

6 Ways Bullies Humiliate Their Victims

According to board-certified physician Sherri Gordon, there are six common types of bullying:

1. Physical
2. Verbal
3. Emotional or Relational (ostracizing, spreading false rumors, teasing, etc.)
4. Cyber
5. Sexual (humiliating crude comments, gestures, touching, porn)
6. Prejudicial (taunting/exclusion based on racism, religion, sexuality)

Bullying is an attempt to humiliate and cause a person to feel inadequate and alone. It can lead to depression, suicide, eating disorders and other issues.

One study from the University of Virginia defined bullying as “the use of one’s strength or popularity to injure, threaten or embarrass another person on purpose.” The study showed that victims of bullies show 3-6% lower scores on standardized tests used for graduation and college placement.

It has always puzzled me why teachers and school systems haven’t addressed this issue with the attention and force that is needed. Physical bullying would be a criminal offense if committed by an adult. Why don’t we consider it to be as just as egregious when it happens to a child?

You see, I was bullied as a 7-9 year-old. Just about every

day, I was beaten and humiliated by one perpetrator in particular, but as happens, that encouraged others to do the same. It was physical, verbal, emotional and eventually sexual.

On several occasions, I came home crying and tried to tell my parents what was happening, but the common wisdom back then was that it would teach me how to stand up for myself. How foolish.

Instead, at the age of nine, I tried to take my life—the first of three attempts before I was twenty-one.

Often, I would come home from school, lock myself in the bathroom and berate my image in the mirror for being so ugly and stupid. “You’re nothing! You’re nobody! Nobody likes you! Nobody loves you!” If no one was home, I would scream such words to my image in the mirror, often afraid that I was going crazy. That led to what would be diagnosed today as narcissistic personality disorder—an extremely difficult condition to overcome. I became fixed on me, my image, and my unworthiness to be alive.

Though bereft of any self-esteem, I became driven to prove myself worthy or worthwhile. I made poor choices to avoid being targeted, such as doing sinful things in order to get the bully to laugh at me rather than hit me. And when the bullying became sexual, I became fixed on that as the way to please people and entered into twenty years of sexual addiction and homosexual confusion, culminating in seven years of male prostitution. During those last seven years, three different people tried to kill me. I was as lost and broken as a smashed penny at the bottom of the Marianas Trench, seven miles below the surface of the ocean. And no one knew. My mask was well constructed and highly polished. My life’s theme was The Platters’ song, “The Great Pretender,” followed by Simon & Garfunkel’s song, “I Am A Rock”. “I am shielded in my armor.....(because) a rock feels no pain; and an island never

cries.”

For the first thirty years, I pursued best-friend relationships with the most popular person I could seduce (though never sexually) so that I could live off of their popularity. Because I was friend to the popular guy, others accepted me as their friend as well. But that fell apart after age thirty because such friendships are almost impossible to sustain once everyone marries and starts focusing on their family.

Today, though a born again, Spirit-filled Christian, I still live with the consequences of bullying. I’ve lived with major insomnia for 25 years and have recently been diagnosed with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Major Depressive Disorder. Presently, on some days, I have to take medication just to get out of bed.

I commonly have dreams about trying mightily to do something, and failing. I’ll try to escape some danger by running and (in the dream) my legs will become paralyzed and I’ll be overtaken. Or I’ll be out in some public arena participating in whatever it is, and suddenly discover that I’m naked. I’ll approach people of power or means to get something, but always with the assumption that I’ll be rejected. I can’t be in large crowds for very long before anxiety takes over and forces me to escape. And I certainly can’t speak in a group larger than 3 or 4 with any confidence unless the host of the event has already announced my credentials and promoted me as someone worthy to be heard. Hmmmmm – I wonder if that explains why some of the most accomplished people insist on having their litany of titles and achievements announced at every turn? Someone needs to study that. But I digress.

I always wondered why I was a “C” student in school until going to seminary, where I suddenly became an “A” student despite it being one of the most rigorous seminaries in the world. What made that happen? Now I see it as a combination of

the confidence that Christ gave me as His newborn child, a supernatural enabling to do the work that He created me for, the books that I read that gave me understanding about healing emotional woundedness, (especially the Bible and the writings of Leanne Payne), and the many inner healings that I received by going through Youth With A Mission (YWAM), Vineyard and other groups that understood how to help someone receive healing for their soul.

So why am I still suffering the consequences of having been bullied as a child? I don't know! I just am, albeit to a lesser degree. No one has received more biblically-based inner healing prayer, deliverance and ministry than I have over the last 36 years; and I have to say, for the most part I am utterly transformed by God's mercy and power. Yet I still see through that glass darkly. I know that I need greater faith, but don't know how to wrest more from God than He has allotted. I know that I need to wage spiritual warfare against what continues to attack me, but (and let the reader understand), sometimes it is impossible to do that on your own when major depression hits.

But this one thing I know – Jesus is good all the time and He loves me with all His heart. And so I wait and serve, trusting that the Lord is working out His good purposes, and praying that He will take this cross and create humility, a deeper empathy for those who struggle with profound emotional wounds, and a stronger and more certain dependence on Him.

All that to say this: We must address bullying as though it was cancer itself! It is a horrendous scourge that has a high potential to negatively affect victims in multiple ways and on multiple levels for the rest of their lives. Science is now beginning to discover that it literally changes brain chemistry. Let me quote from a recent article in :

“Brain research is revealing that bullying is more than just an unfortunate part of growing up. It can cause long-term

changes to the brain that leads to cognitive and emotional deficits as serious as the harm done by child abuse.”

When you see it happening, do something about it if you can. Insist that the authorities do their job in preventing and protecting the children that have been placed in their charge. It could be your child who is next headed for the bully’s fist, with decades of abject brokenness following.

And if you are a bully, turn to God to heal your own wounds that propel you toward such behavior. But the Bible is clear (Luke 17:1-2):

“Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin.” (NIV)

And yet, even that can be forgiven the bully, if he or she will repent and receive forgiveness and salvation from the Lord Jesus Christ.

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