Dear Alice,

Hey! I am a thirteen-year-old clueless girl. I was just wondering what prude means. I mean, I am very curious about it, all my friends talk about it, and I have no clue what it means. If you could help me out, I would be very grateful. Thanks again.

? Curious and Clueless

Answer

Dear Curious and Clueless,

It?s good to be curious! And most everyone finds they are clueless about a new term at some point in their lives. It can be difficult to ask for a definition when it seems like everyone around you already knows a term, such as prude, so hopefully this will help clear things up for you. A prude is someone who is concerned about whether what s/he says, what s/he does, how s/he dresses, etc. is proper according to what a particular group of people thinks is ?normal? or appropriate according to some standard of modesty.

The term is often used as a label to judge someone as sexually conservative and ?no fun.? For example, a person might call someone that is uncomfortable with sexuality or nudity, or even other behaviors such as drinking alcohol or doing drugs, a prude. In this sense, it?s basically synonymous with ?uptight? or ?goody-goody.? Being a prude could also describe a person who doesn?t know very much about sex because of lack of experience, or who doesn?t do something sexually that someone else wants her/him to do.

Depending on the context of the conversation with your friends, you may have heard the term prude used in a variety of ways. Are your friends calling each other prude? Other people? Mostly other girls, other boys, or both? Were they saying someone was a prude because of something s/he said or something s/he did or didn?t do? Did you see the term prude used as an insult or as a compliment?

If your friends are talking about prude in relation to sex, there soon may be even more terms that you are unfamiliar with. You can take a look through the extensive archives on the subject, especially Sexual and Reproductive Health [2] and Relationships [3], if you?re feeling clueless. Stay curious!

Alice!
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