

Dealing With Teasing

Weird Liz

Once upon a time there was a girl named Liz. But that was not her name at school; at school everyone called her “Weird Liz.” Mostly it was one boy who called her that—a boy named Johnny who had picked on her since the first day of school.

“You have red hair and freckles,” he shouted when Liz first walked into the classroom. “That’s weird.” “It’s not weird. My mom says it’s pretty and different.” “Whatever,” said Johnny. “I think it’s weird.” And from then on he called her Weird Liz.

Liz withstood the teasing for about a week, but it started to make her more and more upset. Finally she cried to her mother, “I’m never going back to school.” “You can’t quit school,” her mother said. “Then I’ll change schools,” Liz insisted. “But it’s the middle of the semester,” her mother said, trying to comfort Liz. “You can’t just quit.” “You can’t make me go to school!” shouted Liz, and she ran to her room. Her mother gave Liz ten minutes to calm down, and then knocked softly on her door.

“Do you want to tell me what happened?” she asked. Liz opened the door. She had a sheet over her head. “Everybody thinks I’m weird,” she said. “Everybody?” her mother asked. “Well, Johnny said I look weird,” admitted Liz, “and the other kids heard.” “I understand how you are feeling,” said her mother. “You do?” said Liz. Then her mother showed her some pictures of herself when she was a girl. She looked just like Liz. “I guess you looked weird, too,” Liz said, and she smiled for the first time that day. “Having a sense of humor is a good way to deal with teasing,” her mother said, “but I know an even better one. When someone used to tease me, I would look her in the eye, and say very seriously, ‘I don’t like to be teased.’ No matter what she said back, I would say the same thing, ‘I don’t like to be teased. I don’t like to be teased. I don’t like to be teased.’ And do you know what?” her mother asked, “it always worked. I found that nobody likes to tease you when you don’t react to what they are saying.”

Liz liked what her mother was telling her. She thought it was a good idea to stand up to someone who teased you. “I’ll do the exact same thing if Johnny says I’m weird tomorrow.” Liz told her mom. And that is exactly what she did.

MORAL: When people tease you, don’t react. Just tell them you don’t like it, again and again, until they stop.

Tell A Story

Tell a story about a very tall girl who was teased about her height.

Use What You Learned

The technique Liz used is called The Repeat Technique. It works best when you practice using it. Have someone pretend to call you names and just repeat the same thing over and over again: “I don’t like it when you call me names.” Don’t show any emotion or say anything else. Always tell a parent or teacher if you are being teased.