

BullyProof

Report

Building
Resilient
KIDS

**"It is the victim
who determines
whether or not
he is hurt."**

-Izzy Kalman, MS, NCSP

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Introduction

Most anti bullying efforts focus on changing the people around the victim/target.

Schools and parents try to prosecute and discipline bullies, get bystanders to intervene, and convince victims to report any offenses committed against them in order for grown-ups to rescue them from harm. While all of these attempts can seem helpful- they often fail to actually end the bullying. In my opinion, students who are at risk for depression, self injury, or suicide cannot wait for the world around them to change. They need immediate help now.

In this report, I wanted to focus on helping the victims/targets directly. I consulted renowned school psychologist Izzy Kalman who provided some fantastic tips to help build resiliency in children. The strategies in this report are based on the Golden Rule principle. 'Treat your enemies like friends, the way you would want to be treated.' When we teach students to respond in this way, they no longer act like victims and the bullying ends. It's that simple and powerful.

Another strategy is to understand Freedom of Speech. The attitude, "You have no right to say that," is the source of almost all anger and aggression between people. Freedom of Speech is the ultimate solution to the problem of teasing and bullying. The attitude, "You have the right to say whatever you want, and it is perfectly OK," is the simple secret for preventing victimization. Granting others this right is the most basic ingredient for peace, understanding, and love between people. For some, this may be a hard pill to swallow. But please trust me when I say that it works. Both Izzy and I have hundreds of letters from teachers, parents, and students testifying that this system works. If you give these strategies a try, you and your loved ones will become bully proof.

-Brooks Gibbs



Brooks Gibbs is a national bestselling author and youth motivational speaker. For the last decade he has spoken to over 1 million students, hosted radio/tv shows, and been featured as an expert in publications like The Washington Post, Teen People Magazine, Inc. Magazine, and CBS.com. His career as a youth worker started shortly after the Columbine High School massacre in 1999. In the aftermath of that tragedy, Brooks traveled extensively with surviving Columbine students who shared their story of hope to audiences across the USA.



Izzy Kalman is a Nationally Certified School Psychologist who lives in Staten Island, New York, and gives seminars throughout the country on anger control, bullying and relationship problems. He is the author of

the book, Bullies to Buddies: How to turn your enemies into friends.

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Bully-Busting + Strategies

Outsmart the Bullies

We have to teach kids to outsmart the bullies by changing the way they think about bullying and teasing. Instead of trying to stop it, they need to allow it.

What? What kind of advice is that? Well, it's actually the only advice that will outsmart the bully and make him feel foolish enough to stop what he's doing. In fact, it's a complete mind game that puts the bully in his place and makes the victim the winner. In the following scenarios the victim outsmarts the bully by giving him "permission" to act foolish:

Bully: "Hey, Terry, you've got a girl's name."

Victim: "You can think whatever you want about my name. It's a free world."

Bully: "I've never met anyone as stupid as you. Do you hear me talking to you, idiot?"

Victim: "I heard you. You're free to say whatever you want."

If you're coaching a victim, make sure to allow plenty of time for role-playing various scenarios. The more the child practices, the easier it will be to respond in a way that genuinely demonstrates the bully's own foolishness without making the victim feel or appear powerless.

10 Lies Parents and Teachers Believe About Aggression

Unfortunately, in our effort to protect our children, we often latch on to untruths that negatively impact how we handle bullying situations. As you read through these five lies about aggression, think about how the real truths expressed here can help you respond differently the next time you find yourself wanting to intervene:

1. Aggression is learned behavior.

Izzy Kalman points out that aggression is actually a natural part of being human. We all have the tendency to express aggression when we are angry or provoked. However, in the process of growing up, we learn how to deal with those feelings. Likewise, as parents and teachers, we need to teach our children how to deal with

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anger and aggression, rather than expect them not to ever experience them.

