

Bullying and Free Association

One of the biggest problems with discussions on “school bullying” is that we define bullying differently than we would in other situations. It makes it so we analyse it from a different perspective, a perspective that fundamentally disrespects the pain of children. If we called the murder of a white man ‘murder’, but we called the killing of a black man “smiggletickels” and taught that smiggletickels exist and is unfortunate, but black people need to learn to cope with it ... there is no doubt that society will tolerate the murder of black people much more often than the murder of white people.

Bullying in the adult world is called; battery, assault, robbery, harassment, kidnapping, false imprisonment, etc. In the child world we call it, bullying ... do you see a problem?

To dig further ... if I were to ask you, who is better equipped to handle someone assaulting them, an adult, or a child? Which would you choose? Who has more resources to battle an injustice done to them, an adult, or a child? If anything ... it should be considered and treated as a much bigger issue when a child is hurt than an adult.

However, all of this is merely a result of a much deeper issue. This is the natural consequence of more fundamental ideas in our culture that societies have faced on many different issues many different times in history.

When the fundamental structure of a society makes some people have control over another group of people, it is human nature to abuse that power. Even the person who cares about being just and fair will have bad days where it will be hard to consider every element of every situation to be able to decide the best treatment. Even knowing an individual has so much power and choosing not to exercise it provides a perverted sense of righteousness. Rather than feeling that you are giving a man his due, you feel generous and it will affect the relationship you have with him.

A hundred years ago, the husband that chooses not to beat his wife will tell his wife how lucky she is to have such a considerate man. Two hundred years ago, the slave owner who rarely physically beats his slaves will tell them how lucky they are to be in such a great situation. And I am talking about the nice husbands and slave owners, most often people weren't such nice guys.

The situation that ended the abuse of woman and black people was not white men being more just rulers ... rather, society ending the power disparity. When women and black people have the opportunity to walk away from people they don't want to be around, society became much more fair. When society encouraged these people to get away from abusive situation (rather than moralized or condemned them) we found these people

getting even better treatment.

There is no way for different forms of bullying to be eliminated when people are forced to be around people they choose not to be around. When people have no power over their teachers, classmates, family lives ... bullying will occur. Sadly, that is the plight of human nature. We don't get good treatment by the justness of our rulers, we get good treatment by the incentives erected by free association. People get good treatment only when we have to be good to people in order to have them be around us, and they leave us when they feel mistreated. Children must be provided with free association in order to end bullying ... then it will be in everyone's interest to protect the child, and the child will have the ability to protect himself.