

# 10 WAYS TO HANDLE A BULLY

## 1. TURN INSULTS INTO COMPLIMENTS

Ignore the bully's words and turn them into something nice. (Bully: "Pizza Face!" Target: "Thank you! I know how much you love pizza!")

## 2. AGREE WITH THE BULLY

Bullies expect people to disagree with them. When someone agrees, they are surprised and have to develop new plans. You don't have to put yourself down by agreeing with a bully, you are just agreeing that you might have been mistaken. (Bully: "You're so stupid!" Target: "You mean I've wasted all these years thinking I was smart? Thanks for wising me up!")

## 3. KIDS CAN HELP

Bullies are less likely to bully if they don't have the support of their peers. Be a courageous bystander! If you feel safe, tell the bully that what they are doing is not nice. Offer the target of the bullying some help. Bully: "You're so fat!" Courageous Bystander: "That's not nice! I think you look really pretty today."

## 4. EMPATHY

Put yourself in the bully's shoes. What could have happened to make the bully act that way? Bully: "Get out of my way! I hate you!" Target: "It sounds like you're having a really bad day. I know I have days where I feel like I don't like anyone either."

## 5. CONFUSE THE BULLY

Respond to the bully in a way that makes absolutely no sense. By giving an unexpected response, the bully will not know how to react. Bully: "Hey! Freckle-face!" Target: "Water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink."

SOURCE: Cohen-Posey, K. (1995) How to Handle Bullies, Teasers and Other Meanies: A Book that Takes the Nuisance Out of Name Calling and Other Nonsense. Rainbow Books, Inc.

## 6. HUMOR

Making someone laugh, catches them off guard. It's hard to be mean when something is funny. Bully: "I'm not your friend!" Target: "Well, I'm not your elbow!"

## 7. ASK QUESTIONS

Bullies tend to act out of habit and not think about their actions. Asking questions makes a bully more aware of what they are doing. (Bully: "You sure are ugly!" Target: "That's your opinion, but why do you want to tell me that?" Bully: "Because I don't like you!" Target: "If you don't like me, why don't you just ignore me?")

## 8. REVERSERS

Ask the bully to keep doing something that is annoying you. Complimenting bad behavior and asking them to do it more can have the opposite effect. (Target: "You sure are a terrific burper. Can you do it again? Again? Again?")

## 9. GOLDEN NUGGETS

Try to find a little sparkle of goodness in what the bully is saying to agree with the compliment. (Tease to his sister: "I saw you with your boyfriend last night. I know you two were kissing!" Courageous bystander: "Wow! You sure do love your sister a lot to be so worried about her love life.")

## 10. EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS

When one person can be honest with their feelings it helps the other person to be more open. (Person to their sister: "Did you see these new jeans that Grandma bought me? They look great on me! I know you wish you could afford a pair like this!" Response: "They are cool. I'm really jealous that she bought them for you. When she buys you stuff like that doesn't for me, it makes me feel like she doesn't love me as much as you.")

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