

# Empowered Teens and Parents

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## Empowering Teenage Girls: Five Ways to Build Great Friendships by Debra Beck

Have you noticed the difference between how girls treat each other as opposed to how boys treat each other? Teenage girl's insecurities prevent them from having really close relationships with most other girls. When I talk to teenage girls, it seems to be the one topic that causes girls the most anxiety. It comes up time and time again how they have to adjust their personality, walk on egg shells, and not voice their feelings, so they don't get shunned and have mean rumors spread about them from other girls.

A question that came up in one of my girls groups was,

**"I have this sort-of friend, that is my friend one week and then she is someone else's best friend the next week. She really doesn't treat me well, but if I tell her why I don't want to be her friend, she will shun me and spread vicious rumors that aren't true and ruin my reputation. How do I walk away from unhealthy relationships without those consequences?"**

Sound familiar? Here are 5 ways to protect yourself from mean girls and unhealthy friendships:

**1. Be yourself, set good boundaries around the way your friends treat you.** If you are hanging around with mean girls, ask yourself why? It could be that your self-esteem needs some attention.

**2. Start saying NO to things that aren't good for you.** It automatically makes you feel better about who you are.

**3. Eliminating those girls leaves room for better friends to come in.** Don't be afraid to tell a friend that you don't like the way she is treating you. If her response is something to the effect of "what ever, get over it" ask yourself if you want a friend that doesn't care about your feelings....probably not!

**4. The more you take care of yourself, the more confidence you have and the better you feel about yourself.** The better you feel about yourself, the more confident you are and start making better decisions for yourself, and you will start attracting friends that treat you better.

**5. And last, but not least, make sure you're not a mean girl.** If you are treating other girls poorly, ask yourself, if I was in her shoes would I like being treated that way. If not, see how you can change your actions to be a better friend.

**Make healthy choices and BE the friend you want to have as a friend.**

For the next few weeks start looking at your current relationships, and make some healthy choices in the friend department. Ask yourself a question regarding each friend. **"Is this a friendship that is making me feel good, and do I deserve more?"** Also ask yourself, **"Am I the type of friend that I would want to have?"** Be really honest with yourself.

