

Knowing me, knowing you

Starting out

- 1 Look at the picture and describe what each person is doing. Talk about what kind of person they might be.



- 2 Watch the video and answer the questions.

- 1 What do the three conversations have in common?
- 2 What would you do in similar situations?

1 Look at the problems you may face at school. Discuss which you think is the most difficult to overcome and why.

- bad performance in a subject
- pressure to look good
- conflict with classmates
- difficulties fitting in with others

Now think about who you turn to for help when you face a problem.

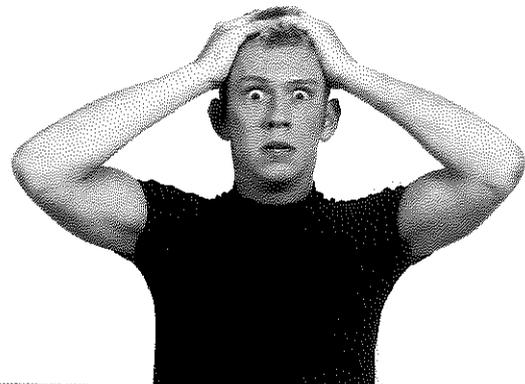
- friends
- parents
- teachers
- online forums
- no one – you prefer to keep things to yourself
- other _____

2 Read the letters and find out what kind of problems Ben has and who he turns to for help.

Dear Agony Aunt,

- 1 I'm in a total mess here – hope you can help me out!
- 2 I'm 17, and a member of our school basketball team. I'm crazy about basketball, and pretty good at it too, which is probably why I was so mad when we lost our last match. We played well, but I felt the team were let down by one member, our point guard. The point guard is a key player, but it was like he wasn't even on the court! Disappointed by his behaviour, I said all this to my best friend. I was just letting off steam really, because I was so angry, but then my friend went and told everyone else what I'd said.
- 3 This is so totally awkward. I'm really angry with my friend – what should I say to him? And should I say anything at all to my teammate?
- 4 Embarrassed and ashamed, I can't concentrate on anything. Please help!

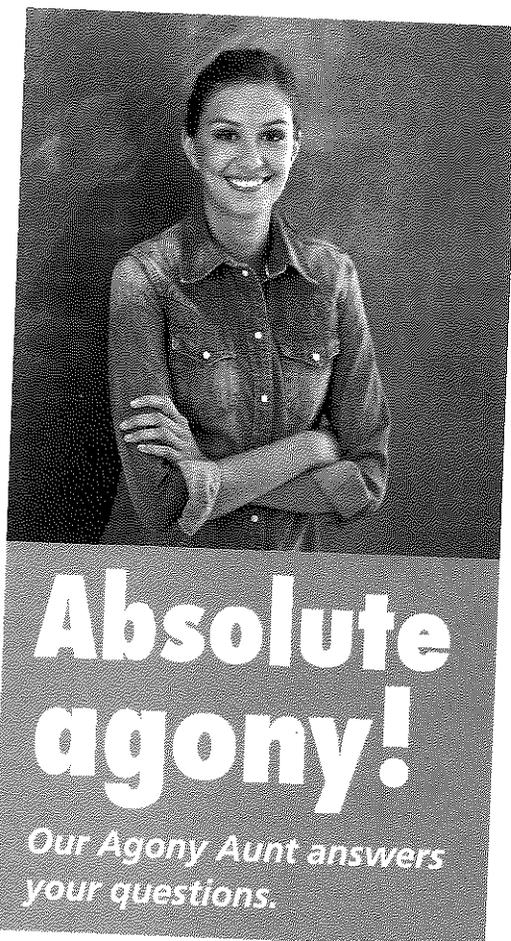
Ben



Dear Ben,

- 1 There is an old American saying, “Loose lips sink ships.” This means that if you speak too much about something, especially to people who you don’t know so well, it’ll cause all kinds of trouble.
- 2 The situation here is so much worse because the “loose lips” were your best friend’s. Treated this way, you’re sure to feel hurt – we should always be able to trust those closest to us, and it hurts even more when we find we can’t.
- 3 But I have to say that it’s partly your fault, isn’t it? You admit that you were “letting off steam”. It is understandable in that situation, but we should always think before we speak.
- 4 Here’s what you need to do. First, apologise to your teammate. If you ever want to win any more basketball games (and I’m sure you do!), you need to work together, and that means communicating with each other clearly and resolving conflicts. So have a chat with your teammate. Tell him directly and honestly that you were talking without thinking.
- 5 Then, talk to your friend. Friendship should be one of the greatest things in the world, but sometimes it can be difficult. Again, your strategy is clear communication. Tell your friend you’re angry with him for repeating what you said and making the situation worse, but that you want to move on. Approached in this way, your friendship will soon be repaired.
- 6 Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, think about your own behaviour. Don’t say too much when you’re angry! Filled with anger, you tend to say whatever comes to your mind. This gives people the wrong signal. Take a deep breath, calm down, and always remember: think first, speak later. If you feel one of your teammates isn’t pulling their weight, then raise your concerns in a professional way with your team coach.
- 7 If you think about other people’s feelings as well as your own, you’ll soon find everything works out.
- 8 Good luck!

Agony Aunt



3 Choose the best summary of the letters.

- 1 Ben said something bad about his best friend, and Agony Aunt told him to apologise to his friend.
- 2 Ben was angry that his team was let down by some members, and Agony Aunt told him to take it easy.
- 3 Ben didn't play well in the match, and Agony Aunt advised him to apologise to his teammate.
- 4 Ben was in an awkward situation, and Agony Aunt gave him suggestions as to how to deal with his problems.

4 Complete the sentences with expressions from the passage.



Ben's problems

- I was disappointed with my teammate because I felt ¹ _____ by him.
- I told my best friend that my teammate was to blame, just ² _____.
- My best friend ³ _____. I don't know what to do.



Agony Aunt's suggestions

- You should ⁴ _____. You need to work together, and that means ⁵ _____ and ⁶ _____.
- Tell your best friend you're angry with him for ⁷ _____ and ⁸ _____, but that you want to move on.
- Don't ⁹ _____ when you're angry. Always remember: ¹⁰ _____.

Now match the suggestions to Ben's problems.

- 1 What do you think of Agony Aunt's advice? What other advice would you give to Ben?
- 2 What is your understanding of the saying "Loose lips sink ships"? Do you know any similar sayings in Chinese?

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