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THE CHICKEN SPENDS ITS WHOLE LIFE...
LEARNING WHO THE CHICKENHAWKS ARE

The school and the mom asked me to consult about and to observe her 4-year old son, Eddie. She felt that another boy Mitchell was bullying him. Eddie's calm immersion in playful exploration would be suddenly interrupted, as he caught a sudden movement or a discordant sound. "What's that? They're getting wild. Don't come over here!" he'd pray silently to himself when he saw Mitchell look his way. Try as he could to shrink himself invisible, he could tell that it was happening… again. "Please, not me again. How come not Billy? Or Sally? Why me? Always me?" Anxiously, he looked for the teachers. No luck. "They're not looking! Don't they know… don't they see, it's happening again? Teacher! Mitchell's going to get me… again!" Mitchell was ready to "play" with Eddie. The body language and facial expressions of both Mitchell and Eddie communicated the bully and victim dance I entered the room and caught Mitchell's eyes.   He immediately disengaged from Eddie. Mitchell was smart enough to not only pick up on Eddie's vulnerability, but also to scan the environment to see what he could get away with. Eddie's family experienced trauma previously, when a stray bullet shot by an unknown shooter had killed his father at the park. His mom was terrified that violence had found her family again. She anguished, "Why is my son targeted by this new bully?"

"Targets for harassment can be chosen any number of reasons. They aren't necessarily victims nor do they necessary seek or need acceptance from the bully's peer group. Simply being a newcomer to a school without immediate friends or alliances might be enough to draw a bully's attention. A perceived slight, a manner of dress or deportment, association with a disliked peer or relative, or even success in school could be reason enough for one person to bully another. On the other hand, bullies become emboldened if they sense that a potential target is vulnerable.
Targets are perceived as vulnerable for a variety of reasons: social or physical ineptness, physical or psychological disability, sexual orientation, and ethno-cultural or socio-economic inequity can drive a wedge between individuals and their peer groups. A bully can further alienate a target by forestalling a sympathetic backlash from the dominant student culture. Anyone in the peer group defending a vulnerable individual invites scorn by association. Someone defending a target labeled "gay," for example, will be themselves labeled 'gay.' According to a Toronto District Board survey, "gay" is one of the first words that English as Second Language students learn" (Parsons, 2003, p.45).

I didn't identify Mitchell as the bully immediately, but any bully could have picked Eddie out among the children… as the "One." Mitchell anticipated and forestalled peer intervention. He influenced others with negative opinions about Eddie. An adult client, KC felt she was from early childhood, bad things always seemed to happen to her. Anguished, she cried out,

"Why always me? The other night... I went to dinner with my grandma. Waiting for a table, we ordered wine and sat at a small table in the bar. I had baggy sweats, hair in a ponytail, no makeup... with my Granny! Minding my own business. Out of the corner of my eye... or, maybe I heard a tone... or, some kind of sixth sense... I looked up and there in the doorway was... trouble! I knew right away that this man was trouble -- big time."

How did KC know with just one look that he was trouble? She knew because the chicken spends its whole life learning how to recognize the chicken hawk. The prey learns how to recognize their

predators. The experience of KC was not an isolated adult incident, but a continuation of childhood traumas. At one time, KC had been the "Eddie" to the bullies in her childhood. And, she was still the "One" to adult bullies in adulthood. Unfortunately, teachers, parents, and other adults can hold an illusion of childhood that denies the existence and actions of bullies or "mean kids." Children may initially grow up in a loving sanctuary without harshness and "mean kids." Or, the adult management had been so vigilant that otherwise problematic interactions are nipped in the bud or resolved by adult interventions. Unfortunately, such adult overprotection prevents children from learning how to protect themselves from aggression. After repeated experiences of being picked on or bullied without sufficient recourse and support, victimized individuals may become hypervigilant and hypersensitive to any potential interaction, threatening or benign. Feeling vulnerable, unable to protect themselves, their only hope becomes to recognize the predator before it attacks and hopefully, avoid it. The little boy Eddie in the classroom and my client, KC had both become hypersensitive and hyper-vigilant to anticipate potential abusers. Unfortunately, hypersensitivity and hypervigilance was not only ineffective, but increased the probability of harassment.

THE CHICKEN HAWK SPENDS ITS WHOLE LIFE...
KC had seen him before... bullies like him back in elementary school, just as Eddie experienced bullies in his preschool. She saw them eventually, at work… everywhere. She had met bullies, other chicken hawks all her life. With a glint in his eyes, the smirk, and the body posture, the chicken hawk... the predator had found her… again. A tremor crept into her voice,

> "I turned away quickly! Out of the corner of my eye, I watched him... hands on hips. Scanning the room... A couple of seconds... And, then... he came right up to me! Starts messing with me! Why me… again? Why me out of all those women in the room? A dozen others... some dressed up... pretty makeup... some alone! Why not them? But he comes up to me in baggy sweats, no makeup, ponytail… with my Granny! Why me? How did he know I was the one? How do they always know that I'm the one? The easiest to abuse?"

