**MODULE 3**

**Class Title**: Peer Pressure part 2

**Aim of the lesson**: To understand how to resist peer pressure

**Category**: Personal development / Interpersonal Relationships

**Lesson Format**: Power point presentation, activity & discussion

(Greeting to students*) Assalam alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh.*

*(Taooz) Aoodhubillahi min AsShaytanir Rajeem*

*(Tasmiyah) Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*

*(Du’a) Rabbish rahli sadri wa yassirli amri wahlul uqdatum millisani yafqahu qawli* (Surah At Ta-Ha 20: Verse 25-28)

**Slide 1:**

Last time we spoke about what peer pressure is and the different ways that we can experience it. We spoke of how your decisions are impacted by the influence of others. Making decisions on your own is hard enough, but when other people get involved and try to pressure you one way or another it can be even harder.

Peer pressure is one thing that all teens have in common. You can't escape it. It is everywhere. Whether it is pressure to conform to a group norm or pressure to act, peer pressure is something everybody has to deal with at some time in their life.

It’s really important to learn how to handle this kind of pressure because we saw in the last class the consequences of giving in to negative pressure all the time can be devastating for us – for our *deen*, our morality, our integrity and our values.

**Slide 2:**

If someone is pressuring you to do anything that's not correct or good for you, you have the right to resist. You have the right to say no, the right not to give a reason why, and the right to just walk away from a situation.

Friends have a big influence on our lives, but sometimes they push us to do things that we may not want to do. Unless you want to give in every time you face this, you’re going to need to learn how to handle it. As you grow older, you'll be faced with some challenging decisions. Some don't have a clear right or wrong answer — like should you play basketball or throwball? Other decisions involve serious moral questions, like whether to cut class, try cigarettes, or lie to your parents.

**Slide 3:**

We live in the era of independence where it’s amazing to be your own unique self. So don’t worry about standing apart from the crowd; it’s more important to be honest with yourself and to be true to what you believe in and have a moral compass that guides you.

It’s natural for people to want to be liked and accepted by the people that matter to them. Yet in the end, each one of us is individually responsible for the successes and failures in this life,and when your peers pressure you to do or accept something that’s not right and goes against your values, you should stay firm and stand up to the pressure.

**Fortunately there are facts, tips and tricks that you can equip yourself with to win the battle:**

**Slides 4 & 5:**

Build your self-esteem.

It is tough to be the only one who says "no" to peer pressure, but you can do it. Paying attention to your own feelings and beliefs about what is right and wrong can help you know the right thing to do. Inner strength and self-confidence can help you stand firm, walk away, and resist doing something when you know better.

Understand that being different or standing out from a crowd, is not a bad thing, it is not a weakness- if anything, it indicates personal strength and chances for success. Do you think anyone who did something remarkable with their life fit in with the crowd? No. It’s easy to go with flow and just ‘fit in’, if you’re resisting the norm then you are doing something that is worth doing.

Remind yourself that you are not ‘sticking out like a sore thumb’, instead tell yourself ‘You’re standing out like a bright star, a flickering flame’. Have strong inner confidence in knowing that what you’re doing IS right, just because everyone else isn’t doing it, doesn’t mean you are wrong. If you’re lucky enough to be different, don’t change.

How can you increase your confidence, courage and self-esteem when dealing with peer pressure? These are practical tips that you should actually practice so you are ready when faced with sticky situations.

**Check your motivation:**

Ask yourself what really motivates you to want to do something, or leave something. If you want to be confident and steadfast in your actions, this is where it starts. Why do you want to wear hijab or avoid listening to gangsta rap?

If you feel you lack genuine motivation, read up about the issue or talk about it until you feel more confident in your stance about it. It will strengthen your decisions in times when your values are put to the test. Remember self-esteem doesn’t just build itself. You have to put an effort for it.

**Be clear, don’t JADE (Justify, Argue, Defend, Explain):**

There are situations in which you can get into a discussion about your values, but when you’re dealing with peer pressure, be short and sweet about what you want and don’t want*.*

For example, when you’re pressured to eat or drink something that you don’t want, you could just say: “No thanks, I decide what goes into my body”. Or, when friends push you to stop reading and go partying with them instead: “It’s up to me how I spend my free time”.

Don’t JADE like – I have a test coming up or I don’t know if we should be doing this or umm let me see. You get the gist?

JADE-ing will give people a foot in the door when you really need to have that door closed.

**Have something ready to say:**

Avoid being swept away by the insecurity of the moment, not knowing what to say or how to react. Write down some useful phrases and practice them too. You’ll probably have to find out along the way which phrases work best in which situation, but make sure you have some ready to use.

Do note, having something to say does in no way mean that you be rude and aggressive. One can put across a point in a polite and matter of fact way. Phrases like “No thanks, I’m good” work well in many situations.

I don’t feel comfortable, but you have a good time! we can make a plan next week

Sorry, this doesn’t fit with my value system, so I’ll pass

This isn’t my cup of tea- I’ll join you guys for something else.

Can you think of anymore?

