



The Space Between Us

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SAM



Leo is a vibrant eighth-grader who moves through the school hallways like a whirlwind of energy. He loves being around people and often shows his excitement with a quick pat on the back or a friendly nudge to his classmates.



During science class, Leo leans over to look at his friend Sam's notes and playfully grabs Sam's arm to get his attention. Sam stiffens and pulls his arm back quickly, a look of discomfort crossing his face that Leo doesn't quite notice in the moment.



Between classes, Leo spots his friend Maya and goes to give her a playful side-hug from behind. Maya jumps in surprise and moves away, firmly telling him that she really doesn't like being touched without warning or permission.



At the lunch table, Leo sits close to his friends, his elbows bumping into theirs as he talks animatedly about a new video game. He notices that the person next to him slowly slides their chair further away, creating a gap that feels wider than just physical space.



Later that afternoon, Leo sits alone on the gym bleachers, feeling a heavy sense of confusion about why his friends seem so distant. He begins to realize that his way of being friendly might actually be making the people he cares about feel crowded or uncomfortable.



Leo talks to his basketball coach, who explains that every person has an invisible bubble around them that represents their personal space. The coach emphasizes that asking for permission or reading body language is the highest form of respect you can show a friend.



The next day, Leo starts to pay closer attention to the subtle body language of his classmates. He notices how some people cross their arms or lean back when someone gets too close, signaling a clear need for more physical room.



When Leo sees Sam in the library, he feels the urge to slap him on the shoulder in greeting but stops himself just in time. Instead, he keeps a respectful distance and asks if it's okay if he sits at the same table to study.



During a group project, Maya looks stressed, and Leo resists his old habit of reaching out to pat her hand. Instead, he offers a supportive smile and asks if there is anything he can do to help, noticing how she visibly relaxes when her space is respected.



Leo finds that his friendships are becoming deeper and more comfortable now that he understands the importance of physical boundaries. He is still the same energetic guy, but now he uses his words to connect and always makes sure his friends feel safe in his presence.