How did he know she was the most fun to provoke... the most scared and the easiest? He knew because the chicken hawk spends its whole life learning how to recognize the chicken! The predator learns how to recognize its prey... the one most vulnerable... offering the least resistance... the crippled prey. The classroom bully had already learned how to recognize Eddie as the easiest target. Predatory individuals seek power and control over others, but carefully aggress against the weakest or most vulnerable. Once victimized, a cycle of vulnerable may build upon itself. Thoughtful teachers are adamant and assertive that any bullying is unacceptable. Unfortunately, some adults accept and implicitly condone such aggression as "kids being kids." Or, they may give gender permission by accepting that "boys will be boys" or all female socialization is innocent. The classic novel, "Lord of the Flies," (Golding, 1954) where shipwrecked schoolboys without adult guidance descended into barbaric murder reminds us of how boys can be! Exclusion from cliques of popular girls is a painful memory for many women. Effective teachers consistently set clear boundaries and consistently follow through with clear consequences about hurtful behavior. Then boys and girls will be citizens in healthy communities- first the classroom, and later, in society. Experienced teachers know that classrooms also have a diversity of children with healthy and unhealthy boundary experiences, of passivity, assertiveness, and aggression, of selflessness and selfishness, of kind to cruel individuals, of respectful to disrespectful individuals, and of social emotional skills. Difficult to disturbed, angry, or vengeful individuals experience some individuals as easy pickings. Something as simple as an unfamiliar name or an accent can target a child for harassment. If they become marginal members on the periphery, they become like the crippled deer on the edge of the herd. The wolf pack targets them.

Abusers know individuals with higher status, confidence, social-emotional, and peer resources (friends) can and will resist and fight back. There is easier prey they can pick on or exclude without objection from the community. This chicken hawk sensed KC's vulnerability, just the like bullies in school who sensed vulnerability with a quick scan. He instinctively knew he could intimidate her.

The life of the victim is a miserable existence, often from early childhood without adult knowledge and intervention. Glew, et al (2005, p.1026) reported in their study over three thousand third, fourth, and fifth grade students that "only 42% of students defined as victims and 44% of those defined as bully-victims said that they had reported their victimization to someone."   When not being picked on, they worry if and when they will be picked on again. "The playground was the most likely site (71%) for victimization followed by classrooms (46%), gym classes (40%), lunchrooms (39%), halls and stairs (33%), and buses (28%)." Unfortunately paraprofessionals, parent volunteers, or teachers' aides who are often the least trained and aware of bullies and victim dynamics do most supervision. Teacher scrutiny and intervention on the playground to protect children may be more important than classroom supervision. Children may experience both vulnerability to being bullied and vulnerability caused by being bullied.

"Being bullied frequently is likely to be a considerable source of stress. Depression among those who were frequently bullied might be expected. However, adolescents who are depressed may also attract negative attention from their peers. Previous research suggests that compared with their peers, those who are bullied are more introverted, less assertive, and are overinvolved in their families. Victims also tend to be rejected by peers. Depression could thus be both a result of and a reason for being bullied." (Kaltiala-Heino, et al, 1999, p.350).

Being victimized or exhibiting consequences of victimization doesn't always draw empathy or support. People may begin to avoid them. They can become more isolated in their communities: the office, playground, classroom, and family. Unrecognized consequences from extreme stress may occur in additional to emotional, psychological, social, or academic consequences. In a study of 15686 students (including 8370 girls) in grades 6-10, "girls who experienced bullying at least once a week were more likely to experience headaches, backaches, and morning fatigue compared with girls who had not been bullied during that term" (Ghandour, et al, 2004, p.801). Some children come to hate or fear going to the school (school phobia). Somatic problems may develop: stomachaches, headaches, or other maladies so Mommy or Daddy keeps them home. Social phobia (fear of social situations) or agoraphobia (fear of leaving the house) may develop.   People, even close friends, family... teachers and parents may eventually believe something must be wrong about them. Adults recognition that being a victim can result in a victim personality, results in less likelihood of pathologizing- that is, blaming the victim.

ANXIOUS VULNERABILITY
Children who become regularly victimized are often younger than bullies. They tend to be more naturally sensitive, cautious, quiet, and anxious, tending to have negative views of violence and fairly non-aggressive in interactions. Physical weakness (youth and/or size) and anxiety potentially targets them. Relational and physical traits alone however are not predictive of being victimized. Victims tend to withdraw from confrontations of any kind and respond to confrontations (attacks) with crying. Faced with conflict, they become paralyzed with fear. Eventually, some children may exhibit an "anxious vulnerability."   Easily recognized by bullies, it is as if floating over their heads were flashing signs broadcasting, "Attention...Victim Here!" Once children feel that they can do nothing if bullies attack them, then avoidance of bullies is their only defensive strategy. Hypervigilance and

