

Tammy's Question

I remember one day when I was about 8 years old, I went down to my next-door-neighbor's house to play. My neighbor's name was Tammy, and she was about a year older than me. On this particular day, we were playing on her family's front porch. A bug of some sort jumped out of one of the bushes and proceeded to scurry across the porch -- and being a typical red-blooded eight year-old boy, I took the opportunity to attempt to impress my friend by stomping the living daylights out of the bug as quickly as possible! I thought my response time was quite impressive!

To my great surprise, Tammy said: "You shouldn't have done that! How would YOU feel if YOU were a bug and someone stepped on YOU?" Then she went about her business playing.

Her question was a pretty good one, and it caused me to pause for a moment. I had never really considered it. How would I feel if I were a bug? Do bugs have feelings? This memory was just one of those fleeting moments you have as a kid that lodges in your mind for some reason and will never be forgotten. To my knowledge she never mentioned it again, and I doubt seriously if she remembers this little conversation at all today.

I can't say that Tammy's question caused me to stop stomping bugs -- I have stomped (and swatted, smashed, and sprayed) many bugs since then. But I must confess, even to this day, before I stomp on a bug, I almost always think of Tammy's question! And I must also confess, there have been a few times when I was just about to stomp -- and instead, for some reason -- I brushed the little creature off into the grass.

Thanks a lot, Tammy.

(Originally written: September 22, 2016)