

13 Things Kids Can Do If Being Bullied.

1. Recognize it's not about them. Easily said, not so easily done, but it's the truth. A bully is bullying because of their issues, not yours.
2. Set up battle lines in your mind. Feminist Sally Kempton said, ““It's hard to fight an enemy who has outposts in your head.” Dr. Phil echoed this statement on CNN's Town Hall (Anderson Cooper 360). One of the most terrible thing about bullying is the way those words and actions seep into your unconscious. As soon as you're having words fired at you, strap on the Kevlar shield of “thought stopping.” Hear the words, then think of three reasons why they're not true.
3. Find an adult. A teacher, a parent, a rabbi—anyone who can stop the bullying.
4. If the adult you go to won't do anything, find another. The war is your mind, don't let the bully win. Search out the authority figure that will hold the bully accountable.
5. Find allies. Whether that means someone at school, the guidance counsellor, an internet support group, make sure you get people in your corner. Not because they'll necessarily fight your battle for you, but because they are an emotional support and a soft place to fall.
6. If you can't find a support group, start one of your own. A bully's tactic is to isolate you, make you feel alone. By finding other people, you've already knocked out one of their weapons. (A simple search “anti-bullying support groups” can help you find people in your community.
7. If you live in a rural setting or there are no groups, then look for national call centers. For example, in Canada, there's the Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868.

8. Get help as often as you need. If that means phoning the Kids Help Phone every hour, do it. I'm OCPD, which is like living with an internal bully, so I can say that when it comes to combating those voices, it's all about being proactive and getting the help.
9. Find a safe place in the school. I used to eat by the office. Because of the teachers coming in and out, I was less likely to be a target. Ditto with spending lunch in the library. It may not be glamorous and it may not be what media wants us to believe about being a target (the movies always have this glorious confrontation, and tend to equate walking away with cowardice), but that's the difference between life and fantasy. Life is about making the smart decisions that keep you safe.
10. Do your homework. Bullying feels primitive and scary, and it is. But it's also a problem and truth is, you're smart and competent. Make it a family project—can you and your parents find an alternative school? Can you find an ally with the principal (and if not, what's the next level?). The truth is this: what your parents remember about bullying is not what bullying looks like today. As you educate them, you educate yourself, and knowledge really is power.
11. Talk, talk, talk. Find people who will help. In a weird way, I found my bullying experience sort of freeing. I didn't have friends and that sucked, but because I didn't have to "save face" I was able to take risks to protect myself. For example, one of the worst things for me was group projects. Lord, how I loathed those. Especially when I was stuck with kids who didn't want their desks to touch mine. So, I went to my teachers, explained what was going on and asked to be able to do

projects on my own. Some teachers gave the standard “rise above it. Ignore them” spiel that made me wonder if they were secretly working for the bullies, but some teachers understood. They were rare, but those moments gave me breathing room. And sometimes, that’s all you need.

12. Unplug. Stop reading the posts/texts. Plugging into the bullies outside of school is a conscious decision. You may not be able to avoid them in the hallways, but why let them into your bedroom? Don’t do it—that’s like a minority person going to a racist website and reading the material. It’s a waste of time and you have better things to do.

13. Use fantasy. Think of yourself as a celebrity. Do you think they spend their time reading *The Enquirer* or do you think they get on with their day? They get on with their day. We think celebrity life is glamorous, but when you look at it, a lot of times, they’re just as bullied. The only difference is society dismisses the bullying because the celebrity is famous and rich. So, take a page from them. Many actors/singers don’t read reviews about their work, they don’t Google to see their standings. It’s the same with you. Treat the bullies as paparazzi (because those celebrity photographers can get just as violent as a bully), walk the halls because you have a *right* to be there.

At the end of the day, it’s about choice and taking charge. Bullies can only make you believe the world is against you. It’s simply not true. By reaching out to adults, other kids, and doing it in person/phone/internet, what you’ll find is a community and a support system. And will your eight hours at school still be hell? Probably. But if you can find those allies—if you can find the ultimate ally (yourself), you can find your freedom.