

Advice Column Examples

Example from Dear Abby

Dear Abby,

I'm a 12-year-old girl. My friend "Bailey" and I both like the same boy but didn't want him to come between us. We made a pact that we wouldn't ask him out.

Bailey can be selfish, and I know she'd say yes if he asked her. When I told her my friendship with her meant more to me than the boy, she laughed and said that meant she'd get him. I'm not sure what to do. I have liked him longer than she has, and I think he likes me back. He knows me much better at least.

If he asks me, should I say yes and risk my friend getting hurt, even though I know she'd say yes in my place?

— A Reader in Missouri

Dear Reader in Missouri,

When you told Bailey your friendship with her meant more than the boy, her response showed that your friendship is less important to her than he is, and the pact means nothing to her. If the boy likes you, he will probably ask you out to do something. If he does — and your parents agree — you should accept. I say this because I don't think Bailey is a true friend at all.

— Abby

Examples from Dr. Web Example #1

Hi. I am extremely shy and extremely quiet. Every one will be in their groups talking and I will be there by myself and it sucks. I wanna be more outgoing but the thing about me is that if I don't have anything meaningful to say, then don't expect me to say anything at all. I don't wanna change who I am, but I wanna make more friends and get closer to students in my class. Can you tell me how to?

— Jay, 13

Dear Jay,

As someone who used to be a shy introvert myself, I completely understand where you are coming from. You don't have to change who you are to make more friends, but you do have to show others that you want to get to know them better. Ask questions since most people like those who demonstrate an interest in them. And express your opinion when a topic comes up that's of interest to you. During a group project, maybe you could discuss a topic you know well or have figured out a way to help the group—something that will be appreciated. I also recommend asking a parent to put you in a social skills group for teens, a safe environment for practicing these skills and meeting other kids going through similar struggles.

— Kim

Examples from Dr. Web Example #2

My school was in the news recently. It had to with school safety, but now people in my school are saying that now our school is going to get attacked. At first I didn't care. Then I found out some people had not come to school that day because of it. That made me a little scared. Now I am a little worried. My parents tell me everything is fine. I am still worried. When I try to talk to people about it for reassurance they always say it is true. I really just don't know what to think. Any advice?

— Smile, 11

Dear Smile,

I understand your fear since, in recent years, there have been many attacks in school buildings. And with so much news coverage, it's easy to become convinced that your school will be next. However, school is generally a very safe place, and whatever led to your school being written about in the news, the situation most likely has already been taken care of. Your parents are right to reassure you that "everything is fine." But sometimes, taking action is a way to reduce anxiety. You might get together with other students, and perhaps a group of parents and teachers, to discuss additional safety measures that can be taken at your school, and become part of the solution.

— Dr. M.

Asking for Advice

What do you think I should do (about...)?

What should I do (about...)?

What would you suggest I do / I should do about...?

Can / Could you give me some advice (about...)?

Giving Advice

I think you should...

Why don't you...?

If I were you, I would...

Maybe you should...

I suggest you...

How about (verb + -ing...)?

You might try (verb + -ing...)

I would advise you to...

My advice would be to...

It might be a good idea to...