



DO IT YOURSELF...

HOW TO STOP BEING TEASED & BULLIED

A Child & Teen Guide
to Gaining...
Control,
Confidence
& Respect

SECTION ONE:

Being teased and bullied is just about one of the worst things that can happen. It seems like it's never going to end and there's no way to stop it, but there is, and we are going to learn about that now.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU 'TELL'

Teasing happens mostly at home and at school. All that we will go over works in both these places. In many schools when you tell the teachers about being bullied the teachers either do one of two things. They either...

- talk to the kids who are bullying about how it is wrong but don't do anything practical to make it stop.
- punish the kids who are bullying.

Either way the kids that are bullying you now know it's really bothering you and you've been telling on them to get them into trouble. Because they think you're trying to get them into trouble they try and get you into trouble and then you try and get them into trouble back and so on, and so on.

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THAT WAY

Maybe you're in a school that has sensible ways to help students work through social problems such as bullying. Usually this involves a teacher helping by...

- Not blaming anyone but at the same time taking it seriously.
- Getting everyone together to speak about how terribly this has been affecting your life.
- Making sensible plans of how the teasing can stop.
- Following up to make sure the plans are working.

Because no one is being blamed you don't get into worse trouble with the kids that are teasing you. This way of handling things can work and you're really lucky if you are in a school like this, but many schools don't seem to take this problem seriously enough or don't handle it very well at all. So if you're in a school that doesn't seem to have great ways to work this out with adult help then telling on the kids who bullying you is not a good idea unless it's really, really bad.

Even if you are in a school that does help in a good way, you can make it even better by following the lesson that you will learn here.

THE THINGS THAT MAY BE HAPPENING

What sort of things have been happening to you? Have they been...

- Making fun of you?
- Calling you names?
- Pushed you in line?
- Deliberately leaving you out?
- Spreading nasty rumors about you and talking behind your back?
- Threatened to hurt you and get you back if you tell?

Maybe there's something else...

THE THINGS YOU'VE TRIED TO STOP BEING TEASED

You've probably tried many things to make it stop. You may have tried...

- Ignoring of them and walking away.
- Giving a come back.
- Spreading rumors about them.
- Pushing or hitting them back.
- Avoiding them.
- Telling other children.
- Telling your parent.
- Telling a teacher or counselor.

Maybe there is something else you have tried...

Some of these things may not have worked at all. But there are some things that probably worked a little bit. We are going figure out why some things work and some things don't. Once we've done that we're going to plan how you can do a lot more of the things that work and stop and the things that don't. That might sound hard but it's not. Once you know the right things to do this problem is going to get better.

Firstly, we're going to look in a new way at teasing that will help you see how to do things differently. After doing this you may feel ready to work things out and that's fine. However, if you would like to do more there are some lessons that we can work on.

These lessons will do a lot more than stop you from being teased, they will help you feel more confident and being more popular. Most of the lessons are about changing the way you think and this can have a *big* effect on the way other people treat you.

LESSON ONE: KNOW WHY YOU ARE TEASED.

You may think you know why you are being teased, but there's really only one main reason. The most important thing is to really understand why you are being teased otherwise it keeps happening over and over again no matter what you try. When you understand the real reason it's not so hard to make it stop. Here are some examples about some wrong ideas of why people get teased.

- Sam wears glasses and gets called four eyes which really hurts his feelings. Sam thinks he's being teased about his glasses but is not, he is wrong.
- Jessica gets taunted by children who say mean things about her mother. Jessica thinks the teasing is all about her mother, but she's wrong.
- William gets pushed in line each day by other kids. He thinks it's because he's small and is not good at sports. The only explanation William can think of is that the other kids hate him. Maybe some kids don't like him but that's not the reason he's being teased.

- Josh gets called “gay” by his classmates, he likes girls and he doesn't understand why they say this to him. Josh believes they do it because he likes art and drama, but Josh is wrong he may be artistic but that's not the reason they're picking on him.
- Jennifer hears that other kids called her "stupid". She doesn't understand, because she does really well with all the schoolwork. Jennifer believes rumors are being spread because other children are really jealous of her. Jennifer is wrong. The other kids may be jealous of her but that's not why they're teasing her.

