

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MEAN GIRLS: How Groups Shape Who We Become

A Viewer's Reflection Guide

For teens and adults.

Use this guide to reflect on the groups we belong to and the courage to refuse to participate in cruelty.

1. FOR REFLECTION



Notice the groups around you.

- Which groups am I in, and what unwritten rules do they enforce on their members?
- Where have I been hurt by relational aggression, and what has it done to my sense of myself?

2. FOR CONVERSATION



Talk it through with someone you trust.

- Who is excluded from my circle, and why? Where have I participated, even passively, in pushing someone to the margins?
- Cady slowly became what she was only pretending to be. Where has an environment shaped my behavior more than I noticed?

3. TRY THIS



A small step toward a kinder group.

- Name one unwritten rule of a group you belong to, and one small way you could refuse to enforce it.
- The next time you notice the machinery of the group at work, be the catalyst, name what is happening or quietly decline to join in.

DR. Z TAKEAWAY

The question is not whether any one person is good or bad.

The question is what any of us would become, placed in the same position, and whether we can see the group clearly enough to change it.

DR. MICHAEL ZAKALIK, PSY.D.
Psychologist for Parenting | Z Psychology

Change is possible when the hidden dynamics are named.