat others and yourself with respect, people will usually treat you with respect too. This book can help make that happen:

It will teach you to **SPEAK UP** for yourself  
and others in a respectful way . . .  
so you can **GET ALONG**—with others AND yourself.

### **WHAT DO BIRDS HAVE TO DO WITH GETTING ALONG?**

Part of respecting others is not judging them before you know them. When I was younger, I had a prejudged idea about people who watched birds. I thought of them as, well . . . nerdy. I pictured bird watchers as people who wore high socks, funny-looking hats, and binoculars dangling from their necks.

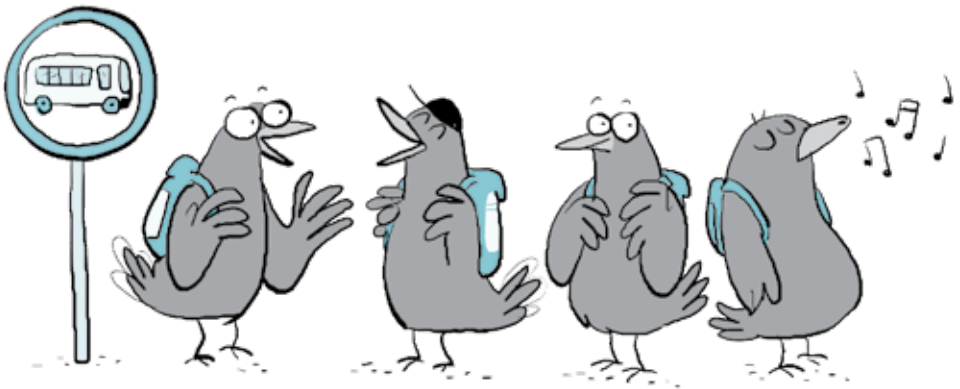
I kept that image even after I became an adult, and my brothers had started bird watching. Then one day my brothers invited me to join them, and I discovered that I liked it. Bird watching (or *birding*, as many people prefer to call it) was a new and exciting world to me. I found out that I enjoyed being with other birders, and that they were nice, regular people (even if some of them did wear goofy hats).



That experience showed me that even adults can learn more about respecting each other and getting along.

Since then I've learned more about birds. I've learned that most are very good at communicating or telling each other things. Because birds often live in flocks or small groups, they need to communicate to get along. They don't use words, but they use calls and songs that tell each other what they need and don't like. Baby birds peep for food and help. Adult birds give out sharp warning calls if danger is near and sing beautiful songs to attract mates. Young birds learn from the adult birds the songs and sounds they will need.

All those songs and sounds are tools birds need to help them get along and take care of themselves. And you know what? Kids also need communication tools to help them get along with others and take care of themselves. That's why I wrote *Speak Up and Get Along!*



## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Each chapter in this book teaches you a different set of tools to help you with a different part of speaking up and getting along. And each chapter is named after a different bird that

## 4 Speak Up and Get Along!

is good at that set of tools. You can choose the chapters and tools to help you with situations or problems you're dealing with. For example, if you're being teased at school, you can go to the chapter called "Stopping Teasing and Bullying: The Tools of the Hummingbird." Hummingbirds are good at standing up for themselves, even against bigger animals. Or, if you're feeling bad about yourself and having trouble getting things done, you can read the chapter called "Talking Back to Negative Thoughts: The Tools of the Owl." Owls can see clearly, even when things seem dark.

You'll get the most use out of this book if you read it from beginning to end and practice all the tools. Practice by yourself, with friends, and with adults you trust, who can share some of their own ideas and experiences. Boxes that say "Practice Time" will teach you a specific way to practice a tool.

People are *social*. That means we spend most our time with other people. *Speak Up and Get Along!* focuses mainly on school, because school is the place where you're most often on your own in social situations. But the tools you'll learn here don't only work at school. They work wherever you're with other people, including at home, in your neighborhood, and out and about. It's important to get along no matter where you are.

As a kid, I didn't like it when I saw people getting bullied, so I would try to help them. As an adult, it's even harder for me to see kids being mistreated. But there is a lot you can do on your own to make difficult situations better. You have great strength. You also have teachers, principals, parents, and other caring adults who want to help you if things get really tough.

