

Bullying is not a new issue, yet it certainly has been making the news. How concerned should we be? As parents, how far do we go to protect our children from behaviors we know they'll experience hundreds of times in their lives? The truth is bullying has been with us a long time. It's not a new thing, but our reaction to it - our previous willingness to just accept it as part of growing up - is. So what can we, as parents, do about it? Our first task is to understand the problem. We all have mental pictures of the bullies we've dealt with (or been) throughout our lives and we likely have our own definition to go with it. To really know how to deal with bullying, we have to make sure we are first on the same page. This month, I thought I'd provide a few snippets from Barbara Coloroso's book *The Bully, the Bullied and the Bystander*. She does a great job of clarifying why this previously accepted behavior is deserving of our attention. Bullying is not a new issue - but our rejection of it is.

Excerpts from *The Bully, the Bullied and the Bystander*, Barbara Coloroso, 2002

Bullies come in all shapes and sizes. They can be big, small, bright, not so bright, attractive, not so attractive, popular or disliked by almost everyone.

Bullying is a conscious, willful and deliberate hostile activity, intended to harm.

<p>The four markers of bullying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An imbalance of power • Bully intends to harm • Usually occurs more than once • Person being bullied is fearful (which can turn into terror) 	<p>The four most powerful antidotes to bullying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong sense of self • Being a friend • Having at least one good friend who is there for you through thick and thin • Being able to successfully get into (and out of) a group
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Bullying is not about anger, or even conflict. It's about contempt - a powerful feeling of dislike toward someone considered to be worthless, inferior or undeserving of respect.

Kids with contempt for others will not feel remorse at hurting them!

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Teasing</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allows the teaser and the person teased to swap roles 2. Isn't intended to hurt 3. Doesn't make the person feel bad about who they are 4. Pokes fun in a lighthearted, clever, way 5. Is meant to get both parties to laugh 6. Is only a small part of what those kids do together 7. Is innocent in motive 8. Is discontinued when person teased becomes upset or objects 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Taunting</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is based on an imbalance of power and is one sided: the bully taunts, the bullied kid is taunted 2. Is intended to harm 3. Involves humiliating, cruel, demeaning, or bigoted comments thinly disguised as jokes 4. Includes laughter directed at the target, not with the target 5. Is meant to diminish the sense of self-worth of the target 6. Induces fear of further taunting or can be a prelude to physical bullying 7. Is sinister in motive 8. Continues especially when targeted kid becomes distressed or objects to the taunt
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