There is really only one reason all these kids are being picked on and they can't see it, and you might not be able to see it either. You may think it's about your personality or the way you look. There are plenty of kids in the world who wear glasses or who are small who don't get teased. There are plenty of kids just like you who don't get teased so why you?

YOU ARE MAKING ONE SIMPLE MISTAKE

Almost every target of teasing makes this mistake. What's is it? Let's see what happens in your everyday life...

Kids who bully come along and make fun of you and you get upset, and then you take some action to try and make them stop. Maybe you...

- tell them to shut up
- try to call them names back and push or punch them
- try to get them into trouble by telling on them threaten them in some way
- try to ignore them until it gets so bad that you have to react in some way

They keep making fun of you and you keep trying to make them stop. This is not working. They know you don't like it, they know the teachers and parents don't like it, so why do they keep doing it. Why don't they just leave you alone?

**"The real reason you're being teased is
because you're getting upset!"**

This may sound really strange because they have teased you first and then you got upset so how can it be that you are making them tease you? You didn't cause it, you're only trying to stop it.

When kids call you names and you get upset do they feel bad about it? They sure don't. When they tease you and you get angry or sad they like it, they'll do it over and over again because they get a good feeling from doing it. The angrier you become the more fun they have. They are thinking

**"Go ahead try and stop me, you see you can't,
I am in control!"**

When they are doing this, all they care about is having fun and what you were doing is giving them more and more fun. They especially look for you weak spots, the things you feel bad about because teasing you about this gets the biggest reaction. The things you get teased about usually have some truth in them but that's not what matters, what matters is that you get upset.

LESSON TWO: CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDE:

It may have come as a bit of a shock to you that you're actually encouraging your bullies, but please don't feel bad, it's not your fault. You had no way of knowing what was really going on. Many, many people make the same mistake.

This lesson is all about changing the way you think about teasing, if you can do that everything else will change. Until now your attitude has been "Oh no they are making fun of me, I have to make them stop." From now on, and you only have to do this for about a week, you think...

*"If they want to tease me it's perfectly OK."

"They can do it all day long and it doesn't bother me."

You are to do absolutely *nothing* to stop making your teasers stop teasing you. Do not...

- tell them to stop
- call them names back
- get upset and threaten them

Feeling angry makes you feel bad, and it makes them feel good. Now that you and your attitude is...

"Go ahead say what you like"

Now you can begin to find your way out of always having to feel angry.

WHAT CAN YOU SAY

You don't have to act like you're made of stone, if your teasers put their face in front of yours and say "What's the matter with you are you deaf or something?", it's all right to say "Yes I hear you". What is important is that you give them permission to insult you and you don't get angry. Here are some examples...

"If you want to call me names, that's okay."

"If you enjoy making fun of me you can do it all day long."

This will stop them very quickly, but remember don't get angry at all, and you must really mean it when you say it. If you give them permission to call you names it's not that you will become a loser, in fact you'll become a winner. Who is going to look foolish you, or them? A person who is calling out nasty names about you or your family or friends to another person who doesn't care looks very, very foolish. The worse the words the, more foolish the person looks.

IF IT'S TRUE?

What about if what they're saying is true? Should you do something then? No. This will only make them do it more. Remember, the reason they are teasing you is not to tell you the truth about yourself but that it upsets you.

Most kids who tease feel that they are, "just joking around" or they are "just playing a game". No one asked your permission to play this game and up until now you have not even known that that's the way they see it. So if they think this is just playing a game, what has been happening is that they have been making up all the rules. Now you're going to change that. By *you* giving *them* permission you are taking part in how this game is being played. You are no longer being put in the position of being the loser. If they don't win this game over and over they are soon going to stop playing. Not only will the teasing stop but you'll feel and be seen as a winner.

LESSON THREE: THREE WARNINGS

1. The teasing may get worse before it gets better. This should last a few days but you have to be ready for it. Don't think "Oh no, this is not working." You teasers have been having a lot of fun with you for a long time and they don't want to stop so they're going to try to keep it going. They may even do it more. They need some time to know that you have changed. But when they do it's really important to know that you and your attitude is working. After a while they get tired of looking foolish and stop. They may try again sometime later but it won't work.

2. You must follow these instructions 100% of the time. If you only do this 90% of the time it won't work because the people teasing you will see that only sometimes it doesn't bother you, but sometimes it does and they will continue.

