



EPISODE 4 **PUTNAM CITY WEST HIGH SCHOOL** **OKLAHOMA CITY, OK**

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

Putnam City West High School is an economically and culturally diverse and socially separated high school of around 1400 students located in the Heartland of America, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Featured students and their roles on campus:

Carson – “Jock”
Ashley – “Brain”
Kayla – “Popular”
Malcolm – “Class Clown”
Kyle – “Loner”

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. Hiding Behind Humor
2. Death & Loss
3. Mean Girls

1. Hiding Behind Humor

Notice

- How often (if ever) do you cover your true feelings with humor? How well does this strategy work for you? What, if anything, prevents you from exposing the real you?
- When people make rude comments or do other things to hurt you, do you let them know how it really feels or do you simply laugh or shrug things off? If you laugh or shrug things off, why do you think that is?
- When people hide themselves and their true feelings behind fake smiles and humor, how do you think it affects their lives and relationships?

If you NOTICE that humor sometimes hides true emotions for you or people in your life and you CHOOSE to Be the Change – you can ACT by doing one or more of the following...

Act

- Many people, like **Malcolm**, cover their pain with humor and then think they always have to be funny. If you suspect someone is hiding their true emotions behind jokes or laughter, encourage them to share what's really going on in their life.
- The next time you notice yourself hiding your true emotions behind humor, do your best to stop hiding. Find someone you really trust and talk to them about how you really feel.
- If you notice that hiding your emotions behind humor has become a habit for you, ask your close friends to help you break the habit and call you out whenever you're joking around rather than sharing your feelings.



2. Death & Grief

Notice

- Has anyone close to you ever died? If so, what was the situation? How did you handle your emotions? Are you still grieving?
- Even if no one close to you has died, we all experience loss. What losses have you dealt with in your life? How have you handled those losses?
- Who else in your life has had to deal with death or loss? How do you think these people's lives have been affected? Have you ever talked to them about how they were feeling?

If you NOTICE that loss and death are or have been 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

- If you are dealing with a death or a loss, don't do it alone. Understand unexpressed emotions can cause even more problems in your life. The challenge is to find people you trust and share how you're really feeling. Remember, like **Carson** says, it's okay to cry and grieve.
- If someone close to you is dealing with loss, be there for them. If it seems like the person can use more support than you can give, help connect them with an adult you trust.
- Know your resources. Find out who in your school or community is trained to deal with grief and loss. Are there counselors or support groups available? If not, consider asking a counselor to start one.

3. Mean Girls

Notice

- Why do you think girls and women hurt each other so often? Have you personally been hurt or seen someone get hurt by backstabbing comments or other forms of female competition? If so, how did it feel and how was the situation dealt with?



- When was the last time you heard or witnessed a female student making negative comments or spreading a rumor about another girl? What, if anything, did you say or do?
- Have you ever found yourself gossiping about another girl? If so, what was the situation? Did you feel proud of the way you handled things? Is there anything you'd change if you could do it over?

If you NOTICE that mean girls are a problem for you or your school and you CHOOSE to Be the Change – you can ACT by doing one or more of the following...

Act

- If you are female and you ever find yourself gossiping about another girl, STOP. Think about how it'd feel to be on the other side. If you have something to say about someone, have the courage to speak with the person directly.
- If you hear a girl talking trash about another girl at your school, try to step in and challenge her to speak directly to the person they have issues with.
- Offer support to any girls at your school who are being ganged up on by other girls. Listen to those who are being hurt or targeted, and go out of your way to compliment girls rather than bringing them down.

LEARN MORE AND SHARE

- If stuff going on at school is impacting your emotional health, check out <http://www.halfofus.com>.
- If you're dealing with cyberbullying or online gossip and rumors, head to <http://www.athinline.org> for resources and ways to get help.
- To further discuss the issues in this episode, head to <http://ifyoureallyknewme.mtv.com>.

