

Volume 10, Issue 11

# MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

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In the elementary school where I work as a Special Education Program Assistant, we have regular anti-bullying campaigns. From talks by the school counsellor to presentations by representatives from the local Police Department, these programs always include the simple fact that bullying is NOT okay! Despite all this, we still experience bullying on our school site.

This became especially apparent when the mother of one of our students insisted that her son, who has learning difficulties and is somewhat overweight, be placed permanently in a special education classroom. When asked why, as her son has made great progress and does not need to be in a separate class full-time, she said that she feels he would be safer from bullies when with us.

Bullying is one of society's major problems these days. Sadly, it is not limited to schools and younger children only, but bullying extends beyond school and college into adulthood and the workplace.

This issue of *Motivated* is dedicated to this pertinent topic, and covers both the problem and possible solutions to it. After reading through this, I hope you can glean ideas on how to take a stand against bullying and commit to do what you can to help both your children and others take a stand, which will certainly have a far-reaching impact.

Wouldn't it be great to have a bully-free world, where all human beings are respected, valued, and appreciated, regardless of race, color, size, education, or socio-economic status? We may not be able to change the whole world in one day, but we can change the world around us today.

Let's pledge today to be kind, treat others with respect, and take action to stop or report any mean behavior that we see. Together we can put a stop to bullying!

Christina Lane  
For *Motivated*

# Bully Free Starts With Me



Web Reprint

As a young girl, Haley Bird was diagnosed with a severe peanut allergy. She could not touch, breathe, or be in the same room with peanuts. As a result, she grew up knowing what she could and could not eat.

As Haley got older, things began to get more difficult. Her peers would tease, call her names, and even wave candy in her face. Teachers would hang-up signs in the classroom to show that no peanuts were allowed, which made her even more of a target.

When the bullying got worse, Haley's parents met with her school to implement a plan to insure she was safe on school grounds.

"I always knew I was different and faced many obstacles because of my food allergy," says Haley. "However, I am fortunate that my parents have been so supportive of this issue, and my experiences of being a target of bullying because of it. That is why it is

so important to tell someone you trust if you are being bullied, or if you witness bullying behavior."

For these reasons, Haley, now Miss Arkansas International 2017, chose the platform of "Bully Free Starts with Me." She is educating young children to know where to turn if they are being bullied and to not let the words, actions, or ignorance of others defeat them. She is sharing this message with as many people as she can, including Arkansas state senators, representatives, and the governor who care so much about bully prevention. "I am working as a voice with them," says Haley.

"No matter what people say to you, it does not define the person you are. Yes, I was bullied in school, but I now use my story to empower those around me. If we all foster love, I believe that bullying will eventually end. One word or action can change a person's life. Stand up for those around you." ■

# Dealing with Bullying

By Mary, L. Gavin, MD., adapted



## What Is Bullying?

Bullying is when someone is picked on by a person or group. Bullies might make fun of people who they think don't fit in.

Bullies might make fun of others for many things, including appearance (how someone looks), behavior (how someone acts), race or religion, social status (whether someone is popular), or sexual identity.

Bullying can come in different types:

**Physical bullying** is when bullies hurt their targets physically. This might be shoving, tripping, punching, or hitting. Any form of touching that a person does not want can be bullying and possible assault.

**Verbal bullying** is taunting or teasing someone.

**Psychological bullying** is gossiping

about or excluding people to make them feel bad about themselves.

**Cyber bullying** is when bullies use the internet and social media and say things that they might not say in person. This can include sending mean texts, posting insults about someone on Twitter, or making rude comments on their Instagram pictures. Cyberbullies also might post personal information, pictures, or videos designed to hurt or embarrass someone else.

## What Are the Effects of Bullying?

Bullies often pick on people over and over again. This can make children and teens feel afraid, stressed, depressed, or anxious, have thoughts about suicide or hurting themselves, have trouble with their schoolwork, have problems with mood, energy level, sleep, and appetite.

## What Kind of People Are Bullies?

Both guys and girls can be bullies. Bullies may be **outgoing and aggressive**. This kind of bully might make fun of you to your face or physically hurt you. They can be **quiet and sneaky**. This kind of bully might try to manipulate in secret. They might anonymously start a damaging rumor just to see what happens. They can also seem **friendly, but fake**. This kind of bully might pretend to be your friend so that you tell them things, but then do hurtful things behind your back.

