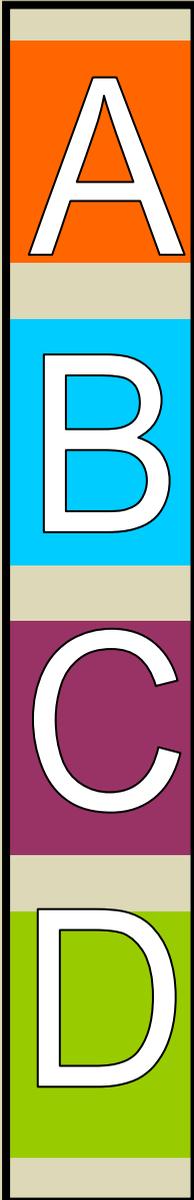


The ICB Character Education
& Community Building Book Series



is for
ommunication

*Series Book
No. 4*



C is for Communication

Character Education & Community Building Book Series

Published by ICB Productions, Inc.

Deryl G. Hunt, Sr., CEO

P.O. Box 693573

Miami, FL 33269

E-mail: icbproductions@aol.com

Web: www.icbproductions.net

Copyright © 2006

By Deryl G. Hunt, Sr.

All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States of America

Cover Graphic & Cover layout:

ICB Productions, Inc.



C
is for
COMMUNICATION



**GOMA FACES
PEER PRESSURE**

C is for Communication

PREREADING EXERCISE

What are some ways you have changed since last school year? Things change as children move from one stage of life to the next. Friends may change; grade levels and schools may change; habits change; the kinds of peer pressure kids face also change, sometimes for the worse. Goma faced this very situation, as he was changing from middle to high school. His boyhood friends had changed and started trying things that could harm them, just to fit in with the “in-crowd.” Goma had a choice either to follow them or to follow what he knew were the right things to do.

Have you ever been faced with peer pressure? What are some ways you have shown your friends that you don’t want to yield to peer pressure?

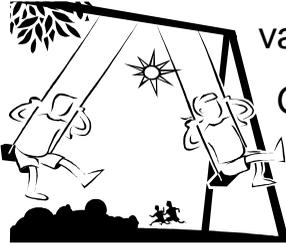
READING FOCUS

This story underscores many important life lessons about maintaining open and honest lines of communication with one's parents/guardians, friends and peers. It also demonstrates how making positive choices may sometimes appear to be difficult. However, in the end, your decision to make positive choices may influence others to make positive choices as well. Most importantly, these lessons help us to evaluate how effectively we communicate these choices to our peers and to our communities.

Read the story, follow the discussions, and come to some of your own conclusions about the things you communicate through your own words and your actions.

GOMA FACES PEER PRESSURE

When Goma was in elementary school, he and his six friends always did things together, inside and outside of school. During their summer vacation, they would all hang out in



Goma's backyard. They would sometimes go to the neighborhood park to play with other neighborhood boys in a game of baseball or football. One of the group members named Jay became Goma's best friend.

Jay and Goma had fun together and shared similar interests. Unfortunately, as the school year passed, Jay began to be influenced by his other peers and became involved in things that Goma didn't do like fighting, cheating, and even stealing. Goma did not know about Jay's wrong doings until Jay asked him to join in such activities.



Goma was faced with a problem: to join in with his best friend and be accepted by the “in-crowd,” or to remain true to his own principles and morals which could ruin their relationship. Goma began to reflect on the many positive messages that he had received over the years. He had been warned about the pressures that he would one day have to face. Among his many mentors, Goma’s mother had the most influence on him . Goma loved the openness his mother used in counseling him and his siblings. She did not hide anything from him. Instead, she nurtured a household based on frank and open discussions and would always impress upon the kids the values of trust,

honor, and respect. His mother’s strongest message to her children, however, was not just the words she used, her own behavior and attitude. She had always emphasized the



importance of not lying and being honest. Goma believed the stories his mother shared with him and would later experience many of the temptations that she had warned him about.

It was no surprise then that whenever Goma was faced with temptation or despair, he would recall the words that his mother had shared with him. In most times, it was his mother's warnings that would cause him to not engage in activities that were bad or illegal.

However, Goma did not always say no. There were moments when Goma would get invited to parties and, like most kids, he took advantage of the opportunities. For example, Jay once invited him to a party after a basketball game. When they arrived at the party, Goma was surprised to see that the kids there were planning to steal a video game from the local video store. He was



shocked but at the time, he did not try to stop them.

After being at the party for a couple of hours, Goma wanted to leave for home by 7:00 pm because his mother asked him to help his sister with homework. So he searched all over the house for Jay and finally found him in the



backyard with a group of boys, who were known to be school bullies. They were talking about fighting another group of boys over who could use a neighborhood basketball court. Goma walked nervously over to them and said, “What are you guys doing?” Jay replied, “What do you think we’re doing? Do you have a problem with us protecting our turf? What, are you — scared or something?” Goma replied, “No, I just needed to head out because I promised my sister that I would help her with a problem she was having. I’ll see you guys

later.” As Goma walked away, Jay called after him with an attitude, “Yeah, we’ll see you later!”

