

## **ITTT: What to do when others annoy you**

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or call 505-THERAPY

**I = IGNORE** the annoyer, walk away, don't look at or pay any attention to them. If possible, try to avoid seeming annoyed, because that's exactly what the annoyer is hoping to see. (over)

**T = TALK** to the annoyer in a calm and positive way, if Ignoring hasn't worked. “When you said or did A, I felt B. I would appreciate, if instead, you would say or do C+.” (over)

**T = THREATEN** to tell on the annoyer, if Talking to them hasn't worked. But, the “threat” is worded in a nice way, for example, “Can we work this out between us, or should we get (teacher's name) to help us?” Hopefully, the annoyer will agree to solve it without getting the teacher involved.

**T = TELL** on the annoyer, if Threat to tell hasn't worked. When telling the teacher (or other adult), the student should explain that he has already tried ignoring, talking to the annoyer, requesting again to solve it without getting the teacher involved, and the problem persists.

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More on **IGNORE**:

**Stone face:** If you have an expressionless face, the would-be annoyer may think he or she has been unsuccessful in annoying you. You deny them the pleasure of seeing you upset.

**Walk away:** Sometimes the best and easiest strategy. This may be effective at recess, especially if you walk toward an adult recess monitor. In the classroom setting, a teacher may be able to honor your request to sit elsewhere in the classroom for a while.

**Smirk:** A facial expression which suggests you can “laugh it off” may lead the annoyer to believe you have not been so bothered by their behavior or comments.

**Humor:** If you can turn the annoyer’s mean put-down into a light-hearted joke about yourself, you take away the annoyer’s power over you. If the annoyer called you “Elephant Breath,” and you always got upset by that, you now try a humorous comeback, like, “Hey, you know, I haven’t brushed my teeth in three months.” If the annoyer sees you can joke about it, the annoyer loses, not you.

**Don’t let others win at trying to get under your skin.** That’s what the annoyer is trying to do: win at annoying you, or “getting under your skin.” If you develop the attitude you will not them “win” at this foolish game, then you won’t “lose.”

More on **TALK**:

The TALK part requires being *assertive*:

1. When you said or did A...
2. ...I felt B.
3. I would like, if instead, you would say or do C+.
4. Agree?

After you are calm enough to do so, and not before then, you should calmly tell the annoyer what it was he or she said or did which was annoying (“When you said/did A, I felt B”). Avoid accusing or blaming, like “You made me feel...” and “It’s your fault that...” That only invites the annoyer to become defensive, attempt to deny the accusation, or argue back. Saying “When you did A, I felt B” is not accusatory, so the annoyer may be more willing to listen. As well, avoid inflammatory words like “liar” or “stole.” But you need to go a step further and offer a constructive suggestion or solution. For example, if someone calls you a name, you might say, “When you call me ‘Elephant Breath,’ I feel annoyed and angry. I would prefer, if instead, you called me Johnny.” However, you must go still *further*, and ask if your suggestion is acceptable. “Is that okay with you?” or “Would you agree to that?” In general, try to get some agreement with the annoyer.

**In cases of physical harm, go directly to the nearest adult and report it to them. Do *not* first try to ignore and talk with someone harming you.**

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