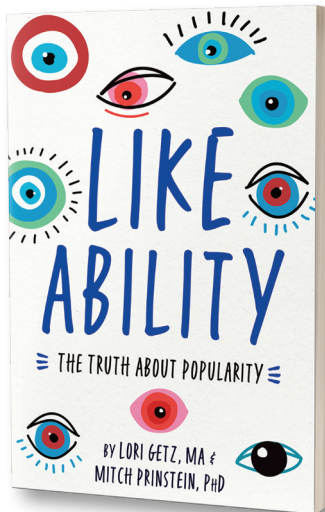




AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Like Ability: Helping Teens Understand Popularity



Like Ability: The Truth About Popularity by Lori Getz and Mitchell Prinstein is a workbook based on science and research that includes stories and an opportunity for teens to decide for themselves which type of popularity THEY want to have. Popularity is not an elusive goal granted only to a select few.

Anyone can become the right kind of popular with a little bit of insight and a whole lot of reflection.

This is a practical, insightful guide for teens about popularity: what it is, why some kinds are healthier than others, and how teens can grow their social intelligence and develop the confidence they need to feel more connected to their family, peers, and community.

What is likability? Psychologists have done hundreds of scientific studies to understand what likability is, how to be likable, and how being liked by others affects you years later. The results from these studies tell us that likable kids have tons of friends, get lots of invitations to play, and are relied on by others to make decisions or rules about games and activities. How do they become so likable? There may be a lot of reasons why we like someone. But overall, it seems that the most likable kids are the ones that make others feel happy, valued, and included when they are around.

Enjoy this excerpt from the first section of the book: Popularity: What Is It?

Defining Popularity:

The word “popular” comes from the Latin word *popularis*, meaning belonging to, devoted to, or accepted by the people. Basically, this meant “for ordinary people.” But of course, that’s not the way we think about the word popular today.

What does popularity mean to you? How would you define this word? How do you know when someone is popular?

Scientists who study popularity have identified two meanings for popularity. The first meaning is someone or something that is liked by lots of people, and disliked by few. The second focuses on reputation: who is most well-known, or has the highest social status...which often doesn't have much to do with who is well-liked at all.

What qualities describe the people that you like the most? What qualities describe the people that have the reputation for being the "most popular"?

We use different words to refer to each of these different types of popularity. One is called "likability" and the other is called "status." **Likability is the quality of being readily and easily liked by others. Status is how widely known, influential, dominant, and powerful a person is.** There are upsides and downsides to each type.

Why do you think it's important to be popular?

This Article's Author

Lori Getz, MA, is the founder of Cyber Education Consultants and educates students, parents, and teachers about Internet safety, security, and ethics. She is the author of *The Tech Savvy User's Guide to the Digital World* and *Navigating The Right Kind of Popular*. Visit her website and follow her on Twitter.

Mitch Prinstein, PhD, is the chief science officer at APA and the author of *The Right Kind of Popular*. He and his research have been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Time* magazine, and elsewhere. Visit his website and follow him on Facebook and Twitter.