Assessing empowerment needs, incremental empowerment, and calculated empowerment, but definitely empowerment is the key to keeping children from becoming perpetual victims. The very first step is determining whether a child like Jordan needs any assistance at all. If he can take care of himself and his bucket, then adults should do NOTHING! Adults need to find whatever strength or skills a child may have and build upon them. Getting it back this way is okay; that way is not acceptable. If the child is not able or is hesitant, then the first step is to acknowledge the issues and the child's needs. Saying it out loud so that the transgressor hears it, sets the context and requirement for both Jordan and the other child. Observe if Jordan can get it back without further guidance. If yes, great! Affirm Jordan's act of self-care! If Jordan isn't able to act or doesn't know how to act, then the adult provides language- "Tell her, 'No!'" Observe if Jordan can proceed successfully from this. If yes, great! Affirm Jordan's act of self-care! If not, then provide more but limited guidance or assistance. Avoid completing the retrieval (act of self-care) for Jordan. In fact, if Jordan refuses or is otherwise unable to complete necessary behavior, the adult should complete process, including disciplining the other child as is appropriate. This is important so as not to reward the other child his or her aggression. However, the adult should also not reward Jordan for failing to take care of himself. Get the bucket back, but don't give it to Jordan. Getting the bucket back is not nearly as important as the potential lesson that his or her action or inaction both create the consequences for life. Passive inaction cannot be rewarded. Empowerment is a key to developing self-esteem. Competency in dealing with bullies cannot be acquired without the opportunity and requirement to practice and learn when dealing with bullies. Both little Eddie and KC, my adult client had to be supported, guided, and required to confront their bullies. This took a fair amount of teacher energy and several weeks, but Eddie became practiced and empowered. Mitchell learned that Eddie wasn't an easy victim anymore. He had learned to tell Mitchell, "No!" And, he had learned to tell on Mitchell if necessary. KC's process was essentially the same but done through therapy and coaching her through life challenges. Eventually, when the predators scanned the room for easy victims, she no longer stood out.

THE LOUD AGGRESSIVE "VICTIM" BECOMES A BULLY

Some children become reactive bullies; also known as bully-victims- ineffective aggressors who get the worse of being both bullies and victims. Some children who are victimized may assert loudly, aggressively, and/or violently, their victimization and feel their aggressive behavior as justified retaliation. "What you expect me to do?!" Ineffective bullies, unable to be socially successful with other children, get stuck associating with other bullies, including more dominating bullies. Insecure being in the bully social group, they are easily provoked. Unable to calm down, they often escalate minor incidents into aggressive situations. However, the more powerful and intimidating alpha bullies provoke, threaten, and intimidate them back. Since the more aggressive bullies can and will bring greater violence into an actual confrontation, they are forced to back down. Reactive bullies whine and complain overtly and sullenly as feel further victimized. Nansel (2004), et al cross-cultural research found the severe consequences for the bully-victim.

> The most striking pattern of psychosocial adjustment was demonstrated by the bully-victims, who reported levels of emotional adjustment, relationships with classmates, and health problems similar to those of victims, with levels of school adjustment and alcohol use similar to those of bullies. Moreover, in some cases, their scores were significantly worse than those of either bullies or victims. In 8 countries bully-victims reported more health problems than the other 2 groups, and in 5 countries they reported more school adjustment problems (p.734).

A Finnish longitudinal study (Sourander, et al, 2007) of 2552 boys from age 8 to 16 to 20 years, found that bully-victims may have the worse emotional or psychological consequences or condition of bullies, bully-victims, and even of victims. They have the highly negative social consequences of the bully (anti-social behavior, poor academics, crime, and so forth), and the internalized negative consequences of the victim (anxiety and depression). While other bullies subjectively experience benefits with gains of power and control and possible social status from their behavior, reactive bullies are actually ineffective at gaining these benefits! With growing sense of powerlessness, resentment, and dominated by more powerful bullies, reactive bullies become increasingly likely to victimize others, be oppositional, defiant, and passive aggressive. As a result, they become increasingly dangerous as they target weaker children to bully in order to build insecure self-esteem. They are the least liked in the entire social group. The reactive aggressor is highly volatile having never learned how to regulate. Adults may not recognize that reactive bullies as having highly similar existentially core emotional experiences as children with classic victim personalities. As a result, adult boundaries and consequences, accentuate reactive bullies' already existing feelings of victimization. Their feelings of victimization, however doesn't draw any real compassion from adults. These children may be more prone to developing increasingly resentful victimization feelings. Supportive adults need to manage the balance between validating their feelings of victimization while setting appropriate boundaries against their aggressive behaviors. They need to be given specific instructions how to express gain healthy power and control without resorting to aggression. For example, "I know you feel it's unfair, and you will not get what you want by hitting." The choice, "You can make it better or make it worse," becomes a reminder of the power and control children have in their lives. They however need clear alternatives to the aggressive behaviors they assert they have to do. Tell them specifically, to do this, say this, etc. . If teachers can see through the whining and bullying behavior, they may be able to find the compassion to support reactive bullies.

