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Why are Girls so Mean?

1. What I know and don't know about girls and why they were so mean to each other.

It was shockingly hard deciding what topic I wanted to do my I-Search paper on. With other people already talking about their topics and how they were going to go about finding their information, I became a little worried. I have not had anything big happen in my life, I don't really have anything wrong with me to research, and I did not have any question I wanted to answer. So for a few days I thought about different things that I could write about and came up with nothing that I was "excited" about. Then when I was walking out of class I felt a pair of eyes staring me down. When I looked to the left of me, I saw a girl just watching me walk. Now I do not know what she was thinking and why she had picked me to stare at out of the many girls coming out of the same doors, but I am happy she did. While I was walking out of the building I decided on my question, why are girls so mean to each other?

Being a girl, I knew what it felt like to be made fun of, called a certain name, or gossiped about. I have been on the receiving end of a cruel joke and made another girl the butt of mine. It all started very young, but it was hard to pin point the exact age. My best friend, Shanna Thompson, remembered when we were in kindergarten at recess I would throw rocks at her and her friends because they were at my part of the playground equipment. It was all innocent enough but as we grew older it became less innocent and more mean. In the sixth grade girls ran

away from me at recess. In Jr. High, I was made fun of for many different reasons. My so called “friends” would make fun of my chest size and the fact that I was awkwardly skinny. In high-school I turned the tables. I made sure no girls would get to me. In fact, as a way to defend myself I made fun of other girls. And yes, in a cliché way it was to make me feel better about myself at some point. I did not think any girl could honestly say she has not put one girl down to make herself feel better. Something I hoped to find out was why girls acted that way. I also did not know when it would all end. When did girls decide that other girls were the enemy? I hoped I did not find out that it happened for the rest of my life, because truthfully I could not stand it. I also did not know how girls chose their prey. Seriously, how did we choose who we were going to be mean to? In all, I just wanted to find out what made girls so mean to each other.

Why I want to answer this question.

I wanted to find out answers to this question for so many different reasons. I would like to mainly find out about college girls because, let’s face it, that is who I am. Also, I would like to be able to stop the fights, at least on my part, before they all start. I have not made many girlfriends up here at the University of Northern Iowa, and I have made plenty of guy friends. I did not think I was the only girl who felt like that. It just seemed a lot easier to get along with guys rather than girls. Actually, I was sure that the majority of the girls at college have uttered those exact words. Another reason was that I was curious. I have always wondered why girls were so mean and this was the perfect opportunity to figure it out and put my thoughts on the subject on paper. It could be very eye opening or nothing could come of it. I also have not had

the best run of luck with girls at college up to this point and maybe after all of this, I could go away with knowing more and maybe make a few friends in the process. Although, I was pretty skeptical on the making friends part of the I-Search. Who knows it could happen.

The story of the search.

When I was thinking of different ways that I could go about finding the information I needed for this paper, I thought obviously of magazine articles. There have been many articles written on girls and why they were so mean. But I decided on not using them. In the true spirit of I-Search, I was going to go out and discover it all first hand for myself. It would not be bad using some magazine article, but that would be someone else's experience and I wanted to figure it out for myself.

I started observing girls in different situations and how they acted toward each other. Walking into the Piazza could be one of the most high-school-like situations in college. Girls were just sitting at tables watching you and ultimately judging you on who you were sitting with and probably what you had on your tray and were going to eat. I have decided that when in this situation girls judge other girls to make themselves feel better and that could be the main reason. Girls put so much pressure on how they look and a lot of that had to do with what they ate. If a girl sees someone who is eating more than them it can make themselves feel better and I believed that is why they judged them. Another observation I have made was when I was out at a party somewhere and the moment another group of girls walk into the doors, the sizing up starts. Not

only were girls being looked over head to toe by the guys in the room, the girls have already made some opinion about you. There was so much pressure walking into a room with girls already in it. Many girls want the attention from the guys so some girls feel threatened when more girls come in. Especially if you think that they are prettier than you. Girls will change their whole demeanor when other girls came. They tried to act crazy, maybe more “sexy”, and more flirtatious, when they came in. So I came to the conclusion that guys were a huge part of why girls were so mean to each other. Boyfriends also were the cause of so many problems for girls. Any girls, the jealous and the non jealous, could be very nasty towards anyone who came close to talking to her boyfriend. I could honestly say that I have not been mean to another girl over my boyfriend. I guess I was confident in our relationship and maybe that was what other girls were missing. Confidence was usually missing from girls who always were picking apart other girls because they needed something to go off of. When girls have confidence they seemed less likely to judge and be mean to other girls. I think that if you were confident in yourself it was easier to see girls for who they were. I showed about all the confidence I had when I was at a party and I walked up to a group of girls and told them that I was sorry they did not like me. After we had our little discussion, I went away from that night with a group of girls who now liked me.