Most of the time, getting along is easy and fun. It's fun to talk, hang out, play games, study, and be on teams with people. It's fun to help others and work together. For those times when getting along is not so easy, *Speak Up and Get Along!* can help you.

I'd like to know how these tools work for you. Write to me and let me know if they helped you speak up and get along and tell me about other tools you have found.

## **Scott Cooper**

You can email me at:  
[help4kids@freespirit.com](mailto:help4kids@freespirit.com)

Or you can send me a letter in care of:  
Free Spirit Publishing  
6325 Sandburg Road, Suite 100  
Minneapolis, MN 55427-3674

# EXPRESSING YOURSELF

## The Tools of the Blue Jay



Blue jays are squawking, jabbering birds. If you walk into any forest in North America, you're bound to hear a blue jay or one of its jay cousins. If a blue jay doesn't like what other birds are doing, it's very loud in telling them so. If it needs help from another blue jay, it asks for it by quickly calling out. Blue jays set a good example for how to tell others what you want and how you feel, and to ask for help when you need it.



All living creatures have ways to communicate. Mother birds chirp to warn their babies, dogs yelp when they're in pain, cats purr when they're content, and guinea pigs stand on their heads and plug their ears when they're angry (just kidding). But no other living creature is able to communicate as

completely as humans, because humans have words. We can use our words to talk, holler, sing, or cheer, and we can write our words on paper or type them on a phone or computer.

Words are a great way to communicate because words are so specific. If a dog whines, we don't know if it's hungry, sad, or just wants to go outside. But with words, people can tell others exactly what they mean. For example, "I'll take a double cheeseburger with Swiss cheese, pickles, tomatoes, lettuce—and *no onion!*"



## WHEN TO USE THE TOOLS OF THE BLUE JAY

Telling other people exactly what you mean is especially important when you're not getting along with those people. For example, if someone takes your water bottle, you can use words to tell that person to give it back. And if someone says something mean to you, you can say right back that you don't like it. And you can say why too.

Difficulties getting along with people are sometimes called *social problems*. Social problems often happen when people don't show enough respect for each other. Check out how two students reacted when they didn't get enough respect.

**Rasheed** was shooting baskets when Michael ran up and grabbed his basketball. "Come and get it, slowpoke," he taunted.

Rasheed felt furious. Basketball tryouts were tomorrow, and he really needed to practice. Besides, Michael was *always* doing things like this. It made Rasheed want to explode. "Give me that ball back, now!" he yelled. But Michael just laughed. Rasheed had had enough. He charged at Michael and tackled



him. As the ball rolled off the court, the two boys wrestled on the hard blacktop.

Later, they slouched in chairs in the principal's office. Michael had a dark, swollen eye; Rasheed had a bloody nose; and they both had scraped knuckles and bruises all over. Both were suspended from school. Worse, Rasheed would not be allowed to try out for the basketball team. "But I didn't start this," Rasheed pleaded.

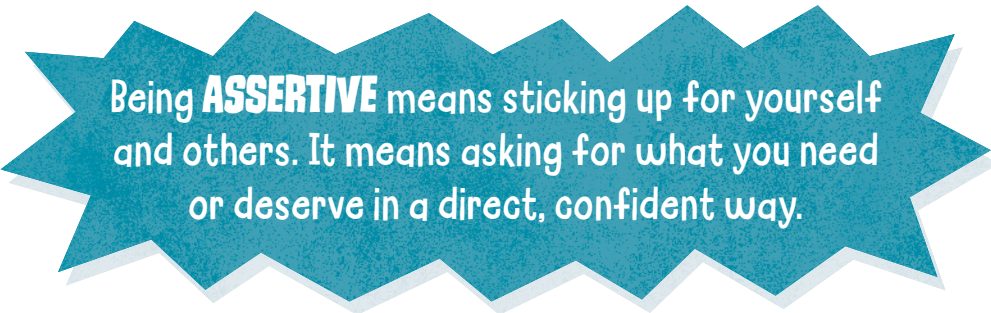
"That doesn't matter," the principal responded.

