

Friendship article –Voice 14

Friendship Feuds and how to deal with them

When you and your best friend have had an argument, it leaves you feeling like a rubbish bag that's been chucked out in the rain. The evil stares across the classroom and avoiding each other's eyes in the corridor can make you question whether you'll ever be friends again.

I was always falling out with my bestie, and every time felt like the ultimate end to our friendship. It is inevitable that you are going to fall out with somebody at some point and this is totally normal. . It's tough juggling school work, friendships, exam pressures, extra clubs and sports commitments both inside and outside of school, *as well* as family stuff too. Even the closest of friends don't always See Eye to eye 100% of the time. Having a disagreement is actually not such a bad thing (even though it feels awful) because voicing your own opinions when you are not happy is a must; there's no way a problem can be solved if nobody says anything! You will often find that after the argument, once you've both made up, that your friendship will usually be stronger and closer than before - it's about knowing how to deal with it when it happens.

Let the fire burn itself out

Initially it's best to spend some time apart after an argument, to give you both a chance to 'cool off'. This can be difficult as you may be feeling lonely, angry, or guilty over hurtful comments that have been said. Talk to someone close to you (like a parent or sibling) who can offer advice and support, so people know you are going through a difficult time. If you try to force yourselves into a corner when you are both still hurting it will probably kick start round two.

Building bridges

Once the dust has settled, approach your friend at a quiet time when you are both calm. If catching a time like this during school is a rarity, then why not invite them over to yours? Arrange to do an activity that you both enjoy. This way there is a common ground between you – perfect to start the conversation. Say how much you miss hanging out together and wish you'd never fallen out over something so small. I find a bar of chocolate as a peace offering always goes down well!

Be the bigger person

Being the one to apologise first can be a challenge – especially if you didn't start the argument – but by doing so, it shows your friend that you didn't mean what you said and want to put this whole drama behind you. The chances are that they feel exactly the same, but you both are waiting for the other one to apologise first.

A pocket full of patience

Don't expect the situation to be fixed straight away (it might if you're lucky, you never know), but it can take time for people to forgive and forget. If your first attempt doesn't end in hugs and your special handshake, then your friend may need more time and space before they're ready to patch things over with you. Don't panic and think that they never want to speak to you again; this is just your anxious thoughts trying to get a grip of you - so don't let it!

A problem shared is a problem halved

If despite your best efforts your friend is still unwilling to listen to you, or you are finding it hard to reach out to them - don't deal with this on your own; let a teacher you trust or the school nurse know about your concerns. They will be able to set up a casual meeting between you, your friend and the trusted teacher during school to help you bridge the gap. Setting up one of these meeting may feel daunting but they always have a good outcome.

The main thing to remember is that the hard feelings never last. Talk to someone old and wise about what's going on and you'll soon be back together again in no time.

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