VICTIM ENTITLEMENT TO BULLY & INTELLECTUAL BULLYING
Reactive bullies can accrue gigantic reservoirs of resentments and grievances. If the consequences are experienced as being unfair, they further reinforce frustration and resentment. Cycles of aggression may develop. As with all negative behavior cycles, they need to be broken or else they become increasing severe. They must be interrupted, if not by children's actions, then through adult or classroom intervention. Children may assert their intellectual or other superiority, while also asserting others inferiority to justify attacking others. Everyone else, which means any abusers, those who don't understand, those who cannot save them, including adults is stupid! They may use every conceivable tactic to be "right" and not lose. Eyes roll and voices drip with disgust and derision. They imply the intellectual and moral inferiority of the fundamentally stupid unfortunate to argue with them! They assert their obnoxious behavior is righteous necessity. Feedback that behavior is disrespectful and harming relationships is experienced as the other person trying to make them "wrong" again. This dynamic can be observed as early as preschool, while it seems to reach its nadir around middle school. Eventually, for classmates, the arguments and relationships with them may not be worth the trouble. Adults need to recognize the "invitation" to engage in the fruitless debate and name the disrespect. They need to assert clear boundaries and consequences not only about overt verbal insults, but also about heavy sighs, rolling the eyes, smacking lips, blank stares, and other passive-aggressive non-verbal communications. Teachers can acknowledge that children are trying to make a point and that they want to hear it. They can give feedback that the communication style is ineffective. "My attention is drawn mostly to your tone, instead of what you're trying to say. Please, tell me same thing in a more respectful tone, so I can hear it." With this statement the boundaries are asserted without being drawn into a fruitless argument about whether eyes really did role, or lips smacked, and so forth. Often, a direct confrontation about disrespectful passive-aggressive behavior draws outrage. "Whaaat!? What'd I do!? I didn't do nuthin'!" Passive-aggressive behavior has plausible deniability! As self-

righteous aggression without overt verbal or physical attacks, passive-aggressiveness gives individuals the illusion of power and control. Unfortunately, it also precludes them learning how to develop appropriate means to gain true power and control. Healthy and successful life and relationships are severely compromised with cycles of interpersonal communication that include passive-aggressive behavior. Teachers can best reach passive-aggressive individuals by avoiding getting caught up in the moral or inferiority vs. superiority argument. Focusing on everyone's relative roles and requirements in the situation may help. "No matter how wrong you make me, I (as the teacher) cannot let you do that." They should constantly refocus children on the functional result of their being so adamant. "Even though you're sure you're right, you won't get what you want." Sometimes when their self-righteous arousal is intense, none of this will work. In that case, it is best not to cycle over and over with the same arguments. Functionally, that means after teachers have revisited the same logic or communication twice to no effect, there's little likelihood that a stuck child will have an epiphany with teachers saying it a third time! Set a boundary and consequence, and follow through immediately. If there is outrage and further attempts to continue the argument, then prompt, "You make it better or make it worse. Continuing to argue will make it worse. Cooperating will make it better. You choose." When adults allow passive-aggressive children to keep them in an argument, the children maintain an illusionary but dysfunctional sense of power and control. If they choose to make it worse, teachers must follow through with consequences and cut off the arguing.

CLASSIFICATION CREATES TARGETS FOR EXCLUSION

Children who are victimized often find that being nice doesn't protect them from bullies. Reactive bullies often forget about being nice when they feel victimized. Bullies can be nice, but sometimes their need to dominate and intimidate is much stronger. It would be nice if everyone could be nice! And reality is that everyone is not nice. Classmates may punish others with exclusion from friendships, games, and activities. Exclusion or being ostracized, often characteristic of girl bullying extends to the playground and beyond. It may be the first step towards even more severe aggression. Behavior that is excused as "kids being kids" in preschool, kindergarten, elementary school… eventually, middle school and high school may predict highly problematic socially toxic dynamics through the life span. Throughout history individuals, religions, races, communities, or groups ("those people," "them") have been classified as different and then targeted for abuse or exclusion to serve individual, social, or political agendas. Stanton (1996) names classification and dehumanization as keys along with denial to genocide. While genocide is a societal act upon another group, abuse or bullying are the acts of individuals or a group upon others. Denial of differences or the lack of positive adult guidance may lead to assumptions of intrinsic "badness" (dehumanization), significant frustration in working with "them" (classification), and leave unsupported children to their own devices to survive. The potential for children to develop victim personalities, bully compensations, and/or narcissistic-type obnoxiousness is terrifying for them, for their victims, and for society. Some teachers unfortunately overlook the reality of bullying and overstate the inherent "niceness" of children in their classrooms. Teachers set the tone and culture for students about differences, inclusion, aggression, victimization, and bullying. Teachers set the requirements for acceptable behavior among the children. Children also want to get along with each other. They want to belong. They want to be liked, including by teachers. Teachers are the guardians of the classroom community and must activate these positive energies to create a respectful community. Silence can give permission. Teacher silence about bullying gives permission for children to be victimized. Teacher communication and action takes that permission away. And, can require positive behavior.