3. The teasing won't stop 100%. Everyone gets teased a little bit. If you follow this plan maybe 95% of all the teasing will stop but there will still be sometimes when it happens. This is normal, and what's more you'll know exactly what to do about it when it does happen and it won't bother you.

LESSON FOUR: HOW TO HANDLE RUMORS

Rumors are a really big part of teasing. People spread or tell you rumors to upset you and sometimes to see if they can have some fun. It goes something like this...

Teaser. "I heard that you eat like really weird food at home. I heard it was really disgusting."

Target. "That is not true."

Teaser. "Well I believe it's true."

Target. "Who told you?"

Teaser. "Everyone is saying it."

Target. "I don't like it. You should stop saying this now or else you'll be trouble."

Teaser. "See you are getting upset? See, it must be true."
... and so on.

The target can't win. She can't make her stop and she's only making it worse. Think of a court scene, who was the most powerful, the accuser or the accused? So the 'rumor game' is all about getting you to defend yourself and this is a really easy trap to fall into. Your instinct tells you that you are being threatened and you need to defend yourself but this will only make it worse.

SO WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

You have to turn the situation around. Make her defend herself by using the following foreword to question...

"Do you believe it?!"

Here's how it goes...

Teaser. "I heard that you eat like really weird food at home. I heard it was really disgusting."

Target. "Do you believe it?"

Teaser. "No"

WHAT IF THE TEASER SAYS "YES"?

Here's how it goes...

Teaser. "I heard that you eat like really weird food at home. I heard it was a really disgusting."

Target. "Do you believe it?"

Teaser. "Yes"

Target. "Fine, you can believe that if you like."

NOW YOU ARE NOT ON TRIAL

In this way you don't become a defendant. Even if the rumor is true it makes no difference. This way of responding to rumors works either way. Remember, this has nothing to do with the truth; it's about getting you to react and force you to defend yourself. Let everyone see that you don't care about rumors that it's not going to upset you.

The only possible exception to this is if someone who cares about you comes to you and tells you a rumor. You could consider telling the truth. Don't get into a long conversation about it and don't defend yourself.

LESSON FIVE: HOW TO HANDLE PHYSICAL BULLYING.

One of the things that is most important to know before we begin this lesson is that all we have talked about applies to other kids that are emotionally stable. There are a small number who are disturbed and out of control. If you are being really badly bullied by someone like this then you have to tell an adult or even the police.

WHY GET INTO TROUBLE?

As you know teasing is not always being done through words, some kids will push or even hit you in order to get you upset. Usually other kids don't mean to hurt you; they feel they were just 'playing a game'. For example, you were standing in line at school and someone behind pushes you. You yell out "Stop that!" and turn around and push back. You get into trouble with the teacher for doing this but no one saw the push that you got first. So now you are in trouble and the kid who pushed you scores a really big victory. The best thing to do, if you didn't get hurt, is to ignore it. The kid who pushed you doesn't want to get into trouble he only wants to get you into trouble. So he has to avoid being seen pushing you and usually will not risk doing it too many times or will just do it lightly. If you don't do anything back and just ignore him he will not have the pleasure of knowing he is annoying you and he will stop.

WHAT IF YOU REALLY GOT HURT?

Should you ignore that too? No. No one has the right to hurt you. However, it's important to realize that physical fights almost never come out of nowhere. Hardly ever does a stranger walk up to a person and hit him really hard for no reason at all. Almost always the situation begins with an argument that gets worse and leads to a fight. However, if you follow what you have learned in the other lessons you will be able to avoid a situation from getting bad like this because now you know how to deal with teasing words.

If you aren't hurt enough to see a nurse or doctor then try to calmly to tell him how much this hurt you. It's not easy but try to do this without getting angry. What you are doing is letting him know that while he hurt you physically you and not going to react,

retaliate and give him even more pleasure. Chances are he may even feel bad and apologize.

If you are hurt badly then go right away to a teacher but try not to shout "Right I am going to tell on you", as this may result in him following you, doing it again or making it very difficult for you to get away.