Many bullies are a lot alike. They like to be in control of others and are focused on themselves. They may have poor social skills and have a hard time getting along with people. They might not care about people, or lack empathy. They are often insecure and bully others to make themselves feel better.

Some bullies don't understand normal social emotions like guilt, empathy, compassion, or remorse. These people need help from a mental health professional like a counselor, social worker, psychiatrist, or psychologist.

## What Can I Do?

There are many things that you can do if you're being bullied or know someone who is. You can:

**Tell a trusted adult.** Adults in positions of authority, like parents, teachers, or coaches, often can deal with bullying without the bully ever learning how they found out about it.

**Ignore the bully and walk away.** Bullies like getting a reaction. If you walk away or ignore them, you're telling them that you don't care.

**Walk tall and hold your head high.** Using this type of body language sends a message that you're not vulnerable.

**Don't get physical.** You're more likely to be hurt and get into trouble if you try to fight a bully. Work out your anger in another way, such as exercising, or writing it down (make sure you delete or tear up any emails, posts, letters, or notes you write in anger).

**Try to talk to the bully.** Try to point out that his or her behavior is serious and harmful. This can work well if you notice that a member of your own group has started to pick on or shun another member.

**Practice confidence.** Practice ways to respond to the bully verbally or through your behavior. Practice feeling good about yourself (even if you have to fake it at first).

**Talk about it.** It may help to talk to a guidance counselor, teacher, or friend—anyone who can give you the support you need. Talking can be a good outlet for the fears and frustrations that can build when you're being bullied.

**Find your (true) friends.** If you've been bullied with rumors or gossip, tell your friends so that they can help you feel safe and secure. Avoid being alone, especially when the bullying is happening a lot.

**Stand up for friends and others you see being bullied.** Your actions help the victim feel supported and may stop the bullying.

**Join your school's bullying or violence prevention programs.** Peer mediation is another way you may be able to work things out with a bully. If your school doesn't have these programs, start one of your own. ■

# Be a Friend

Encouragement can change a life!

Author Unknown



One day, when I was a freshman in high school, I saw a kid from my class walking home from school. His name was Kyle. It looked like he was carrying all of his books.

I thought to myself, “Why would anyone bring all his books home for the weekend? He must really be a nerd.” I had quite a weekend planned—parties and a football game with my friends the following afternoon—so I shrugged my shoulders and walked on.

Then I saw a bunch of kids run at Kyle, knock his books out of his arms, and trip him so he landed in the dirt. His glasses went flying, and I saw them land in the grass about ten feet from him. When he looked up I saw a terrible sadness in his eyes.

My heart went out to him, so I jogged over to him. As he crawled around looking for his glasses I saw a tear in his eye. I handed him his glasses and said, “Those guys are jerks. Don’t let them get to you.”

Kyle looked at me and said, “Hey, thanks!” He broke out into a big smile—one of those smiles that show real gratitude.

I helped him pick up his books, and asked him where he lived. As it turned out, he lived near me, so I asked him why I hadn’t ever seen him before. He said he had gone to a private school till now. I would have never hung out with a private-school kid before. We talked all the way home, and I carried some of his books. He turned out to be a pretty cool kid.

I asked him if he wanted to play a little football with my friends, and he said yes. We hung out all weekend, and the more I got to know Kyle, the more I liked him. My friends thought the same.

After the weekend, there was Kyle again with his huge stack of books. I stopped him and said, “Boy, you’re going to build some serious muscles with that pile of books everyday!” He just laughed and handed me half the books.

Over the next four years, Kyle and I became best friends. When we were seniors, we began to think about college. We decided on different schools, but I knew that we would always be friends. The miles between us would never be a problem. Kyle was going to be a doctor, and I was going to study business on a football scholarship.

Kyle was valedictorian of our class. I teased him all the time about being a nerd. He had to prepare a speech for graduation. I was so glad it wasn’t me having to get up there and speak.

On graduation day, I saw Kyle. He looked great. He was one of those guys that really found himself during high

school. He filled out and actually looked good in glasses. He had more friends than I had, and all the girls loved him. Sometimes I was jealous. Today was one of those times.

I could see that he was nervous about his speech. So, I smacked him on the back and said, “Hey, big guy, you’ll be great!”

He looked at me with one of those looks—the really grateful ones—and smiled. “Thanks,” he said.

