

Bullying's Cure is Fighting Back

It's as predictable as the equinox: school starts in the fall and bullying catches society's attention anew.

It's not as though bullying stops over the summer break, but then it is usually left-over momentum from the previous school year.

"Back to school" recharges it.

Schools decry bullying, often getting the community involved. It's a halfhearted effort at best. Schools can't eliminate bullying without undermining their own system since it's based on authoritarianism — socially accepted bullying.

The dictionary says a bully is anyone who uses strength or power to harm or intimidate someone weaker, usually to force them to do what the bully wants.

Who, other than an insecure person with little self-worth, would behave this way? Whether it's the schoolyard bully, the authoritarian teacher or principal, the politician or the politicians' badged "muscle," if you choose to push others around — literally or figuratively — to force them to do what you want, you can't think very highly of yourself.

I pity bullies, even as I hope their victims fight back hard enough to make the bullies reconsider their poor life choices.

Fighting back is the only cure for bullying. The victims must fight back, and shouldn't be penalized for doing so. Yet this is the solution no one in an official capacity, who claims to oppose bullying, is willing to accept.

Forcing victims to rely on someone else to solve the problem for them is also bullying. It doesn't teach responsibility and won't build confident character for facing life's other struggles. Encourage the victim to stand firm. Back them up if you're concerned about their safety, but don't tolerate anyone who treats fighting back against a bully the same as bullying.

Some bullied kids have gone on to strike out in tragic, angry ways at those who didn't bully them — themselves or other innocents. I suspect this is because healthy ways of fighting back were forbidden.

The frustration must build to intolerable levels, finally snapping in the worst possible way.

The victim, because of his lack of competence in dealing with bullies, becomes a bully. Or a mass-murderer.

It's no excuse, but it is predictable.

You can create a monster by being monstrous to someone. Forbidding self-defense or turning a blind eye to officially sanctioned forms of bullying is monstrous. Society ends up paying the price for official cowardice.

Bullying is a problem. It won't be solved by ignoring the solution or by making the social environment worse for its victims.