EXTORTION

There is another kind of physical bullying. Kids will demand that you give them stuff you don't want to give them. They may forcefully take things from you. What should you do about this? If they ask you for things like your lunch money don't give it to them, but don't look scared and don't react. They are not allowed to hurt you or take things from you like this. Almost always they don't really need what it is they're taking from you, they are just playing the same old hurtful game of trying to get you to react. If they continue to pester you say calmly,

"I'd love to give you what you want but I can't."

Don't get into a big debate about why you can't just say,

"I'd like to help you but I can't."

By starting out saying you'd like to help them they can't claim that you're against them and they will probably do it much less or even stop completely.

WHAT IF THEY TAKE SOMETHING BY FORCE?

Remember, children who bully don't really want what it is they're taking from you; they are trying to get you upset. So the worst thing to do is to try to force them to give it back. That won't work. Again, stay calm and walk away. The calmer you are the more likely you are to get it back.

What they are doing is called extortion and is against the law, so if it gets really bad and if ignoring them doesn't seem to make any difference then tell an adult.

LESSON SIX: GETTING REVENGE.

You have been suffering day after day because of the cruelty of other kids. It's understandable if you want revenge on those who have made you feel so bad for so long. You may have even dreamed of really hurting them or at least making them look like fools in front of everybody.

Lots of things I've been telling you so far have been helpful and good news, but get ready for bad news, (but I hope you realize it's for the best). Getting your teasers back for all the pain they have caused you just isn't possible. Try to add up all the pain you have had, of bottling things up, of feeling sad and depressed and feeling like you're worthless, of not having friends, not being able to concentrate on your schoolwork, feeling sick and worried, there's just so much hurt.

You would have to do something truly terrible or life threatening to get your revenge. You may believe that this is exactly what you want but you need to stop and think about it. Is it really what you want? Do you really want to put someone into a hospital? Do you really want this on your conscience for the rest of your life? As you probably know, there have been some really bad situations where kids who have been teased a lot have taken revenge by seriously hurting or even killing others. Do you think that they are happy now? Do you think their families are happy? They have ruined their own lives and the lives of many other families.

SO HOW CAN YOU GET REVENGE IN A WAY THAT DOESN'T HURT ANYBODY?

There are four things you need to understand.

1. Without becoming a criminal getting revenge for all that's been done to you is just not possible.
 2. Every minute you spend thinking about revenge is a minute your teasers are continuing to control you. You are wasting your life thinking about them. They probably don't use any time at all thinking about you. By doing this you're doing the work for them.
 3. Accept that your teasers are not completely to blame for the situation. What they've been doing is wrong and hurtful and not your fault but as you know now trying to stop them in the way that you did was actually adding to the problem. You don't have to do this any more.
 4. The best way to get revenge is to have your tormentors look foolish. You'll also have the satisfaction of gaining respect. You may even discover that the kids that were trying to make fun of you all the time now are becoming your friends. Changing your life for the better is really the best revenge of all.
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LESSON SEVEN: HOW TO STOP PEOPLE FROM HATING YOU.

For a long time people have been teasing and you are sure they hate you. Otherwise why would they be treating you like this? It's horrible to feel hated, so how can you stop other kids from hating you? Actually, it's not all that hard to do. You just have to understand how hatred works.

WHO DO PEOPLE HATE?

Do they hate people who make them feel good? Do they hate people who love them? Of course not, when people love us we love them back. It is our enemies we hate, the people who purposely cause us harm. If someone makes us hurt and enjoys doing it is that a person we can hate? It's easy to understand why you think the kids that tease you hate you and you hate them. Now ask yourself this question "Who hates more, the kids who are teasing or you?" To answer this you need to think about who is suffering the most. Are you causing the kids who bully you more pain or are they causing you more pain? Of course, you are being caused more pain, the kids bullying are having a great time. You are hating them way more than they are hating you. What happens when you hate them? Does that make them want to love or even like you? As long as you hate them they will hate you. You probably haven't thought of this before because you're being too busy thinking about how much they make you hate them. You couldn't possibly have thought that *you* are making *them* hate *you*. It's not too hard to stop this.

CAN YOU HATE SOMEONE WHO REALLY DOESN'T HATE YOU?

If you ask yourself this question the answer is, may be for a short while but when you see that this person doesn't really hate you and doesn't do things that hurt there is

nothing to hate him for, it'd be impossible for you to continue hating him. Everyone is like this, it's impossible to hate someone who doesn't hate you. This is the secret formula you're going to use to stop them hating you. From now on *you* are going to stop hating *them*. Do not try to stop them hating you, let them do it if they wish but you no longer hate them. When you no longer...