WHY DO YOU PICK UP A BABY WHO IS CRYING?

Children may be victimized at home, continue at school, or start and persist in school. Once victimized, some children are repeatedly bullied. Some children develop a victim personality and gravitate to dysfunctional strategies and mentalities that perpetuate being victimized. Adults may inadvertently contribute to a victim personality by how they support these children. Physically and emotionally available trustworthy adults ordinarily help children develop their senses of survivability. Survivability is strongly related to resiliency for children and comes from a core of secure attachment. Why do you pick up a baby who is crying? The baby is in distress over discomfort, hunger, being startled, and so forth. Babies in distress who are not attended to, slide into despair. The difference can be heard in their cry. Babies do not know how to self-soothe. Caregivers pick up the baby to soothe him or her so that he or she doesn't go into despair, which ignites a whole set of other emotional and psychological issues potentially. As the baby is soothed, he or she learns how to self-soothe from the caregiver's model. The baby eventually learns to rock him/herself gently the way caregiver rocked him or her. The baby eventually learns to caress him/herself around his or her face and body the way caregivers caressed him or her. He or she eventually learns to murmur in the same tone (but in baby language) the gentle nurturing sounds that he or she has heard from caregivers.

Babies learn how to self-soothe by being soothed by loving caretakers. Babies that learn how to self-soothe become children, teenagers, and adults who know how to self-soothe. Babies that do not learn how to self-soothe become children, teenagers, and adults who do not know how to self-soothe. Children who do not know how to self-soothe, will act out to gain the fourth cousin twice removed of nurturing- that is, negative attention. They take the negative attention because that is all they feel they can get. Teenagers and adults who do not know how to self-soothe, will use alcohol, drugs, sex, food, self-injury, and any number of other dysfunctional behaviors in order to self-soothe. Teenagers and adults who do not know how to self-soothe, will get into relationships with other people, and demand that others always perfectly soothe them when they are in need. And, if for some reason, the other people fail to soothe them when their distress spirals immediately into despair, they will lash out and punish them for their betrayal. This is borderline personality disorder described in a simplified fashion. Why do you pick up babies who are crying? Because this is how they learn that in the big wide world, there is someone who cares that he or she is in distress. This is the fundamental behavior of all those wonderful attachment theories! Some people advocate letting babies "cry it out" because they are focusing on a practical problem and focusing on the behavior itself. It's a legitimate problem to be handled in any number of ways, but done so that babies can have secure attachment. When teachers and other adults, focus solely on solving a problematic behavior, they risk missing that a cry of discomfort also is a cry of need. If adults don't respond to the cry, the "cry it out" advocates are correct... the baby will stop crying. The baby will stop crying because beyond the cry being a cry of discomfort, it also becomes a cry of hope. When babies, children, teens, and adults lose hope, they don't cry out anymore. Crying out, acting out, and other behaviors are the cries to personal and professional caregivers that need to be responded to. At the core, it's often still essentially about attachment no matter what the ages of individuals. Children and adults need to have secure attachment from being nurtured and supported to develop a sense of survivability. Most adult caregivers including teachers know this instinctively and try to soothe children in distress. All caregiving adults need to be also aware that they may over-compensate and inadvertently teach children that they won't survive. They may create children used to and dependent upon being rescued. Adults need to carefully offer appropriate support, and even seem to withhold support. The secure attachment that is so critical to healthy children needs to be balanced with facilitating children's strength and skills. Recalling attachment principles, secure attachment or basic trust are the foundations to children becoming able to

risk autonomous behavior. Children need opportunities to competently handle challenges on their own. What starts out as support can become a huge problem because of lost opportunities.

OWWW!! I must have tripped.... Ow! (Peek) Where's teacher?   Help me! Owwwww! I'm gonna to die! Teach…er!! I'm dying!! ! Tuh… Tuh.. EEE.. .CHER!! OW! AHHHH!

Overly dramatic children eventually give up recruiting adult salvation when sage parents and teachers recognize their manipulations and set appropriate boundaries. However, some children cannot seem to give up the act. Furthermore, for some children, it is not really an act. They are being victimized regularly. In Psychology Today, psychologist Marano (1995, p.54) noted that while about 22% of children experienced being bullied sometime, 8-9% became the constant targets of bullies. How did 8-9% of children become the victim personalities that bullies returned to harass, often despite frequently calling for adult help? Victimized children initially draw caring adults and classmates to help them. However, victims often draw others' hearts to them, only to break them. Despite initial empathy for them, constant victims' seeming inability to learn, change, and stop being victimized becomes increasingly frustrating. Such victims never seem to be able to take help or guidance to become more successful. Would be rescuers end up feeling helpless just like the victims they seek to help. Rescuers often can become angry with perpetual victims. Guilt-ridden, they keep trying, but repeatedly fail to get victims to help themselves. Their sense of competency as as loving, caring, and supportive adults is damaged.

