



## **EPISODE 3 – RIVERSIDE HIGH SCHOOL** **BELLE, WV**

- *Bullying, prejudice and cliques are fixtures in schools across America.*
  - *Challenge Day is a one-day program that aims to break down these barriers.*
- 

### **ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Riverside High School is a school of 1200 primarily Caucasian students situated in the small mining town of Belle, ten miles east of Charleston, West Virginia.

Featured Students and their self-proclaimed roles on campus:

Rachel – “Creeker”

Adam – “Punk”

Katie – “Homecoming Queen”

Logan – “Class Clown”

Brittney – “Outcast”

Cliques and the stereotypes people form about various groups on campus are a painful reality in every school.

- What are the cliques at your school? What stereotypes do you attribute to them?
- Have you or any of your friends ever been hurt by stereotypes or by being associated or labeled as a member of any of these groups?
- Do you relate to any of the students in this episode?



## **THEMES TO EXPLORE AND DISCUSS**

1. Regret
2. Growing Up Too Fast
3. Suicide

### 1. Regret

#### **Notice**

- In this episode, regret takes many forms, with **Logan, Rachel, and Katie** all sharing their regrets on Challenge Day. What regrets do you carry around? Is there anything you've said or done (or didn't say or do) that you are sorry about today?
- Why do you think so many people who seem to know better still continue to do things they don't feel good about or proud of?
- Think about the last time you said or did something that you regretted. Why do you think it happened? Did you ever apologize or make it right? How can you make the right decisions in the future?

If you NOTICE that regret is a problem in your life and you CHOOSE to Be the Change – you can ACT by doing one or more of the following...

#### **Act**

- Don't beat yourself up over it. We all make mistakes. If there is nothing you can do to resolve the situation, forgive yourself and focus your attention on doing things different the next time.
- Set yourself free. Apologize, make amends, make restitution--do whatever you can to make things as right as possible.
- Have compassion for others who make mistakes. The more forgiving you are with others, the easier it will be to forgive yourself. If you need help, speak to a counselor or someone that you trust.

### 2. Growing Up Too Fast

#### **Notice**

- **Brittney** mentions that as a child growing up she knew things about drugs that no child should ever have to know. If you had to grow up too fast, how would you have coped with it? If this happened to someone you know, how could you help them deal with it? Do you find that dealing with



extreme pressures at school, home or in your relationships with others has made you grow up too fast? What is the impact on your life? How do you deal with the pressure?

- Did you or someone close to you have to grow up too fast as a result of divorce, like **Katie** or **Rachel**? What effect did the divorce have on relationships, school, or work, or on overall stress levels?
- Did you have a happy childhood? If so, have you told your parents or the people who raised you how grateful you are?

If you NOTICE that growing up too fast is a problem for you or people around you and you CHOOSE to Be the Change – you can ACT by doing one or more of the following...

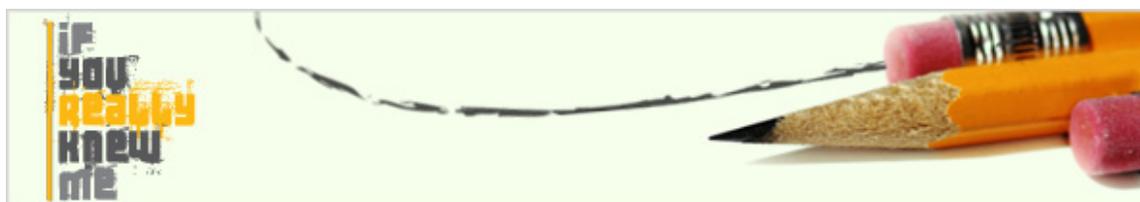
### **Act**

- Reach out. If you notice yourself feeling irritable, sad, depressed or overwhelmed, ask for support. You shouldn't have to go through things alone – talk to a friend, parent, teacher, counselor or another adult that you trust.
- Be curious. Ask your friends to share about themselves and their lives, and really listen. Try following **Rachel** and **Katie's** lead and ask an adult advisor to help you start an *If You Really Knew Me* support group.
- Facilitate healing. Try writing your parents a letter to let them know how you feel. Remember the goal is healing, so do your best to avoid blame. If possible, make time to talk about the past and work on forgiveness.

### 3. Suicide

#### **Notice**

- In this episode, **Brittney** shares how on Christmas Day she and her friend decided life was too much to handle. Have you or anyone close to ever seriously considered, attempted or committed suicide? If you lost someone, what effect has it had on your life and the lives of the person's loved ones?
- How could you support a friend struggling with these issues?
- Why do you think so many young people feel like suicide is their only alternative? What suggestions do you have for teenagers who feel suicidal?



If you NOTICE that suicidal thoughts or depression are a problem for you or someone you care about and you CHOOSE to Be the Change – you can ACT by doing one or more of the following...

### **Act**

- If someone tells you they are considering suicide, get help from an adult you trust. It's important that you don't try and deal with that situation alone.
- If you are feeling suicidal, remember suicide is never the answer. Whatever you are going through there is ALWAYS help. You don't have to handle things alone. Talk to an adult you trust or contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-TALK**.
- Dramatic mood changes, withdrawing from friends and family, and a sense of hopelessness are all common warning signs of suicide. If you're noticing these warning signs in a friend, seek help from an adult you trust or a counselor.

### **LEARN MORE AND SHARE**

- To learn more about suicide, stress, and other emotional health issues, check out <http://www.halfofus.com>.
- To further discuss the issues in this episode, head to <http://ifyoureallyknewme.mtv.com>.

