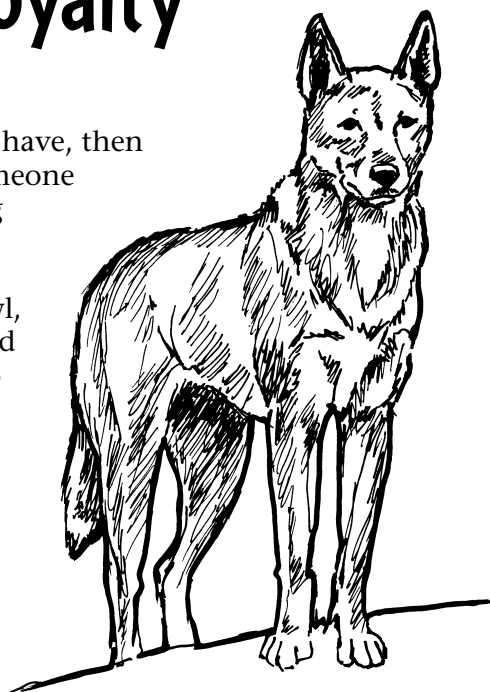


## Chapter 11

# Some Great Things about Loyalty

Have you ever had a dog? If you have, then you know what your dog does if someone tries to hurt you, or even if your dog just thinks that someone outside of your family is getting dangerously close to you. Usually a dog will growl, bark or do whatever he can to defend you. Your dog even barks at night to defend your house. He doesn't think, *It's so late, I don't think I am going to bark. It's just too late, and I am tired.* He automatically wakes from sleeping to try to protect you. You are more important than his sleep. Perhaps this is why a dog is called a man's best friend. He is totally loyal to the people he loves.



If people have an even greater capacity to love than a dog, then what does it mean exactly to be loyal to someone? Sometimes loyalty is shown through what you do *not* do or do *not* say. Sometimes you may have a chance to say bad things, or make a face behind someone's back when you are angry at them, but you don't. That is loyalty, too. Loyalty can be shown in many ways, but it always starts within you and the way you think about people in your heart.

## What Exactly is Loyalty?

Loyalty to your loved ones means standing by them when other people may be rude, unkind or speak poorly of them. It is *not* keeping quiet if they do something wrong or never disagreeing with them. However, being loyal does mean that you won't join in if others are saying bad things about your loved ones.

It is possible to be loyal to many things—people, your country, ideas and values, and your school (to name a few). People who are loyal to their country aren't those who pretend that the country is perfect but rather are those who love their country and want to make it a better place.

## What is Disloyalty?

A person is disloyal when he:

- ☹ *Says bad things about loved ones to other people just because he is angry.*
- ☹ *Doesn't challenge false, unjust or abusive statements that others make about his friends, family or country (or whatever it is he wants to be loyal to).*
- ☹ *Is afraid to stand up for what he believes in or feels is right.*

There is a difference between being *disloyal* and being *honest* about someone or something's shortcomings. You can be loyal to your father, for example, and yet admit that he may have a serious problem with, let's say, gambling. You do not have to pretend not to notice problems and shortcomings when you are loyal. You do not have to give up honesty in order to be loyal.



## Loyalty to Your Country: The Difference between Patriotism and Nationalism

People are often confused about the difference between nationalism and patriotism. There is a big difference between being a *nationalist* and a *patriot*. A patriotic person is loyal to his country and dedicated to making it a better place to live, but he is also realistic. A nationalist, on the other hand, is blindly

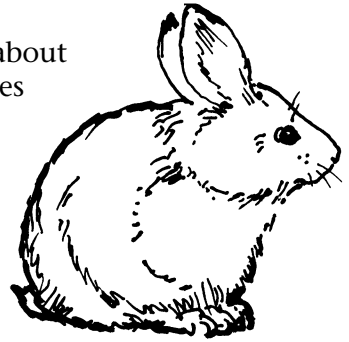
loyal to his country. He thinks that his country is the best country and that all other countries and people are inferior. He thinks that his country can do no wrong. Nationalistic people tend to be narrow minded and refuse to discuss national problems rationally. George Washington, America's first president, refused the title of "king" when it was offered to him because he knew that in the future, having kings instead of presidents could hurt the democracy which had been established so painfully.

Some of the worst crimes and atrocities have been committed as a result of nationalistic feelings. Extreme nationalists see people of other nationalities or ethnic backgrounds as less than human. This problem has caused millions of deaths, and is still a problem in some places today. Not long ago, during World War II, the Germans murdered millions of people who they thought to be "less human," because of their ethnicity, religion or nationality.

## How Loyal Are You?

Sometimes we are disloyal even when we want to be loyal and, as a result, feel terrible afterwards. Try to imagine what you would do in the following situations and choose one of the answers for each:

1. You hear someone saying something bad about your friend in the hall, but that person does not know you are there.
  - a. You slink away as soon as you get a chance and think, *I hope they didn't see me! Why should I say anything?* It won't change their minds, and then they will talk about you in the same way.
  - b. You pluck up the courage and confront them, *You don't know him like I do. You shouldn't say those things about him.* It was really hard for you to do that, but you love your friend and you know he'd do the same for you.
  - c. You show your face to the group and give them an angry scowl. But you don't say anything, and you walk away.
2. Your best friend moves to another city and you miss him terribly. You have known him since kindergarten and you know he doesn't know anyone in his new town. At first it





is difficult for you to get along in school without him, but gradually you adjust. You have tried to call your friend repeatedly, but he hasn't answered your calls. What do you do?

