

# Self-Esteem Angel Ezine for Families

## Back-To-Bullying-NOT!

Angel Books

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Editor Jennifer Gouldie

## Learn More Inside This Issue

Page 1...	Teaching Kids How to Deal With Bullies.....3 Stages to Stop Bullying in its' Tracks
Page 2...	Continued...Teaching Kids How to Deal With Bullies - 3 Stages to Stop Bullying in its' Tracks Tools for Parents, Teachers, Counselors...Internet Safety – Getting the Reality Across to Kids and Teens
Page 3...	Kids and Teens: Have you been bullied? You are So Much More than this experience!
Page 4...	For Kids and Teens Cyber-Bullying Tips Cyber-Bullying Statistics
Page 5...	Feature Book of the Month– being different is cool What our FANS Say Conversations with Wendy
Page 6...	Effective Tool for Healing the Emotional Scars of Bullying Author's Message
Page 7...	Bullying Statistics What to Say to a Child Who Is the Bully
Page 8...	How to Cope When Your Child is Bullied

## Teaching Kids How to Deal with Bullies 3 Stages to STOP Bullying in its' Tracks

It is imperative for parents and teachers to learn the steps needed to teach kids how to deal effectively with bullying situations. These situations have a long-term, negative impact on children's lives. It determines whether they will succeed or fail in their jobs, relationships and health.

Bullying unfortunately has become an everyday occurrence in school yards, playgrounds and parks. There are a variety of ways kids are bullied so there are multiple theories on how to deal with bullies. Every case of bullying needs to be assessed individually to determine the best way to help kids.

For this article, I will focus on bullying situations that involve words, facial expressions and body language. These tend to be the most common ones. It is important to teach children to recognize when they are being bullied. Many bullies are very good at what they do and they can be so subtle, that it is hard to realize what is happening.

## Continued...Teaching Kids How to Deal With Bullies - 3 Stages to Stop Bullying in its' Tracks

So, teach kids to listen carefully for the tone of voice. I've said for many years now that "a word is just a word, until you add a tone of voice". The tone of voice is what determines the meaning and intent of the word. If you add facial expressions and body language that is negative, then the event becomes more traumatic for the victims.

A harsh tone of voice is a common characteristic of bullying words. It is vital to teach kids HOW to hear the tone right away so they will know that it is going to be a put down, teasing or bullying event; even before they hear the actual words. This gives them the advantage, allowing them the opportunity to choose to walk away or tune out the bully, before the bully even has a chance to say anything.

Neither of these two things is easy to do and that is why you need to role play with kids so they can practice. Ask your kids what words they have heard and include those in the appropriate stages of these step-by-step instructions.

**Stage 1** - start with a sharp tone of voice and subtle teasing words like, 'lame'; 'dweeb'; 'weird'; etc. You say the word, have the kids listen for the tone and literally have them turn and walk away. It will take several tries for them to even start to move but keep at it and pace yourselves.

**Stage 2** – then use a critical, judgmental tone and harsher, more hurtful words like, 'ugly'; 'dummy'; 'crazy'; 'pimple head'; etc.

**Stage 3** – the final step is an angry tone and more common bullying words like, 'loser'; 'fatso'; 'nerd'; 'stupid'; 'not cool'; etc.

The more they practice how to do this, the better they will be at pulling themselves out of situations that can turn into traumatic experiences.

Please make sure you and your children re-read their book, *being different is cool* to remind them why they need to 're-frame' what bullies say, so they can let go of these awful experiences and rebuild their self-esteem.

Words do hurt and do have a negative impact on how we see ourselves and how we live our lives. These are skills children and teens will need for the rest of their lives. They will use these to stop future bullying events from laying down tracks on their hearts and minds.

By Wendy Collier, B. Ed.



## Tools for Parents, Teachers, Counselors...

### **Internet Safety – Getting the Reality Across to Kids and Teens**



Show them an example of what is on the internet by doing a search for someone they wouldn't expect to see much information on but not currently in their life – past coach, teacher, leader of a club, etc.

Do a search for their name AFTER you have done the search and made sure there isn't anything on the internet that could hurt them; most kids would be surprised at how much information there is on the internet about them.

**Help BUILD Self-Esteem.....**

**Pass a Positive Compliment to a Friend or Family Member each and every day!!**

# **KIDS AND TEENS: Have you been bullied?**

## **You are So Much More than this experience!**

Being on the receiving end of bullying situations is a horrible feeling. You will feel embarrassed, ashamed and you may have this feeling of being 'small.' You will wonder if you did something to deserve it. You will wonder if it is true. Are you a bad person? Are you not good enough?