2. Zero-tolerance policies will help us eliminate aggression.

Too often, the types of aggressive behaviors that led us to create zero-tolerance policies in the first place (like kids bringing guns into schools) took place because these individuals were no longer able to tolerate the bullying they were being subjected to by their peers. We need to back up and teach our kids how to cope with bullying on their own, so that no one ever has to resort to violence to put an end to bullying.

3. Hurting someone's feelings is even worse than physical aggression.

Whether we are hurt by someone's words depends on our own attitudes about the individual and about what has been said. We can choose to be bothered or choose to let it go. When we rise above it and move on, we're actually doing a favor to ourselves, not to the perpetrator. This is the real message we need to teach our children about verbal aggression.

4. We should never allow children to engage in imaginary play that involves fighting.

On the contrary, such imaginary play allows children to have fun while also learning how to communicate and respond to boundaries with their peers. Having the ability to identify the line between what's fun and what's too much is an important life skill that our kids need to develop.



5. We should never allow children to see or even know about violence in entertainment.

While, obviously, it's not good for children to witness extreme or prolonged violence in TV shows, movies, or video games, being aware that violence exists is a necessary part of growing up and being able to protect themselves. When we, as adults, try to prevent our kids from even knowing that bad things exist in the world, we create a fairytale existence that cannot be replicated outside of our presence.

6. It is our responsibility as adults to protect our kids from anything painful.

Think back to a painful experience you endured recently. What did you learn from it? Did it build your resilience? Teach you that you possess more strength than you realized? Stretch your tolerance for handling discomfort? In life, we all face difficult, painful circumstances. When we protect our kids from ever experiencing anything uncomfortable, we fail to teach them how to endure life's ups and downs.

7. Adults need to take action as soon as they see a minor squabble take place.

Certainly, hurting one another is not accept-

able. However, we need to teach our children how to deal with some degree of minor squabbling on their own, so that they can feel confident about their own ability to handle such situations when we are not present.

8. Without adult intervention, children will never learn how to get along.

In truth, trying to micromanage our kids' friendships can actually interfere with how well they listen to their own intuition. What we really want is for them to be able to identify on their own which friends make them feel good about themselves and are fun to be around, and which individuals make them feel uncomfortable or sad.

9. Children need to have an adult decide how a dispute should be handled.

Actually, teaching our children to handle their own disputes is a lot more effective, and it's a better way to prepare them for life in the real world.

10. If we don't allow our children to be exposed to violence, we can prevent them from ever having to deal with violence.

Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee our children's safety 100% of the time. As parents and teachers, we do everything we can to keep our kids safe, but bad things still happen in this world. We do ourselves and our children a disservice when we pretend that avoiding the reality of violence and aggression in the world will make them safe.



Is Simon Cowell a Bully?

Recently many English-speaking news sources reported that British television show “Britain’s Got Talent” judge Simon Cowell, known for his outspoken and often harshly critical verbal tongue-lashing of less than stellar performers, is being sued by former contestant Emma Amelia Pearl Czikai, who claims she was “humiliated and degraded” by Cowell during a broadcast in May of last year.

Czikai accused Cowell of “exploitation, humiliation, degradation and barbarism” when he (and the other judges) expelled her from the stage. Her suit is reportedly for \$3.8

million USD, or 2.5 million British pounds. Reporters, bloggers, and commentators view the suit as being without merit because Cowell is particularly known for mocking and insulting losing contestants. Czikai knew this well in advance of her appearance on the show – as does the world! – and chose to participate nonetheless. Therefore, she assumed the risk, making her complaint against Cowell baseless.

Can you sue someone for being mean to you?