- tell on them
- try to make them stop
- hate them...

They will find it impossible to keep hating you. They will see that you are not their enemy, they may even begin to like you.

EVERYBODY'S DIFFERENT

There is one last thing about this. You've been thinking they hate you because you're different and if you were just like to them they would like you, but that's not really true. The truth is that they are happy you are different that's because deep down everyone wants to be special. In order to be special you have to be different from other people. Part of us wants to be the same as other people so we won't stick out and be made fun of, but another part of us *wants* to be different and special. If people were all the same life would not be fun and anyway the world couldn't function. It takes all sorts of people with all sorts of different talents to do the jobs that make the world work. So feel different and feel special, love others for being different from you and they will love you for being different from them.

LESSON EIGHT:

DEALING WITH BROTHERS & SISTERS.

In almost every family siblings will sometimes fight and tease. Sometimes this happens a lot, sometimes not very much. If you want this to stop the lessons we have learnt will work. So why a special lesson about brothers and sisters? Because there is one major difference, your parents may make matters a little more complicated. In the outside world when you stop kids teasing you are a complete winner. However sometimes when you get your brothers or sisters to stop teasing you may lose something very important, your parents special protection.

GETTING TEASED ON PURPOSE

Here's what often happens. Your brother, for instance, calls you a name and you get upset and tell your parents. Since your parents believe that it is their job to help you all get along together they may yell at him or even punish him. When your parents do this it makes you happy you got your brother punished and your parents are on your side against him. Now if your brother stops bothering you you'll no longer be able to get your parents on your side. It seems like you will be giving up something very special. Many kids actually prefer to keep on being a teasing victim at home rather than give up this advantage over a brother or sister. So you need to make a decision, what's more important, ending the teasing, getting along better or getting your sibling punished?

Well friends may come and go but in times when things get really hard it's your brothers or sisters that will be there for you. This can only happen if you take care of your relationships and learn to get on better and work out your problems without trying to get them into trouble.

BEING A HERO

One important thing you need to realize is that you will gain your parent's respect by learning to get on with your brothers or sisters. They like this much more than having to take sides and always being told about problems. Try to prevent your siblings from getting into trouble. Tell your parents that you can work it out. Your siblings will really like it and your parents will be very happy. There is nothing that parents like more than seeing their children stick up for each other. When you stop telling on your siblings they are going to stop telling on you to. This may take a few days to stop but that's perfectly OK. Let them tell on you because you know that soon this will stop.

Now this may seem hard but even if your siblings are lying and making up a story about how you hurt them, do nothing and don't get angry. Even if your parents believe the story and punish you, don't get mad at them either and argue about it, don't yell at them for blaming you unjustly and then try and get the punishment taken away. Just take the punishment like a hero. Now this may seem really strange to you. How can you let your brother or sister get away with that? You can do it because it's going to make you a winner and make this whole situation get much better. Firstly your brother or sister is going to be so surprised they're going to be amazed at how nice you are being to them and that you are so tough that you can gracefully accept punishment for something you didn't even really do. But they'll also feel bad for what they did, they know that they told a lie and you didn't really deserve it but most importantly they probably won't do it again. Everyone will like you better for being this way. After this happens a few times your parents will actually start asking you what really happened because they see you are being so mature. Tell them that you and your brothers and sisters will work this out and that no one is really to blame.

LESSON NINE: KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TATTLE-TALING AND TRUTH TELLING.

We have been talking a lot about working things out for yourself. However, there are times when you are going to need to tell an adult about a problem. Although it's good to always try to do things on your own there are times in everybody's life when they need help.

WHEN DO YOU NEED HELP?

- ◇ You have tried for 3-4 weeks all that we have learnt and they still keep on doing it.
- ◇ When the person bullying physically or emotionally really hurts you badly.
- ◇ When you are starting to feel like you want to hurt yourself or others.
- ◇ When it is bothering you so much that it's all you can think about.
- ◇ When the person bullying you is dangerous and out of control.

As we said right at the beginning if you go to a school that has a good way of working with teasing and bullying then it's no big deal to tell a teacher or a parent. However, even then it's important to note the difference between truth telling and tattle-taling. Here's how you can tell the difference...