Your self-esteem will take a big hit and you will begin to feel unworthy of good things. Don't let this happen to you and your friends.

### 4 Steps to Go from Bullied to Brave

1. **Acknowledge the feelings.**
2. **Express the feelings.**
3. **Let it go.**
4. **Move forward.**

It is very normal to feel all of your feelings and you will go through a wide range of them which may include any or all of these: anger, fear, self-pity, sadness, doubt, frustration, anxiety, even terrified. So, allow yourself to simply feel and acknowledge the feelings by saying to yourself, "I feel terrified; or I feel angry; or I feel sad."

There's a part of you that will feel very defensive and will want to fight back. This is a very natural instinct as humans and it is a good thing, not a bad thing. It is okay to think about what you could have said or done differently, but don't dwell on it and DO NOT criticize or judge yourself as being a 'bad person.' Everyone thinks about things they could have said or done differently but that does not make them a bad person for not saying or doing those things, it simply makes them 'human.'

Once you have worked through the clutter of emotions, you can begin to move forward. Part of moving forward is learning from the situation. Here are the action steps you can take to achieve forward motion.

**A.C.T.I.O.N. Steps:** Take the time to think about and write down your answers to these questions:

"What did I learn from this experience?"

"What did I learn about myself as a person?"

"What would I do differently next time?"

Write these on a file card and read them often:

"I did not do anything to deserve this."

"There's nothing I did to feel embarrassed and ashamed of."

"I am a good person and I am good enough."

"I am worthy of good things, good people, and good experiences. And I accept those with grace and gratitude."

Most bullying experiences are a small part of your whole life experiences. You have much to look forward to; that is why it is important for you to process your feelings and go through the healing experience.

**YOU** deserve to be happy. You **ARE** a good person. You are **WORTHY** of being free.

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# For Kids and Teens Cyber-Bullying Tips



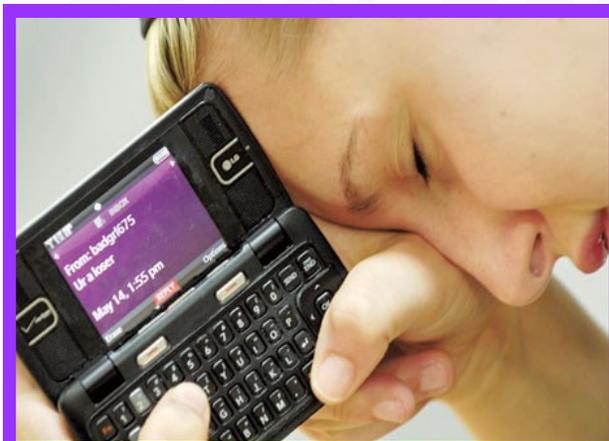
- ⇒ Turn it off – this is not easy for you to do with all your friends on the internet but sometimes you need to take a break from it all.
- ⇒ Learn about privacy on the internet – basically there is none. Everything you say and do online is available for the whole world to see. Once it is on the internet it is difficult to remove it.
- ⇒ You can't hear this enough – DO NOT give out phone numbers, addresses, and personal information which includes where you go to school, the clubs you belong to, where you and your friends like to hang out, what after school activities you are involved in, any identification numbers you have like a school ID, driver's license or passport, especially to anyone that you don't know.

- ⇒ Learn from a reliable source – how to post comments, photos, and videos – posting a comment is the same as speaking the words, once the words are out you can't take them back.
- ⇒ Ask a knowledgeable person how to set up secure settings on your social media pages, cell phones and mobile devices.
- ⇒ You must TURN OFF the location feature – you do not want the world to know exactly where you are all the time – this is 'stalker heaven.' (Thanks Asha)
- ⇒ When posting pictures ask yourself: "Is this something I'd be proud to share with my grandma or favorite aunt?"
- ⇒ If you see something online that is inappropriate or abusive bring it to the attention of a parent, teacher or someone who can do something about it.
- ⇒ DO NOT pass on things that are abusive or inappropriate.
- ⇒ Sometimes you will need to hold yourself back from commenting on something. It is easy to get caught up in a conversation and say things that you will regret.
- ⇒ This old saying is not so old and is a good one to keep in mind: "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all."
- ⇒ Not everything you read or see on the internet is true, so don't believe everything, check out the reliability of the sources.
- ⇒ In severe cases of cyber-bullying, please get professional help.
- ⇒ The internet is very complicated and the rules are changing every day. Change your passwords every 3 months. Check your social media privacy and security settings regularly to keep up with the changes.