Should you be arrested for insulting someone? Nationally certified school psychologist and school bullying expert, Izzy Kalman, thinks not. Even in the often merciless arena of the public school system, Kalman maintains that it is not only un-American and unconstitutional for anyone to attempt to silence another person’s freedom of speech, it’s also counterproductive. Kalman believes that despite a bully’s insults,

the best solution for a bullied child is not to react to the bully’s taunts, but to respond like a friend when they treat you like an enemy. Defuse and dis-empower bullies by allowing them to exercise freedom of speech and then “shut them up” with a friendly response. Kalman says that anyone, adult or child, can break through the self-limiting view of assuming the stance of a victim by allowing him/herself to be insulted and then choosing not to respond in an angry, histrionic manner that merely propels the bully into new heights of verbal meanness. The bully, once realizing that demeaning behavior provokes no outrage by others, decides that this really isn’t any fun and decides to cease and desist.

Kalman’s proposed solution to school bullying is a 180-degree departure from the solutions of most other experts in this subject. Instead of the traditional approach of anti-bully school campaigns that call for harsh punishment of offenders that can even include civil and criminal liability, Kalman advocates for the empowerment of the targeted child through the development of nearly iron-clad social skills that prove to be impervious to the bully’s threats, taunts and humiliations. The old “sticks and stones”

approach not only silences the bully, but also helps the targeted child learn to cope in an often hostile world.

There are limits, Kalman acknowledges. In our society, the slander or libel of another person can get us sued. Trying to incite violence can get us incarcerated. Kalman cites the well-known legal adage that freedom of speech does not give us the right to run into a crowded theater and yell “fire!” Still, trying to rigidly control the speech of an insulting person by inflicting punishment upon that person is counterproductive in most cases of school bullying. Instead of teaching our children to respect the rights of others even though they disagree with them, we’re teaching children to become – and remain – the powerless victims of others. Nor should we legislate and/or criminalize speech that hurts our feelings. Kalman maintains that the censorship of school bullies by parents, teachers and policy-makers results in perpetuating the victimization of our children.

If speaking like a fool becomes against the law, Simon Cowell would be serving a life term in prison. Then what would we watch on TV?

Does the First Amendment Apply to Children?

Freedom of speech. It's part of our nation's Constitution: our guaranteed right to say whatever we want, without fear that we will be imprisoned, harmed, or killed for sharing our point of view. It's good for the nation, but should freedom of speech apply to kids as well?



Does the fifth grader in your class have the right to say whatever he wants about your teaching style? Does the ninth grader who refuses to participate in a class activity have the right to say so, out loud, right in front of his classmates or online? And what about what kids say to each other. Does a teenager have the right to call a classmate names? According to our Constitution, yes.

Of course, it may not be the right thing to say. It might not be appropriate or kind. But that doesn't take away from the fact that adults aren't the only ones who possess freedom of speech in this country. Our kids do, too.

As adults, this means that we need to take the time to teach our children about the difference between being able to say something and actually saying it. We don't have to voice every thought that enters our minds. As we mature, we learn to filter out the things that would cause harm to our own or another person's reputation, or that would lead to hurt feel-

ings. At the very least, we learn how to say difficult things in a nice manner.

How do we teach these skills to our kids, though? Here are some ideas:

Teach your children how to disagree with you.

When we raise our kids to think that they can never disagree, they miss out on the skill of disagreeing in a respectful manner.

Teach your children how to suggest an alternative.

It's an important life skill to be able to say, "Mom, I'm in the middle of something right now. Would it be okay with you if I took the garbage out when I finish this?"

Demonstrate what it's like to filter your words.

Model for your children what it's like to think something in your head and realize, "Wait, I shouldn't say that out loud because it might

hurt the other person's feelings."

Look for life lessons all around you.

The next time you hear about a politician or celebrity saying something that gets him or her into trouble, share it with your children or students and ask them what that person could have done differently.

Talk about what rights really mean.

Just because we have the right to say anything we want doesn't mean that we should. Be intentional about teaching your children the difference.

Model not getting angry over words.

Let your children see you respond calmly in the face of offensive or inappropriate words. Put aside the anger and realize that that person has right to express himself or herself, even if you disagree with the content or tone of what is being said.

Teachers Ask, “What About Parents Who Expect Me to Get Involved?”