As he started his speech, he cleared his throat and began. “Graduation is a time to thank those who helped you make it through those tough years. Your parents, your teachers, your brothers and sisters, maybe a coach ... but mostly your friends. I am here to tell all of you that being a friend to someone is the best gift you can give them. I am going to tell you a true story.”

Then I watched Kyle with disbelief as he told the story of the day we met. He had planned to kill himself over the weekend. He told of how he had cleaned out his locker, so his Mom wouldn’t have to do it later, and was carrying all his stuff home. He looked straight at me, and gave me a little smile. “Thankfully, I was saved. My friend saved me from doing the unspeakable.”

A gasp went through the crowd as this handsome, popular boy told us all about his weakest moment. His mom and dad looked over at me with that same grateful smile. Not until that moment had I realized its depth.

Never underestimate the power of your actions. With one small gesture you can change a person’s life for better or for worse. ■

# The Secret Life of Bullies:

## Why they do it—and how to stop them



By James Lehman, MSW, adapted excerpts

**W**hy do some kids turn to bullying? The answer is simple: it solves their social problems. After all, it's easier to bully somebody than to work things out, manage your emotions, and learn to solve problems. Bullying is the easy way out and, sadly, some kids take that route.

With bullies, nothing has to be worked out, because the bully always gets his way. The bully's mindset becomes, "If you do what I say, then there will be peace around here." And that's not all, when the bully uses force, it's the victims fault for not doing what he said. So the bully's attitude is, "Give me my way or

face my aggression."

The way they're solving problems is through brute force and intimidation. So by the time that child reaches ten, bullying is pretty ingrained. It has become their natural response to any situation where they feel socially awkward, insecure, frightened, bored, or embarrassed.

We often think of the child bully as being male, but the percentage of girls who intimidate their classmates and siblings is increasing dramatically. And as with boys, the abuse can be both physical and emotional.

I think from a very early age, you have

to teach your child what bullying is. You can tell them the following (or even post these words in your house somewhere).

**You are bullying when you:**

- Force other people to do things they don't want to do;
- Hit other people;
- Take or break other people's property;
- Call other people names or hurtfully tease them.

Then you have to set a standard that says: "We don't do that in our house." Start that culture of accountability early. Teach them what the word means, and say directly to them: "You're accountable for that kind of behavior in our house."

It's also important that you talk about how to treat others. Ask your child: "How should you treat others?" And the answer is: "You treat others with respect. If they don't respect you back, walk away. Treating someone with respect means listening to others about what they want to do or what they think about something, encouraging someone and validating them, being courteous, polite, and helpful.

You can also say to your child: "Listen to others. Accept others. If they don't want to play with your toys, or they don't want to share their things, you have to learn how to accept that." This is not easy for kids, but they will learn.

A child who bullies needs to learn how to solve social problems and how to deal with their emotions without acting out. Have conversations with your child about problem-solving. Ask your child: "What happens when other kids don't want to play your games? When other kids have things you want and they won't

give them to you? How do you handle that? How do you handle it when you think you're right and they're wrong and there's nothing you can do about it?"

Kids have to learn how to manage their impulses. If their impulse is to hit or to hurt or call someone names, they have to learn to deal with that in an appropriate way. Many children and adolescents have the impulse to hurt others. They have impulses to do all kinds of things. But they need to learn to handle them, and kids who bully are no exception.

Make no mistake, if a child bullies, that tendency can stay with them their whole lives. Fortunately, some bullies do mature after they leave school. You'll see them get into their early twenties and go their own way. They get married, they go to college, they start a career, and they stop their bullying behavior.

But sadly, you will also see young child bullies who become teenage bullies and then adult bullies. How does this behavior and lack of social skills affect them? These are the people who abuse their wives and kids emotionally and sometimes physically. These are the people who call their spouses and kids names if they don't do things the way they want them to. Bullies may also become criminals.

If you think your child is bullying others, it's very important to start working with him or her now. This behavior is already hurting their life—and will continue to do so if it's left to fester. If you expect your child to outgrow bullying once they reach adulthood, realize that you're also taking the risk that they may not. And that choice may negatively affect them for the rest of their life. ■



# Confessions of a Bully

**Seven-year-old former bully shares heartwarming story of change**

By Jase Peebles, Adapted Newspaper Reprint

**S**even-year-old Cameron Thompson felt so bad for teasing a fellow student to the point of tears that he didn't simply apologize, he started a school club against bullying.

