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# STAYING COOL WHEN THINGS HEAT UP

## DON'T LET BEING ANGRY TURN INTO A FIGHT

- Anger is normal, but fighting isn't the way to deal with it.
- Treat people with respect, even when you're angry.
- Find the courage to walk away from a fight.
- Help keep others safe by not staying to watch a fight.
- Get help from a trusted adult when others are fighting.

**I**t's important to know how to settle an argument before it gets physical. You can learn ways to control your anger.

## BEING ANGRY WITHOUT LOSING YOUR TEMPER

Anger is normal. It is natural to feel this way when you or someone you care about has been treated badly. It's up to us to decide how to act when we get angry.

### Everyone gets angry.

Being angry does not have to lead to a fight. But, when we lose our temper, we are more likely to get into a fight or say something we will later wish we did not say.

**Once you lose your temper, it takes about 30 minutes to calm down and think clearly.**

**If you think you are about to "lose it," leave, find something to relax your mind, and come back later.**

This saves a lot of trouble. It may even save your life! You can say, "I'm starting to get mad. Can we talk about this later when I've cooled down?"

## HAVE A GOOD ATTITUDE—TREAT EVERYONE WITH RESPECT

Telling yourself that all people, even those you don't know, have a decent side makes it possible to treat them with respect. Then, when you feel angry or upset with someone, your first reaction would be not to fight.

## TALK TO A PERSON'S DECENT SIDE

### Don't crowd.

Some people get afraid when others get too close. Stay an arm's length away from the other person.

### Find out why this person is upset.

"Why are you saying this?"

### Explain your side.

"This is how I see it. What I think happened is \_\_\_\_\_."

### Try to make things right.

"I don't want us to be enemies over this. What can we do to make this right?"

## IF YOU FEEL FEAR, LEAVE

Being afraid of snakes and bears has kept human beings alive for thousands of years. Being around people who are angry or who want to start a fight can be scary.



If you feel fear, even if you don't know why, you need to leave. Your body is telling you something is wrong when:

- Your heart speeds up.
- Your stomach feels funny.
- You get hot and sweaty.

"I'm not sure what's going on, but I'm out of here."

### **WALKING AWAY DOES NOT MEAN YOU ARE WEAK**

If you cannot connect with someone's decent side and this person still wants to fight, get away. When both people are so upset, it is hard to think clearly.

**Not fighting is a sign of self-respect and maturity.**

**It takes more courage to leave than to stay and fight.**

### **FRIENDS DON'T LET FRIENDS FIGHT**

Even if you are not the one who is fighting, how you act is very important. Some people would rather fight than lose face in a crowd. Here are ways you can help stop a fight:

**Tell them to "talk it out" when they have calmed down.**

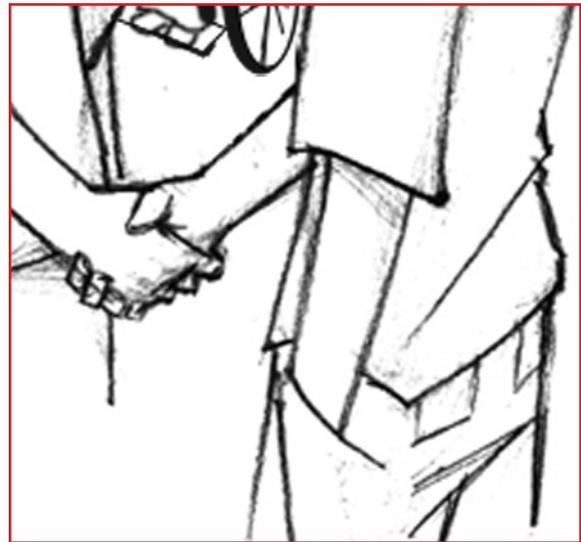
- "This is not worth fighting about."
- "Don't let a fight happen over this."

**Leave them alone.**

If you and others leave, the fight most likely will not happen. Many fighters want and need people watching. You can say, "Let's get out of here. They can work this out as long as we leave them alone."

**If there is a weapon, get help right away!**

- You and others need to leave as fast as you can.
- Find a trusted adult at once.
- Call 911—it can save a life.



### **YOU CAN HELP KEEP THE PEACE**

**Do not watch or encourage the fight. Get help.**

Supporting the fight with yelling, teasing, cheering and pushing only makes things worse. Get help from an adult. But first, tell someone that this is what you are doing.

**If you feel safe, say in a clear, firm voice, "Stop!"**

Let the fighters and those watching know that besides getting hurt, there is a chance of:

- Getting kicked out of school
- Being thrown off the team
- Having the whole group punished
- Getting grounded
- Being arrested

**Getting help is not tattling.**

You are not trying to get anyone in trouble. You are trying to stop someone from getting hurt.

- If you hear that someone is planning to harm someone else, tell an adult.
- If someone is threatening you or someone else, ask an adult for help.

**Stand up for those who are being bullied.**

This takes a lot of courage. Try to get others to help. Together you can make a difference.

### **Get to know the person being picked on.**

When the victim is not your friend or is unpopular, it's just as important to care about what happens. You may be able to help this person become more involved with school activities.

### **Help your friends learn how to settle arguments and conflicts without fighting.**

Share what you know about not getting into fights.

### **Learn the truth about weapons.**

A gun or other weapon does NOT make anyone safer. It only means that someone may be seriously hurt or killed.

### **Learn how to stay cool before things heat up!**

Talk with friends and understanding adults about what to do before something happens. By talking about it now, you will know what to say and do in the future. Think about what you would do if:

- You are challenged to a fight and your friends want you to fight back.
- A friend of yours is being picked on and asks for your help.
- You know that some kids are taking knives to school.
- You hear about plans to "jump" someone.

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