

# Standing True

**Purpose:** To introduce the positive action of telling ourselves the truth by standing up for ourselves and resisting peer pressure, so we feel good about ourselves.

**Materials Needed** None

**Materials Provided** None

## Procedure

**Say** Imagine you were given a special space tool that can move you around. The thing about the space tool is you can't control it except by what you do in response to it. It's like being in a high wind: If you don't decide where and how it's going to move you, it will move you wherever it wants. The results of this space tool can be good or bad. It can slam you into a brick wall or it can move you forward toward your dearest dreams. What determines the outcome is what you choose to do in response to it.

This imaginary space tool is like the subject of today's lesson: peer pressure. What is peer pressure? (*Wait for responses: Your peers are your classmates and friends; pressure is a pushing.*) Peer pressure is when you feel pushed to do the things your classmates and friends want you to do. Sometimes this is positive and good for you; sometimes it can create problems—as Libby, the girl in our story, will find out.

**Teacher** *Read the story, then elicit discussion using the questions that follow.*

## LIBBY'S PURPLE CURLS

"Hey! Look at this, you guys!"

Ronda and Libby looked up from their magazines.

"No! I mean it—look!" Marty sat crosswise in the big stuffed chair, pointing excitedly at a page. Both girls, lying down on the floor, crawled over to look.

"Isn't that the craziest hair color you've ever seen?"

Marty giggled. In the picture was a teenage girl with curly purple hair sprouting everywhere.

Ronda and Libby stared. "Yeah. It sure is crazy," Ronda said.

Libby agreed. "That is crazy. I sure wouldn't do that to my hair!" She tossed her long brown hair, and shuddered. "Would you?"

Ronda felt her black shiny hair and said, "No way!"

Marty stared at the picture while the other two went back to their magazines. Suddenly, she got a sparkle in her eye.

"I've got an idea. Why don't we all do it? I mean, we can go to the store and get that dye that lasts like six weeks, and we can all go to school just like this. Can't you just see the look on Mrs. McCloud's face?"

Ronda and Libby looked up. They both giggled.

“She’d probably faint,” Libby said.

“She would! She would!” Marty agreed. “Let’s do it!”

“Huh?” Both girls chorused.

“No kidding,” Marty insisted. “We’ll all three get permanents and we’ll go to school and everyone will faint. Come on, you guys. Let’s do it!”

Marty was clearly the leader. The other two hesitated.

Then Ronda said, “Do you think we should? What happens if we don’t like it?”

“Well, it isn’t forever—and we’ll start something new. The other kids will want to dye their hair purple, too. Can’t you just see Mrs. McCloud’s face?”

Marty rolled off the chair in a spasm of giggles.

Ronda started to laugh, too. “Can’t you just see her old eyebrows go straight up? And her face get all red?” She held her stomach, she was laughing so hard.

“And then she’ll clear her throat about twenty times, and...and...” Libby had caught the giggles, too.

Marty sat back up in the chair. “I’m serious. Let’s do it. We’ll all get the hair dye tonight and tomorrow Taft Elementary will be on the map. We’ll have reporters out there taking pics of the purple-curl girls.”

Libby was still gasping. “Sure, I’ll do it,” she said. “I’m not a chicken. Are you guys?”

“It’s a deal, then?” That was Marty. “Let’s shake.”

That night, Libby’s older sister said, “Are you sure you want to dye your hair? What will dad say? Well...okay...but what if you don’t like it? Okay. It’s your hair.”

She opened the bottle. Libby screwed up her nose. “Ugh! That stuff stinks,” she said.

Two hours later, after the stinky solutions and water ran down her forehead and back, after her hair was painted and wrapped and heated and washed and painted some more, then pulled, twisted, rolled, and dried, Libby’s sister said, “Okay, now go look at your crazy hair!”

Libby was shocked! “Oh...it’s awful!” she cried.

“It looks just like the picture,” her sister said smugly.

“The hair looks like the picture, but I don’t!” Libby wailed.

The next morning she had to meet Marty and Ronda. It was good she had two friends in this thing, too. She grabbed an old cap and stuffed her purple curls under it until she got to school. She didn’t want anyone laughing at her.

Her heart sank when she saw Marty and Ronda under the big elm tree. Marty’s long blonde hair was pulled back and fell down her back like gold glass. Ronda’s hair was like always—dark, sleek waves.

“Hi, Lib!” she called as she bounced over to the car. “What’s with the cap?” With tears running down her cheeks, Libby pulled off the cap, and the purple hair flew every where.

“Oh, no! Marty! Look! She did it!”

Marty ran over. “Libby why did you do that?” she cried. “We didn’t mean it! We were just being silly.”

Just then the bell rang. “Let’s go!” Marty shouted, and Ronda said, “Yes! I can’t wait to see Mrs. McCloud’s face! Come on, Lib!” and they ran off without waiting.

In the car, Libby sat like a lump with tears running down her face. “I didn’t want to,” she sobbed. “I just did it because I thought they’d say I was chicken if I didn’t.”

Libby's sister sighed and rumbled her purple hair.

"Lib," she said, "You'll find many times your friends will ask you to do some thing you don't want to do. I can tell it doesn't feel very good right now."

Libby sniffled. "It feels terrible. Next time I'm going to do what I want to, even if I never have any friends!"

"You'll always have friends, Lib, no matter what they say, as long as you do what is good for you."

She looked at her younger sister huddled against the car door. "You know what?" she said with a warm smile. "Your purple curls aren't too bad. And no one else has purple hair. I guess people will notice that you're special, because you did what you agreed to do—even though it was uncomfortable. But you'll still be special when all the purple is gone."

Libby looked up and ran her fingers through the strange-feeling hair. "I guess it does," she whispered.

"Well?" her sister asked.

"Well,...I guess I'll go be the purplest girl in school," Libby answered. "Thanks. You're a great sister for understanding."

They squeezed hands, as Libby shook her curls before running to beat the tardy bell.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How did Libby allow her friends to influence her actions? (*Wait for responses: She let them talk her into doing something she didn't want to do.*)
- What did Libby learn about the importance of self-honesty? (*Wait for responses: She learned to value her own judgment.*)

### Say

Think of a time when you felt peer pressure. If you didn't give in to the peer pressure, trace your Positive Thought-Action-Feeling Circle. First you thought you would do what was best for yourself, even if it made your friends unhappy. Then you did that positive action. Finally, you had that great feeling you get when you are honest with yourself and you act accordingly. Or perhaps you gave in to the peer pressure. If so, think of another way you could have handled it. What positive thought could you have had? Now imagine yourself doing the positive action suggested by that positive thought. Maybe it was to just walk away. Or maybe it was saying, "No, thanks." Now allow yourself to have that good feeling you get about yourself when you complete a Positive Thought-Action-Feeling Circle. The more you practice this, the better you will get at flipping negative circles to positive circles. Then you'll trust yourself, and you'll gain confidence that you'll keep your integrity even in difficult social situations.

**Note:** Lesson 108 examines the influence of media on behavior. Remind students to bring an example of media or advertising pressure they feel is designed to influence the behavior of others.