

“How can I help my friends overcome problems like swearing and excessive video gaming?”

Helping your friends overcome problems can be a touchy topic, because you don't want to come across as being overbearing or judgmental. Even though each situation will be different, an important point to remember is that your example matters. By upholding your standards, others will notice—and you can be a positive influence. For instance, if your friend swears, make sure that you're always using only clean language—including clean jokes and comments. That way, he or she has a great example of how it's possible to be funny and cool without swearing.

Your friends will often notice your choices and respect them. Good friends will respect you for your choices, even if they don't make the same ones.

But what if your friend doesn't stop doing whatever troubles you, even though you're being a good example? Well, it's also important to remember that your friends can't read your mind. Sometimes, they might not even *realize* that a particular behavior bothers you. If, after a little while, he or she doesn't stop, it's perfectly OK to kindly and respectfully ask them to.

Whatever problems your friends face, you can be a positive influence on your friends by choosing the right. You can invite them to do fun, uplifting activities. If you are happy to choose the right, people will notice. **NE**



Strengthen Your Friends

I gave a lesson about language in Mutual.

I think that it's working,

at least with one of my good friends. We first have to set the example. We can pray for our friends and have the courage to tell them at the right time, “Please do not speak with bad words. I challenge you not to say rude things today.”

Dante C., 19, Puebla, Mexico

Pray before Talking with Them

First, I would pray before having a conversation with him or her. Second, I would speak to them kindly and positively, giving advice such as refraining from reacting when mad, for example. My example will also help them use better language.

Ndansia B., 18, Kimbanseke, Democratic Republic of the Congo



Show Them Better Things They Can Do

Instead of chastising them, help them realize there are better things they could be doing.



Invite them to do fun, wholesome activities with you and encourage them to do more

productive hobbies such as learning to play a musical instrument, playing

with siblings, or helping them around the house.

Elder Cobabe, age 19, and Elder Allred, 19, Hong Kong China Mission

Practice Makes Perfect

I would tell them to pray for strength and practice talking without swearing or using crude words. I'd also tell them that spending excessive time on video games limits their interactions with family and friends and that they can stop it by engaging in wholesome and worthwhile activities. If they find themselves making a mistake, they can pray for strength and continue practicing because practice makes perfect.

Ozioma O., 17, Abia, Nigeria

Influence Them for Good

We can't control other people's actions, but we can help influence them for good. We can live our lives as positive, Christlike examples and help those who are around us come unto Christ. If our friends are making poor decisions, we can suggest better alternatives and express what we know to be right and true through our words and our actions.

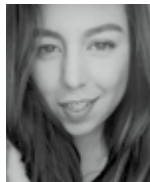
Mosiah M., 17, Utah, USA

Have a "Swearing Jar"

One specific way I could help my friends stop swearing is by having a "swearing jar," and whenever someone swears, they have to put a quarter

in the jar. I can help encourage stopping excessive video games if I invite my friends to youth camps, Church events, and other fun activities. I can also introduce them to new people who will help them be both social and active.

Owyn P., 13, Hawaii, USA



Caring for Others

Being a good example is the most important thing I can do because trying to help someone

stop a bad behavior when I am doing the same thing is just not reasonable. They won't take my advice or my point of view seriously. I can also help my friends by explaining to them why I don't feel comfortable with their behavior. If their language is not appropriate, I can help them see the impression they give to people when they use that type of bad language.

Alejandra T., 17, Chihuahua, Mexico



BE AN EXAMPLE IN SPIRIT

"We are to be an example in spirit. To me that means we strive to have in our lives kindness, gratitude, forgiveness, and goodwill. These qualities will provide for us a spirit which will touch the lives of those around us."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Be an Example and a Light," Oct 2015 general conference.

Pray

You can pray for them to stop swearing or stop gaming so much. Prayer will never hurt.

Joshua L., 14, Oregon, USA

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as official pronouncements of Church doctrine.

UPCOMING QUESTION

"What activities should I do in my free time to make it more valuable?"

Send your answer and photo by September 15, 2017.

Go to newera.lds.org, and click "Submit Your Work." Sign in with your LDS Account, and then select "New Era" under "Choose Magazine." Click "Add File" to select your file and photos, and then click "Submit" to upload and send us your file.

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.