



ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH, INC

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STRATEGIES TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO BULLIES

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Bullies thrive on intimidating and controlling others through their mean words, physical aggression, nasty rumors, threats, etc. Therefore, it is crucial that bullying victims and/or bystanders disarm bullies and gain control by responding to them with strength and empowerment rather than upset emotions or fear by:

BEING DIRECTIVE – It is often helpful to look bullies directly in the eye and tell them to stop in a tone of voice that conveys that you mean it and are not afraid. Bullies quickly lose interest when they are unable to “get under your skin” and move on in the hopes of finding someone they can have more success with.

ASKING QUESTIONS – Asking bullies questions concerning the fairness of their behavior usually leaves them speechless and forces them to internally reflect on their behavior. Effective questions include:

- “What makes you think you have the right to bully me?”
- “I know your bullying behavior is an attempt to feel better about yourself. How is it working?”

OFFERING TO BE HELPFUL – Rather than respond to bullies by bullying them back, “change the game” by trying to be helpful through questions such as “How can I help you with your problem with bullying?”

USING HUMOR – Humor quickly disarms bullies and empowers victims and/or bystanders to take control. For instance, if someone makes fun of the size of your nose you could say “Thank you very much for your interest in my nose. It looks this way because my parents are both elephants.”

BEHAVING UNPREDICTABLY – Since bullies are looking for responses which make them feel powerful or in control, they usually have no idea what to do if a victim and/or group of bystanders responds to them in an unpredictable way by breaking out in a song such as *Jingle Bells*, congratulating them on a good try or simply looking at them without any facial expression.

DETACHING - An excellent way to respond to bullying is to detach and gain a sense of inner peace, self-mastery, etc. by visualizing that you are at a favorite place or engaged in a favorite activity. Since students are often highly reactive and not used to going within themselves, they often need to master this skill outside of bullying situations so that it is readily available to them when they need it.