



Attitude Alert

Viewer's
Guide



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INTRODUCTION

Having a negative attitude is like being in a bad mood that never ends.

We all know them, the people who complain, rain on our good ideas or plans, and generally spread gloom and doom wherever they go. Often the seeds of a negative attitude problem are sown in the early years. The sooner youngsters realize that bad feelings about themselves and others cause them to create negative behaviors, the sooner they can lead more positive lives. *Attitude Alert* offers a way to start a discussion about identifying and changing negative attitudes.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

By watching *Attitude Alert*, students will:

1. Learn the common types of attitude problems
2. Understand why people have negative attitudes
3. Learn ways to change negative attitudes

VIDEO OVERVIEW

Beth is irritated when her brother gives her a "cranky attitude" bracelet. Julie, on the other hand, is delighted because it gives her an idea for the next issue of the *Fairfield News*. A lot of kids around Fairfield were displaying bad attitudes and it was spreading a negative feeling throughout the school. Julie, who was editor of the *Fairfield News*, came up with a plan. Students would go on attitude alert. They could catch attitude problems on videotape. Then they would submit them to the *Fairfield News* where Julie and her staff would give advice. Of course, the videos wouldn't be shown all over the school. And no names would be used. The videotaping was strictly for research purposes.

Negative Feelings. Negative Attitudes. Negative Behaviors.

Mr. Fraker, the school counselor, became the project adviser to help out Julie and add some professional ideas. He'd seen his share of attitude alerts.

Videotapes came flooding in. Apparently, kids had been copping attitudes all over the place and it was really bothering others. Christopher decided that having a negative attitude was like being in a bad mood that never ends.

Mr. Fraker agreed, but he had some more information. He explained that people with bad attitudes usually don't feel good about themselves. And those negative feelings come out as negative attitudes. People who feel that they are okay most often display positive attitudes toward others. Attitude problems fell into a few categories:

- Kids who said negative words
- Kids who had negative behavior
- Kids who just didn't much care about anything or anybody

Complainers. They received a lot of videos about complainers. Kids like Tonya complained about everything. She griped that her hair was awful, her locker was too far away, the cafeteria food was terrible, her teachers didn't like her, and her friends didn't understand her.

The news staff decided that complaining gets to be a bad habit. If complainers would change their words, their attitudes could improve. Tonya could say, "My hair actually looks okay. There are some pretty friendly kids near my locker. The food seems to be getting better. My teachers this semester are really nice."

Changing your words can also change other people's attitudes. David said that his family called his little brother Carl "Crabby Appleton" because he was born crying and hasn't stopped since. The staff suggested that David choose a nicer nickname for Carl and he might be nicer. If Carl doesn't get attention for being a pill, he may stop.

Storm Clouds. Quite a few students sent in videos about classmates who rained on their ideas, plans, and fun. That was Crystal's story. Whatever anybody wanted to do, Crystal thought it was a dumb idea, but she never had any better suggestions. She just brought everyone down. The news team said she could practice having a good attitude even if she didn't think anyone else knew what they were doing. She might like other kids' reactions to her so much that she would stay positive.

Disrespect. Jimmy made most of the kids in his class feel uncomfortable when he showed disrespect toward the teacher. He never said terrible things. It was the way he said them. His tone of voice and actions were the problem. The news staff thought Jimmy was a tough case and decided he should be sent to Mr. Fraker. Sometimes turning around an attitude calls for getting an adult involved.

Silent Signals. Brendan sent in a video about himself. He wanted Julie to write an official answer so his parents would get off his case. He said his parents were always complaining, although he never said anything nasty. Julie sent the tape back to Brendan, pointing out that when he folded his arms, slouched, turned away, played with the TV remote, or actually left the room while his parents were talking, he was being just as negative as if he had said smart-aleck words.

When the attitude edition of the *Fairfield News* came out, everyone had their "noses in the news." There was advice for interrupters, complainers, know-it-alls, killjoys, and disrespectful back-talkers.

Attitudes didn't change overnight. But the hallways were becoming happier every day. And the classrooms weren't cluttered with complainers anymore. It was a great year for Fairfield. And Beth's cranky attitude bracelet was put in a drawer and quickly forgotten.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. How did Beth's "cranky attitude" bracelet start the attitude alert at Fairfield School?
2. What type of negative attitudes were submitted to the *Fairfield News*?
3. What kind of negative attitudes have you seen in your school?
4. What are some of the reasons kids have bad attitudes?
5. Tonya was a complainer. How did she turn around her negative attitude?

6. What did David's family call his little brother? How can words affect someone's attitude?
7. Crystal was always negative about her classmates' ideas, plans, and fun. What was the news team's advice for her?
8. What was Brendan doing to make his parents think he had a negative attitude?
9. What happened when the attitude edition of the *Fairfield News* came out?

ACTIVITIES

Cure These Attitude Problems

Haley. Haley thinks she knows everything about clothes, TV shows, what's going in school, and who is doing what. She never lets anyone else tell a story or offer an opinion. She interrupts after the first couple of words. Lately, Haley has noticed that her friends make up excuses not to be around her. What advice would you give Haley?

Nathan. No one can figure out whether Nathan is mean or just trying to be cool. His favorite comment is "Whatever." Sometimes he tells kids "Get a cell phone and call somebody who cares." Do you know classmates like Nathan? Why do you think they act that way? What advice would you give Nathan?

Clare. Clare gossips about everybody. Some kids like to hear her stories. Others think she just wants to get attention. Still others think she might start telling stories about them. Do you think gossiping could be an attitude problem? Why?

ATTITUDE QUIZ

If you're wondering whether or not you have a negative attitude, answer these questions with a "Yes" or "No."

___ Do people avoid you?

___ Do you often disagree with what other kids and adults want you to do?

___ Do you think you are smarter, better looking, and generally cooler than everyone else?

___ Does it make you feel good to say something mean or disrespectful to another person?

___ Has anyone told you that you have a problem with your attitude?

If you have answered even one question "Yes," you may have the beginning of an attitude problem.

For information on other programs visit our website at

www.meridianeducation.com

2572 Brunswick Pike, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

Toll Free: 1 800/727-5507

Fax: 1 888/340-5507



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