Many teachers are afraid to empower their students to deal with bullying on their own because they're concerned that parents will think they're not “doing enough” to handle the problem. Instead of worrying, be proactive about communicating your philosophy to your students' parents.



For example, use the following steps to teach families how you would like bullying situations to be handled:

1. Teach your policies to your students at the beginning of the year.
2. Have your students work in groups to decide how they would handle various bullying situations.
3. Have each group act out a scenario in front of the class and demonstrate their solution.
4. Discuss each group's presentation as a class in order to reinforce the skills that have been demonstrated.
5. Repeat the presentations for the parents, so that they can see for themselves what you are asking your students to do.
6. When a social problem is brought to your attention, ask the involved students how they handled it.
7. When you see patterns involving the same students bullying others or being victimized, contact the parents to let them know how the kids have been handling the issue. Ask the parents to help their kids brainstorm new ideas and coping strategies, as well as reinforce the kids' efforts to deal with the problem thus far.

It's true that these steps will require an investment of your class time. However, the

time you'll spend doing these activities will be significantly less time, overall, than the typical teacher spends in a year dealing with social problems during class time.

Give This Strategy a Try

As much as you might be tempted to put aside your lesson plans and deal with a social problem in the classroom, turn the problem back over to your students, instead, and see how they deal with it. If you are not yet comfortable with a hands-off approach, request that the involved students return to you at lunch to explain what they've decided and how they're going to handle the problem.

Responding Without Anger



You come across two students having an argument, and one of them starts calling the other names. It's infuriating, right? But you have to train yourself not to let that anger show.

Why? Because when we get angry at what kids say, we're teaching them that words are something to get upset about. Since we can't actually control what other people say, getting upset over words becomes a losing battle.

Instead, Izzy Kalman recommends that adults stay calm and say something like, "Those words aren't appropriate to use in school."

Getting Angry Makes it Worse

The whole point of using hurtful words or bad language is to get a rise out of someone, right? When we get angry, we give the bully exactly what he was hoping for! And to boot, we hand over to him the power to do it again and again.

Staying Calm Works Effectively

When we stay calm we show the bully that his words aren't so powerful. Eventually, trying to get a rise out of us with words becomes boring, and he gives up.

Bully-Busting + Strategies

"Do You Believe It?"

Your child comes home and tells you that a classmate called him a name. As much as you might want to make a big deal about it, in order to show your support for your child, train yourself to respond by simply asking the following question, *"Do you believe it?"*

If your child says no, say, *"Great, I don't either."*

If your child says yes, ask him again in a lighthearted manner. *"Really, you think you're a _____?"* This will usually result in your child agreeing that the statement is inaccurate.

You can then talk about how no one else has the power to make us feel bad about ourselves. It's our responsibility to filter out the stuff that people say that's flat-out inaccurate or rude. We have to trust that the people we've chosen to be our friends already know what is true about us and they won't be likely to believe lies.

What if It is True?

At times, someone will say something unkind that also happens to be true. In this case, you can teach your child to say, *"That's not polite to point out."*

5 Reasons Not to Protect Your Child From a Bully

What? Not protect your child from a bully?
That sounds counterintuitive, right?
I mean, who wants their child to
have to deal with a bully?

Unfortunately, if we want our kids to grow up to be compassionate, productive, capable adults, we're going to have to teach them how to deal with life's blows. And for kids, bullies are one of the biggest challenges they face on a regular basis.

So even though you'd never wish a bully on your child, here are five things children learn from dealing with a bully:

"I'm capable of standing up to someone who's bigger or more powerful than I am."

This is a lesson we want our kids to know by the time they're dealing with peer pressure, right? So why do we shy away from teaching it to them on a smaller scale when they face a bully in school.



"I have a variety of coping strategies at my disposal."

When a child successfully deals with a bully, the strategy he or she employed goes right into their imaginary backpack of coping mechanisms. These strategies can then be drawn upon to cope in other unpleasant situations.

"I can choose to become upset about what someone says, or not."

