

## **Barbara Coloroso – The Bully, The Bullied, and the Bystander**

“Bullying is not about anger, it’s about contempt—a powerful feeling of dislike toward somebody considered to be worthless, inferior, and undeserving of respect. Rabbi Lerner calls it ‘desanctification, not being able to see the divine in the other.’” Pierre Teilhard de Chardin called it “dehumanization,” not being able to see the humanity in the other “

“Terrorizing, intimidating, shunning, tormenting and ridiculing are not sibling rivalry or peer conflicts. They are acts of bullying.” (p.102)

“The opposite of love is not hate, but indifference; indifference creates evil. Hatred is evil itself. Indifference is what allows evil to be strong, what gives it power.”

Help your child to develop an inner “moral voice” that guides them to do what is right. Show, model and teach your child to share, care, help and serve. Teach them to reflect on the impact of their actions on others and be able to see things from another person’s point of view.

Willing good involves taking a stand and taking an action

Teach your child that he is responsible for the consequences of his actions

Build your child’s confidence in his ability to make good decisions (thus be less likely to be manipulated by others and not be afraid to act and think independently)

Teach your child how to evaluate reasons on his own

A holocaust survivor listed three actions to change a bystander into a witness – “Pay attention, get involved and never ever look away”

If your child has been courageous enough to stand up for someone else, don’t reward them, thank them and talk to them about what they did, how they think the victim felt, how they felt themselves and what more they can do.

### **4 Markers of Bullying:**

1. imbalance of power
2. intent to harm
3. threat of further aggression
4. terror

### **Characteristics of the bully**

1. attitude of entitlement of control, dominate, subjugate or otherwise abuse another person
2. intolerance toward differences
3. assumption that he has the liberty to exclude someone deemed unworthy of respect or care
4. no empathy, compassion or shame

### **How to change a bully**

1. intervene immediately with discipline
2. create opportunities to “do good”
3. nurture empathy
4. teach friendship skills – assertive, respectful and peaceful ways to relate to others
5. closely monitor your child’s TV viewing, video game playing computer activities and music
6. engage in more constructive, entertaining and engaging activities
7. teach your child to “will good”

### **Bullying Circle – Dan Olweus, PhD**

- A. Bully – starts the bullying. Takes an active part
- B. Followers/ henchmen-Take an active party but do not start the bullying
- C. Supporters, passive bully/bullies – support the bullying but do not take an active part
- D. Passive supporters, possible bullies – like the bullying but do not display open support
- E. Disengaged onlookers – watch what happens but don’t take a stand “It’s none of my business”
- F. Possible defenders – Dislike the bullying and think they ought to help (but don’t do it)
- G. Defenders of the target – Dislike the bullying and help or try to help the target
- H. The target – the one who is being bullied.

### **Three Kinds of families**

1. The Brick-wall
2. The Jellyfish
3. The Backbone

Both the Brick Wall and the Jellyfish families help create bullies, bullied kids and bystanders. Backbone families help children create inner discipline with faith in themselves and the ability to make a difference.

### **Brick Wall Family**

- a. concern with order, control, obedience, adherence to rules, strict hierarchy of power. Kids are controlled, manipulated, made to mind. Their feelings are often ignored, ridiculed or negated. Parents supervise, minilecture, order, threaten and remind and worry of the kids
- b. It is a dictatorship
- c. Parent had absolute authority, enforces order and always wins. Children do as told without questioning
- d. Rules are rigidly enforced with actual, threatened or imagined violence-paddling, wash your mouth out with soap, spanking,
- e. Child’s will and spirit are broken with fear and punishment

- f. Parents use sarcasm, ridicule and embarrassment to control and manipulate behaviour
- g. Extensive use of bribes and threats – parents alternate between each and the child does not know which to expect – deeds are done mostly for the payoff
- h. Heavy reliance on competition with subsequent contempt for the “loser”
- i. Learning takes place in an atmosphere of fear – mistakes are not tolerated and perfection is the goal
- j. Love is highly conditional
- k. Children are taught what to think not how to think

### **Jelly-fish Family**

Permissive, laissez-faire atmosphere – children are smothered or abandoned, humiliated, embarrassed and manipulated with bribes, threats, rewards, punishments. They become obnoxious and spoiled and/or scared and vindictive.