**Brenda** loved her art class. She especially enjoyed painting watercolors and making pottery. But there was one thing she didn't like. Every day she was the only one to clean the mess at her group's table. There were drippy paint brushes, sopping paper towels, and broken pieces of clay. She worried that if she spoke up, the other kids in the group might not like her. But if the table wasn't cleaned, their group would lose points for their semester grades. Brenda wanted the other kids at the table to like her, and she didn't want to lose points, so she always cleaned up. She knew it wasn't fair, though, and it was starting to make art less fun.



Rasheed and Brenda didn't get the respect they deserved, and they ended up doing things they regretted. When you have trouble getting along with others, you may feel like fighting, like Rasheed did, or avoiding the problem, like Brenda did. Those reactions are natural. But neither reaction will help you in the long run. If you fight, you can hurt yourself or others, and you can get in trouble. Fighting can ruin friendships and make problems worse. If you ignore a problem, it usually won't go away. The people you're not getting along with may get their way—even if they're being unfair or unkind. And the next time you see them, the problem is right back again. You've taught them that they don't have to give you respect.

Rasheed and Brenda would have been better off if they had expressed themselves about what they didn't like. To express yourself, you need to be assertive. Being assertive doesn't mean being tough or mean, and it doesn't mean starting a fight. So, what does it mean?



Being **ASSERTIVE** means sticking up for yourself and others. It means asking for what you need or deserve in a direct, confident way.

Sometimes kids may be mean to you, they may try to get you to do things you don't really want to do, or they may try to keep you from getting things that you deserve. Most of the time, the best thing to do if you are not getting along with another person is to *talk* to that person. You will probably have to be assertive to get the respect you deserve. The tools of the Blue Jay can help you.

## Tool #1

# THE POWER I

*Use the Power I to tell others what you think, what you want, or how you feel when they are not treating you fairly.*

The Power I is a simple but powerful tool. It means using an “I” sentence that is strong and direct. If someone does something mean, you can say, “I want you to stop doing that,” or, “I don’t like that.” If you disagree with someone, this is also a good time to use the Power I. Tell that person, “I don’t agree with that,” or, “I have a different opinion.”

## WAYS TO SAY IT: The Power I

The person who sits behind you at school keeps thumping your head with a pencil.

**Power I:** *Hey, I want you to cut it out!*

.....

You’ve been waiting to swing on the swings for a long time but another person won’t stop swinging.

**Power I:** *I want to use the swings too. I’ve been waiting a long time, so please let me on now.*

The Power I can be even simpler. You don’t even have to say the “I” out loud. You can keep it inside you. If someone is calling you names, you can simply say, “Please stop it.” What you are really saying is, “I want you to please stop it.” But to keep it simple you can drop the “I.”



## MORE WAYS TO SAY IT: The Power I

A friend sends you a rude text.

**Power I:** (You text back) *That's not cool. Don't send me stuff like that again.* (If the friend texts you again, don't reply. See pages 41–42 for more about texting and online safety.)

.....

Your teacher has assigned a group of you to write a report, but you are the only one doing any work.

**Power I:** *The assignment is that we write this as a group. Let's figure out how each of us can help.*

.....

A kid teases you for having a pimple.

**Power I:** *Knock it off!*

### BODY TALK

Not all your communication happens through words. Your face and body communicate too. This is called *body language*. When you have a big smile, others know you're happy. When you have a scowl on your face, people know you're upset or angry.

Sometimes your words say one thing and your body says another. For example, if you say, "I'm very happy," but your mouth is frowning, people will usually believe your frown more than your words. Or if you say, "I'm not afraid," but your knees are shaking and your eyes are bulging, your body language is telling a different story.

When you're using the Power I, it's important to use body language that shows that you mean what you say. If you act afraid, other people may not take you seriously. If you act mean or tough, they may think you are starting a fight. Instead:

- Stand tall.
- Hold your head high.



## 12 Speak Up and Get Along!

- Pull your shoulders back.
- Look the person in the eye.
- Don't move away.

Your tone of voice is also important. Speak calmly in a strong, clear voice. Don't yell, but don't talk too quietly either. With the right body language and tone of voice, you show that you are firm and serious.



### USING THE POWER I WITH AUTHORITY FIGURES

It can be hard to use the Power I with older kids or adults. You might worry that they will get angry or make fun of you. You might think that they won't listen to you. You might even be afraid that they will hurt you.