How we respond is a choice. When we choose not to become upset or rattled by someone else's words, we empower ourselves to let things "roll off our backs" for a lifetime. (And how much healthier would we be, as adults, if we'd learned that lesson earlier in life?)

"When others see how I deal with bullies, they respect me for it."

No one likes a bully. Even the kids who aren't being bullied are uncomfortable knowing that someone in their presence is trying to overpower another individual. But when your child's peers see how capable he or she is, the result is often a newfound respect and appreciation directed at your child.

"I'm experiencing fewer bullying incidents."

Finally, one of the best results of allowing your child to wrestle with how to handle a bully is that he or she will become a less likely victim in the process. This is due to the self-confidence that develops when your child learns to deal with his or her problems effectively.

3 Ways to Reduce Bully Retaliation

Many children and teens are afraid to stand up to a bully because they don't want to make the situation worse. As a result, they quietly endure the bullying or, when they've had enough, they turn to a trusted adult. However, this often results in the adult intervening and unintentionally making the situation even worse for the child. Instead, use the following strategies to reduce bully retaliation:

Teach the child to deal with the bully directly, rather than having an adult intervene.

When adults get involved, the bully becomes more and more angry. In addition, he becomes more defensive and believes that everyone else is just "out to get him." In this state of mind, he's never going to see that his actions are actually hurtful. The best way to deal with a bully is for the victim to deal with the bully directly.

Teach the child to consider what the bully really wants.

Sometimes the bully wants power and recognition. Other times, he's just trying to get someone else into trouble. When we teach kids to consider what the bully's real goals are, we equip them to take the bullying less personally, which is critical to putting an end to the bullying altogether.

Teach the child to respond to the bully as they would a friend.

Finally, the best way to end bullying is to be

friendly to their enemy. However, this goes against everything that kids believe and think of doing in the moment when they are being bullied. Therefore, it's up to us as the adults in their lives to teach them this skill and help them put it into practice.



Bully-Busting + Strategies

Refusing to Get Upset

Most bullies are just trying to get a reaction from the person they're bullying. One of the best strategies, then, for kids who are dealing with bullies is to refuse to give them the reaction they want.

Refuse to get mad. Refuse to cry. Refuse to feel embarrassed.

These things are easier said than done. But when this approach is taken in conjunction with recognizing that we're the only ones who can make someone else feel bad about ourselves, it's empowering.

The next time you're working with a child who's being bullied, explain this key strategy and ask him or her to come back and share it with you the next time the bully acts up.

The following questions can help you reframe the incident into one that is empowering for the child who's learning to stand up to a bully:

- What kind of reaction was the bully hoping for?
- How did you respond?
- How did that feel to you?
- How do you think this made the bully feel?
- How do you feel about facing this person the next time you see him or her?

Why You Should Let Siblings Work Out Their Own Squabbles

What do your kids fight about most? Silly stuff, right? Which TV show to watch. Who's got the thicker throw blanket. Who gets to sit in whatever chair they deem to be "the best." This is part of growing up together, and it really is stuff that your kids can work out among themselves.

However, according to Izzy Kalman, you inadvertently up the ante when you intervene. Now, instead of fighting over inconsequential stuff, they're fighting over whose has more favor in your eyes. Who is "right" and who is "wrong." Who will be punished and who will be vindicated. Who is the winner and who is the loser.

Ultimately, to your kids, the answer boils down to this: whatever outcome is more favorable will go to the child that mom or dad loves more. And when you look at it this way, it's obvious that getting involved is the worst thing you can

do. Instead, step back and tell your children that you expect them to work out a solution themselves - and then trust them to do that!

What if there's blood?

Of course, if one of your children is in real danger, you'll need to step in. However, force yourself to minimize your involvement. Kalman recommends simply taking away the implement that is being used to threaten the other child and calmly saying something like, "No, we're not planning to visit the emergency room today." And then step back out of the situation

and let them work it out.

What if the child being bullied wants you to intervene?