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## Cyber-Bullying Statistics



- One in four school students has been bullied online (University of Toronto).
- Those most at risk of cyber-bullying are children aged 12-14 years old (Tokunaga, 2010; "Cyber bullying: Reality Check 2012", Kids Help Phone).
- 63 per cent of respondents reported experiencing cyber-bullying through social networking.

# Feature Book of the Month

## being different is cool

The Self-Esteem Angel has a goal. She wants to show kids that they are valuable no matter what bullies say, do or think. You will meet three kids that have been hurt by the mean and unkind words of others. The angel helps them to find the truth and then realize what really matters. She also helps them through the hurt that the bullies caused with their negative words. In the end the Angel empowers the kids to use their unpleasant experience and what they have learned to help others.



## What Our FANS Say....

"I decided what she said is an opinion, and rolled it off my back before she could say anything else that would be hurtful. I walked away. When I got home I got out my Self-Esteem Angel books and read them. And after that I felt better." - **Megan, Age 8**

"When my nine-year-old niece read *being different is cool*, she just wanted to read it again and again. I can recall one time when she was ice fishing, which happens to be one of her favorite winter hobbies. She got tired of waiting for the fish to bite. So she decided to read her book yet again.

I saw the light in her eyes as she began to make connections between events in her life and events in the book. She spoke of situations where she was bullied and then was able to explain in her own words how she could re-frame the event. - **Annette Scherrens-Sehlistrom, B. Ed. B. Arts**

"The foundation for healthy self-esteem is laid in childhood. *being different is cool* will help children appreciate their differences and honour their own uniqueness." **Murray Fuhrer, Author – Extreme Esteem, Columnist, Workshop Facilitator, extremeesteem.ca**

"I would highly recommend your book *being different is cool* because it demonstrates, in a simple and easy to understand manner, how important it is for our students to understand and appreciate their self-worth. In my opinion, having good self-esteem is directly linked to our successes in life." **Margaret James, Guidance Counselor, Avalon Elementary School, Orlando, FL**

"The most beautiful gift you can give to your child is Self Esteem. The Self Esteem Angel is a perfect way to help you in this act of love."

**Glenn Allen, M. Ed. Psych.; Former Principal and Psychologist; Founder and President – Self-Esteem Society For Central Alberta**

"You've really done an outstanding job of writing and the book, *being different is cool*, is certainly attractive. You should be very proud and I'm certain that it will help many children."

**Robert W. Reasoner, President-International Council of Self-Esteem**

"I liked when the Self-Esteem Angel unfolded her wings and saw a park and the lake with the fountain. I loved the picture of the lake with the fountain." - **Delanie Age 7**

"I liked the part where the Self-Esteem Angel gave the honorary Self-Esteem Angel pins. My favorite picture was when the Angel found Melanie for the first time by the tree. It is so pretty." - **Morgan Age 7**

"It's the kind of book you will want to own so your children can read it when they hit the downswings in life." - **Marion, Parent**

"Great book!" - **Brenda, Assistant Superintendent**

**BUY NOW**

## Conversations with Wendy...

- ⇒ A 9 year old who said she no longer has a self-esteem problem because she now knows that it's good to be different.
- ⇒ It helped 2 children new to town feel less afraid and more confident about starting a new school.
- ⇒ Parents who are multicultural, grateful for these books because their daughter had been teased 4 years ago when she started school about her cultural physical features.
- ⇒ A student stopped teasing because now she understood the negative effect it can have on kids.
- ⇒ Parents who thanked me because the book gave them a way to talk to their kids about self-esteem and teasing and bullying.
- ⇒ Children and Youth who said "I'm an honorary self-esteem angel, that's cool!"



# Author's Message

Don't let bullying experiences become defining moments in your children's lives. Unfortunately, bullying triggers an emotional response which creates a strong association that leads to a turning point in children's lives. The roots of low self-esteem begin to grow and spread. That turning point can lead them down a negative path or a positive journey.

Children are influenced and bombarded by the opinions of others. This book teaches them how to keep other people's opinions in perspective; steps on how to actually build their self-esteem; and to focus on the positive people in their lives.

The graphic arts pages of animals, plants and people, will imprint a clear message in the minds and hearts of your children that being who they are is truly what makes them "cool."

Start the school year on a positive note for your children and their classroom.