**Lead an active and productive life:**

Being busy with work, study, volunteering, being active in the community and seeking knowledge will boost your confidence and steadfastness. Stay busy, and as you start to see results and achieve your goals, this will make you confident and courageous enough to continue on the path you carved out for yourself, no matter what others will say.

**Slide 6:**

It’s essential you create personal boundaries for yourself. Even with good friends.

We tend to think if we are close to someone cousins or friends then everything goes. Period. Nope, you must have limits and boundaries of interaction with everyone. And you yourself must respect other’s boundaries. Simple example, you know how terrible gossiping is. Right? How Allah (SWT) has said in the Quran that gossiping is like eating the flesh of your dead brother. Such a scary and vivid parable! You have worked hard to rid yourself of this toxic and destructive thing, draw the line with your friends – I will not gossip, no matter what. That is my boundary.

No one should be allowed to exceed the limits you set for yourself. They may make fun of you but they should never feel like they can force you or go beyond that.

Also know that the likelihood of peer pressure is more when you are in a new environment because people don’t know your boundaries and thus expect you to follow them

For e.g.: if your friends are over, and they insist on smoking on your roof and you are not comfortable with that and you communicate that- they make fun of you or ridicule you, but you should make it evident that they still cannot go ahead and smoke with you- that is where you draw a line. If they do try to do it, then you don’t invite them to your roof in the future so they understand that there is a strict boundary in place.

**Slide 7:**

I cannot emphasize how important it is to surround yourself with good friends who you can whole heartedly trust.

It can really help to have at least one other peer, or friend, who is willing to say "no," too. This takes a lot of the power out of peer pressure and makes it much easier to resist. It's great to have friends with values similar to yours who will back you up when you don't want to do something. For example, a few kids in school might try to get you to cut class with them, your soccer friend might try to convince you to be mean to another player and never pass her the ball, or a kid in the neighborhood might want you to smoke with him. Even if you have one friend to stand with you, you don’t feel like the black sheep anymore; and now you have someone who stands by you and your decision.

You've probably had a parent or teacher advise you to "choose your friends wisely." Peer pressure is a big reason why they say this. If you choose friends who don't use drugs, cut class, smoke cigarettes, or lie to their parents, then you probably won't do these things either, even if other kids do.

Try to help a friend who's having trouble resisting peer pressure. It can be powerful for one kid to join another by simply saying, "I'm with you — let's go."

**Slide 8:**

The Quran offers beautiful advice and guidance that you can apply when you are faced with negative influence from people around you, and by the same token, you are also warned about the ‘follow the herd mentality’ where we do certain things simply because everyone else is doing them

“And be patient over what they say and avoid them with gracious avoidance.”

[[Surah Al Muzzamil 73: Verse 10](http://www.quran.com/73/10)]

Obviously don’t live in a cave- but separate yourself from those people who are on a path different from yours.

Example: if you were a marathon runner in training would you hang out with a crowd who smokes or eats junk all day? no. because that would make it difficult for you to stick to your healthy habits.

And remember the story of the people of the cave – in Surah Al Kahf. They were young men who turned away from their corrupt society by literally hiding in a cave, and at the same time, stuck together for support.

If you’re always surrounding yourself with people who have different values than you and have habits that you don’t want to have; that way of life will become the norm for you and it will be even more difficult for you to then resist and do something different. Remember you are who you surround yourself with.

The Prophet (pbuh) reminds us of the importance of good company:

**“**A good friend and a bad friend are like a perfume-seller and a blacksmith: The perfume-seller might give you some perfume as a gift, or you might buy some from him, or at least you might smell its fragrance. As for the blacksmith, he might singe your clothes, and at the very least you will breathe in the fumes of the furnace.” (Bukhari, Muslim)

I know that often that can be difficult to implement because you want to have better friends but there’s just not much better company in your school. In those scenarios try to find good friends not only in school but perhaps in places like this class where like-minded people come together or other classes or extra curriculars like this. Also always make *dua* for like-minded, good friends from Allah and *in sha Allah* when the time is good for you, He’ll make it easy for you to meet better friends.

**Slide 9:**

It is also important to remind yourself the **whys** behind your decision and the negative consequences of giving in to the peer pressure.

Let’s suppose you play that cruel prank on the class mate; you may forget about it in a couple of hours but how will it negatively affect that student? it will probably make them highly insecure and feel very hurt that could impact their personality and confidence for years to come. In another example, if you go to a party you aren’t allowed to by your parents what could be the negative consequence? Your parents could find out and lose trust in you, and deeply damage your relationship with them. Or even if they don’t find out, you would constantly be uneasy and caught between many more lies to hide the original lie you told.

When you think of the negative consequences – both religious and not- you realize that it is actually not really worth it.

**Slide 10:**

(**note to teacher**: do not explain anything yet, do this activity)

Ok everyone up on your feet. Split up in pairs. Hold your hands like you see in the picture and push against each other. The goal is to see who can push back the opponent the farthest and who can resist the pushing.

Ok. Start.

Keep activity going for 2 minutes. Then ask students to sit down.

