

TEEN TALK (an original column from The Daily Record)

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We love your letters--keep 'em coming! Put "Teentalk" in the subject and email us: teentalk@the-daily-record.com

YOU: I know you hear this a lot, but I'm *really* shy! I can't talk to girls...I can't really talk to anybody. I want to be the life of the party, but I have no clue how to do that. It's like I live inside this shell. I want to break out but *how*? HELP!

TEENTALK: Yes, lots of people are shy—kids *and* adults. Some of your shyness is just who you are—it's part of your personality—and being quiet and reserved isn't all bad. But when shyness keeps you from doing the things you want to do, it's time to do something about it. First, it may help to remind yourself that lots of very accomplished people have overcome their shyness, including heartthrobs like Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt! Next, choose a situation where your shyness hinders you—like talking to girls, for example. Start off *small*—don't assume you have to march up to some awesome girl and ask for her phone number! Think of a situation from the past when you considered yourself too shy to speak and *imagine* yourself talking. Play out the entire situation in your head, imagining exactly what you're saying *and* what she's saying (keep everything *positive*, please!). Next, imagine that the conversation is over and you feel really good about it. Now, make up your mind to try it! You can do the same thing with any situation that you want to work on—just remember to start with little things and work your way up.

YOU: How can I ask a girl out in person? I've gone out a lot of times but I always asked them in a note. I really want to be able to ask them to their face!

TEENTALK: What a worthy goal! Notes are fun, but when you've really got something to ask, nothing beats a good ol' fashioned face-to-face talk! It might take a bit more planning to catch her in person, though—especially if you want to ask when no one else is around (a good idea). So think about when you might catch her alone. Do you always see her at her locker between classes? (We *don't* recommend asking during class—what if you get in trouble before you get an answer?) You can always ask to meet her for a few minutes *after* school to talk—just make sure you tell her that you want to talk alone. Since you're so used to using notes for your communiqués, why not use a note *first*, to tell her that you have something you want to ask her in person? That way, she'll be expecting your question and you'll know that you're committed to asking. Once you've done it a few times, it'll be easier than you think. Good luck!