VICTIMIZED BY VICTIMS
Feeling victimized by perpetual victims, people begin avoiding them.   Would be helpers need to realize they might inadvertently reward perpetual victims for their helplessness. The victim dynamic "benefits" the victims. Victim personalities appear to be highly incompetent, but actually are extremely competent at being victims. Being a victim becomes an effective, though dysfunctional way to gain power and control. A five-year-old with Down's Syndrome had figured out adults did not expect her to respond quickly. Told to get off the swing since recess was over, Beth kept swinging and stared blankly at the teacher. Her visage seemed to state, "I don't know what you want." She expected the teacher (me) to repeat the command several times. Eventually, she would comply when the adults would finally get insistent. Instead of repeating myself, I told her firmly, "You heard what I said!" She quickly jumped off the swing and went inside. Down's Syndrome? Yes. Stupid? Not by a long shot! The practice of helplessness while gaining superficial benefits can have significant negative life consequences. My new client, Bridget presented her lifetime of horrific experiences. A strong and pervasive sense of helplessness emanated from her.   While drawn to her, empathy alone would not help her. Consciously and sub-consciously, she was asking me ride to the rescue! After 15 minutes, I said gently, "You're so good at being helpless." Bridget was shocked, "What!?... What do you mean?" She had anticipated the classic "Oh, poor baby" response that would have confirmed her helplessness. Getting care through other people's sympathy was her dysfunctional power and control strategy. I continued, "You're very good at being depressed… being a victim." Stunned, she said, "What do you mean?" I explained, "When you are depressed and helpless, people… especially friends take care of you. As a miserable victim, you get cut a lot of slack and get help from others. You get a lot of power and control that way. By being hopeless, you avoid taking risks… avoid challenging yourself. You avoid doing hard things. You keep yourself in an uncomfortable, but familiar world of quiet desperation. Being helpless works for you." Bridget said, "Oh." My feedback completely resonated with her subconscious process. What I call the "Duel Theory of Frailty" asserts first that the child or

individual is too frail to handle being told the truth. Conversely, telling an individual the truth asserts he/she is strong enough to hear and then, to deal with reality. The second part of the theory would have been that the helper was also too frail, that is incapable of managing her process if she became distraught. To reverse the negative messages of this theory, teachers and parents require confidence, clarity, and skills to challenge children's victim tendencies. This is particularly challenging, as adults must balance empowerment with sensitivity for children's vulnerabilities. I therefore challenged Bridget's habitual means to gain a sense of illusionary power and control. She began to explore and experiment with healthier and more affirmative ways to gain power and control. A true success story, over the next 18 months, she e stopped being a victim and is currently working on the "happily ever after" part!

HOW VICTIMS ARE CREATED

Some children develop victim personalities from being constantly bullied starting from being victimized at home by family members. However, some come from very nurturing families without any hint of bullying. While Marano (p.54) states that victims tend to be sensitive, nonviolent, and non-aggressive, they do not become victims without other important experiences. Victims also tend to have very close relationships with their parents. Closeness, involvement, and vigilance may be serve positive development. However, they may also be expressed in ways that may backfire and disempower children. The victim personality is developed by protective actions that inadvertently prevent children from developing skills, such as assertiveness, negotiation, and compromise that are necessary to handle confrontations with others, especially with bullies. Rather than "Have no fear, protectors are here!" it becomes "Stay in fear, protectors must get here… or else!" Some adults may assume and project that children are overwhelmed, vulnerable, or incapable to handle conflicts. Within these families, children may be protected from siblings' aggression or any other discomfort. Outside their nurturing loving families in the real world, children find that others won't do anything for them like Mommy or Daddy. Adults, who continually rescue children, steal from them opportunities to learn how to handle conflict. Thus, they do not develop the resiliency necessary to deal with stress, frustration, failure, and emotional distress- suffering. They become more and more vulnerable to other children's aggressive behavior. Some teachers, if become intent on protecting children, may unknowingly continue or create the further denial of learning opportunities to become self-empowered. Realistically, teachers cannot catch and intervene with every aggressive act among students. Children who are frequently victimized compensate for inconsistent or erratic teacher intervention by becoming extremely vigilant scanning for any bully's approach. Intended to prevent ambush, anxious vulnerability makes them readily identifiable for bullies looking for easy prey. Sometimes adults must intervene quickly and assertively. Other times, children must be required to draw upon and learn skills, resources, and resiliency, despite how difficult it may be. Adults must manage their own anxiety about failing victimized children to best differentially serve them with encouragement, training, and empowerment, or with protection when necessary. Adults must be able to watch children struggle, even suffer to handle stress, conflicts, and intrusive, abusive, or exploitative people, including bullies. Typical of many others' recommendations, Marano (1995) lists five things for children to do (as opposed to adult intervention) under, "HOW TO HANDLE A BULLY:"

- A wise line of defense is avoidance. Know when to walk away. It is thoroughly adaptive behavior to avoid a bully. Being picked on is not character-building.
- Use humor to defuse a bully who may be about to attack. Make a joke: "Look, Johnny, lay off. I don't want you to be late for school."

