

Let's talk about mean girls.

May 20, 2019 | 125 upvotes | by [stevierose789](#)

When I was growing up (a thousand years ago) there was an understanding between girls: Be there or be talked about. It was horrid when you were not invited to a party or could not attend. It was bad enough that you had to miss out on the fun, but you also knew there was a very good chance that you would be gossiped about. I honestly cannot imagine myself living through that time of my life with today's social media. Today's young people have my sympathy.

I believe that there are three types of girls:

The mean girls: the girls who maintain their place at the top of the pecking order by devaluing other girls and sometimes guys.

The bystanders: the girls who do nothing while watching the mean girls in action. They do this because they are afraid of becoming a victim themselves or they do not want to jeopardize their chance of being a part of the group.

The victims: the girls and guys who are the targets of the mean girls.

I believe that most women have a mean girl inside of them. In fact, I have seen the mean girl dynamic at work in some of the threads on this very sub. After witnessing so many female interactions (from preschoolers to middle aged) I am convinced there is an inborn tendency in all females to dish out abuse to those unfortunate individuals who are easy targets if it means maintaining their spot in a group, or working their way up in the female hierarchy. There is also the very pervasive tendency to be a mean girl to those females who incite jealousy.

Sometimes the victims of mean girls end up with emotional scars that can last a life time. Inside the ugly duckling, who worked her ass off to become a swan, is the girl who always questions her self-worth when she is around other women.

I was the weirdo: the girl who never quite understood how to behave properly to fit into a group of females. I was pretty enough, but I was too honest to pretend affection and never mastered the ability to hug someone and then when they walked away, throw them under the bus. However, I had my own moments of jealousy when I truly relished the downfall of a girl who had lost favor with the mean girls even though that girl had not been unkind to me.

I recently achieved recognition in my field and I looked forward to the award ceremony. My husband attended the event with me and it should have been a wonderful evening. Instead it was a night of angst as I racked my brain for reasons why the women I had considered friendly peers gave me the cold shoulder. My immediate reaction was "I did something to offend them". It wasn't until a day or so later that I realized that the mean girls were jealous of my achievement.

So what is the point of this post?

Make a conscious effort to avoid being a mean girl.

It is self defeating behavior. You will live with the guilt of your mean girl transgressions. Not to mention karma. I am not suggesting that you "hug a slug". Just don't step on one. Do what is necessary to be kind and still maintain a comfortable distance. You can treat a person with dignity and respect without extending an offer of friendship. This applies to both males and females. And remember that under the blue haired, tattooed exterior of the SJW, or the nerdy persona of the geeky girl, or the awkward veneer of the chubby girl, may exist a RPW who may be the loyal friend you wish to have.

All women need female companionship. It is the reason so many women are a part of this sub.

What are your thoughts about this subject?

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Comments

CrazyHorseInvincible[M] [score hidden] 20 May, 2019 10:31 PM stickied comment

I believe that most women have a mean girl inside of them. In fact, I have seen the mean girl dynamic at work in some of the threads on this very sub.

We had this problem some years ago with the original mod team, and had to take corrective action.

One of the core underlying dynamics here is that women often lack social rituals for handling conflict. Men, by our very nature, engage in a great deal of conflict, and hence we have developed both hardwired and cultural protocols for limiting it, what is and isn't appropriate, etc.

Women tend not to have that, and so, when one dislikes another, any action at all can become fair game to "get" the other woman.

Just to be crystal clear from a moderation point of view:

1. We can tell the difference between harsh criticism intended to help or educate, and bullying. We encourage the first, and have zero tolerance for the second.
2. If you see something, hit the report button. Don't involve yourself.
3. If you are commenting on something that makes you angry, examine your motives. Are you trying to persuade, or to vent?

LuckyPeaceful • 36 points • 20 May, 2019 09:01 PM

True, loving, supportive female companionship is one of the biggest blessings women can have. I agree that it can be hard to find, particularly now that a lot of people are concerned not only with their social status in real life, but online. People seem more inclined to one-up each other nowadays (although, that might just be my perception). I was a very fat, spotty, socially awkward teenage girl and my goodness did my peers let me know about it. It's really only in adulthood that I have found women who aren't 'mean girls' and I confidently believe many exist, but just as many are still stuck in that immature mindset.

