How to be a Better Friend

Learning and knowing how to be a good friend can make a world of difference to someone who has been bullied. Knowing what to say and how to say it, how to listen and how to support a friend or someone you just met is an invaluable tool.

1. **Be a good listener**
   * Don’t interrupt when she is talking to you about what has happened.
   * Keep good eye contact.
   * Give thoughtful and supportive advice, but only when asked.
2. **Be honest**
   * Keep what she says to you private.
   * If she asks you to help her or do something and you don’t feel comfortable doing it, be honest about why you don’t feel comfortable doing it.
   * If she talks to you about what happened or tells you why she is being bullied, don’t tell other people, not even your best friend! Being a good friend is about being trustworthy when your friend is in need.
   * The only time you should ever reveal what she told you is if you think she is in danger.
3. **Be loyal**
   * If someone tells you something in confidence, keep that confidence! She may not be ready to tell an adult about the bullying or to have others know what happened.
   * If you hear people talking about your friend or saying something bad about her, stand up for her. Don’t be a part of the problem by letting rumors start.
4. **Be supportive and offer advice**
   * If you feel like she needs some advice, but she has not asked for any, say something like:
     1. *“Would you like some advice or suggestions on what to do?”*
   * Offer comments that specifically address that she did not to deserve to be bullied or that the bully is wrong. For example:
     1. *“She’s the one who looks stupid, not you.”*
     2. *“It’s not you. She says mean things about everyone.”*
   * Some things may seem supportive but they can also make the victim feel like she is to blame for what happened. Don’t say things like:
     1. *“You should be more careful about getting into these sorts of situations.”*
     2. *“You must feel really embarrassed that they were laughing at you.”*
5. **Be proactive**
   * If you know the person who has been bullied doesn’t have many friends reach out to her.
     1. Offer to let her sit with you at lunch.
     2. Introduce her to your own friends.
     3. Offer to walk to class with her or plan a place to meet up later.
     4. Sit with her on the bus.
     5. Say nice things about her to other people.
6. **Extra ideas**
   * Call her, message her, text her, write her a note and ask how she is doing.
   * Tell her you are sorry she is going through this and that you are available to talk at any time.
   * Post positive comments about her on your Facebook wall for all to see.
7. **If you think someone might be getting bullied, but you are not sure**
   * If your friend is acting out or being mean to you, it is possible that something is going on. Ask her! Don’t just assume you know what is happening.
   * Tell her why you think something might be going on and ask her if there is anything she wants to talk about.
   * Be nice and respectful when talking to her. Remember that being bullied can be embarrassing and the victim may be reluctant to talk about it.
   * If she doesn’t want to talk, reassure her that is fine. But also let her know if or when she does want to talk that you will be ready to listen.