- Or tell the bully assertively, "Get a life. Leave me alone." And walk away. This may be the best defense for girls.
- Recruit a friend. Observers find that having a friend on the playground is one of the most powerful protectives, especially for boys.
- In general, seek out the friendly children and build friendships with them.

All these recommendations are appropriate they can be effective if they can be activated. The negative side of the recommendation of avoidance may be that on its own, it supports increased anxious vulnerability. The fourth recommendation- recruit a friend and the fifth recommendation- seek out the friendly children can be problematic for a child already ostracized as a victim. The second and third recommendations both require verbal skills that may be challenging for some children. Problems with verbal communication may be linked to aggression or other behavioral problems for children. "Aggression has been associated with low language proficiency as early as the second year of life and throughout the lifespan. Although language deficits are not sufficient or necessary correlates of aggressive behavior problems… This has led to a consensus around the view that the link between language and behavior is functional, not spurious." (Dionne, 2005). Verbal fluency also becomes a means to avoid victimization. Verbal fluency is a key to gaining social fluency. Children that can tell a joke may deflect the aggressive or angry arousal of a bully. Verbally setting clear and compelling boundaries with consequences may cause a bully to recalculate the cost of bullying. Both these responses require strong verbal skills under stress. Verbally adept children tend to be better able to "spar" with aggressive children through humor, setting boundaries, or problem solving. Verbal fluency also differentiates between assertive children who become leaders versus those who become bullies. Bullies use aggression to demonstrate power over others. But aggression and power are not synonymous. Aggression can be a means to use and achieve power, including achieving positions of leadership. Leaders also use other socially acceptable ways to be assertive without necessarily being aggressive. They become leaders without bullying others. Marano (1995) refers to boys who are aggressive, but don't get their way by physical aggression or verbal abuse. They assume leadership by establishing dominance through the socially appropriate skill of verbal fluency. Teachers can help children by modeling, teaching, prompting, and requiring development of verbal skills that are required to manage others aggression and for leadership. Conflict resolution and mediation programs may be useful to teach specific verbalizations for assertiveness and boundary setting.

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A BLUSTERING BROWBEATING PERSON

Some children, who are immersed in a sense of helplessness, become aggressive in to avoid further victimization. Adults often instinctively know that bullies have self-esteem issues, but forget that when they become antagonized from dealing with the bullying behavior. The desire to protect oneself and to deny further victimization should be considered strengths.   This energy can be activated with appropriate guidance towards healthy self-empowerment. Unfortunately, some victimized children may instead look to avenge humiliations. They decide in a dog eat dog world, they must be the big dog. To avoid being bullied or to gain self-esteem, they may become bullies themselves. Who become responsible leaders and who become the tyrants of the world? How are bullies created? Who are bullies? Flynt and Morton (2004) offer this definition of bullies,

> "One definition of the term bully is 'a blustering browbeating person; especially, one habitually cruel to others who are weaker'… 'bullying exists when students are 'exposed repeatedly or over time to a negative action on the part of one or more students'… defines a bully as a person who demonstrates repetitive aggressive behavior that purposefully hurts another person and ultimately results in a 'systematic abuse of power.' Regardless of the source, most definitions of the term 'bully' incorporate three distinct attributes… the harassment of the victim occurs over an extended period of time. Second, the intent behind the harassment is meant to cause harm either mentally or physically to the victim. And finally, an imbalance of power is apparent."

Intimidating others may feel not only appropriate but also desirable for the bullies who are bullied by abusive and aggressive parents who are compelling models to emulate. However, well-intended non-bullying parents and other adults also can raise bullies. Parents often become their first victims! Siblings, classmates and their teachers are next. Despite good intentions, misunderstanding of personalities and needs affecting psychosocial adjustment can result in children becoming bullies. Nansel, et al (2004) studied the relationship between bullying and psychosocial adjustment (emotional adjustment, relationships with classmates, and health problems) across 25 countries. They found that

> "… across all countries, involvement in bullying was associated with poorer psychosocial adjustment (*P*<.05). In all or nearly all countries, bullies, victims, and bully-victims reported greater health problems and poorer emotional and social adjustment. Victims and bully-victims consistently reported poorer relationships with classmates, whereas bullies and bully-victims reported greater alcohol use and weapon carrying." (p.730).

They concluded "The association of bullying with poorer psychosocial adjustment is remarkably similar across countries. Bullying is a critical issue for the health of youth internationally." Particularly poor adjustment may first come to professionals' attention not because of their learning, processing, or ability challenges, but when their parents seek relief from their tyranny in the home. The tyranny then crosses over to the school. As parents and teachers understand this dynamic, they can make adjustments to better guide children.