Say something like, "I know you can work this out." When you empower your children to resolve their own problems, they rise to the occasion. In addition, you'll want to talk with the victim separately about Bully-Busting Strategies, like "Do You Believe It?" and "Refusing to Get Upset."



Tips for Teachers on Coaching a Bully's Victim

As a teacher, you can't ignore bullying when you witness it yourself or it is brought to your attention by the victim or other students.

However, many teachers aren't sure how to intervene in a way that doesn't make the situation worse. Here are some tips for coaching victims to confront their own aggressors:

1. Explain to the child why he should confront the bully himself.

As the victim's teacher, it's natural to feel angry about what you're seeing and hearing. The bully should not be allowed to continue to behave this way, and the victim needs your help. However, it's important to coach the victim to confront the bully himself. This way, the focus is on the relationship between the victim and the bully, rather than on you and the bully. When you come down on the bully yourself, the bully walks away thinking that all he has to do is continue the behavior outside of your sight. But when the victim confronts the bully, it forces the bully to face the victim as a fellow human being.

2. Coach the victim to focus on the facts and not on his own anger.

When victims and adults show the bullies our anger, the bullies only become more angry. As a result, the bullying continues and gets worse. Instead, it's important to focus on the impact the bullying is having on the victim. Coach the victim to be specific about communicating what took place. For example, he might say, "When

you tripped me, I fell and banged my elbow against the desk. It really hurt."

3. Help the victim role play what it will be like to confront the bully.

There's power in anticipating what it will feel like to confront the bully verbally. Help the victim prepare by acting out what the conversation will be like, and especially how to stay calm and not let his own righteous anger show.

It's important to remember, too, that the roles of bully and victim aren't permanent. The goal is to help the bully recognize how his behavior impacts others, so that he can make the changes necessary to establishing healthy relationships. Also, many victims themselves turn around and bully younger siblings or less powerful friends. Just because a child is a victim in one scenario doesn't mean that he's stuck in that role. The act of confronting the bully will not only strengthen his own self-confidence, but it will also deter him from repeating the same offenses to another person as a way of coping.



3 Facts

Every Bullying Victim Must Accept Before the Bullying Will Stop

It's hard for kids to understand that their gut reaction to bullying - getting angry - only makes matters worse. In addition, there are some cold, hard facts that victims have to accept if they really want to put an end to the bullying for good:

1. It's not about whether what is being said is true.

Most of the time, victims of bullying feel the need to argue with the bully about whatever it is that's being said. For example, if a high-schooler is accused of being gay when he's not, he'll probably want to point out that he's actually straight. But the truth is that even that response is enough to encourage the bully to keep going. Therefore, victims have to realize that it's not about whether whatever they're being teased about is true; although it may hurt more when it is, like when someone says something about their physical appearance that they're sensitive about. As adults, we can help victims deal with this by coaching them to react as if what is being said is so obviously inaccurate that it's not even worthy of a response.

2. Victims have to train themselves not to react 100% of the time.

We're all familiar with the phrase "one step forward and two steps back." When a victim shows his anger, tries to argue about what's being said, or reacts in a way that reveals his true sensitivity, he's voluntarily taking two giant steps back, even if the bullying had started to diminish somewhat. Therefore, we have to, a) train victims not to get angry, and b) Train them to employ that strategy 24/7, 365 days a year.

3. It will get worse before it gets better.

Especially when bullying has been going on for quite some time, it will take the bully awhile to realize that the victim's own non-response has already put an end to it. Therefore, when we coach victims, we have to prepare them to expect the bullying to worsen before it gets better.

Victims have to realize that it's not about whether whatever they're being teased about is true.

Bully-Busting + Strategies

Refuse to Let Others See That You're Upset

Kids who get teased often think that the reason they are teased is out of their control.

What Will Help?

The biggest thing that any victim can do to ward off future bullying events is not to get upset. This means that we have to teach our children to let things roll off their backs more. It's sounds counterintuitive, like it's not a big enough response to something that is clearly wrong, but it's the biggest and most powerful thing a victim can do.