Goma knew by Jay’s voice that nothing good would come from a confrontation. It seemed they were ready for a fight with anyone who would have a problem with what they were doing, even an old neighborhood friend.

After that party, Goma shared with Jay his concerns about his actions. He shared the rumors that were floating about Jay’s fighting, stealing, and cheating. Whenever Goma would speak to Jay in private, Jay would tell Goma to mind his own business.

One day, Goma realized that, if he did not talk to his friend, Jay might get himself in serious trouble. Goma was very surprised and disappointed with Jay and told him that they could no longer be friends, if he continued to hang out and to do those kinds of activities. Jay told Goma that it was not what he wanted, but that there were

other kids who, because of the fighting, cheating, and stealing, would include him into their groups. Jay felt that he was more popular and had gained a reputation of being tough. Goma continued speaking to Jay about his bad behavior. Overtime Goma's words began to get Jay to think about why it is wrong to fight, cheat, and steal.

Jay would watch Goma's behavior. He saw how happy Goma was without the fighting, cheating, and stealing. Jay also saw what his actions were doing to his own life. His grades fell after he was caught asking someone to give him the answers to his math homework. He was having serious problems at home with his family, because of his constant fighting. Jay remembered how close he and Goma once were and wanted that closeness to return. Jay also knew that Goma would not



be his friend, if he kept fighting, cheating, and stealing.

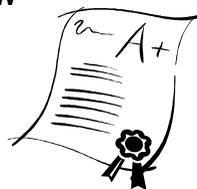
A few days later, Jay saw Goma walking home from school and admitted to Goma that he did not want to fight, cheat, or steal but he needed help to stop doing these things. He asked Goma to help him turn away from his bad habits. Goma said he would be glad to help Jay as long as Jay was sincere about making a change for the better.

Jay saw something in Goma that he respected. Jay wanted to be more like Goma rather than like his other peers who enjoyed fighting, cheating, and stealing. Goma



shared with Jay that he has to treat all people with respect and honor, but in order to do that, he must first respect and honor himself. Jay compared his lifestyle to Goma and considering the words Goma shared with him, Jay replied “you’re right man, but how do I stop?”

Goma replied, “It starts in your heart and mind. You must first want to turn away from bad behaviors, then you must take yourself away from people that are a bad influence.” Jay agreed saying, “No more parties?” Goma said, “If fighting, cheating, and stealing are being discussed at the parties, then you should not go.” Goma went on to tell Jay that he would be there for him to help him with anything that he needs. Goma assured Jay that if he stayed away from his bad habits he would be fine. As days and weeks went by, Jay’s whole personality changed. He was getting along with his family and has developed some new friendships with people who shared his new attitude. In addition, Jay’s grades improved.



Goma and Jay were now friends like in the old days, spending time together, in and out of school. Jay thanked Goma for not giving up on him and told him that he would be grateful to him.

Goma understood the importance of communication. Good communication must come from people who respect each other. All positive relationships are built on respect and good communication. In this instance, Jay had much respect for Goma and saw him as a positive influence and valued what he had to offer. As such, respect was the method Goma used to reach his close friend Jay. Goma used verbal and non-verbal communication to teach Jay and his peers how to respect themselves as well as others.

We communicate not only through our words and conversations, but also through our body language. Body language is called non-verbal communication. One's posture can express sadness, frustration, embarrassment, happiness, anger, and a host of other emotions. Though we cannot always rely on a person's physical

appearance to determine what they are really thinking at any given time, body language offers many clues.

Another way we communicate with others is through our actions. Have you ever heard the expression, “Actions speak louder than words.” Our actions demonstrate how we feel about certain issues. They show others the kinds of choices we are willing to make. Through our actions we can either negatively or positively influence others. Goma learned that withstanding peer pressure allowed him to become a role model to his friend Jay. Goma’s actions spoke louder than words.

1. Why do you think the teenage boys talked badly about Goma when he refused to drink alcohol or do drugs?
2. How did Goma help Jay to overcome his addictions?
3. Have you ever been faced with similar issues, when someone ridicules you for doing the right thing? If so, how did you communicate with your friends, when they wanted you to do things you didn't feel comfortable doing?

1. With your class, use a chart to list some of the positive and negative things that were said to Jay by Goma and his peers .
2. Use a tree diagram to list the effects of the things that were said to Jay by Goma and his peers. What did Jay do after his peers said these things to him?

NOTES

NOTES

The ICB Character Education & Community Building Book Series