When it comes time to use the Power I with authority figures like teachers and parents, it's natural to be nervous. But remember that no matter who you are talking to, you have the right to be respected. Sometimes adults have to hear what your needs are. There are two things you can do to make it easier to speak up in these situations. One is to say how hard it is to speak openly and honestly. Another is to express how you think the other person might feel about what you have to say. Here are some examples to help you get started:

*I hate to make a big deal, but I need to tell you that . . .*

*I'm worried you might feel bad hearing this, but I want . . .*

*It's hard for me say this, but I don't think that . . .*

*You may not like this, but I want you to . . .*

*Maybe nobody else has told you this, but I . . .*

Remember, it's important to be respectful toward adults and other authority figures even when you're being assertive.

## PRACTICE TIME



When you first start using the Power I, you might feel nervous with kids your own age too. This is also normal. It can be hard to tell people things you know they might not want to hear. If you're nervous, practice the Power I with a good friend or an adult you trust. With your practice partner, make up some situations in which people act disrespectful toward you. (Or think of a real problem in your life, a situation where you'd like to be more assertive.) Then come up with several ways of using the Power I to speak up for your right to respect. Take turns saying the lines to each other. With practice, the Power I will become easier and easier, and telling others how you feel will begin to feel natural.

Here's one last point about the Power I: Be polite. This is very important. You're asking people to treat you with respect, and they deserve to be treated that way too. You may be angry but being mean won't help you. The Power I works best when you use it in a polite but firm way.

## Tool #2

## THE NO THANKS

*Use the No Thanks to say no to people who pressure you.*

Have friends ever tried to get you to do things you didn't want to do? Has anyone tried to talk you into something you knew was unsafe or wrong? For example, maybe someone tried to pressure you into being mean to somebody else. Or maybe someone tried to talk you into taking something that wasn't yours. A big part of having respect for yourself is keeping yourself safe and out of trouble. And that means learning to say no to bad situations.

**Astrid** was starting to be accepted by the most popular group of girls in her class. She sat with them at assemblies and at lunch. For the first time, she'd been invited to a boy-girl party.

At the party, Astrid and her friends stood talking near the music speaker. Linda looked around to see if any adults were nearby, then pulled a small bottle of liquor from her bag. "Try a little," she said, "it'll make you feel dizzy." Astrid was surprised but also curious. The girls giggled and took sips. Other kids were watching. Astrid's mom had talked to her about not drinking



alcohol. She knew she should say no, but Astrid didn't want to fall out of the popular group. She was confused and nervous.

Someone passed her the bottle. Astrid took a deep breath and said, "No thanks. I'm good."



Sometimes, because you want others to like you, you might be tempted to say yes to things you really don't want to do. You might even say yes to things that you know aren't good for you. You probably know that it's very important to say no to things like:

- drugs
- tobacco
- e-cigarettes and vaping
- violence
- stealing
- cheating
- being mean to others
- movies and internet sites that aren't meant for kids

You probably also know it's not always easy to say no.

Kids who are your own age are called your *peers*. When peers try to get you to do things that they're doing, that's called *peer pressure*, and it can be very hard to resist. People naturally want to be liked and doing things that friends ask seems like an easy way to get them to like you.

Even good friends might try to talk you into things you're not sure about. Maybe they just want you to go to parties, movies, or other activities that you're not interested in. Or they may try to get you to do something dangerous.

But you'll be happier and safer—and you'll show self-respect—if you think and act independently. You can make your own choices and say no to other kids when you need to. That's where another simple tool comes in: the No Thanks. The No Thanks just means saying no when you need to.

Like using the Power I, saying no to friends, older kids, and adults can make you nervous or uncomfortable. You might worry about hurting another person's feelings or about being teased or not being liked. You might be afraid of making the other person angry or disappointed.

For worries like these, here are three things that can make saying no easier:

- 1. Self-respect.** This is the biggest help. If you have respect for yourself, you know you're too important to risk your safety. You also know you are the best person to make decisions about yourself.
- 2. Honesty.** Be honest about how hard it is, even as you're saying no. For example, you can say something like, "It's hard for me to tell you this, and I don't want you to feel bad, but I have to say no," or, "I hate for you to be disappointed, but I can't do this."
- 3. A "No" Buddy.** Get a friend to back you up. If your "No" Buddy says no right along with you, it can be a lot easier—for both of you.