Give Bullying Victims a Tool for Coping With Their Emotions

The next time you're coaching bullying victims, suggest they keeping a log of bullying events that includes what the actual event was, and what they did about it.

For example, "Johnny told the kids on my bus that I got my jacket at a thrift store. I got upset and tried to slap him. When he laughed, I started to cry."

Help the victim to see how her own reactions to the bullying can unintentionally encourage the bully.



What Can Derek Jeter Teach Us About Bullying?

The truth is that all of these bully-busting strategies aren't limited to childhood.

Even as adults, we encounter situations where someone else wants to make a big deal about something minor, or spreads a rumor about us that isn't true, or just believes something untrue about us based on his or her own biases.

On September 15, 2010, Derek Jeter - the squeaky clean, well-respected captain of the New York Yankees, was accused of pretending to be hit by a pitch when replay footage showed that the ball clearly hit the bat, not Jeter. Certainly the vibrations would have stung, but Jeter's response was much more dramatic than that, and his performance resulted in a walk - placing him on first base.

When asked about it after the game, Jeter freely admitted that he knew he wasn't hit, but said that part of the game of baseball was to take advantage of such situations for the good of the team. Even the other team's manager agreed with Jeter's actions and said it was something he wished his own players would do!

But the media was not satisfied, particularly when Jeter is known for being such a fair, above-board player. For days, the issue wasn't

dropped, and that's where the bullying lesson comes in. Jeter continued to downplay the event and even said he didn't understand why they were still talking about it. He pretty much stopped the issue from damaging his reputation by not arguing about it or continuing to give it attention.

What Can Kids Learn From Jeter's Example?

When we give an issue our attention, it gets bigger and bigger. Whether it's someone teasing you or spreading a rumor, the more you react and try to dispel what is being said, the bigger it gets. Instead, let's teach kids that they have the power, like Jeter, to put an end to it altogether just by downplaying it and refusing to give the teasing or the rumor our attention.

Source: Walker, Ben. "Yankee sleight of hand: Jeter cheater?" Wood TV 8. N.p., 17 Sept. 2010. Web. 18 Sept. 2010. <http://www.woodtv.com/dpp/sports/mlb/other_mlb/Yankee-sleight-of-hand-Jeter-cheater>.

Bully-Busting + Strategies

Redefine the Event as Humorous

We tend to think of victims as being powerless. But there's actually a very important power that any bullying victim possesses: the power to view the event as a tragedy or a comedy. Izzy Kalman says, "The important thing for us to understand regarding the subject of teasing victims is that it is the victim who determines whether or not he is hurt."

Here are some examples of how a victim can turn a negative event into something funny:

- *Laugh out loud.*
- *Make a joke about yourself.*
- *Let out a small giggle, as if the bully just embarrassed himself.*
- *Turn to a friend and repeat what the bully said when he was trying to tease you. For example:*

"Did you know that I have big ears?"

Why Hitting Back Doesn't Work

We all know parents who advise their kids to hit back, even harder, when someone starts to push them around. While being able to defend themselves is extremely important, we also have to teach kids to consider what bullies really want. Most of the time, they just want to be recognized as being powerful and to get someone else in trouble.

So let's say that Clark pushes Sam in the hall at school. Sam doesn't want Clark to "win," so he hits him back, hard. Just then a teacher's voice booms down the hallway, "Sam, to the office, right now!"

All too often, this is what happens. It's not the bully who initiated the fight who gets into trouble; it's the student who's reacting to the bullying that gets caught and has to suffer the

consequences. Rarely, the bully will also get into trouble, which looks like a good thing until he becomes even more angry and goes after the victim even harder the next time.

Therefore, we have to teach kids to ignore insignificant physical confrontations that don't result in injury, if only to show the bully that they're not willing to engage in an ongoing, ridiculous physical confrontation.



What If Someone Gets Hurt?