Supporting other women whom we admire and respect is really important, but too often women tear each other down out of jealousy. I agree with everything you've written.

stevierose789[S] • 23 points • 20 May, 2019 09:17 PM

The irony is that often women are ostracized due to jealousy, but they don't recognize it as such. Instead, they assume it is due to their own shortcoming rather than recognizing that it is based on their success.

liarbirdy • 15 points • 20 May, 2019 09:43 PM*

exactly, it just leads to a domino effect in insecurity. Pretty girl makes a girl feel insecure, girl is mean to pretty girl, now pretty girl is also insecure. It's one of the most toxic aspects of female culture imo and I really hate it. I have trust issues with friendships with other women because of mean girls and fakeness. I was in a friend group for maybe 3 years, always feeling like the one that didn't fit in and that people didn't really like me, only to have this later confirmed by one of the members of the group that they all hated me. yeah I was socially awkward, a bit weird and not the best looking back then. I wasn't 'cool' at all. But pretending to be my friend for like 3 years when they hated me? It just makes me always second

guess females, I never fully trust them until they've really proven themselves. I really crave that kind of supportive, loving female friendship. The ones that don't try and bring the other down, but wants to bring them up. The ones that don't let insecurity turn them into mean and fake people. Because it's not like I don't like women or I don't want to be in a friendship with them. I really really do. When women are great, they are so so great, so kind and gentle and sweet. and I really want that.

stevierose789[S] • 3 points • 20 May, 2019 09:53 PM

When women are great, they are so so great, so kind and gentle and sweet. and I really want that.

There are many great women out there who have the potential to be a "sister chick", but it is hard sometimes to find them. I struggle with this myself, because I am not in a lifestyle where I meet many woman, outside of the limited number of women I encounter in my professional life.

Cooking_withSvetlana 1 points 20 May, 2019 09:19 PM **[recovered]**

I've seen and experienced everything you've just written. As part of practicing gracefulness I always try to make an effort to raise people up around me (women and men, too). There's a girl I work with who always has a sour look on her face, gossips and puts others down to make her work look superior - but her "evil" shows through pretty easily. Instead, I strive to be the type of person who praises others. It's a better look!

missiesmithy • 8 points • 21 May, 2019 12:54 AM

Psychology shows by way of the "halo effect" that when you praise others it makes you more seem more likeable to others.

stevierose789[S] • 7 points • 20 May, 2019 09:38 PM

It is not only a better look, but allows you to sleep at night and get up and look at yourself in the mirror without regret.

liarbirdy • 1 point • 20 May, 2019 09:44 PM

Definitely!

[deleted] • 21 points • 20 May, 2019 10:56 PM

Females are vicious to each other, it's also part of the reason why I have very few female friends.

mydogwillbeinmyheart • 3 points • 21 May, 2019 07:04 AM

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[deleted] • 2 points • 21 May, 2019 02:30 PM

Just my experience. Women has been meaner and straight up colder to me than men. Socially and professionally. I have notice by working in mostly male dominate places, they may neg each other and be envious of cars, salary, etc but men will help each other especially in the professional world. I've seen dudes get promoted with months without doing much.

mydogwillbeinmyheart • 3 points • 21 May, 2019 06:01 PM

I agree with you. I got a degree in teaching and I honestly don't think solidarity is the rule among women whether at university (too focused on who's "prettier", resenting the ones who get more male attention, the ones who succeed academically, etc.), then in the work field, some women really do see other women as competition to be destroyed.

I'd say one thing remains as the focus even in women in their 50's, and that's resenting other women for their physical attractiveness.

It's really sad and even sadder because it's such a taboo topic. You get shut down and shamed if you even try to bring up the topic.

itainteasybeinreasy • 9 points • 20 May, 2019 09:27 PM

I'm feeling this so much at work at my new job right now. Truly a miserable time, all of the girls are gossiping about me to anyone who will listen.

I just keep smiling and treating my customers as sweet as American pie. Their words about me are more powerful than the jealous ones of the ladies I work with.

stevierose789[S] • 8 points • 20 May, 2019 09:44 PM

It hurts! It is awful to be a target. But the hurt is only temporary. Keep your composure. You will be so proud of yourself later and your reputation will be stellar.

itainteasybeinreasy • 5 points • 21 May, 2019 12:12 AM

Thanks sister! I'm trying.. ☐

liarbirdy • 9 points • 20 May, 2019 09:31 PM

I really feel this post, very accurate.

artemis286 • 16 points • 21 May, 2019 12:24 AM

I was never in the expected category. I've always been pretty, I never really struggled with my appearance. But I was kind, soft-spoken, sensitive, happy, gullible... And was a victim of mean girls most of my life.

The first one was my sister, and that extended to my social interactions outside my family too. I struggled to make female friends, and for a long time I blamed and isolated myself. It wasn't till years later that I realized those behaviors were coming from a place of jealousy and insecurity.

So I guess I'd just have to add that the "victims" aren't always stereotypical. I can't tell you how many beautiful, lovely, kind girls I saw get emotionally traumatized by mean girls due to jealousy. And I saw many turn cold, harsh, angry, and unpleasant due to those experiences.