- *Truth telling is* when you tell an adult so that you can get help for yourself or for others without looking to get anyone else into trouble.
 - *Tattle-taling is* when you tell an adult in order to get someone into trouble or to draw attention to yourself. As long as you are truth telling, speaking to an adult about a really serious situation it is a healthy and good thing to do.
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LESSON TEN: STANDING UP & SPEAKING OUT

Now that you have the tools to stop being teased you are a special person and you may not even know it. For a long time you've probably seen other kids teased and although you know how much it hurts you probably have not done anything to stop it. After all haven't you been getting in enough trouble without asking for more? Up until now by sticking up for someone else it's meant that the teasers would likely turn on you.

If you've followed the lessons you very likely will no longer be the target of teasing but now you can do something that just a short time ago you would have thought to have been completely impossible. You can now stand up for other kids who are being teased. If the teasing turns on you now know exactly what to do to stop them very easily and very quickly. Remember, speak calmly and with confidence when you intervene and here is the most important thing, don't speak to the kids bullying, speak to the kid who is being picked on. In this way you're not threatening anybody.

At first try speaking quietly with the kid being picked on. Do this away from the kids who are teasing. However if you are really confident then you could do it right in front of the kids who bully. Sure, they will probably say mean things to you but now you know exactly how to stop it. You will be helping someone because you know exactly how it feels to be in that position.

You could say something like,

"I used to get teased until I realized that in trying to make them stop it I just made them do it more. When I made up my mind not to let it bother me anymore they just looked foolish and it stopped."

"You know, the more you try and make them stop the more they'll do it. If you don't let it bother you they will stop."

You could speak to the people being teased and teach them all the things that worked for you. Don't be afraid that this will make you lose your friends, everyone, including the kids who are bullying, will respect you more.

AND FINALLY

HOW TO HAVE MORE REAL FRIENDS

One of the things that will slowly begin to happen when you follow these lessons is that you'll get more friends. Although this seems unfair, after all when you really needed friends was when you were being picked on; it is often the way things work out. This won't happen right away but gradually you'll find that more kids want to talk to you and be with you. This may sound impossible because for so long you've been picked on and your self-esteem has been badly affected but with a little patience you will find confidence improving. You may have gotten so used to staying away from people that even though the teasing stops your old habit of being a loner continues. However, it is really important to know that people are now wanting to be with you not because they feel sorry for you but because you are good to be with.

HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT FRIENDSHIP

1. Don't try to convince people to be your friends. It usually will just put them off. A true friend is not a 'Boss' but should be seen more or less as an equal. If you have to work hard to make friends like this they will feel they are your 'Master' and can tell you to do things you don't like and they will also be willing to 'dump' you as a friend without thinking too much about it.
2. Don't think "Oh no. I don't have enough friends. What can I do to make kids like me?" Throw this thinking away. This kind of thinking

will give people unhealthy power over you. They will look down on you. Replace this attitude with,

“If no one wants to be my friend it’s perfectly OK with me.”

3. Does it scare you to think like this? Are you afraid you will end up with no friends at all? Don’t worry this attitude will not mean you will have less but more friends. How does this work? It means that no one has unhealthy power of you, you will be strong and independent and no one will look down on you. You will be yourself. People will see you are confident and will respect you more and will want to be with you. If you relax and are carefree the friends will come to you.
4. You can’t be friends with everybody. It’s normal to have small groups of friends. One of the easiest ways to know who could be a possible friends is to see if they like the same things as you do. They don’t have to be exactly like you in fact it can be boring to have friends who are just like us, but it’s good to have similar interests. It’s important to know that it’s not only you who needs friends. Other kids need friends as well. You are just as important to them as they are to you. You don’t have to act exactly like them to be accepted. To simply be you is the best way to make friends.

If there is a group of friends that you would like to be a part of then here are some things that will help you...

Approach them but don’t be pushy, stay a little bit on the edge of the group. Don’t speak too much and mainly listen. If they walk away don’t follow them unless they ask you to.