Obviously, if the victim is injured, a different course of action is in order. Any student who is injured by another child needs to report the incident to a teacher, parent, or guidance counselor so that appropriate steps can be taken in accordance with the school's policies on discipline and bullying.

What About Racially Motivated Bullying?

Sarah, a middle school teacher, writes: “What can I do when I hear that my students are making fun of someone else’s race? I would have thought that this kind of behavior would have ended years ago, and that their parents would have taught them better, but it’s still going on. How can I help the victim deal with bullying that is racially motivated?”

This is an excellent question. I agree with you that this kind of bullying shouldn’t be going on today, but it is. And for us, as adults, to ignore it is to leave victims of racially motivated bullying without the skills they need to combat it.

So What Can We Do to Help?

Actually, the skills we want to teach kids who are dealing with racially motivated bullying are remarkably similar to dealing with regular bullying. We need to give victims the skills they need and allow them to role-play how they’re going to respond, so that when the moment comes, they’re prepared.

Skills to Combat Racially Motivated Bullying

Coach your student to:

1. *Refuse to react with anger or fear.*
2. *Refuse to engage in a battle over whether what the bully is saying is true or not.*

3. *Realize that the bully is foolishly misinformed.*

4. *Recognize that in a country with freedom of speech, we cannot stop people from spouting their opinions.*

5. *Recognize that you cannot control what the bully thinks about your race or ethnicity.*

6. *Remain calm and de-escalate the situation with words like “Unfortunately, there are plenty of people who agree with you.”*

7. *Don’t fight back. Let the bully know that his words are hurtful, but don’t retaliate with ugly words of your own.*

Remember, too, that even though we can’t stop someone from believing something that is untrue or ridiculous, we are doing something powerful to help stop racism by teaching victims how to respond without getting angry. This stance is the most powerful way to respond if we ever hope to influence untrue, biased beliefs in this country.

Bully-Busting + Strategies

Squelching a Rumor

Let’s say that someone is spreading a rumor about Sally, saying that she got drunk at a party. Her friend Joanna tells Sally what she heard in gym class, and asks Sally whether the rumor is true.

The Victim Has the Power to Stop the Rumor

All Sally needs to do to stop the rumor is ask Joanna, “Do you believe it?” Joanna will either say “Yes,” “No,” or “I don’t know.” If she says no, the rumor has already stopped. If she says “Yes” or “I don’t know,” Sally can still squelch the rumor by telling Joanna that she’s free to believe whatever she wants.

Even if the rumor is true, Joanna won’t know for sure whether it’s true or not, so she’s probably not going to go around continuing to talk about it. If she did, she’d look rather foolish, because she has no real knowledge of whether it happened or not, and she knows it. The point of talking about rumors, after all, is to show the world that you have information most people don’t have.

Role Play This Strategy

Kids need to learn and practice this strategy before they find themselves the subject of a rumor.

Simon Clegg is one of our Top Speakers from Australia.

With over 10 years experience in speaking with teens Simon brings a challenging and inspirational message to his audience. His communication style is humorous, raw and extremely impacting.

Growing up in New Zealand as a top skateboarder, at a young age he found himself going down a pathway of drugs and alcohol within some serious family dysfunction. He challenges young people to rise above whatever life throws at them and not to let the past dictate their future.

Simon speaks throughout the USA, Australia and New Zealand. He is also Author of the book "Pressure Makes Diamonds".

Together with his wife Tammy and their four young children they now live on the South Coast of NSW, Australia. For more info visit

www.simonclegg.com.au // www.simoncleggresources.com

"The feedback has been outstanding and clearly identifies that your involvement was a key factor in that success. Ambassadors, teachers, students and exhibitors have all made comment regarding your facilitation of the Inspiration Rooms and the common theme is that your open manner and enthusiasm were instrumental in the high level of engagement this year. I hope that you enjoyed the Expos as much as we enjoyed sharing them with you."

- Fiona Hatcher, Executive Officer, Regional Development Australia