## PRACTICE TIME



If you have been pressured to do something you don't feel good about doing, you can make a plan with your "No" Buddy for the next time it happens. Before you see the kids who are pressuring you, make an agreement with your friend that you will both say no. Come up with ways of using the No Thanks and practice them on each other. Then, when the time comes and you're feeling pressured, back each other up!



### WAYS TO SAY IT: The No Thanks

#### If you're worried about hurting feelings

*No. I wish I could, but I can't.*

*That's really nice, but I have to say no.*

*No, but thanks for asking.*

*I'm sorry, but my dad won't let me.*

**If you're worried about people getting angry with you or not liking you**

*I know you might not like this, but I just can't.*

*It's hard for me to say this, but no.*

*You might be disappointed, but I can't.*

*This may seem weird to you, but I can't do it.*

**A strong no when you need to make your point**

*No, that's a really bad idea.*

*No, I don't want to get in trouble.*

*No—I just don't want to.*

*Nope.*

*No way.*

*No, and I'm not changing my mind.*

## QUICK QUIZ

For each of the following situations, find at least one way you could use the No Thanks that is comfortable for you. There are lots of possible ideas. A few answers appear at the bottom of page PN upside down. (No peeking!)

**Situation #1:** *One of your friends says, "Hey, let's go take that kid's dorky hat."*

**Situation #2:** *A friend says, "Come on, let's go to the mall," but you don't really feel like it.*

**Situation #3:** *Some kids are looking at a website that you know your mom wouldn't want you to look at. Someone says, "Come over here and check this out."*

**Situation #4:** *During a test at school, the girl next to you asks if she can see your answers.*





**Situation #1:** "No. That would be mean." "No, just leave him alone." "No. What if someone did that to you?"

**Situation #2:** "Thanks for asking, but I'm going to pass this time." "No. I'm sure it'll be fun, but I can't tonight." "No thanks—I'll see you tomorrow."

**Situation #3:** "No, I've got to go do some other stuff." "No, that's too gross for me." "No, I'll see you guys later."

**Situation #4:** "No. I don't want to get in trouble." "No way!"

## POSSIBLE RESPONSES

## Tool #3 ASKING QUESTIONS

*Use Asking Questions when you need information or help.*

Telling people how you feel and saying no when you need to are ways to be assertive, like blue jays. Another part of being assertive is asking for what you need, especially when you need help. Blue jays are always willing to squawk for help!

The best way to find out things, or get help, is by Asking Questions. Don't know where the library is? Ask someone. Having trouble with long division? Ask your teacher for help. Not sure why your bike isn't working right? Ask a

friend who knows something about bikes. Asking Questions is never dumb.

You may feel embarrassed to ask a question sometimes. What if someone laughs at you? What if someone thinks your question is stupid?

Well, what if someone does? This would be a good time to ask *yourself* a question:



What's the **WORST** that could happen?

If you find that you are embarrassed about Asking Questions, ask yourself *that* question first. Ask it several times if you need to. For example, let's say you're having trouble understanding a geography assignment, but you're embarrassed to ask your teacher a question. Here's a conversation you can have with yourself:

**"What's the worst that could happen if I ask about the assignment?"**

*Other kids might laugh at me or think it's a dumb question.*

**"What's the worst that could happen if they did laugh or think that?"**

*I'd be embarrassed.*

**"What's the worst that could happen if I was embarrassed?"**

*Well, nothing too bad. And, so what?*

*No one's perfect and I'll get over it pretty quick.*

The worst that could happen isn't really that bad when you think about it. Most of the time, other people are glad you asked the question that they were afraid to ask themselves. And, of course, you know what can happen if you *do* ask a question:

- You get an answer.
- You get more information.
- You get the chance to learn and do better.

If you just can't get up the nerve to ask a question when you're in a big group, like a school class, you can always wait until an easier time. For example, you can ask the teacher during recess, when the class is over, or before or after school. Many teachers will let you email them too.