Pick out someone from the group that may be interested in similar things to you. Start a conversation with this person. The best way to start a conversation is to pay a genuine compliment, maybe something about clothes or something he or she does. Don't worry, provided your compliment is not fake, he or she will like it. You don't have to do this all the time, doing it too much would be phony but it's a great way to open a conversation. After you've exchanged a few words, if you don't know him or her already, introduce yourself and maybe the person will introduce you to others in the group. If this doesn't happen right away, have patience, it may take three or four times of approaching this person before you are introduced or involved you with the others. If you have the attitude,

*"It would be good to be friends but it's okay if we're not."
Then you can't lose.

GOOD LUCK!
...EVEN THOUGH YOU DON'T NEED IT.

SECTION TWO: *SOME OTHER VERY EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES*

Teasing and bullying can go on for a long time and get 'stuck'. After mastering the simple tools learnt in the previous lessons here are some more. Even if the strategies seem somewhat 'fake' it is amazing how just one or two alternatives can lift you out of a hurtful situation.

Of course you can work out a lot of these situations on their own but if they become a pattern, go on and on, occur frequently or you feel physically or emotionally threatened then extra help and adult is very important. What is usually needed is a 'coach'. This can be any adult who you trust and who will not make things worse in trying to help.

In speaking with countless adults both young and old over the years about situations where they were teased or bullied, again and again they say they wish that the adults around them had gotten more involved in the right way. In working on these simple strategies don't be afraid to ask a trusted adult for help. The kids that are bullying don't need to know that you are getting coaching. Sometimes you just need coaching and a safe place to practice your new strategies that will break the hurtful patterns of bullying and teasing.

Only choose one (or at most two strategies) and practice it a lot before using it in a real life situation. After two or three weeks you can try more if...

- It was not the right strategy.
- It worked so well that you want to try more.

"So"

(Age Range: Four years upwards)

This is very simply for younger children because it is simple and easy to remember. It's a blend of ignoring and agreeing. It can be used both in the classroom and playground/camp situation. It should be said calmly and naturally (but *not* towards adults.)

1. This is like shrugging your shoulders in that it conveys an "I don't care." attitude. For example...

Teaser: "When you run you look like a duck."

Target: "So?"

Teaser: "Well it means that your butt sticks out and looks funny."

Target: "So?"

2. Other similar responses:
 "Your point being?"
 "What is your point?"
 "Whatever."
 "Really?"

Visualization

(Age range: Five years upwards)

1. What is a visualization?

A picture inside you that is different and better from what is happening outside you.

2. You can imagine an 'inside picture' when confronted with a tease. This helps because it makes it easy to not respond and give the teasers pleasure. Some examples are...

An imaginary shield to repel teases.

Letting the tease 'bounce off'.

Letting the tease blow away.

Visualizations should not include violent images.

Also...

They can be used in preparing for difficult situations like the playground or bus.

They can be used to calm down after a difficult situation.

3. You may want to draw your visualizations and keep it near your bed or someplace close so you can look at it a lot.

Self-Talk

(Age range nine years old and above.)

1. Do you ever 'self-talk' in other situations in your life.
When?
2. Here are some examples of effective teasing self-talk...
"I will not react with anger or hurt feelings."
"They can this all day and I won't be bothered."
"Whose opinion is more important-the teaser's or mine?"
"I do not like teasing, but I will handle it."
3. For helping break the cycle of impulsive reactions.
S.T.O.P:
S-top, **T**-hink, about your **O**-ptions and **P**-lan.
4. You need to think about positive qualities or special times.

Think good things about yourself.

Respond to the Tease with a "Compliment"

(Age range: Ten years and upwards)

This catches the child teasing off guard, turning the attention away from you.

1. Examples.
Tease: "You read like a first grader."
Response: "I am a slow reader. You are a great reader."

OR...

Tease: "You hit like a retard."
Response: "I hated striking out as well. I wish I could hit as good as you."

2. Role-play.
As with 'Agreeing With the Facts' this strategy is great for situations where you are being teased about something you do or the way the teasers see you but it should not be in responding to very bad taunts such as racist comments and calling you "gay".

Agree with the Facts

(Age range: Ten years and upwards)

This is another surprising strategy that often ‘takes the steam’ out of a tense situation. It can mean you don’t have to defend yourself. It also means you don’t have to feel embarrassed and try to cover up the things about yourself.

1. Examples.

Easy to do...

“Yes, I do.”

“That’s right.”

Harder to do...