The second part of my I-Search was, of course, the interviews. Now, I could have gone up to random girls and asked why they thought girls were so mean to each other. But I just could

not do it. I did not have the guts to go up and talk to them about this subject and figured I would get about the same answer to my question. When girls are faced with a question like this, they usually just say the nicest thing in order not to look so mean. I needed girls who would tell the truth, and not hold back, to get the most honest reason girls are just so mean to each other. So I resorted to the girls who affected my life everyday. The girls who I looked to for answers to and just some girls that I had become pretty close with at college. I first called my mom, the brightest women I knew, and asked her if she ever was in a fight with another girl. A little surprised her college aged child would be asking such a question she answered, "Yes, but recently I haven't." When I asked my friend here at college, Cala Regal, she said, "Yea, of course!" Then her and her roommate, Danielle Wubbens, talked for a good half an hour about all the fights they have gotten into. I asked Danielle why she thought that girls are so mean and she looked at me in the eyes with a dead serious face and said, "Girls are bitches."

That was what I have always thought, I just did not want to say it in this essay because it was a little blunt and well, mean. But Danielle said that she did not care and said "Go ahead and put it in there!" Now just saying that girls were bitches did not exactly give me an actual answer to why they were so mean. So I called my good friend, Shanna Thompson, who was very laid back and could look at the whole picture and gave some good advice every now and then. So I thought that maybe she would have a good explanation for girls being so mean. I asked her, "Why do you think that girls are so mean to each other all the time?" She responded only after a

few seconds of thinking, “Because they are jealous of other girls and they like drama.” I agreed with her answer quite a bit. I also liked how my mom answered this question, “Because they care a lot about things and they want to do good in all they do.” It was a sweet way to look at this problem and a way that I have never thought of. Girls did care a lot about *everything* it seemed like. Girls seemed to have very strong opinions about certain things and if someone, especially a girl, went against what they believed were right; we automatically went into attack mode. It was a lot like survival of the fittest. If you did not stand up for what you thought was right then you would fade into the back round. Maybe the reason why girls were so mean to each other was fear of being forgotten or looked over. If you were perceived as mean, it was at least being perceived as something. I have never really looked at it like that before and the more I thought about it the more that reason seemed likely. Why were girls mean? Because it was a way to show they cared about things, issues, their friends, anything. It showed that they were there and had an opinion too. But call me a pessimist, I still thought it was because most girls “are jealous” (Thompson).

My last way to research was the one that I had been most looking forward to. I was going to watch the movie *Mean Girls*. I was excited! Finally, something I enjoyed doing and I could use it for school. Only after I watched it, I realized there was not all that much information I did not already know. It showed girls being mean to each other but never really got into the whole reason why. Though towards the end of the movie it did give a little insight on figuring out being mean to other girls was not going to make you get ahead in any way. “Calling somebody else fat

won't make you any skinnier, calling somebody stupid doesn't make you any smarter, [...] all you can do in life is try to solve the problem in front of you." Now every girl knew "calling somebody fat won't make you skinnier", girls still did. Every day in fact. I believed that quote showed girls were also very competitive with each other. And saying that some girl across the room or sitting next to you was fat or stupid, it made you feel like you were just a little bit a head in the game. Although this game girls played did not have an ending, and there were no winners or losers. We competed for nothing.

What I learned and failed to learn about this question.

While I thought about the whole process I just went through to find the answer to the question, I was amazed to find out what some of the reasons were. I never once even took into account girls being mean was just another way to be noticed. To be noticed by guys, by other girls, by anybody willing to take the time out to pay attention for awhile. It scared me some girls, even me, thought the minute we stopped saying things about other girls, was the minute that we had nothing to say. It was a hard thought to come to terms with, and when I finally did, it made my stomach hurt. The more I thought about the attention girls were getting for being mean to each other, I was beginning to realize that could be the main reason why we were so mean. It brought all the separate ideas together. If you were jealous of another girl and you pointed out her flaws, the attention quickly turned to you. If a girl was feeling left out, she just had to start

talking about any girl in the room and she would soon have a hot topic and were right in the middle of things again. I was really just shocked that girls really did have to be mean to other girls just to get a little word in every now and then. Even being a huge bitch got you attention, almost all the attention you were striving for. But you did not have to go to such extremes, even a little joke about some girl could get a laugh out of people and you were “in.” But at what expense? It was a very scary thought that if you did not speak up about someone, then you would be forgotten.

Just a little note. Honestly, I did not think that I would have gained so much from this I-search. It surprised me when I sat down at my computer all of these things were just coming out of my head, through my hands, and onto the computer without even thinking about what I was saying. The process of finding out for myself really put me in the hot seat. I no longer could rely on what others said, and had found out about why girls were so mean. I had to interpret every day situations and figure out why I thought girls acted that way. It was a little scary to look at things like that. To really figure out why, it was almost healing in a way. It was like I know now, even if it was something as easily said as, it was a way to get attention and not be forgotten. I could do something about it for me. It really has made me look at things a little different. Something that I did not think would happen during this process. But it did, and I am grateful that it did.