Discussion:

So let’s analyze this face off. Suggested questions to ask. You can adjust the questions according to your audience.

What did you do to resist the pushing?

What was going through your mind when you were resisting?

How hard did you push back?

Did you feel like giving up at some point? Why?

**Slide 11:**

One thing we saw from this activity is that standing your ground when someone is pushing you is not a walk in the park. It requires effort, strength, focus and a pretty good reason to resist.

You have to practice standing your ground in the face of negative peer pressure. And you have to learn what and how to articulate your response according to different situations and what the context may require.

Someone wise said – if you don’t stand for something, you will fall for anything. Profound indeed.

We just talked about JADE ing. Don’t let anyone think that you’re unsure or dwindling in your decision or feeling uncertain; be clear and firm. Only when you seem weak about your own morals do people want to take advantage of you. Recognize the power of saying “no”.

**Slide 12:**

Acknowledge your values and understand fully why you’re choosing, what you’re choosing.

This is super important if you want to resist negative peer pressure.

Your ultimate reason for resisting peer pressure is because of what Allah (SWT) has laid out a way of life for believers – the practical example of which was lived by the Prophet (pbuh) and his Companions and to this day by those who follow them.

If you are a person of *imaan* and have chosen the path of the Prophet (pbuh), it’s important that you acknowledge that and strengthen your *imaan* so that the strength of your *imaan* motivates you to continue resisting negative peer pressure that takes you away from that sacred path.

I’ll give you an example; let’s suppose you started hijab and all your friends are wearing coordinating *lengha cholis* (traditional Indian long skirt and midriff revealing blouse) at a friend’s siter’s wedding. You feel extremely left out because you can’t wear that torso baring *lengha choli*. In that situation you have to remind yourself of why you’re wearing the hijab; about the *ayat* in the Quran, about the temporary nature of the world, of the everlasting blessings of *Jannah* and of the pleasure of Allah (SWT) - that’s going to give you the strength to continue.

It is important to keep working on strengthening your relationship with Allah (SWT) and gaining knowledge about deen, knowing about the life of the Prophet (phub) and people around him.

Also, take the fear of peer pressure out of yourself. It’s actually not that scary. More often than not if you are a fun, kind, giving, relaxed, positive person people will want to be with you regardless of you choosing to do something different from them. What’s the worst that can happen? you won’t be invited to some parties? well that’s just about it. you don’t have to go to every party anyway. think of it as an honor that Allah (SWT) chose for you to be different from the people around you, He (SWT) chose you as His special servant.

**Slide 13:**

Don’t be ashamed of who you are. Just because everyone is doing something and its right for them doesn’t mean it’s right for you.

We are all on our individual journeys, with our own struggles and goals. It’s cool to be different. Right now, you guys just want to mix in but trust me when you come to university or even the professional life everyone respects and values the person who has the strongest values and boundaries. They will see you as different, but not necessarily dumb or alien. They will instead see you as someone with a spine, conviction and inner strength and that’s very inspiring.

Also, since when did it get uncool to be different anyway? It’s easy to feel alone and isolated when you can’t see anyone else making the same sacrifices as you, but there are so many people who are on that journey to make the right decisions and they all feel the same way, and they all also come out of it perfectly fine!

You are cool the way you are. Dressing up like someone else, celebrating Valentine’s day, using bad language, neglecting your *salah* and turning your back on Allah (SWT) never made anyone “cooler” – it’s just a temporary delusion that shakes your confidence.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwTrDw7sD6g>

**(Play video Cooler self)**

**Slide 14:**

If you continue to face peer pressure and you're finding it difficult to handle, talk to someone you trust. A mentor of sorts. Don't feel guilty if you've made a mistake or two. Talking to a parent, teacher, or school counselor or an older cousin, can help you feel much better and prepare you for the next time you face peer pressure.

Don’t be shy, tell them what you’re feeling and they should be able to help you out because they have perspective into life from years of experience that you don’t. They know how it works and what matters and what doesn’t. They can tell you that winning a popularity contest is not the main goal and objective, it’s not even important as long as you have a good support system with you. The reality is that you cannot spend your entire life making others happy.

**Slides 15 &16:**

Positive thoughts and feeling about your informed choices, about your value system, about your religious beliefs – all help big time in deflecting negative peer pressure.

**Slide 17:**

Know these facts:

True friends respect each other's wishes.

We can put pressure on ourselves too.

Caving in to what other people want won't get you respect.

Quick recap of main points we discussed.

It is healthy and normal to want to belong to a peer group.

Many young people find themselves bullied or taken advantage of by a peer group.

We must first and always be true to our values and ourselves and make decisions that are good for us.

Friends are important but we should not be led astray or pressured into doing things that we do not want to do.

Tons of *dua’s* that may Allah (SWT) help us in staying steadfast on our *eeman* and value system no matter how much “pressure” we face daily. Ameen.

(Du’a for end of a gathering) *Subhana Rabbika Rabbul Izzati ‘amma yasifun wa salamun ‘alal mursaleen, walhamdulillahi Rabbil ‘alameen*

(Parting salutation to students) *Assalam alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*