

# TEASERS AND TAUNTERS

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I am sure we have all experienced being teased as children and remember how much it hurt our feelings. Yet it didn't stop us doing the same thing to others! So why do kids tease one another?

Teasing, taunting, putting others down, being sarcastic and 'burning on' others amounts to the same thing. It is done to degrade another person and it is intended to hurt. Teasing usually takes the form of poking fun at another child's physical features e.g. their ears or their nose, their height, their weight, a disability, an accent, their clothing, their hair and on and on it goes. Kids will often be given derogatory nicknames such as Porky, Skinny, Dopey, Stinky, Frumpy and Stumpy. These names can stick with them for years and define the way they think of themselves.

So the question remains. Why do kids tease each other? Often they do it to advance their own standing in a group. It is like chickens in a pen pecking at one another to gain supremacy. They are creating a 'pecking order'. They want to be at the top of the totem pole. Some tease and taunt out of jealousy, thinking another child is getting all the attention or is the favorite in the family. Children often learn the art of teasing by the examples they see around them. Most TV sitcoms rely on one line put down to get a laugh. Sometimes parents are heard making hurtful remarks to one another or to their children, and kids learn to do the same. Hurt people hurt people.

The Bible tells us that we should love one another, and love our neighbor as we love ourselves. I don't see in these statements, that the quality of love should differ between people. Instead we are to accept and love one another unconditionally. We shouldn't have to prove our worth to be accepted by others. Our worth comes from acceptance. There should be no need to put someone else down to make our selves look superior. In fact, the opposite is true. When we make negative comments, we lower our own worth through our disrespect of others.

It is vital to teach our children to value one another equally. Just because teasing and taunting is so rife amongst children, it doesn't mean it is acceptable. When our children learn to be respectful at an early age, they will naturally develop a sense of worth and continue to develop a healthy self-esteem throughout life. This sense of personal value will negate the need to put others down to enhance their own standing.

Teasing and taunting is not restricted to children. It continues into adult life. Sometimes we excuse making a hurtful remark by adding, "Just kidding". If we were just kidding, we wouldn't have said what we did in the first place. It is

like asking forgiveness instead of permission. As adults we also need to consider our behavior in this regard. Do we put others down to create for ourselves a better position on the imaginary totem pole? By respecting one another equally we will negate the perceived need to put another person down. We can upgrade our own self worth.

I have a friend who I can honestly say has never made a negative comment about anyone in my hearing. Because of her reputation I know that she would never make a negative comment about me. I trust her integrity. Wouldn't it be wonderful to be a family that was known for its respect and integrity? We should expect nothing less.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at [sally@forefrontfamilies.org](mailto:sally@forefrontfamilies.org). We invite you to also check out our website at [www.forefrontfamilies.org](http://www.forefrontfamilies.org) and our blog site at [www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com](http://www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com) for further assistance.