#### **Jellyfish A –**

- Parent doesn't know how to create a healthy structure, consistency and safe boundaries – is extremely lax in discipline, sets few or no limits, tends to smother her children.
- Since her own needs were never honored she has trouble recognizing them in herself and confuses her children's needs with her own unfulfilled needs
- Parent becomes immersed in child's lives- always there to smooth out problems and rescue them from any adversity
- No structure at critical points – meals, bedtime. Chores, recreation – results in chaos, major problems, then the parent reverts to threats, bribes, punishments,.
- In calmer moments there are apologies and attempts to assuage the guilt the parent feels for acting like her own parents – therefore parent is vacillating between brick wall and jellyfish.

#### **Jellyfish B**

- Parent physically or psychologically abandons the children, forcing them to fend for themselves- parent is centered on her own personal problems and does not physically or emotionally nurture her own children
- Inconsistent and arbitrary punishments and rewards – so that home is not a safe place. Child learns that consequences are not always imposed so is willing to take his chances on getting caught.
- Second chances are arbitrarily given – child is sometimes held accountable and sometimes no
- Threats and bribes are commonplace
- Emotions rule the behaviour of the parents and the children
- Parent may smother the child, trying to own the child's feelings, and not letting the child work them through herself
- Love is highly conditional – in order to get affection or approval the child must please the parent

### **Backbone family**

- Not hierarchical, bureaucratic or violent
- Parents don't demand respect, they demonstrate and teach it
- Parents develop for their children a network of support through 6 critical life messages given every day
  - I believe in you
  - I trust you
  - I know you can handle life situations
  - You are listened to
  - You are cared for
  - You are very important to me
- Love, acceptance, encouragement
- Healthy secure attachment of child and parent
- Democracy is learned through experience
- An environment that is conducive to creative, constructive and responsible activity
- Discipline that is handled with authority that gives life to children's learning
- Rules are simple and clearly stated
- Consequences for irresponsible behaviour are either natural or reasonable
- Children get second opportunities to try again after they have experienced the consequences for blowing it the first time
- Children are motivated to be all they can be
- Children receive lots of smiles, hugs and humour
- Children learn to accept their own feelings and to act responsibly on those feelings through a strong sense of self-awareness – parents are empathetic and emotionally available to them, modeling appropriate ways to express the full range of emotions
- Competency and co-operation are modeled and encouraged
- Love is unconditional
- Children are taught how to think
- Children are buffered from the impact of a bully, or the need to become a bully, by the daily reinforcement of the messages that foster a strong sense of self
- The family is willing to seek help – problems are not hidden

### **Messages that foster a strong sense of self.**

- I like myself – kids know that they are loved unconditionally, that they are capable of taking the full responsibility for their actions and thoughts
- I can think for myself – given lots of chances to make choices and decisions with adult guidance not adult directives
- There is no problem so great it can't be solved – kids tend then, to be competent and resilient in the face of adversity. Realities are accepted and problems are solved.

### **4 most powerful antidotes to bullying**

- At least one good friend who is there for you through thick and thin
- Being able to successfully get into a group

- Strong sense of self
- Being a friend

### **Bully tries to**

- Harass the child
- Chip away at his sense of dignity and word
- Isolate the victim so that he is unable to develop critical relationship skills with his peers
- Enlist peers to join in or at least not stop the bullying

### **Therefore parents need to**

Strengthen child's sense of self

Show him how to be a good friend

Teach him how to nurture strong healthy friendships

Teach him how to introduce himself into a group

### **5 personality factors that protect kids from being increasingly victimized**

- Friendliness
- Willingness to share
- Willingness to cooperate
- Skill in joining the play of other children
- Possessing a sense of humour

### **From bystander to witness p.159**

#### **Bullying Circle (p.64)**

Shows the roles that bullies, victims and bystanders play

**There are NO INNOCENT BYSTANDERS-** not to acknowledge bullying for what it is or to simply dismiss it is to be a complicit bystander

Much of bullying goes on "under the radar" of adults

#### **The 9 Excuses for refusing to stand up or speak out against bullying:**

1. the bully is my friend
2. it's not my problem! This is not my fight!
3. she is not my friend
4. he
5. 's a loser
6. he deserved to be bullied, asked for it, had it coming, so why stop it? He didn't even stand up for himself so why should anyone else stand up for him?
7. bullying will toughen him up.
8. Who wants to be called a snitch or a rat or be blamed for getting the bully in trouble.
9. It's better to be in the in-group than to defend the outcasts
10. It's too big a pain in the brain

