



**P**eer

**I**nfluence:

**Isn't All Bad**

**During your teen years you must have figured out who you are, what you believe, what you're good at, what your responsibilities are, and what your place in the world is going to be.**

**It's comforting to face those challenges with friends who are into the same things that you are. But we probably hear adults — parents, teachers, guidance counselors, etc. — talk about peer pressure more than the benefits of belonging to a peer group.**

**But peers have a profoundly positive influence on each other and play important roles in each other's lives:**

- **Friendship.** Among peers you can find friendship and acceptance, and **share experiences that can build lasting bonds.**
- **Feedback and advice.** Your friends listen and give you feedback as you try out new ideas, explore belief, and discuss problems. Peers can help you make decisions, too: what courses to take; whether to get your hair cut, let it grow, or dye it; how to handle a family argument. **Peers often give each other good advice. Your friends will be quick to tell you when they think you're making a mistake or doing something risky.**

- **Socializing.** Your peer group gives you **opportunities to try out new social skills**. Getting to know lots of different people gives you a chance to learn how to expand your circle of friends, build relationships, and work out differences. You may have peers you agree or disagree with, compete with, or team with, peers you admire, and peers you don't want to be like.
- **Encouragement.** Peers encourage you to work hard to get the solo in the concert, help you study, **listen and support you when you're upset or troubled**, and empathize with you when they've experienced similar difficulties.
- **New experiences.** Your peers might get you involved in clubs, sports, or religious groups. Your world would be **far less rich without peers to encourage you listen** to a CD you've never heard before, or to offer moral support when you audition in an open forum.