- a. You get angry and decide not to be his friend anymore. *Who needs a friend like that anyway? He doesn't care about me!* You tell all your other friends that you think he is a jerk.
  - b. You know your friend must be getting used to his new school, and moving into his new house. "Maybe he tried to call but the line was busy," you think. You wait patiently, never doubting the worth of your friend.
  - c. You don't give up on your friend, but you ask your other friends if he has called them. "Maybe he likes them better than me after all," you think.
3. Someone you love does something that makes you very angry. Does it matter what it is? At times don't all of us get angry with the people we love most? What do you usually do?
- a. You wait until your temper is cooled and you talk honestly about your feelings.
  - b. Tell someone else about it as soon as you can, emphasizing how much that person hurt you and that it is all their fault.
  - c. You don't speak badly about the person, and you say how you feel even though the words don't come out just as you planned (you were a little too harsh).

## The Results:

*Add up your score. If you answered:*

1. a. **1 point** At least you didn't join in with the group in their bad talk, but you have a long way to go to become a loyal friend.
- b. **10 points** You are very loyal, and courageous too. Congratulations! You are the kind of friend that everyone wants!



- c. **5 points** Okay, you didn't slink away, you showed your disapproval, but why didn't you say anything? It's better to speak your mind than to be unclear and angry.
- 2. a. **0 points** You gave up so easily! How could you? Maybe your friend is lonely and sad. How would you feel if you were him in a new house, a new school and a new life?
- b. **10 points** You are a true friend, you will never give up. With that kind of perseverance you will create the possibility to be better friends even though you are miles away.
- c. **5 points** Okay, so you are human, an average friend. Give yourself credit for still hoping and believing, but why would you doubt your good friend? Maybe you had better think again.
- 3. a. **10 points** You are very loyal indeed! You are amongst the few that can be trusted under any circumstances. You are a person who lives up to his word, not an easy thing to do!
- b. **0 points** Terrible! How could you? You know that you will feel badly about it later when you make up, too, but words are hard to take back once they are spoken.
- c. **5 points** So, you are not perfect, but good start. Not saying bad things in the heat of anger or hurt is very difficult. You have been honest, but need to work on the rough edges.

*If your total score was:*

- 30-25** You are a loyal person and anyone would be honored to be loved by you. Keep it up. You can help other people become as loyal as you are. Good actions breed more good actions.
- 24-16** You are not completely loyal, but you have the potential to be so. Keep trying. You have a good start. Remember that it is no easy job to be loyal but you can do it if you forgive yourself when you stumble, and keep trying to do better each time.
- 15-6** Your loyalty is a little on the weak side, but nonetheless, some of the best things in the world grew from a very humble beginning. Take a deep breath, have courage, and say to yourself, *I am going to learn to be loyal starting right*

*now!* All good things start from good intentions.

- 5-0 Perhaps you should spend more time with your dog. He may have a few things he can teach you about being loyal. Do you want to grow to be loyal? You can do it, even if you have a record of terrible disloyalty. First you must decide in your heart that it is important to you to be loyal and for others to trust you, and then you can start on your new way. Remember, when it comes to cultivating good character habits, “There is no time like the present.”

## Loyalty, Tested and Proven

Loyalty can also be described as a willingness to suffer difficulties and hardships for the sake of someone else. Let’s look at some of the loyal things people have done:

- ☉ *A teenager keeps his word to his parents that he will not go to a certain park in town—a place where the boy’s friends often play basketball—even though he could get away with it without their knowledge.*
- ☉ *A girl overhears her aunt speaking badly about the girl’s mother. The girl stands up for her mother, but without being outright rude to her aunt.*
- ☉ *A person stands up for what he believes even though it makes him unpopular.*



## Journal

How does a person show that they are loyal to their mother and their father? If you live with other family members instead of your parents—an aunt, an uncle, grandparents, or an older sister or brother—do you feel that they deserve your loyalty as if they were your parents?



## To Do

1. As a class, discuss the difference between being a patriot and being a nationalist. Why can nationalism be dangerous? Can you think of any situations in the world that have taken place recently due to nationalistic feelings? How do you think people can be taught to be patriotic but

not nationalistic?

2. Write down some of the reasons why you would want the people in your family to be loyal to you. Can you think of any other ways in which people show loyalty aside from those listed in this chapter?
3. As a class, brainstorm about what a person can be loyal to. Do you all agree on the items you have come up with? If not, what do you disagree upon? Has anyone mentioned higher values like truth and goodness, or the value of life? Look at the items your class has established and discuss how a person can prove his loyalty to each one.
4. Write a short essay titled, "The Most Loyal Person I Know." What has this person done to make you feel that he or she is loyal? How does this person behave? Do you think that this person would remain loyal under heavy pressure? Share your essays with your classmates.

## Key Ideas

- ☞ Loyalty is a key ingredient to a good relationship.
- ☞ Loyalty begins with how you think and ends with how you act.



**The flower that follows the sun  
does so even on cloudy days.**

**Robert Lighton**

