

Bullying: what can you do?

[Sociology](#), [Bullying](#)



Bullying in America used to be a rite of passage for kids of all ages, something that everyone went through, and survived, coming out none the worse in the end. I remember going through it. It wasn't easy, and I had to endure quite a bit of it because of what I looked like, even as a seemingly regular kid. But I survived, nonetheless, and came out better for it, more empathetic, and more sensitive to the needs of those around me who may not have been able to find their voice. After all, it took me about 30 years to find my voice on the subject.

But now, I've found it, and I'm [sounding] my 'barbaric yap' from the rooftops of public schools around the country! As a poet by nature, a Christian, and a single mom of a relentlessly bullied 6-year-old who suffers from ADD, I am passionate about this more than I've ever been passionate about anything else in my life. I want children to know about bullying, what it looks like and how it affects kids who are not only victims, but also, kids who are bullies. I want to give bullying victims a voice and bullies a shot at redemption.

I want to give the average kid a leg up in the social hierarchy, and I want to turn the social hierarchy upside-down. I don't want it to be cool to pick on kids anymore. I don't want it to be something they can brag to their friends about. I want to make bullying the elephant in the room doing a circus act and make it something that if their friends saw them do they would be thoroughly ashamed. I want to change the ideology that bullying is a 'rite of passage', because while it very well may be that 'all kids go through it', not all kids come out on the other side 'none the worse'; some kids don't even come through it at all.

I also want to point out that In some cases, teachers play a part In bullying, too. While they have the best Intentions at heart, to foster our little future presidents' and doctors' minds and lay a foundation for learning that will last a lifetime, they can also be unwittingly and unknowingly ensnared by children as a point of influence for bullying to begin. Let me explain. When a child has ADD, they can only be 'officially tested for It at age 6.

Kids are under a lot more pressure when they start school now to perform well, to be socially adept and ready to change the world with a flick of heir crayon at the tender age of 5, when most children are in kindergarten. This makes it very hard on a child with ADD, who may not be socially adept; who may in fact be socially awkward through no fault of his own; who may not be a first-time listener; who, also through no fault of his own, because of his undiagnosed disorder. May be drawing attention to himself as he fidgets through stormier or talks out of turn in a class discussion.

He draws attention to himself without a clear understanding of what Is going on around him In the minds of his fellow classmates, hen he, Instead of the story, Is the topic centered on by theteacher as she tells him to " sit up straight, stop moving around, get in your own space, wait your turn", etc. Each time she corrects him (after a certain point), her corrections and the I OFF against him in the future, because by doing this, he inadvertently drew attention to himself, and therefore away from them (see Ego, DevelopmentalPsychology). The teacher is unaware of these little arrows being flung as insults later.

She doesn't realize that she has essentially made things harder for him, while trying to make everything easier for everyone. I don't know how to solve this problem, but whole-heartedly believe it exists, because now I have a new problem to solve: how do I fix what was never broken? How do I ensure the true rite of passage for my son, and stop him from going through something he was never meant to go through? I can't change the past. I can't go to school with him; as a mother I have to let him go a little bit at a time, and guide him to eventually become a great man, educated and socially adept.

I can't blame anyone for what has happened, nor take on the blame for myself alone, and I certainly can't blame him for something that he had no conscious awareness of creating. I can't make someone pick him for a game, or stop him from being dragged behind a tree and forced to belittle himself in front of the bullies out of fear of being physically harmed, and I can't stop him from being called a freak because he doesn't behave in the same way that the other children have been made accustomed to. And I can't blow through the school like a tornado, and shield him from all that mistakenly indoctrinated ammunition, either.

I can't shake a finger at other people's kids, or shame them for being bullies, when bullies are created without a conscious awareness of wrong-doing, and not born that way. I can't stop it. All I can do is take a stand... I CAN teach my son that while it may not be fair, he is going to have to work twice as hard to be as still as his classmates at stormier, and refrain from interrupting class. I CAN teach him about his disorder and ways to counteract the

impulsiveness, and release the excess energy in healthy ways. I CAN tell him over and over that he is reflect Just the way he is because that is how God made him, and I will always love him.

I CAN teach him about bullying and how to stand up for himself, and how to eventually become a cog in the wheel of anti-bullying ideology so that no one else has to suffer with him in their life, because he understands and has a heart for people who are persecuted for being themselves, the way his savior was, and pray that it strengthens his faith, in God, and in himself. I CAN find ways to influence him and build up the self-esteem that is torn down each day he is bullied. I will not teach IM to be practiced at turning his head, or to ignore what is going on around him, because others around him are already good at doing Just that.

I CAN continue to teach him every day that he is worth trying extra hard, and that he doesn't deserve to be treated any differently than anyone else, and that he should say that to someone who tries to treat him differently. I CAN teach him how to regard life with humor, and knock the chip off every time he comes home from school with it on his shoulder. I CAN love him, and do the best I can by him, and in so doing ensure that he grows up o be successful and kind and driven and righteous.

And I CAN be an advocate, for him and countless others who have not yet found their voice to sound out against bullying. I CAN do that. I CAN write articles and provide protest against the most influential ideology since Marin Luther King, Jar. Inspired non-violent demonstrations silent demonstration and understanding among children to upholdviolenceas morale, instead of

empathy. I CAN teach my son to do unto others as he would have done unto him, and pray that it seeps from him and finds a home among the hearts of his classmates.

And I CAN urge him to do something I will never do, either: to never give up, and to believe in himself and to know that God gives him worth; to not put stock in what others say about him, but continue each day to be optimistic in the face of adversity, and to never, ever bully anyone: to let it end with him, and to let something new and fresh and wonderful begin, a morale we have apparently lost sight of in recent years: TOLERANCE. That's what I CAN, and will continue to do, from now on. I urge you to teach your kids about bullying and how awful it is. Teach them to be kind to one another.

I had an idea of how to do this in kindergarten: Kids are chosen, or volunteer, to be 'door holders', 'messengers', 'hall monitors', etc. Every day. It teaches them leadership and service, and gives them a sense of accomplishment. I think that we should take a little time to add to the curriculum the message of anti-bullying, and make it so that children volunteer amongst themselves to be "Bully Monitors", to keep an eye out throughout the course of the day for incidents of bullying, and to make the bullies aware of what they are doing, and to not be afraid of telling a teacher about it.

Some kids are better at standing up for themselves than others, and the victims of bullying often are too afraid to say something, or believe that the teachers will just brush it off as something they started, or as unimportant 'horsing around'. Children have the most influence on each other, and those who are unafraid to speak out against bullies or acts of bullying should be

encouraged and entrusted to do just that. In so doing they can be a leader, and maybe even a hero to kids around them who are victims of bullying.

This is one very powerful way that we can use the ideology of 'peer pressure' in a positive and effective way that helps everyone involved, and ensures safety and a well-rounded learning environment for our children. After all, they won't be children forever. One day they will be adults, with power and authority over people and things. And we want those seats of power to be filled by distinguished, all-around decent human beings, so let's teach our kids how to be decent human beings now, and ensure a better world and a better tomorrow for all of us. Let's teach them what they CAN do about bullying. Dorothy Wire December 14, 2012