

Story #1

When I was a junior in high school. I had a friend named Kim. She was essentially a nice person, but as the year progressed, it became more and more difficult to get along with her. She was easily offended and often felt left out. She was moody and difficult to be around. It got to the point where my friends and I stopped inviting her to things.

I was gone for a good part of the summer after that year, and when I returned I was talking to a good friend of mine, catching up on all the news. She was telling me all about the gossip, the different romances, who was dating who, and so on, when suddenly she said, "Oh, did I tell you about Kim? She's been having a hard time lately because her parents are going through a really messy divorce. She's taking it really hard."

When I heard this, my whole perspective changed. Rather than being annoyed by Kim's behavior, I felt terrible about my own. I felt I had deserted her in her time of need. Just knowing that one little bit of information, my whole attitude toward her changed. It was really an eye-opening experience.

Story #2

The summer following high school graduation, my best friend Tara and I were dating two really neat guys. They were best friends, we were best friends, and we often doubled. One weekend Tara and my boyfriend, Sam, both went out of town with their families. Tara's boyfriend, Will, called and said, "Hey, let's do a movie since both Tara and Sam are out of town and we have nothing else to do."

We truly went out as friends. Will knew that and I knew that. Of course, someone saw us at the movies and misinterpreted the situation. Well, in a small town, things have a tendency to grow. When Tara and Sam returned, and even before I had a chance to talk to my best friend or my boyfriend, the word was out.

There was no pulling back the stories and rumors. As I called to say hi to them, I got a frigid blast of arctic air. There was no explaining. There was no communication. My best friend and boyfriend chose to believe the nasty rumors that were being spread, and their anger added fuel to the fire. I learned a really tough lesson about loyalty that summer that I have never forgotten nor even gotten over. And to this day, my best friend still doesn't believe me.

Story #3

When I was a junior in high school, I'll never forget watching a high school basketball game with my friend, Eric. I began making fun of one of the players who was always sitting the bench. He was a nice guy and had always been good to me, but a lot of other people made fun of him so I thought I would too. It made Eric laugh. After I had ripped on this kid for several minutes, I happened to turn around and, to my horror, saw this kid's younger brother sitting right behind me. He had overheard everything, I'll never forget the look of betrayal written all over his face. Quickly turning around, I sat quietly for the rest of the game. I felt like a total jerk, about one foot tall.

Story #4

One day in my English class, my friend, Matt, started talking about a girl I knew from my neighborhood. His friend had taken her out to a dance and he started saying things like "She is such a snot", and "She's so ditzy."

I turned around and said, "Excuse me, but Kim and I have grown up together and I think she's one of the sweetest people I have ever met." After I said it I was kind of surprised at myself. I had actually been struggling to get along with her. Even though Kim never knew what I said about her, my attitude towards her changed and we became really close friends.

Matt and I are still good friends. I think he knows he can count on me to be a loyal friend.