



## **EPISODE 8 – NEENAH HIGH SCHOOL** **NEENAH, WI**

- *Bullying, prejudice and cliques are fixtures in schools across America.*
  - *Challenge Day is a one-day program that aims to break down these barriers.*
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### **ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Neenah High School is an all-American, clean-cut, large mainstream high school, in a small community about three miles south of Green Bay.

Featured students and their roles on campus:

Alison – “Prep”  
Dan – “Jock”  
Anna – “Emo”  
Kyle – “Stoner”  
Riccardo – “Gay”

Cliques and the stereotypes people form about various groups on campus are a painful reality in every school.

- What are the cliques at your school? What stereotypes do you attribute to them?
- Have you or any of your friends ever been hurt by stereotypes or by being associated or labeled as a member of any of these groups?
- Do you relate to any of the students in this episode?



## **THEMES TO EXPLORE AND DISCUSS**

1. Perfectionism
2. Judging a Book by its Cover
3. Not Fitting In

### 1. Perfectionism

#### ***Notice***

- In what areas of your life, if any, do you expect yourself to be perfect? Are you hard on yourself in any way? If so, how does it feel and how does it affect your life and relationships? In what ways, if any, are you your own worst critic?
- What pressures and expectations do you deal with or put on yourself on a daily basis?
- If you or someone close to you is dealing with perfectionism, why do you think that is? What do you think causes some people to be so hard on themselves?

If you NOTICE that perfectionism is a problem for you or people close to you, and you CHOOSE to Be the Change – you can ACT by doing one or more of the following...

#### ***Act***

- Sometimes we are our own worst enemies. Make a list of all the ways you negatively judge yourself or expect yourself to be perfect. Once your list is complete, make note of at least one way you feel successful or proud in each area you've listed.
- If being a perfectionist is an issue in your own life, acknowledge how it must feel to deal with such intense pressure. Realize that absolutely no one is perfect and that you have always been good enough.
- If you notice people close to you are perfectionists, do your best to remind them to not be so hard on themselves. Make an agreement with your friends that you will remind one another any time you hear or see self-critical or derogatory remarks or actions. If you feel like self-criticism has become a huge problem or even started to run your friend's life, help connect them with a counselor or some other resource.



## 2. Judging a Book by its Cover

### **Notice**

- How often do people judge you before they really know you? How does it feel? How often, if ever, do you judge others without really knowing them?
- How might things in your life or in your school be different if you and the people around you took the time to really know people on the inside before judging them on the outside?
- Think about someone you don't like or that you judge as the most unlike you. Do your judgments bring you closer or farther away? Ask yourself if your judgments and beliefs about this person are based on what you really know or if they are simply a result of the stereotypes or rumors you've heard about this person.

If you NOTICE that judging people on the outside is a problem for you or people close to you, and you CHOOSE to Be the Change – you can ACT by doing one or more of the following...

### **Act**

- Challenge yourself to find at least one thing you like about everyone you judge. Once you identify things you like, become someone who speaks positively about them, rather than negatively.
- The next time you hear someone sharing a negative or judgmental comment about another person, don't assume it's true. Ask the person making the comments to explain how and why they came to the conclusions they did. If you realize the person's beliefs are based on stereotypes or rumors, challenge the person to reconsider their point of view.
- Identify at least one person who you believe you have nothing in common with. Sit down and get to know the person. Notice if anything about your beliefs or your relationship with this person changes in any way.

## 3. Not Fitting In

### **Notice**

- Have you ever felt like you just didn't fit in or belong? If so, how did it feel and how did you deal with the situation and the feelings you experienced?
- When, if ever, have you felt pressured to change yourself in order to fit in or to become part of a group? What, if anything, did you do or change? Did



you compromise your values or sell yourself out in any way? Did you ever regret your decision?

- Who are the people in your school or in your life that you think might be feeling left out? What if anything could you do to include them?

If you NOTICE that you or people around you don't seem to be fitting in and you CHOOSE to Be the Change – you can ACT by doing one or more of the following...

### **Act**

- Find the people who seem to be left out or excluded at your school – maybe they are eating lunch or walking alone, or perhaps they are being excluded from a group, game or activity. Make it your mission to include them. Get to know them and encourage them to hang out with your group of friends.
- If you find yourself feeling excluded, consciously look for ways to get involved. Do what you can to add something to the group – offer support, listen, tell jokes, help organize things, clean up, or in some other way make yourself useful.
- Not fitting in can leave some people feeling lonely, depressed, or, in some cases, even suicidal. In situations like these, some people feel like they have nowhere to turn and no one to trust. If someone tells you they are considering suicide, get help from an adult you trust. If you are feeling suicidal, remember suicide is never the answer. Whatever you are going through there is ALWAYS help – you don't have to handle things alone. Talk to an adult you trust or contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK.

### **LEARN MORE AND SHARE**

- To learn more about suicide, stress, and other emotional health issues, check out <http://www.halfofus.com>.
- To further discuss the issues in this episode, head to <http://ifyoureallyknewme.mtv.com>.

