

# Complimenting Others

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## NICE SAM

Once upon a time there was a mean little boy named Sam. He wasn't born that way—as a baby he was very sweet—but when he first went to school he was nervous and afraid that people wouldn't like him, so he decided to not like them first.

Sam was what you might call a bully—he made fun of the other kids so much that they avoided him and were afraid of him. His teacher didn't like the way Sam made the other kids feel, but she also worried about Sam. Because Sam was so mean to the other children, he was always alone. No one sat with him at lunch and this made him angrier and more mean.

Sam had many mean things to say to the other children. “Nice shirt,” he would say sarcastically when he saw a boy with a torn shirt. “You're ugly,” he told a little girl for no reason at all. “Could you be any dumber?” he said to a boy struggling with his math. Then one day his teacher asked Sam to stay after school with her. “Sam,” said the teacher, “why do you talk to the other kids this way?” “I don't know,” said Sam. And he really didn't know. “Well, let's try something else.” Every time you feel like saying something mean, why don't you try and say something else?” “Like what?” Sam asked. “What about something nice?” his teacher suggested. It sounded weird, but Sam was willing to try it. He wasn't really happy about making fun of other children.

The next day, on the playground, Sam passed Jason trying to make a foul shot on the basketball court. He missed, and it bounced off the rim. “Nice try,” he said. “That was close.” “Thanks,” said Jason. He was surprised that Sam said something nice, but he enjoyed the compliment.

The next day, Jason sat with Sam at lunch. They talked about basketball, and discovered they both had the same favorite team. Sam thought being friends with someone was much more fun than being mean.

Sam continued to give compliments throughout the week. Every day more kids sat with him at lunch. At the end of the week he had five new friends. His teacher gave Sam a compliment, too. “I really like the change in you, Sam. You've become a very friendly boy, and I can see that it has really paid off.” Sam liked receiving a compliment, too.