We are religious, so I attend church every week, including a all women's meeting. And I can't tell you how many times I see this high school behavior play out among adults twice my age. I'm a doula and lactation consultant, and am so about supporting and uplifting other women, and I find myself in the minority most of the time. What has worked for me is to be kind to everyone, never participate in gossip, but only trust and befriend a very few quality women. I have only have three or four good, trusted female friends, and one is my cousin and another is my sister in law. I nurture those quality relationships, and am very wary about getting close to other females till they've demonstrated that they don't participate in those kinds of behaviors.

I've had so many "friends" turn cold when I got married, when we got pregnant, when basically anything good happened in my life. I've found some kindred spirits among hippie ladies, being a hippie myself. They may not ascribe to the traditional, red-pill mindset. But they are kind, and don't judge others, and want to just be genuine friends. At least every once in a while haha!

stevierose789[S] • 6 points • 21 May, 2019 01:07 AM

It doesn't matter if you are pretty, or not pretty when it comes down to being a victim of mean girls. Men can beat the living shit out of each other and walk away with their pride intact. A mean girl can utter one

sentence and crumble the spirit of another girl or even worse, some unfortunate boy .

artemis286 • 4 points • 21 May, 2019 01:24 AM

I agree! I just sometimes got the reaction along the lines of,

"What do you mean *you've* been bullied?! But you're so [insert positive adjective here]!"

Or people that seemingly took the treatment I received not as seriously as they did others. My parents didn't, they always said how they just didn't understand how I could struggle with my self esteem.

But, as you said, the hurt is universally experienced regardless of what you look like or who you are!

mydogwillbeinmyheart • 4 points • 21 May, 2019 07:13 AM

This side of female relationships is really sad.

There's a book, from 1999 I think, that explains some evolutionary and cultural traits that may make women behave the way they do. It is a long ass book, but oh boy, I wish I had read it at 18, or even earlier.

In the Company of Women

The book deals more with a work environment context though. If you want to really get to the bottom of this issue, you might want to google (Female) Intrasexual Competition. I can't link anything since I've had my fair share of bullying and I don't want to cause pain or anxiety to myself.

Hugs from the Internet! I hope you can find genuinely nice ladies out there soon!

splendiferocious • 4 points • 21 May, 2019 02:42 PM

Thanks, I bought the book! Here's the correct link: [In the Company of Women](#). It has great reviews.

LateralThinker13 • 3 points • 21 May, 2019 02:41 PM

I had my own moments of jealousy when I truly relished the downfall of a girl who had lost favor with the mean girls even though that girl had not been unkind to me.

Don't confuse *schadenfreude* - watching someone's karma coming home, watching chickens coming home to roost, watching JUSTICE - with being a mean girl. "Live by the sword, die by the sword" is a true thing with women too; it just isn't usually bloody and overtly violent as it can be with men. It's usually status games and *passive* aggression because that isn't considered impermissible like active aggression is.

Once you understand how the status games work, you can play them or rise above them. If you choose the latter, prepare to be battered and pelted by your lessers. If you aren't strong in your self worth, they can and will destroy you. It's a choice everybody has to make. Go along (be mean), be quiet, or be better than all that. Being better is the hardest path but the most rewarding.

rare_specimen_indeed • 6 points • 20 May, 2019 09:34 PM

Mean people make others stronger by challenging them, and this prepares them for hardships in life.

stevierose789[S] • 7 points • 20 May, 2019 10:05 PM

Yes mean people prepare others for hardships, but I think it is important to acknowledge the pain that can suck the joy out of life's triumphs if you don't recognize it and recognize where it comes from.

cassalas • 3 points • 21 May, 2019 04:54 PM

I've often wondered if the "mean girl" phenomenon has been observed cross culturally. Is this something

prevalent in all cultures? Is this something that happens in hunter gatherer groups? It really is a shame that many women are so unkind to each other. I'm not sure if it is a biological adaptation. I tend to think these women are mentally ill. I recognize the behavior in myself sometimes and reflect on how I was in high school and it seems like it comes from a place of dysfunction.

stevierose789[S] • 1 point • 21 May, 2019 09:25 PM

I have seen 4 year old girls in full mean girl mode. I think it is an innate quality in females. Unlike boys, who will fight and then an hour later be friends again, girls can drag out the unpleasantness for days. The sad thing is that the girl who was tormented and cried her heart out over the mistreatment will turn around and be a mean girl to the next vulnerable target just to keep her newly won acceptance back into the fold. I don't know about the biological adaptation idea. Perhaps it grew out of competition for the best males.

A_Rough_Dicking • 3 points • 21 May, 2019 04:43 PM

Great post 10/10

stevierose789[S] • 1 point • 21 May, 2019 09:35 PM

Thank you.

aussiedollface2 • 1 point • 25 May, 2019 12:57 AM

I went to a girls school and dorms and can totally relate to this fact of life. All my friends are basically female, and I feel like there's so many factors that go into whether you "gel" with another woman or not. There's mean girls at my current work and I just have to remind myself to stay classy and above their immature behaviour. xo