## Effective Tool for Healing the Emotional Scars of Bullying

Immediately after an incident, have your child write a letter to the person who bullied them, dumping all of their feelings and thoughts on paper. It is very normal to feel all of their feelings and they will go through a wide range of them which may include any or all of these: anger, fear, self-pity, sadness, doubt, frustration, anxiety and even terrified. Make it okay for them to express these feelings.

It is important for you to be clear with them that, this is NOT a letter they ever, ever keep or send! This is simply a tool for them to process what has happened so they can let it go and move on.

There's a part of them that will feel very defensive and will want to fight back. This is a very natural instinct as humans and it is a good thing, not a bad thing. Encourage them to write about all the things they wished they'd said or done to stand up for themselves or their friend.

Give them the choice to read the letter to you but make sure they understand that they have a right to choose not to read it to you; and there are no consequences of choosing to not read it to you.

Have them rip up the letter and SHRED it, it is absolutely vital they SHRED it. Have them say "I release, I let go" as they shred it.

When they feel themselves getting angry or feeling bad about what happened – have them write another letter to that person and again rip it up and SHRED it. Keep doing this until they no longer have strong feelings about this situation.

Notice and point out to them how much their emotions lose their strength as each letter is written and shredded.

I have been using this tool for over 20 years and I am always surprised by how effective it is for processing emotional experiences, letting them go and moving forward.

By Wendy Collier B. Ed.



# Bullying Statistics



⇒ One in five Canadian youth report being bullied regularly (Canadian Red Cross, 2013)

⇒ When a friend steps in, bullying stops 57 per cent of the time in 10 seconds or less (Canadian Red Cross, 2013)



## What to Say to a Child Who Is the Bully



### **DO NOT SAY:**

*How could you do this to me?*

*How could you do this to our family?*

*What the ‘\*&%@’ were you thinking?*

*This is so embarrassing.*

*You should be ashamed of yourself.*

### **DO SAY:**

*Tell me how this situation developed.*

*What did you hope to gain from this?*

*How does it feel?*

*How would you feel if this had happened to you?*

*What can you do to make up for this?*

*What privileges do you think you should have to give up?*

Get professional help to find the root of what’s really going on. Most bullies have gone through some type of trauma. It could be that they were bullied, it could be their way of dealing with changes in their family situations or school situations, or they may have a lack of self-esteem and feelings of unworthiness.

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# How to Cope When Your Child is Bullied



As a parent or guardian you will feel like you've been punched in the gut. Whatever your child is feeling, you will feel; but it will be so unbelievably strong, you may not understand it at first. But, think about this - you are their protector and you take that responsibility seriously, so when this happens to your child you will experience a state of shock. The level of shock will depend on how severe the situation is. Unfortunately, you will have to put your own needs aside and be there for your child.

Your child doesn't blame you at all, even though you blame yourself. It's important to remind yourself often that you are not to blame. You must be diligent with stopping your brain from playing the "what if" game and thinking up ways you could have prevented this. There are simply too many things that happen in your child's life that you cannot control.

Just be there for your child in any way you can. Here are some suggestions:

- listen to what they are saying and what they are *not* saying;
- acknowledge the stage of healing they are in whether it is the denial phase, anger phase, it doesn't matter, just be aware of what they are going through and help them through that stage;
- depending on your child's personality and sensitivity level you may want to seek professional counseling immediately. You wouldn't believe how many adults have trouble processing bullying situations - imagine how hard it is for a child to find their way through this process;
- make sure if it is a school situation, that the administration is doing everything they can to resolve these issues and put in place some type of bullying prevention program. Make sure at the beginning of the year that you and your child are familiar with the school's protocol when it comes to dealing with bullying situations, and keep up with any recent changes;
- do lots of positive things with your child to remind them of all the good things in their life;
- involve them in activities that you know will give them a total distraction from thinking about the situation;
- remind them often of the things they did that were good choices;
- validate, validate, validate, you can never do too much of this;
- keep the situation in perspective for them and remind them of the things they have to look forward to.

Make sure during this process, you have your own outlet for talking about your feelings and experiences – whether it is with a friend, family member or counselor, just make sure you have someone who is willing to listen.

Once your child is through the healing process and well on their way to moving forward, then you can ask yourself if you need to see someone professionally to deal with your process of healing. There is a very good chance you may not even need to do anything else.

One of the best advantages of working through this with your child is that you will also heal along the way. These are the kind of life experiences that construct a bond that you and your child will have forever.

By Wendy Collier, B. Ed.