

# “You Can’t Sit With Us”

Guide for the Epidemic of Mean Girls



## What People Are Saying:

*“There were so many things that I related to. You’ve helped me confront these issues I’ve had with myself and attempt to work on them and work on better myself.”*

*Jasmine (Student)*

*“I can’t explain how much that this has helped me with my self esteem and confidence! You’re amazing! Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.”*

*Summer (Student)*

*“I wanted you to know the tremendous impact you had on my daughter. She was so impressed with what you shared and I am grateful for your positive influence”*

*Parent*

*“Adam has the unique ability to connect and build trust with students which are important traits for people who seek to build positive relationships with students...Adam is fair, compassionate and understanding and truly believes in his ability to make a difference in the lives of all students.”*

## *Administrator of a High School*

# Introducing Adam Brooks:

Adam Lee Brooks was born in Phoenix, Arizona, where he grew up and still lives. He was the first person in his family to go to college and earned a Bachelors of Science in Speech Communications, a Masters of Arts in Special Education, and a Graduate Diploma in Leadership Development.

Growing up performing in the theater led Adam to perform in a play off Broadway. He quickly realized that he no longer desired being a character on stage, but rather longed to be himself which has translated into motivational speaking.

Adam speaks to teens and adults across the country regarding Healthy Communication, Bullying, and Body Image. He has spoken at assemblies, conferences, and camps where his story of hope and appreciation for one's self continues to transform those he talks to. With Adam's humor and theatrical style audiences are entertained as well as moved by his heart touching stories of life and how we can begin to see ourselves in a healthy and exciting light. Adam's work as an educator and speaker at one of the top rated Eating Disorder clinics has enabled him to cut to the core of issues that hold us back in life.

Adam has worked as the following:

- Associate Faculty at Arizona State University
- Adjunct Faculty at Rio Salado Community College
- Director of Special Education at Franklin Police and Fire High School
- Speaker for Remuda Ranch Eating Disorder/Anxiety Clinic
- Co-Author of the book "WTF- Why teens fail and what to fix"



## Introduction:

The girls in the picture above were best friends for four years in high school. I know, because I was their yearbook advisor. They ate lunch together every day, gave each other rides to school and even were inseparable on the weekends. Sounds like a lot of teen girls I know and, as often is the case, these young women are no longer on speaking terms. It started their senior year of high school and continued on after graduation; they began to fight and argue and compete with each other. That was when I knew they were doomed. I watched them comparing themselves to each other, rolling their eyes when they passed in the hallway and at the end of it all...the dreaded silent treatment!!

This is all too common across the country with young girls everywhere. What seems like a great young friendship ends up being a sad power struggle where pettiness and hurting each other's feelings become commonplace. It never ceases to amaze me how far young women will go to hurt each other as a way to prove they are better than the friends they have. There is a social power that some people talk about which cause teens to jockey for position. A leader wants to remind the followers that they should be following which keeps the power struggle in a vicious cycle.

The whole epidemic was classically played out on the now famous movie "Mean Girls." While the movie may not fully mirror real life the ideas behind it really do give us a visual of what girls face daily. This workbook and video are meant to be guides in the world of this epidemic. It isn't going to solve the mean girl epidemic which is going to take a considerable amount of time and people to solve. The purpose of these resources are to start the conversation. Once we

discuss and delve into the issue of mean girls we are quickly on our way to solving this issue in our lives and in those we love.

## Questions to ask yourself:

1. Are you or someone you love being called hurtful names?

*(Words matter; names can be hurtful and if they are happening continuously it can cause great detriment and harm. This is where situations begin! This is why we have to start here...)*

2. When called out on those same actions is the person un-remorseful or apologizes, but seems to be merely going through the motions?

*(I have seen kids who were forced to apologize for something that they had done to another student. Sometimes the words mean something and sometimes the words do not. Usually you can tell either way)*

3. Does the same situation keep happening with the same people?

*(If the same people are continually involved that is the very definition of MEAN GIRLS!)*

4. Does it involve one person or more?

*(Usually if one girl is involved usually that is bullying or harassment, when it involves multiple girls or multiple people that is more of a symptom of mean girls)*

5. After each situation does the child who's the victim become or appear withdrawn?

*(It is easy for a child to become withdrawn when they are being victimized. The real issue is if they refuse to talk about things then it tends to only make things worse.)*

# How We Got Here:

There are many ways to look at the past and see how we have arrived to this era of teenage girls being cruel predators to each other. Instead of looking at the history of this, let's look at our own individual history.

