

Example by StudyDriver

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How to Resist Peer Pressure Example

At some point in one's life, one is exposed to some form of peer pressure. Undoubtedly, most teenagers have moments where they do things to try to be cool and fit in with the popular kids. The pressure that is felt is very overwhelming and can cause them act in ways that they would normally not act. For example, in the essay, *White Lies* by Erin Murphy in *Models for Writers*, an albino girl is bullied in school. She felt like she had to lie to her peers in order to be liked by them. Teens now are exposed to many harmful outlets that can have negative effects on their lives. The pressure to conform is very prominent among adolescents especially, but it is not limited to only teenagers. There are so many different reasons people are exposed to peer pressure, and it is fairly common in most school environments. Peer pressure has negative effects on the lives involved because it could cause a person to engage in dangerous activities, can cause decreased academic performance, and leads people to have negative opinions on themselves and things they enjoy.

Peer pressure could cause a person to engage in dangerous activities. The pressure to fit in and be liked can be as simple as a friend telling another friend to try this alcohol. Some people are able remove themselves from the situation if they do not want to engage in the drinking, while other people feel like they have to say yes in order to

be liked. Another example of this pressure is seeing a close friend engage in something dangerous and feeling an internal pressure that would cause one to want to engage in that same activity. According to an article entitled, *Tight-Knit Teammates May Conform to Each Other's Behavior*, it talks about the peer pressure that is not directly stated. In a study with NCAA athletes, researchers found that the more closely a player identified as being a part of their team, the more likely they were to conform to their teammates behavior. This was true for both risky and positive behaviors. (Teammates May Conform to Each Other's Behavior). This illustrates the internal pressure that is felt when one is close with their friends or teammates. They feel like they should do the same thing because their teammate or friend did it. There are some situations in which the need to conform can have a positive outcome, but there are a lot more situations that can produce negative results.

Secondly, peer pressure can cause decreased academic performance. This is fairly common in middle school and high school students because they are in a different environment, there is a lot more social pressure to make new friends, fit in and be liked by them. In an article talking about academics and peer pressure, Lowry writes, These parents may not have the credentials of the esteemed researchers, but they see the focus on academic achievement shift as social pressures to fit in as class clown or social butterfly are embraced. The students academic achievement was decreasing because they felt the need to neglect their academics in order to be accepted by peers or friends. This change normally occurs during the transition from elementary school to middle school or high school. A lot of kids feel like they have to be the most popular student in school and have the most friends. The important thing for school is to focus on the education and having an overall memorable experience. With friends, learning that quality over quantity is very significant. A person could have 30 friends that do not talk very often versus a person having three or four really important friends that talk quite often and help each other. Making and having friends is an important part of being in school, but it should not shift the focus away from the academics.

Peer pressure can also lead a person to have negative opinions on themselves and certain things they used to enjoy. In the essay, *White Lies*, from *Models for Writers*, an albino girl named Connie is bullied by students in her school. She develops a very negative opinion on herself because people were bullying her for something that she

had no control over. So, after being bullied quite a bit, Connie told her peers that her father got a new job working for a candy company and that she could get candy for them. She started taking orders from kids and they began to stop teasing her. The other Lebanese girl who was in the same class thought she saw Connie and her mother at 7-Eleven buying all the candy for the kids in her class. (Murphy 210-211). In this situation, Connie was experiencing a lot of bullying and probably felt so awful after being called horrible names, so she made up a lie to get the kids in her class to like her. Preschoolers also experience a small form of peer pressure. After they begin interacting with other children, preschoolers are conforming their ideas and feelings about certain things. They are altering their feelings on foods that they had previously enjoyed eating, after hearing one of their peers say that food is gross. (Lowry). Peer pressure is very widespread and is even evident in preschoolers, who are only between the ages of three and five years old. When a person hears someone talk badly about a certain thing they enjoy, it makes them feel bad about liking it so they sometimes will change their opinion on it. With the example about preschoolers and food, it may not be as prominent but the child most likely felt bad about liking that food so they changed their opinion to be more like their peer.

New research is indicating that peer pressure has some form of a positive side to it. As far as the research goes, I agree that there can be some form of positivity that could come from peer pressure. For example, a friend could help motivate another friend to improve their grades or do something positive. The research was done by a Psychologist named Laurence Steinberg. He had participants playing a computerized card game in room by themselves and separately with people their age in the room. He basically found that teenagers learn faster and efficiently when they are in the company of their peers or people their own age. (Paul). Personally, I believe that there is a larger amount of negative aspects in terms of peer pressure. The research is interesting and there is something to be learned from it, but the constant pressure and need for individuals to conform is at large. So many kids feel like they have to conform in order to fit in with the popular crowd. I think we need to do a better job in explaining that one does not have to conform and do things that one would not normally do to fit in with a certain group of people. If a group of people is going to put an individual at risk then there is no reason to try and be friends with them.