

# **The Bystander: Victim or Villain?**

A Special Curriculum to Help Young People  
Understand and Cope with Conditioning

Ages 9 -14



by  
**Dr. Terrence Webster Doyle**  
with Adryan Russ

based on the  
Education for Peace Series books  
by Dr. Terrence Webster-Doyle

# **A Personal Note to You**

## **from Dr. Terrence Webster-Doyle**

Thank you for caring enough to want to help your students resolve conflict peacefully. Bullying is a serious affair. I personally suffered from it in my younger years. I think that's why I am compelled to help young people today.

### **Do We Fight, Run Away, Help?**

When I was a boy, I had one option: to run away. That's what I did, and although it often saved me from being bullied, running away gave me no confidence in myself and caused me emotional pain. I was also caught and beaten up. Once I learned how to protect and defend myself, I then had another option: to defend myself physically against a bully who bothered me. This has a certain logic. We *do* have the right to defend ourselves against being violated. Physical self-defense has a place.

But in my preadolescent and adolescent years, the limited options of fighting or running away were not successful in helping me cope with bullying. As I grew older, I thought there must be a better way. So many people are bullied, and many of them never get help from others who are standing by! What concerned me then, and still does today, is that practicing *only* physical self-defense doesn't stop conflict; it merely creates another on top of the one that exists. We need to develop our mental strength so we know how to handle a bully, and how to help a victim in need.

### **How Do We Promote Nonviolence in a Violent Culture?**

Today our young people face far greater threats. Bullying has escalated to homicide. Guns are now the weapons of choice for settling disputes. Physical self-defense, by itself, has become ineffectual in defending us from bullying. The media have conditioned young people to think that using weapons to resolve conflicts is the justifiable — and even honorable — thing to do. Our children have grown up in a tremendously violent culture fed by violent movies, TV programs, video games, magazines and comics. Since 1956 more than 1,500 studies have shown that violence in the media (especially television) *does* affect young people's behavior in a negative way. In other words, we've taught our children to be junior Rambo's, to resolve their problems of relationship by extreme and violent means.

As our young people face more violence, we adults are challenged to come up with ways they can resolve conflicts *nonviolently*. Parents are overwhelmed with making ends meet in this economically unstable time. Teachers are overworked trying to educate young people academically, to give them the intellectual skills they need to go after their chosen vocations. So who's going to help our children understand and

resolve the problems they have with people around them? Who's going to teach them the skills to cope with bullies, conflict and violence?

### Learning How to Stop a Fight

One of the greatest gifts we can give our children is the ability to understand and resolve conflict peacefully. This is what this curriculum is all about — to create a new kind of education that teaches Mental Self-Defense™ skills. These skills provide students the ability to resolve conflict before it becomes physical.

When young people learn how to defend themselves mentally, they learn how to deal with bullies, and how to help victims. Our culture has taught us that in order to survive, we need to stand back, observe, and not get involved. We have become bystanders who are either afraid to help or simply don't know how to help. Hopefully, this curriculum will help change this — in your mind, in your school, in your community.

If you have questions about the curriculum, or how to implement it, please feel free to contact me. I also offer teacher-training courses to train people in conflict resolution using this and several other books and curriculums.

Thank you again for selecting these materials for your school. I hope they live up to your expectations and, most importantly, that they help your young students understand and resolve conflict peacefully — by becoming aware of their conditioning and by their willingness to see the world in a new way.

Respectfully yours,

*Dr. Terrence Webster-Doyle*



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## LESSON 1

# Bullies & Their Victims

### Breakdown of Lesson 1:

- What a bully does.
- How the bully selects a target.
- How practice prepares us.

### Materials & Tools Needed:

- Activity 1: Prepare a chart called “A Bevy of Bullies,” p. 2.
- Activity 2: Make 2 copies of the roleplay, p. 6, for Volunteers.

**Note to Instructors:** Welcome students to this new curriculum. As you ask questions, encourage ALL responses. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers. A “mistake” creates an opportunity to learn something new. Statements in *italics* indicate notes or possible student responses.

## What A Bully Does

### 1. Ask students:

- Have you ever been badgered by a bully? *Encourage students to tell brief stories.*
- Do you think there’s anyone who has never been intimidated by a bully?
- How many different kinds of bullies can you think of? Let’s make a chart. We can add to this chart every time we meet!

**Go to Activity 1, “A Bevy of Bullies!”  
on the next page.**

## **ACTIVITY 1 – THART**

# **A Bevy of Bullies!**

Create a chart called “A Bevy of Bullies” and encourage students to add to the list on an ongoing basis. The more varieties they can name, the more aware they become of how many different kinds of bullies there are. Below are a few to get you started.

**A bully is someone who:**

- 1. Nit-picks and finds fault with everything you do.**
- 2. Refuses to recognize your existence and value.**
- 3. Singles you out and treats you differently from everyone else.**
- 4. Threatens you in front of other people.**
- 5. Twists and misrepresents everything you say and do.**
- 6. Is charming to everyone, but cruel to you.**
- 7. Calls you names, which saps your self-confidence.**
- 8. Frightens you.**
- 9.**
- 10.**
- 11.**
- 12.**
- 13.**
- 14.**
- 15.**

**2. Tell students:**

- There are many reasons why bullies target certain people.
- An important thing to know is that all cruelty springs from weakness. A bully who nit-picks, accuses or threatens you is someone who feels powerless — and takes it out on you.
- Understanding why a bully harasses you is the first step toward taking control of a bully situation.

## **How the Bully Selects a Target**

**1. Ask students:**

- How would you guess a bully selects a person to harass?
- Would a bully target someone who looks strong? Someone who appears weak? Someone tall? Someone short? A good student? A mediocre student?
- Would a bully attack someone who excels at everything? Excels at nothing? Someone popular? Someone apparently anti-social? Someone with a strong sense of honesty? Someone who lies?

**2. Tell students:**

- Bullies are skillful at selecting a target. Sometimes they select someone who is, or has, something the bully envies — popularity, success, competence, integrity.
- Other times bullies select someone they recognize as fearful, easily intimidated, vulnerable or lacking in self-esteem.
- Bullies need to be in control, and will do anything to get it. They will lie, deceive, or charm you, and cannot be trusted or relied upon.
- Let's look at two students talking, and see if we can figure out who the bully is! Are you ready?

**Go to Activity 2, "The Bully Is Back!"  
on the next page.**