Do you trust me? Alright if you are a parent I want you to share with your teen a time when you experienced a friend treating you cruelly for what felt like no reason at all. If you are the teen tell your parent of something that happened where you experienced the same. If you are working through this book alone please answer on the space provided.

How did it feel? How did you react? How do you wish you would have reacted?

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The reality is that the more we discuss and talk about our experiences and work through what we wish we could have and would have done, the easier it becomes to do that very thing.

This is where we begin to take baby steps, small movements towards freedom towards healthier friendships. Once we begin this journey of taking the small steps towards these goals we will be amazed one day how far we've come.

## What do we do now:

We have to ask ourselves these questions:

*Now what?*

*Where do we go from here?*

*How do we make changes that last?*

*How do we pick our friends growing up?*

When we think of the issue as the "other" meaning, so and so needs to change or I wish someone would do something about her. To point the finger at others is really not going to help us change the situation at all. I wish that we could control what other people say to us. As a teacher I tried for years to get teens to say and do what I wanted. That really isn't fair or even real life. We only have the capacity and ability to change ourselves. We have to view the situation and act differently in it so that change is possible.

So instead of starting with how others should change let's look at how we ourselves can change.

What I want you to do is use the lines below to just brainstorm. You know yourself and you know the right ways you should respond when people start giving you a hard time. So jot down off the top of your head how should you be reacting to people? Use this as a journal entry.

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## Resources:

I want to give you some great resources that I have! I mentioned one in the video, but let me give you a longer list here:

1. *The Ophelia Project- Offers curriculum for what they call “girl relational aggression.” They have lessons for girls and boys of most if not all age groups. Great downloadable activities to do in classes as well as small groups. [www.opheliaproject.org](http://www.opheliaproject.org)*
2. *Rosalind Wiseman- Rosalind is the award winning author of the book “Queen Bees and Wannabes” that sparked the actual movie MEAN GIRLS. She is a great resources and always has videos and research on her website. [www.rosalindwiseman.com](http://www.rosalindwiseman.com)*
3. *Julie Lythcott-Haims- She’s an author of a book that seems to be sweeping parenting circles it’s called “How to Raise an Adult” and it helps parents look at the bigger picture and see choices they are making today that will impact their child down the road.*
4. *Michael Gurian- He is the founder of the Gurian Institute and his primary research is on brain development of children. He has written over 28 books and many of them are on the New York Times best seller lists. Check out his research in the book “The wonder of girls.”*
5. *Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish- They have teamed up to write a follow up book called “How to talk so kids will listen and Listen so kids will talk.” It is worth a read and again is also a best seller.*

\*There are so many more great resources out there. I encourage you to let other people know if you have found something that was helpful or worked for you. Send out those emails or social media blasts because there are too many people who are looking for helpful resources.



# Raising a Happy Girl:

The suggestions that I gave on the video are as follows:

1. Be aware of yourself
2. Teach them how to compliment
3. Encourage positive conversation
4. Teach them to root for the underdog
5. Praise niceness
6. Watch how we praise others

So how do we accomplish these tasks in better ways with regards to our kid's lives? We need to spend some time thinking and writing various ways we can incorporate each of these things into our daily routine with our kids and with each other.

1. List and describe ways that you can be better aware of yourself and how you treat others as a model to the children that you are around.

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2. Give examples of the ways you hear children around you complimenting. Now describe how you would like to hear them compliment.

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3. Practice writing down several ways you can start creating positive conversations with those you are around. It sounds corny but we have to know where to begin. Some friends I know have family dinner every Sunday night and they each talk for 2 minutes about something positive that happened to them the week before.

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4. What do you consider an underdog? How about your family or kids? Brainstorm a list of ways you can get them to cheer on and root for the underdog.

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5. Give examples of how you can practice praising the children you are around for positive things. Constantly pointing out the negative really only leads to more negative.

