

Become the Peer Pressure

I just graduated high school and peer pressure was a really big deal in my school, and I just want to let other youth out there know that it is possible to make it through high school without giving in, especially when you have others that will stand with you. It's not always easy, but I've never regretted it.

It's awesome to get comments like yours. While there are many youth out there who are making poor choices in life, it's good to remind ourselves that there are many young people who are standing up for what they believe and living a life of no regrets.

I think too many times we try to tell "good" kids to resist the peer pressure when it might be better to encourage and empower them to *be* the peer pressure. So often we think of peer pressure as a negative thing. But wouldn't it be great if a group of young people got together and were committed to encouraging others to join them in being good role models; standing up for things like purity instead of promiscuity, kindness instead of bullying, respect instead of name calling, wise choices instead of drug or alcohol use.

So, we write this month's article to those who are still struggling with peer pressure. Often those who try to enforce negative peer pressure on others suggest that those who don't join them are cowards. But people often don't stop to ask, "Is it true?" What is really the more courageous thing to do? I believe it takes more courage to stand up for something you know is right, even when risking acceptance, popularity or position. So, I dare anyone reading this to have the courage to not give in. Besides, courage is not the absence of fear, but the willingness to face your fear for a greater cause.

And what is this greater cause? Any kind of stone thrown into a pond has ripple effects. Most of my life this was used to scare me from doing bad things and warning me about the consequences of sin and the shame, guilt and regret I would suffer from for making wrong choices. While that is true, it isn't the whole story and it's definitely not the best part of the story. I have lived long enough to realize that stones thrown for good bring ripple effects of peace and confidence for future choices and wisdom and a good name.

What are some other ripple effects? Others will take notice, especially those younger than you. You can be an example to others around you. Stand up for what you know is right and show them they don't have to give into the pressures of others around them. When others notice your courage, it will be an encouragement to them that they, too, can make the right choice. Pretty soon, you could have a whole new kind of peer pressure influencing your schools and communities. Will it begin with you? We hope so.

We encourage everyone reading this to see that by making choices to stand up for what's right, you can be a real life hero. By becoming the positive peer pressure in your school, church and community, you'll help others have the best future possible. We need you!!!

Articles are written by Bob Lenz, Tiffany Thompson and other national youth communicators with Life Promotions Inc., a non-profit youth organization committed to instilling hope, worth and value in youth.

Life Promotions • Appleton, WI • www.lifepromotions.com • 800-955-5433

