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REDO #102 Arizona, Jan 2014, Seeing Double

Dear Arizona,

Sometimes I think my friend is two totally different people. She's fun and nice when we're by ourselves, but as soon as she gets around her friends, she acts like she doesn't even know me. What should I do?

Confused in Connecticut

Dear confused,

I know that exact same person. Okay, maybe not exact, but, well – a person with a bunch of those same exact qualities that you just described. Since it probably wouldn't be the friendliest thing to reveal her true identity, I think I'm going to call her Missy.

So, I started out not knowing her at all. We're not in the same class, or even the same grade. We ended up meeting because we both loved to do this spin-around thing on the monkey bars. At first we'd both just spin around and around not saying a single word. But then we started talking, and laughing in between the spinning. Before very long at all, we'd become fantastic new friends.

Then, one terrible day at recess, these two girls walked over and said, "There you are! We've been looking everywhere for you!"

I couldn't wait to hear why they'd been looking for us! Maybe they'd found some amazingly cool something to show us, or maybe they had some fun game that couldn't be played without two more players like Missy and me. But the very next minute I got my answer, and it wasn't anywhere near what I was hoping.

"Missy!" One of the girls said. "You'll never believe the secret we just heard!"

"It's totally private," The other girl said, staring straight at me. "So of course we can't tell you in front of anyone else!"

"Oh, of course!" Missy said, leaving me behind as the three of them walked away in their whispery little group.

It was the weirdest, yuckiest feeling – to be left out and left behind. How could that girl, who'd been my fun, nice, friend have walked away, leaving me in the dust, just like that? I was officially hurt and sad about being treated so incredibly rudely.

As the day went on the more I thought about it, the more I realized I needed to talk to Missy. There must be some kind of explanation! I told myself. So when I spotted Missy at lunch, I took a deep breath and walked over to her.

“That was weird – how you just ignored me and left with that whole secret thing this morning,” I told her. “What exactly was up with that?”

“Oh, yeah, well, you, um like, probably shouldn’t be so hyper sensitive,” She said, flipping her hair and walking away.

That’s why, when I left for school the next morning, I had no idea that what was about to happen was about to happen!

“Hey Arizona!” Missy called when I got to school. She was running up to me all happy and smiley like nothing at all weirdly terrible or terribly weird had ever even occurred.

“Um, hi?” I said, suspiciously.

“Meet me at the monkey bars at recess,” she said. “I have to show you the coolest new spinning trick!”

And before I could say anything she was gone.

I wondered all the way through spelling and math. Should I go meet Missy, or should I go hang out with my real friends? When the recess bell finally rang, I’d made up my mind.

“Hey, where are you going?” Missy called as I was passing by.

“I’m going to go kick the soccer ball around with Mareya,” I answered.

“Oh, but you have to come hang out on the bars with me first!” She insisted. “I invented the best double spin thing ever!”

I totally, absolutely, positively knew better. And I have no idea why I fell for it. But there was something about Missy – I mean, this super convincing way she had about her when she was excited about something.

“Well,” I said, reluctantly. “I guess I could try it for a second.”

And it really did turn out to be a super fun trick. We started talking and laughing again. And I started thinking stuff like - well maybe I should forgive and forget, and maybe she wasn’t trying to hurt my feelings on purpose, and hey – everybody deserves a second chance – right?

So, I was feeling pretty okay again – until the very next day, that is. By now, you can probably guess what happened without me even telling you.

There we were, perfecting our new double spin, when those same two girls came by.

“Come on Missy!” One girl said. “We have to show you something!”

Missy hopped right down off the bar and started walking away without even looking back at me. This time I was at least going to speak up and say something.

“That sounds awesome,” I said. “Can I come see it too?”

“Maybe next time,” the other girl said.

“Yeah, maybe next time,” Missy repeated.

And before I knew it, they were gone.

The next day when Missy came up and acted like nothing mean or rude or disrespectful had ever even happened, I said, “You know, you might want to start thinking about other peoples feelings once in a while.”

“Well,” she answered. “You might want to stop over-reacting so much!”

I decided not to bother making a whole big deal about it. I just started spending more recess time with my considerate friends, and politely said I was going to do other stuff when Missy asked me to play.

So Dear Confused, I just want to agree with you and say that having one friend who acts two totally different ways really is confusing. I think maybe I’d call that type of person an acquaintance rather than a friend. And basically I guess I’d say, if you really want to play with her now and then, that’s fine. But you should know she’s not the kind of true blue friend you can trust, and you and I should both have enough self-respect to expect others to treat us kindly.

Ciao for Now,

Arizona

