

Grade 5 Narrative

Not Enough Phones

My sister Danielle and I are twins. We get along with each other, but we often find it a problem to share the one phone line we have in the house. We are both freshmen at Franklin Ridge High School, where we have tons of friends between us, and we usually want to talk with them all at the same time. If our parents hadn't made rules for use of the family phone, they would never have a chance to talk with *their* friends. When I'm on the phone I ignore call waiting, and when Danielle receives a call for me she tells my friends to call again later. Every call we miss we think is the most important one of our day.

We had to find a solution to our dilemma, so on Friday we agreed to ask our parents to install an additional phone line. We could hardly wait for Saturday so we could spring our request on Mom and Dad. Every Saturday morning Dad and I go to the gym, while Danielle and Mom go jogging in the park. This Saturday we planned to raise the idea of a new phone line while we were out with them. Danielle and I gave each other high-fives as she and Mom were getting ready to go. For my part, I could hardly wait to get to the gym to talk with Dad. The whole time Dad and I were driving to the gym, I was thinking of the new phone. He wanted to talk about our workout, but he could tell I wasn't thinking about weights.

"Hey, Dan, is something on your mind? What are you thinking about?" Dad asked, as we drove to the gym. "You aren't too tired to keep up with your old man, are you?"

"Dad, I have a very important question to ask you," I replied.

"Ask up, we're almost there."

"OK, here it is: I think we need an additional phone line. Danielle has so many friends, and they tie up the phone so I can't ever make a call."

"Hold it, Dan. You spend your fair share of time on the phone yourself. Every time I use it, I get a call for you." Dad parked the car, turned off the ignition, and looked at me. "But I do agree that we might need more than one phone in the house, especially with you two teenagers. I'll talk with your mother, and we'll see."

That was all I needed to hear. I thought that if Danielle was doing her job and talking with Mom, we should have the phone issue solved by nightfall. After a good workout, Dad and I drove home. As Dad pulled the car into the driveway, I saw Danielle and Mom sitting on the steps. And before I could get out of the car, Danielle ran to the passenger side and started talking so fast that I couldn't get a word in edgewise.

"Dan, Mom said she would talk with Dad about a putting a new phone line in my room."

“What do you mean in *your* room? What about me? When will I get to use it?” I could hardly believe my ears.

“Dan, I didn’t think you would care about where it was. I was so busy talking about how you and I use the phone all the time when Mom just spoke up and said, ‘Danielle, you’re in high school, and your grades are good. I think it’s time for that additional line. Dad and I have been talking about this for some time.’”

I was happy about getting the new line but not about the location. It looked as if I was going to be stuck with asking Danielle every time I wanted to use the phone. That is, until Dad spoke up with his idea of a compromise.

“Guys, why not think of our family as a team? People on the same team share and compromise with each other. Dan, I’ll have the installer put in two outlets, one in your room and one in your sister’s room. You can each have a phone in your room. However, you’ll still have to respect each other’s time and privacy when using the phones because you will be sharing the same line.”

I saw a satisfied smile spread across Danielle’s face and felt myself starting to grin, too.

“Thanks Dad, I think Danielle and I can make it work, like you said, ‘as a team.’ Maybe we can even tell our friends the best days to call and when not to call.”

I was happy that our problem had been solved, and with Dad's suggestion, my sister and I worked out a great compromise on how to share our new phone line.

Grade 5 Informational

Why Smile?

Your little sister drew big red flowers on your math homework and hung it on the refrigerator. The bus is coming, but you can find only one shoe—and it has dog slobber on it. What should you do? Try smiling!

Improve Your Mood

Scientists are discovering that smiling—even when you don't feel like it—helps to lift your mood. For example, in one study people were asked to watch cartoons and rate how funny each one seemed to be. Half of the group of people had to put a pencil lengthwise between their teeth. It pushed their lips into a smile.

What was the result? The group with the "pencil smiles" rated the cartoons higher on the funny scale than did those with straight faces. Sometimes just putting on a smile can actually make you feel better.

Improve Your Health

Smiling affects your health, too. A cheerful face and a few chuckles can really rev up your immune system. (That's the part of your body in charge of fighting off diseases and germs.) When you smile and laugh, your body releases special "killer" cells, B-cells, and T-cells. These cells fight off viruses and germs that make you ill.

Does it really make a difference? In one study, people were asked to describe themselves. Then they were all exposed to a cold virus. Only some of the people caught colds and became ill. Who stayed healthy? The people who said that they were cheerful and happy were three times healthier!

If you add a hearty laugh to your smile, your body will reap extra benefits. Laughter makes your heart beat faster, and your body takes in more oxygen. That oxygen gives your body energy and zip. Laughter also gives your stomach, face, back, and leg muscles a workout. In fact, scientists say that one hundred laughs give you the same amount of exercise as fifteen minutes on an exercise bike.

A smile and a hearty laugh help relieve nervous, jittery feelings you may get, too. Perhaps you're worried about a big test in the morning, or your team has a championship game the next day. Spending some time telling jokes and laughing with a friend will help your stomach stop flip-flopping.

A cheerful smile also helps your heart stay healthy! Dr. Laura Kubzansky, Ph.D., of the Harvard School of Public Health did a study on a thousand men. They answered questions and were scored. Then the men were ranked in order from most cheerful and positive to least cheerful.

For ten years, Kubzansky kept track of the men's health. What did she find? The men who were most positive had the least amount of heart disease. Being cheerful kept them healthy.

Live Longer

A sunny smile and outlook not only make your life more enjoyable; they also help you live longer. Just ask Dr. David Snowdon, Ph.D., from the University of Kentucky Chandler Medical Center. Snowdon has been studying 678 nuns for fifteen years. Each nun wrote about her life and beliefs when she was studying to become a nun. Snowden used the essays to determine which women were most cheerful and positive. So far, Snowden has found that the cheerful nuns are living about ten years longer than those with less positive outlooks.

Another study also looked at the effects of a positive attitude on the length of life. It followed 866 people with heart disease for about eleven years. Even though all the people had heart problems, 20 percent more of those with cheerful outlooks lived longer. Their attitudes made the difference.

Stop the Pain

Finally, doctors are finding that smiles and laughter can help stop pain. How does it work? Some researchers say that laughter pulls a person's attention away from an aching arm or knee. Others say that it actually helps the body heal faster.

While scientists are still studying the issue, some hospitals are already taking advantage of laughter's positive effects. They have "humor carts." The carts contain collections of funny noses, glasses, and toys to cheer up patients. Some hospitals have "humor rooms." In them patients play games and watch funny movies. Doctors and scientists hope that using humor to lessen pain will help patients leave the hospital sooner and need less medicine.

Turn on Your Smile

Everyone knows how to smile; people are born with that skill. Some babies who are only two days old already smile. But not everyone realizes how many benefits a cheerful smile can bring. So the next time your little sister decorates your homework, remember to turn on your smile. It has a lot of power!