Tease: “You’re such a cry baby.”

Response: “Yes, I know I cry a lot.”

Tease: You were such a scaredy cat.”

Response: Yes, I was afraid of that big dog.”

Tease: “You are such a slow reader.”

Response: “Yes I am a not so fast a reader.”

2. Role-play and practice.

This strategy is particularly helpful if used when the teasing is about a physical difference or other thing about you that you can’t change, like the shape of your nose. Unless you teach yourself to feel OK about this characteristic, don’t try this strategy. Find an adult to practice with.

With your adult coach agree to do three ‘practice teases’ that happen at unexpected moments through the day and you can try and make a ‘Agree With the Facts.’

However, this strategy should not be tried in responding to very bad taunts such as racist comments and calling you “gay”.

The Turn Around:

Reframing-Accept the Tease as if it is a Compliment

(Age Range: Ten years upward)

This is a strategy to turn a tease around so that you take it as a positive comment. It is a powerful way to *defuse* and *deflate* a teasing situation.

1. Here are some reframing comments.

“I appreciate your attention.”

“Thanks for your opinion.”

Or...

Tease: “Four eyes, four eyes, you have four eyes...”

Response: “Thanks for noticing my glasses.”

Sarcasm should be completely avoided as this may make a situation much worse.

Work on making the ‘turn around’ in a ‘dead pan’, flat way.

2. Role-play.

With your adult coach agree to do three ‘practice teases’ that happen at unexpected moments through the day and you can try and make a ‘turn around.’ It’s not so easy at first but once you get the hang of it, it takes away the teaser’s pleasure in a powerful way because it is obvious you respect yourself

Use Humor

(No specific age)

Humor really takes the stress out of a bad situation. You may have a good sense of humor but because of all the horrible things that have been happening to you your ability to say funny things may have gotten covered up. So this is a tool to use after you have been successful with some of the other strategies, because then you will be beginning to feel more confident. It often surprises and throws off the teasers if you laugh and say something funny. Remember, no one, not even the funniest people can be funny every minute of the day but using humor occasionally can really work.

1. Some examples.

Tease: "You are such a slow runner."

Response: "Only when I am being a turtle."

Tease: "You are always so slow to finish your work."

Response: "It's because I come from a family of snails."

I remember once when a boy who was being teased about having a big nose started to wiggle it in a funny way which made everyone laugh a lot. He was only teased a few more times about his nose and each time he made the same funny face. The teasing soon stopped.

"I" Message

(Age Range: Twelve years upward)

This strategy has become very popular and a lot of adults think it is helpful. The risk of using this is that it can sound fake and weird if you don't really mean it. You also have to be careful because you are asking the teasers to stop which they likely will not do. So this tool usually only works if you use it together with others such as 'Turn Around' or 'Agreeing With the Facts.' However it can be useful so see what you think.

1. This is what the "I" message is.
 - “**You** make me so mad” vs. “**I** feel angry when you do that. **I** would like you to stop.”
 - The A,B,C of 'I' statements
 - a) I feel...
 - b) When...
 - c) I would like... or I wish you would...
 - Try to use your own words so it doesn't sound formal and strange.
2. Discuss situations with your coach in which the "I" message could be used.
 - Very important:** Don't use 'I' messages when you are being teased in the playground and on the bus or any other place that no adults are around.
3. If you role-play remember to maintain eye contact and use a neutral voice.
4. Practice the "I" message in non teasing situations.
 - “I feel angry when you take my stuff out my room. I wish you would asked me first.”

Safe Place:

All these strategies are fine but most involve walking away afterwards. Work out a place you can go to. For example if a you use 'Agreeing With the Facts' you need to move to a different place such as joining some other group, walking away to the water cooler, going to join or watch another game or going to the library. One of the best ways is to join another group of children who have agreed in advance to be a 'Circle of Friends'.* Sometimes this is not possible but often it is and it helps. The most important thing is to walk away with confidence and to know where you are going really helps.

Sources: Much of the first part of this booklet is drawn from...Kalman, I. (2003) *Bullies to Buddies: How to Turn Your Enemies into Friends & Stop being teased and bullied without really trying.*

Available on www.bullies2buddies.com

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* The Circle of Friends is a part of The Social Inclusion Approach devised by Kim John Payne