



EPISODE 9 – COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL **COLUMBIA, SC**

- *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

Columbia High School is a primarily African American school centered in the capital of South Carolina.

Featured students and their roles on campus:

Damien – “Popular”
Christian – “Outcast”
Roderick – “Jock”
Brittiany – “Emo”
Gabrielle – “Mean Girl”

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. Social Status
2. “Jock Power”
3. “Mean Girl Drama”

1. Social Status

Notice

- One of the goals of Challenge Day is to help students get beyond image and status. How much do you think clothes affect people’s social status? Have you ever compromised yourself or changed your style in order to fit in?
- How often, if ever, do you find yourself judging or making negative comments about other people’s clothes or personal style? How often, if ever, have you felt judged or mistreated because of your clothes or image?
- Aside from the way people dress, what other factors play into creating a person’s social status? Is there an obvious social scale in your school? If so, how has this scale affected your life and relationships?

If you NOTICE that social status has become a problem for you or people close to you, and you CHOOSE to Be the Change – you can ACT by doing one or more of the following...

Act

- Consider the ways that image and social status has affected your life and your relationships. Decide for yourself what you should wear and how you should act. Once you are clear about your own style and way of being, become a trendsetter and invite your friends to do the same.
- If you find yourself tempted to judge or make negative comments about other people, their clothes, their friends or their status, stop, and become part of the solution. Reach out to your classmates who seem on the surface to be the most different from you. Challenge yourself and the people around you to start building people up instead of putting them down.
- Help break down the walls of social status. Find at least one person who you believe is currently being left out or hurt because of their status. Make it your personal mission to get to know and recognize who they really are and what really matters to them.



2. “Jock Power”

Notice

- According to **Roderick**, being a jock at Columbia High means being placed on a pedestal. Why do you think jocks often have so much power in school? How do the jocks on your campus relate with other groups at your school? As a whole, how are the jocks on your campus viewed?
- What beliefs and stereotypes do you hold about the jocks on your campus? If you consider yourself to be a part of that group how does it feel? Do you ever feel embarrassed or ashamed by the behavior of any of your friends? If so, how often, if ever, do you have the courage to speak up? If you are not a part of the jock group, how does it affect your status on campus?
- Do the jocks at your school contribute positively or negatively to the school environment? Are there specific members of the group that make a bigger difference, either positively or negatively, than others? If so, why do you think that is?

If you NOTICE that “jock power” is a problem for you or people close to you, and you CHOOSE to Be the Change – you can ACT by doing one or more of the following...

Act

- If you are not already doing so, try to make a daily positive contribution to your school’s environment. Say hi to someone new, spread a positive rumor, speak up against racist, sexist or insensitive jokes, or in some other way be the change.
- On many school campuses some members of the jock group are stereotyped as abusing their power and status to intimidate and hold others down. If you notice a jock -- or someone from any group, for that matter– using their power in positive ways, give them props. Let them know that you noticed and that you think it’s cool.
- If you consider yourself a member of the jock group at your school, take an honest look at yourself and your friends. Notice how your group interacts both among yourselves and with other students on campus. If you feel good about how you are interacting, keep it up. If not, speak up! Let your friends know what you see and how you’d like things to be. As a group, see if you can come up with a plan to use your power and status to positively affect the overall culture and climate of your school.



3. “Mean Girl Drama”

Notice

- When you think of the term “mean girl,” does anyone come to mind? You? In what ways, if any, has your life been affected by “mean girl drama?” Have you or anyone close to you ever lost a friend due to pointless drama?
- Why do you think that so many girls and women seem inclined to treat one another badly? Is there anything about the way girls are raised or the messages they receive from the media or society that you think might contribute to their behavior?
- For **Gabrielle** and her friends, being mean seemed to be an everyday occurrence. On a scale of 1 to 10, how big a problem is this in your school or in your life? Have you ever been hurt by “mean girl drama?” What, if anything, do you think can be done about this issue?

If you NOTICE that you or people around you seem affected by “mean girl drama” and you CHOOSE to Be the Change – you can ACT by doing one or more of the following...

Act

- If you notice that someone is being hurt by or participating in “mean girl drama,” do your best to help. Challenge the person being hurtful to stop their behavior. See if you can find out what’s *really* going on. Sometimes all it takes to diffuse a hurtful situation is calling attention to the behavior.
- If you find yourself being part of the problem, stop! Think about what’s going on with you, then consciously turn your attention to the other person. Imagine being in their shoes. How would you feel if the situation were reversed? Apologize or otherwise take steps to better the situation.
- Look over your life. Are there people who you have been mean or disrespectful to? If so, follow **Gabrielle’s** lead and tell the person you’re sorry. Once you’ve apologized, take the next step by committing to change your behavior.

LEARN MORE AND SHARE

- If stuff going on at school is impacting your emotional health, check out <http://www.halfofus.com>.
- To further discuss the issues in this episode, head to <http://ifyoureallyknewme.mtv.com>.