## WAYS TO SAY IT: Asking Questions

*Excuse me, can you please help me?*

*Could you please explain that again?*

*For some reason I'm still not getting it. Could you repeat that?*

*Could you please go over that again?*

*I'm sorry to bother you, but can you go through each part?*

*Tell me again, why did you do it that way?*



**Tool #4**

## THE SQUEAKY WHEEL

*Use the Squeaky Wheel when you need to be persistent.*

Using the Power I, the No Thanks, or Asking Questions doesn't work if the person you're talking to doesn't listen. When that happens, you have to be persistent. Being persistent means that you don't give up. It means you repeat what you're saying until the person you're talking to finally understands that you're not giving up. This is especially important when someone is being mean or unfair. Remember, nobody has the right to treat you badly, no matter who they are. You have as much right to feel safe and respected as anyone.

**Victor** had been waiting in line for a long time to get his food in the cafeteria when a bigger kid cut in front of him. "Hey, the line starts back there," Victor said. Victor was proud of himself for standing up to the bigger kid. But the boy just laughed at him, and he didn't go to the end of the line. He was popular, and Victor didn't want to seem like a dork by making a big deal out of it. And he really didn't want to get into an argument or fight. But Victor was upset. It wasn't fair, especially after he had waited so long. He decided to say something again: "Excuse me, please go to the end of the line."

The boy looked at Victor. "All right, kid," he said.

The tool that helps you be persistent is called the Squeaky Wheel. That's what Victor used. Think about it: The squeaky wheel on a skateboard or bicycle is the wheel that needs attention. It squeaks and squeaks until someone pays attention to it and gives it what it needs. You, too, can continue to "squeak" until someone gives you what you need. The skateboard wheel needs oil. You may need someone to stop teasing you. Or maybe you need someone to give you what belongs to you. Or maybe you need someone to take turns.



Of course, you don't actually squeak (that would get attention you *don't* want!). You talk. You keep repeating what you want in a firm and determined way.

## WAYS TO SAY IT: The Squeaky Wheel

One of your friends starts going through your locker at school and you don't like it.

**You:** *Hey, quit going through my locker!*

**Friend:** *I'm checking it out. Don't worry about it.*

**You:** *No, I'm serious. I don't like it.*

**Friend:** *Don't freak out, it's not a big deal.*

**You:** *Maybe not to you, but I want you to stop it.*

**Friend:** *Okay, okay, okay!*

It's your turn to use the computer, but a girl won't stop using it.

**You:** *It's my turn to use the computer.*

**Girl:** *Later.*

**You:** *No, I've already waited. I need to use it now.*

**Girl:** *Stop bugging me, I need to finish this.*

**You:** *I need to do something, too, and it's my turn according to the schedule.*

**Girl:** *Stop bugging me.*

**You:** *I'll stop bugging you when you let me use the computer. Do I need to get the teacher?*

**Girl:** *All right, I'm getting off!*



A group of friends wants you to go to a movie, but you don't really want to.

**You:** *Thanks for inviting me, but I'm just going to hang out at home.*

**Friend:** *Come on. Don't be such a homebody.*

**You:** *No, I really don't feel like it.*

**Friend:** *Why not?*

**You:** *I just don't want to tonight. I'm tired.*

**Friend:** *Come on, you can relax in the theater!*

**You:** *No thanks, I'm staying in tonight.*

**Friend:** *All right. See you tomorrow.*

You can use the Squeaky Wheel with other tools in this book. In Victor's story, he used the Power I, but it wasn't enough. Then he used the Squeaky Wheel along with the

Power I. If the bigger kid still didn't get out of line, he could have done it again: "Stop cutting in front of me. Go to the end of the line!"



## WHEN IT'S NOT SAFE TO USE THE SQUEAKY WHEEL

If you're talking to kids who you think might hurt you, don't use the Squeaky Wheel. If you keep talking to kids who are mean, you might not be safe. Instead, don't say anything at all. Just leave right away and find an adult you trust who can help. This is called the Disappearing Act, and you can read about it on pages 77-79.

The tools you learned in this chapter are for being assertive like a blue jay. When people don't treat you fairly or respectfully, you can use the tools of the blue jay to get the respect you deserve. Remember that being assertive doesn't mean being mean or tough. You'll have a lot more success getting respect from others if you show it to them too. Sticking up for yourself can be hard. It takes practice and confidence. But with practice, it gets easier. Soon you'll find that being assertive comes as naturally to you as it does to the blue jay. ■