



Popular: The Power of Likability in a Status-Obsessed World Mitch Prinstein, Ph.D.

John Van Seters Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience, Director of Clinical Psychology, and Director of the Peer Relations Lab, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Author, *Popular: The Power of Likability in a Status-Obsessed World*

Wednesday, October 4, 2017, 7:00 PM
New Trier High School, Northfield Campus, Cornog Auditorium
7 Happ Rd., Northfield

Presented by **Family Action Network (FAN)**,
in partnership with Beacon Academy, Countryside Montessori School, Family Service Center,
Family Service of Glencoe, Haven Youth & Family Service, Joseph Sears School,
Josselyn Center, and the New Trier Parents' Association.

This event is free and open to the public and will be videotaped. Suitable for youth 12+.

Info: familyactionnetwork.net

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Mitch Prinstein, Ph.D.

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Wednesday, October 4, 2017, Popular: The Power of Likability in a Status-Obsessed World, 7:00 PM, New Trier High School, Northfield Campus, Cornog Auditorium, 7 Happ Rd., Northfield, IL 60093. In his new book, *Popular: The Power of Likability in a Status-Obsessed World*, Mitch Prinstein, Ph.D., the John Van Seters Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience, and the Director of Clinical Psychology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill examines why popularity plays such a key role in our social development, our eventual happiness, success, and even our longevity.

There are two distinct types of popularity: one that helps us, *likability* – arising from our ability to make others feel close, trusted, happier after time spent with us; and one that can potentially harm us, *status* - a measure of how well-known, widely emulated, and powerful we are. In preschool, studies show that we value likability most. This is good, since likability plays a role in every aspect of our lives for decades to come. But as teenagers when, neurologically, we develop faster than at any other time after the age of one, status becomes a new form of popularity that we are biologically programmed to seek, whether it helps us, or as Prof. Prinstein argues, it doesn't.

The biological basis for popularity comes from a part of the brain that matures quickly in adolescence, called the ventral striatum. This is a region responsible for making us feel good, and beginning in adolescence, it begins to receive greater signals from two brain substances: the hormone oxytocin, which increases our desire to connect and bond with our peers, and dopamine, the same neurotransmitter that produces the pleasure response triggered by many recreational drugs. Emerging research now shows that this neurochemical cocktail not only makes us feel good when we have high status, but also makes us pursue it, sometimes in ways we don't even realize. This is one reason why our brains continue to draw upon our initial, formative high school experiences with popularity for the rest of our lives, creating biases at home and at work.

Prof. Prinstein's **Peer Relations Lab** has been conducting research on popularity and peer relations for almost 20 years, resulting in over 100 scientific works, including a slew of scientific journal articles, book chapters, a set of encyclopedias on adolescent development, and even a textbook on the field of clinical psychology.

Sponsored by *Family Action Network (FAN)*, in partnership with *Beacon Academy, Countryside Montessori School, Family Service Center, Family Service of Glencoe, Haven Youth & Family Services, Joseph Sears School, Josselyn Center, and the New Trier Parents' Association*. FAN is grateful for the support of its 2017-18 annual sponsors *Compass Health Center, Evanston Township High School D202, New Trier High School D203, the Martin & Mary L. Boyer Foundation, Magnetar Capital, and Tina & Byron Trott*; our strategic partners *Acclaim Media, the Butler Family Foundation, Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University, Curt's Café, Envestnet, Erikson Institute, Evanston/Skokie D65, the Finnegan Family Foundation, Grosvenor Capital Management, Hackstudio, Loyola University Chicago School of Law, the Mammel Foundation, the Master of Science in Education Program at the School of Education and Social Policy at Northwestern University, the McGaw YMCA, New Trier Parents' Association, North Shore Community Bank, Northern Suburban Special Education District (NSSD), Northwestern University, R4 Services, LLC, The Book Stall at Chestnut Court, The Family Institute at Northwestern University, Youth & Opportunity United (Y.O.U.), and YWCA Evanston/North Shore*; and our in-kind sponsors *Kirkland & Ellis LLP and Turing Group*.

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