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6. Create a list of common compliments you give to your family and the kids that you are around. Now take that list and create new dynamic ways to say the same things that will benefit more than just a child's feeling of outward things. So instead of saying "you're beautiful" you might say "you have such a caring heart which makes your beauty have depth." It's a simple way to create deeper more impactful compliments.

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## Artistic Exercise:

Too many times people who present workshops often forget to include a different way of viewing things through more artistic eyes.

Try this:

### Items you will need:

- Magazines (Either buy them or get them from others)
- Glue
- Poster Board
- Scissors

### MAKE A FRIEND BOARD

For this exercise you will be reviewing magazines looking for words and pictures that represent what you want out of the people that you are spending your time with. So maybe an example would be the word "honest" or "loyal."

Incorporate any pictures that may inspire you. Paste them to the poster board. Once you have your friend board made, hang that up in your room or in the kitchen, wherever you will see it the most. Try and spend at least a minute or two a day looking at the board and remembering why you thought those things were important enough to put on the board.

People have been doing this as Vision boards for a long time; they even talked about the idea in the book and movie "The Secret." This is different only because we are focusing on our relationships and friendships only for this board. We want to bring to mind and thought all the positive things we want from our friendships. That way when things don't go well and we have bad days or bad things happen to us we can look at our board and remind ourselves what healthy and happy looks like and WE WON'T SETTLE FOR LESS!!

## Helpful Videos:

Teaching Daughters to deal with Mean Girls

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcG4BAEINgk>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKwm\\_tQQNdY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKwm_tQQNdY)

Talking to Teens

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PgPdADKdNdq>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PyhTtfdQb14>

Inspiring

[http://www.ted.com/talks/sarah\\_kay\\_if\\_i\\_should\\_have\\_a\\_daughter](http://www.ted.com/talks/sarah_kay_if_i_should_have_a_daughter)

[http://www.ted.com/talks/amy\\_cuddy\\_your\\_body\\_language\\_shapes\\_who\\_you\\_are](http://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are)

**“Being a teen can be tough. Just try to surround yourself with really good friends that really have your back, and also be a really good friend to those who really care about you. If you’re not sure about certain things, talk to your friends that you trust and your family!” - Victoria Justice**

**“Adolescence is when girls experience social pressure to put aside their authentic selves and to display only a small portion of their gifts.”**





## What else:

If you are saying:

*"I want more..."*

### **Check out these other great resources from Adam**

"WTF- Why Teens Fail and What to Fix"

*"This book contains true stories of parents and teens, written by ten different professionals who interact with teens in a variety of ways. Cops, teachers, administrators and counselors all provide valuable insight to parents about how to help your teens avoid the serious pitfalls of adolescence and capitalize on their mistakes for future success. WTF? Failure is not an option!"*

<http://adamleebrooks.com/book-w-t-f-teens-fail-fix-adam-lee-brooks>

Workshop on Improving your Body Image

*"In a day and age where 95% of the female body type seen in the media only represents 8% of the world's female body type. It's easy to see how this is going to cause major issues for young women growing up in our current society. We have to take steps to work on having healthier body image in a world that desperately needs it. This workshop can help begin that process!"*

## Closing:

The picture and introduction seemed to be a little bit discouraging. I mean best friends who refuse to talk to each other. These same girls who are being cruel and hateful toward other girls. Worrying everyday whether they are going to have friends or not. This all brings to mind a really rough and sad few years for these students in school. Even we adults know what happens to us during those years and it continues to be a struggle on into life.

The exciting thing is...THAT'S NOT THE END OF THE STORY!! We don't have to accept that as our normal lifestyle. We can make changes in our communities that will affect those around us especially if we are working towards being a healthier person. I don't want us to focus on the doom and hardships as much as we can focus on actual answers. It's all in how we view things. We as a people group tend to focus on the negative. We are more likely to believe the bad over the good especially when it comes to how we view ourselves.

We have the power to stop that type of thinking....we have the power to stand up and say NO MORE! NO MORE will Mean Girls push us around and make us feel less than, NO MORE will we believe the lie that we just don't fit in, NO MORE will we place our self worth and self esteem into the hands of other people! Let's stand united and yell at the top of our lung "NO MORE!!!"

**GO GET EM GIRLS**