**Desired Response**

- Stand up for a peer
- Speak out against an injustice
- **Take responsibility for what happens among themselves**

**For example**

- Refuse to be a party to the bullying
- Support the target privately
- Talk to the bully publicly or privately
- Intervene on behalf of the target
- Don't repeat the rumour
- Invite an isolated classmate over
- Don't laugh at the derogatory joke or put down
- Tell an adult about the bullying
- Join with others to stand up to a bully
- Step in alone

**Responses:**

1. intervene immediately with discipline
2. create opportunities to "do good"
3. nurture empathy
4. teach friendship skills – assertive, respectful, peaceful ways to relate to others
5. closely monitor child's TV viewing, video game playing, computer activities, and music.
6. engage in more constructive, entertaining, energizing activities
7. teach your child to "will good"
8. talk about ways to avoid being so easily led into doing the bidding of a more powerful peer –
  - by figuring out how not to be so easily led
  - by hanging around kids who will not lead you down that path

**The three R's****Restitution, resolution, reconciliation**

1. apologize to the child who was harmed (by a rumour)
2. go to everyone she told it to and tell them it wasn't true
3. ask them to stop spreading it
4. ask them to let everyone they told know that she was part of spreading the rumour and wants to correct the damage done
5. to the best of her ability repair any harm done to the target of her act
6. heal with the child she harmed

**A Pledge from Columbine**

As part of my community and my school I WILL:

- pledge to be part of the solution
- eliminate teasing from my behaviour
- encourage others to do the same
- do my part to make the community safe by being more sensitive to others
- set the example of a caring individual
- eliminate profanity toward others from my language
- not let my words or actions hurt others

and if others will not become part of the solution – I WILL

#### **4 Basic Principles for Caring Schools**

1. warmth, positive interest, and involvement from adults
2. firm limits as to unacceptable behaviour
3. in case of violation of limits and rules, consistent application of non-hostile, non-physical sanctions (discipline as opposed to punishment)
4. behavior by adults at home and at school that creates an authoritative (not authoritarian) adult-child interaction or child-rearing model (backbone, as opposed to brick wall)

#### **Elements of well-supported and effective antibullying policies**

1. strong positive statement of the school's desire to promote positive peer relations and especially to oppose bullying and harassment in any form it may take by all members of the school community
2. a succinct definition of bullying or peer victimization, with specific examples
3. a declaration of the right of individuals and groups in the school to be free of victimization by others
4. a statement of the responsibility of those who witness peer victimization to seek to stop it.
5. encouragement to students and parents with concerns about victimization to speak with school personnel about them
6. a general description of how the school propose to deal with the bully/victim problems
7. a plan to evaluate the policy in the near future

#### **School Culture and Social Environment**

- need all three parts – policy, procedures, program
- preventative program to decrease bullying and to help students build more supportive relationships with each other.
- Teaches the skills for coping with bullying , recognizing bullying, using assertive behaviours to refuse bullying and reporting bullying to adults.
- Address the critical role of the bystander
- Emphasize the responsibility of all members of the school community to decrease bullying
- Teach empathy for the targets of bullying
- Teach specific ways children can respond when they witness bullying

**Process**

1. Gather information
2. establish clear school wide and classroom rules about bullying – so the kids know what the rules are, that they will be enforced and how they will be enforced
  - a. ensure constructive consequences are part of it – three r's
  - b. plan of interaction of the intervention does not work
  - c. may include removal of bully, referral to a mental health agency or police
3. create strong social norms against bullying
4. train all adults to respond sensitively and consistently to bullying
5. provide adequate adult supervision
6. improve parental awareness and involvement in working on the problem

An anti bullying policy that has zero tolerance of bullying is a good thing if it provides opportunities for administrators to exercise fairness, common sense and sound discretion – all bullying should receive some sanction but not necessarily the maximum sanction for each offence

- parent might justify, rationalize, minimize or make excuses for their child's behaviour

**Healing Circle**

-opportunity to admit their own part in the incident, develop a plan for fixing what they did and figure out how to keep it from happening again

“Don't Laugh at Me – dontlaugh.org