The second-grader at Tournament Hills Elementary in Beaumont, Calif., was reprimanded for making fun of another boy in his class for bringing a doll to school for show-and-tell. But the experience didn't just affect the boy he bullied, Thompson says he felt bad as well. "I didn't really mean to tease him so much that I made him cry," he said.

He wrote an apology letter to the boy he'd made fun of and his mother apologized to the bullied boy's family as well, but that wasn't good enough for Thompson. He decided to start an anti-bullying club at his elementary school. "Since I was sad, I thought I could make it up to him and he could feel better and I could feel better too," Thompson said.

Thompson's family helped him create an educational video titled "Confessions

of a Bully," which reenacts the incident that eventually caused him to have a change of heart. He also launched the anti-bullying club working together with the boy he had once teased, which drew 76 students on the first day alone.

Thompson wants other bullies to know "it's not too late to change" and that we should all work to "accept a person for who they are."

## **Cameron's Anti-Bully Campaign**

Cameron is a young boy who made the wrong choice to bully another child. He apologized but still felt bad for causing hurt and wanted to make it right. He has done everything in his power to stand up against bullying and wants your help. He's asking you to share his video so that others might change their bullying ways as well.

You can watch his video, "Confessions of a Bully" here: <https://youtu.be/Nod06e3GwNc> ■

# Stop Office Bullying

Adapted from "Banishing Bullying," APA Monitor on Psychology

**B**ullying isn't confined to childhood— it also happens in the workplace, where it's garnering more research attention.

What does workplace bullying look like? "When we think of bullying, an image of a big kid shoving a nerd into a locker comes to mind (or, at least it does for me)," says Katie Moritz. "Those of us who were bullied were often told that the problem would solve itself with time, and that bullies would grow out of their bad behavior.

"But when we grow up and go to work, bullying doesn't always go away. You might not be getting shoved into lockers anymore (I really hope not, anyway), but you can still be targeted in other ways."

Workplace bullying is abusive conduct that is threatening, humiliating, or intimidating. It can also be work interference, such as sabotage, which prevents work from getting done, or it can be verbal abuse.

Persistent bullying in the workplace can lead to increased absenteeism, health problems, employee turnover, and even lawsuits.

Here are some ways how employers can reduce aggressive behavior among employees:

**Foster improved communication skills.** Use a technique called Collaborative Action Inquiry. The

approach encourages groups to collect data about a problem, then cycle through stages of action and reflection. After the training, employees reported less aggression and more satisfaction.

**Teach employees to understand each other.** Small groups of co-workers rate how violent they think various behaviors are. One person might think kicking a wall is a healthy way to relieve anger, while another thinks it's a violent act. The discussion helps employees see each other's perspectives.

**Identify root causes.** For example, maybe the underlying problems are favoritism and employees' feelings that upper management isn't hearing their concerns. Nominate a group of employees to serve on an action team to address the problems. After analyzing findings from an employee survey, develop a program where on Fridays, a manager invites a randomly selected group of employees to a meeting where they can ask questions, bring up concerns, or just chat. A follow-up survey may reveal that bullying and other aggressive behavior decreased as a result, and that productivity increased.

**Establish a policy of respect.** It's not enough just to have a policy, however. Employers must also take disciplinary action against any violations. This can be done by brainstorming together what the disciplinary action should be. ■

# Say NO to Bullying!

NOTABLE  
QUOTES



If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse, and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.—**Desmond Tutu**

*Knowing* what's right doesn't mean much unless you *do* what's right.—**Roosevelt**

Some people won't be happy until they've pushed you to the ground. What you have to do is have the courage to stand your ground and not give them the time of day. Hold on to your power and never give it away.—**Donna Schoenrock**

What if the kid you bullied at school, grew up, and turned out to be the only surgeon who could save your life?—**Lynette Mather**

One's dignity may be assaulted, vandalized, and cruelly mocked, but it can never be taken away unless it is surrendered.—**Michael J. Fox**

The place where you made your stand never mattered. Only that you were there... and still on your feet.  
—**Stephen King**

Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured.  
—**Mark Twain**

Never do a wrong thing to make a friend—or to keep one.—**Robert E. Lee**

You can't base your life on other people's expectations.—**Stevie Wonder**

A lot of people are afraid to tell the truth, to say no. That's where toughness comes into play. Toughness is not being a bully. It's having backbone.—**Robert Kiyosaki**

Stop bullying. No one deserves to feel worthless.—**Rebecca Black**

