



BULLY-PROOF YOURSELF!

10 tips for victims of bullying

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MEAN BEHAVIOR AND BULLYING ARE NOT SYNONYMOUS! Both come from a wounded heart and soul. A person who intentionally tries to hurt another needs intervention and healing. When we feel good about ourselves and experience love and legitimate personal power, we do no harm to others.

Bullying is more than meanness. It is the *deliberate and repeated attempt* to intimidate, embarrass, or harm another person. If you or a companion are targeted victims of a bully, apply the following tips:

1. Seek help. Share with your parents, principal, teacher, or counselor. Talk about your feelings. Develop positive ways to release tension and stress and redirect the misbehavior. Brainstorm solutions. Do not confuse self-advocacy with tattling. Tattling intends to cause trouble; self-advocacy seeks solutions.
2. Do not fight back. Focus on ways to avoid violence: Change the topic, walk away, call out to a friend, or say something like, “What will it take to improve our relationship?”
3. Do not trade insults. Ignore them, or agree with the teaser with responses such as “You’re on the mark! I can’t deny that I weigh more than I wish.” Or “It’s a family trait. We’re all short, and we all have straight hair.”
4. Avoid embarrassing the bully.
5. Preplan how to talk to the bully.

“Why would you want to tell me something that might hurt my feelings?”

6. Preplan to compliment the bully with honest affirmation. “I think you are clever. You definitely have a quick wit.”
7. Use humor (not sarcasm) to relax a tense situation. Make fun of the teasing. For instance, if the bully called you fat, you might reply, “Now you sound like my brother!” or “You have no idea how hard I try to practice self-control,” or “Unfortunately, this is not the first time that I’ve heard that criticism.”
8. Agree with the bully. “You’re right! Grades are important to me.” If the bully makes an accusation, apologize for the misunderstanding. “It was not my intention to hurt you. I apologize for the misunderstanding.”
9. Be proactive. Before trouble occurs, practice ways to respond to a bully. Role-play with a parent or trusted person.
10. Be assertive, calm, and confident — but not arrogant. Stand tall, make eye contact, address the bully by name, and express your

position calmly and respectfully (“It is mean of you to make fun of me”). Use brief “I want” statements (“I want you to stop teasing me”). Then walk away. **T**

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