

askGinger

ADVICE ON FRIENDS,
SCHOOL, BOYS,
PARENTS . . . WHATEVER!

who's that girl?

My best friend used to be a sweet person, but now because of her boyfriend she has gone hardcore. She dyed her hair black and she's into heavy metal and emo-screamo. I want the "old" her back! What do I do?

— Missing Her, via e-mail

Dear Missing Her,
Unless this boyfriend is an evil mastermind with magic powers, he hasn't changed your friend. She's chosen to change. Maybe she was attracted to this guy because he let her acknowledge a hidden facet of her personality. Or maybe she's just trying out something new. Sure, it's possible that this isn't who she really is, but she'll have to determine that.

If your friend is the same girl (with different hair!), there's no reason you can't still be close. But if she's no longer someone whose company you enjoy, then you may want to move on.



weighty prob

I'm overweight, and I'm tired of it. (I've been cutting my food intake, though I admit I haven't exercised much.) I know how to deal with people who tease me. But I still feel like if I were slimmer, I'd be happier. Help!

— Confused, via e-mail

Dear Confused,
Few females are ever satisfied with their shape. Girls who don't worry about being heavy usually worry about not having curves!

Since you say you're not exercising, that's a good place

to start. Those endorphins (feel-good brain chemicals) released during physical activity will give your self-image a boost. Just make sure you talk to your doctor to set up a workable plan. And while you're at it, ask him/her about your diet. The problem could be *what* you're eating, rather than how much.

You still might never achieve the world's thinnest thighs, but so what? Find your unique beauty. Maybe the bone structure in your face is to die for, or maybe you're the most thoughtful person at your school. Focus on those things. I know plenty of girls who aren't classically

beautiful, but their awesome personalities make them so cute, no one notices.

fear of failing

Every time I try to do something new, it blows up in my face. Now I feel worthless! I don't know what to do . . . I feel like giving up completely on trying anything.

— Brittany, TH

Dear Brittany,
The only way to avoid failure is to never try anything. But what a sad — and boring — way to go through life!

You may not have found

your niche just yet, but you *will*. Instead of beating yourself up for failing at things, think of it this way: You're learning who you are, and that's pretty exciting.

If something interests you, *don't* give up. Love basketball but didn't make the team? You could record stats, start a pep club, or cover games for your school newspaper. Talk to your friends and teachers about how you can channel your strengths; they might have ideas, too.

It may take time, but once you find your gifts, the effort will have been worth it.

stolen bff

This new girl just moved to my area, and I'm the first person she met. I liked her immediately and I introduced her to my BFF. Well, they became really close! Now I feel ignored. They were my two best friends . . . help!

— Sad, via e-mail

Dear Sad,
Remember when you were in kindergarten and you carefully labeled your best friend, second-best friend, and so forth? Maybe your friends haven't graduated from that thinking. They may feel that the only way they can obtain that *best* friend status with each other is to freeze out competitors for the title — namely, you.

Another possibility is that your friends are simply caught up in the novelty of someone new. They may not have intended to make you feel left out, and maybe things will soon return to normal, with all three of you hanging out and having fun. Give it some time and see what happens. Then, if you continue to get the cold shoulder, it's time to find some new friends.

It's Your Turn

Have a question for Ginger? Send it to Sweet 16 Ask Ginger, 1050 Broadway, Suite 6, Chesterton, IN 46304; or e-mail askginger@sweet16mag.com.

(Sorry! Individual letters cannot be answered, acknowledged, or returned.)

Ginger Rue is an advice guru who lives in Alabama. When she was in college (and broke!) she once gave her cat-owning friend kitty litter for Christmas because she had a free coupon for it.