

Bullying- What can we do?

Everyone is talking about bullying these days. It has been a major concern in our schools from primary grades through high school. It doesn't stop there. Bullies are in the workplace, on the streets and in our homes. What is the root cause underlying the bullying epidemic and how can we help solve this widespread problem?

When I was teaching primary grades I learned quickly how important character education is in the early years. If we learn to treat others the way we want to be treated, bullying is not an issue. If we learn to love ourselves, we will naturally tend to love others. In my classroom, quality time was spent developing values that fostered love, compassion, caring, sharing and respect for ourselves and others. It evolved into a program called MasterMind DreamMakers, where kids learned the keys to self empowerment and self esteem. The result was a community (classroom) of happy kids who respected themselves and one another.

After I retired, I taught these principles in various public schools in Phoenix. The kids learned to respect and have compassion for themselves and others. Teachers followed up on these ideas and reported more peaceful classrooms.

After a while, "no child left behind" made testing a priority in the schools. Since character building was not on the test, I was asked to teach my program in the after school program. It went well for those kids who attended, but many kids now did not get the opportunity to learn these important life skills and practice them daily in their classroom.

It is known that children with high self esteem are less likely to be bullied. Those who do the bullying are also usually the ones struggling with self esteem. Where in the curriculum of our schools do we find materials to help kids build confidence in themselves? How much time during the day do teachers have to show kids how to find peace within themselves? How much time do they have to teach children how to become peace builders in their family and community? Even the best of teachers are so busy with required curriculum that there is not much time for character building. Last year I offered a simple program to

several schools in our community called “Keys to Peace”. Concepts were taken from my award winning book, MasterMind DreamMakers. The program was free, did not take much planning for teachers to do with kids, and would only take a few minutes a day for about a week. Unfortunately, it seemed most schools were too busy to incorporate something like this into their daily schedule, even for a week.

So what can you do about bullying? You can start by asking our schools what they offer as required curriculum to help kids feel better about themselves and respect differences in others. You can encourage them to offer after school clubs where kids support kids who feel different, left out or are being bullied.

Most of all, 95% of what kids learn is from role modeling. Do you accept diversity in your life? Do you exclude or put people down who are different from you? Do your children experience dominant, aggressive, competitive behavior in their own home? What kind of movies and TV shows do you play in your home? How many hours a day do you allow your kids to spend on the Internet, texting or playing violent video games?

Do you set an example for peace, forgiveness and understanding? Do you praise your children often, listen to them and give them your undivided attention? Do you accept their differences and shortcomings?

We may not be able to change the world over night, but we can be role models for values and traits we would like to see in our kids. We can make character building a priority at home and in the schools. We can make a difference!

“We are ALL Keys to Peace”

Mimi Greek
Tavernier , Fl
MastermindCyberAcademy.com