BULLIES, AGGRESSION, AND THE SEARCH FOR SELF-ESTEEM

All defense mechanisms, including denial are to avoid anxiety that would otherwise be overwhelming. Some parents find considering that their beloved children will purposefully and joyfully hurts others can

be too disturbing. Or, are protective of their children's reputations. If teachers can help parents understand the numerous negative consequences their children will suffer for becoming bullies, it may motivate them get past the shame to face reality. Teachers can help by not focusing only on behavior, but also how behavior change can have long-term positive consequences. Parents who become are in denial or are defensive will not be allies in prompting behavior change. Teachers may be able to better monitor and enforce behavior standards, but without change in character bullying will continue opportunistically. The teacher-parent alliance is essential to promoting character growth and change in children. Unable to distinguish among socially acceptable assertiveness and bullying, bullies' behavior and reputation creates downward life spirals. In their research of third, fourth, and fifth grade students, Glew, et al (2005) said that "All of the groups involved in bullying were significantly more likely to be suspended or expelled; to feel unsafe, sad, and like they didn't belong at school; and to endorse cheating if they could get away with it compared with bystanders. Bullies… were more likely than bystanders to endorse carrying guns to school, beating up someone who started a fight, and smoking cigarettes. Nonresponders were not more likely to say they felt sad, unsafe, or that they did not belong." (p.1029). Bullies are much more likely to become anti-social adults: have criminal problems, become batterers, child abusers, and tragically produce more bullies in next generation. Sourander, et al (2007) found in their longitudinal study that

> "Boys who bully frequently in childhood are at elevated risk for recidivism and for committing violent, property, traffic, and drunk driving offenses in late adolescence. To illustrate this, 21.1% of frequent bully-victims and 15.9% of those with frequent bully-only status were recidivist offenders, compared with only 6.8% of those who did not exhibit frequent bullying behavior. Although frequent bullies and bully-victims composed only 8.8% of the total sample, they were responsible for 33.0% of all offenses during the 4-year period between the ages of 16 and 20 years, i.e., 8 to 12 years after the initial assessment" (p.550).

Beyond delinquent and criminal behavior, the bullying behavior ends up harming learning, friendships, work, intimacy, income, and mental health.

> "Childhood physical aggression is of particular concern as it is viewed as a precursor of physical and mental health problems such as, higher risk of alcohol and drug abuse, depression, suicide attempts, violent crimes and neglectful and abusive parenting. Furthermore, aggressive behavior in children and adolescents has been identified as a current major public health concern ranging from frequent bullying to violence and delinquency" (Tauscher-Wisniewski, 2006, p.1398).

At best, people struggle to find sufficient compassion to like bullies. Important people including classmates and teachers don't like to be around bullies, unless the culture of the school gives social status to bullying behavior. Despite distorted self-images, social sanctions continually give bullies negative feedback. Others reactions constantly remind bullies of their failure to live up to their ideal selves as powerful people. They lose power and control with continual restrictions from adults for their poor behavior. Bullies are often socially incompetent. Bullies' low self-esteem motivates their creation of a tenuous sense of worth based on aggression. Teachers can help such children gain self-esteem and as a result, diminish their need to bully. It is important to support children's desire to gain self-esteem.

"WHO ARE YOU LOOKING AT!?"

Bullies have a hostile attributional bias, a kind of paranoia where provocation is perceived without justification. "Who are you looking at!?" People are often stunned when targeted by bullies' hostility for something they had not done or had done innocently. Paranoia distorts bullies' perception and interpretation of innocent comments and behavior into knowing that the other person doing them "wrong." Bullies often cannot see themselves negatively. That would be too threatening to their self-image. And thus, they feel completely justified to retaliate aggressively. Hostility and aggression makes them feel powerful. Most importantly, it often works. Aggression gets the last cookie or first place in line. Hostility intimidates classmates into silence, which is interpreted as permission to continue the negative behavior.   Bullies anticipate only short-term outcomes without considering future consequences to themselves or others. "It gets me the ball now!" Such "successes" builds a fragile sense of self-esteem, locking them into patterns of aggressive and hostile responses, acceptable only to others similar to them. Increasingly isolated, they, especially male bullies hang out and socialize only with others like them. Unable to function among other children and tolerated only by other bullies, they form packs of bullies.   Sometimes marginally skilled parents, teachers, or other caregivers come up against difficult children with more intense and problematic personalities. Some difficult children may be overtly defiant. However, when they mix in a passive approach, it can be most infuriating. The common scenario experienced is adults make a request. Children rather than refusing to respond or comply are noncompliant. Silence is their response… non-response. Or, at best adults might get a guttural, "Huh? What?" Children's noncompliance often is effective to avoid directives or boundaries, especially when adults become distracted by other demands. Adults may also be hopeful that threats are sufficient to get children to behave as requested. They may fail to monitor responses and as a result, don't actually follow through with consequences if required. Children's may continue misbehavior or not comply without suffering any repercussions. In other words, they get away with it. Successful non-compliance validates children's immature but strong drive to have power and control. Children may initially not comply because of missing cues, distraction, inattention, processing issues, preoccupation, or purposeful testing of adults' frustration level. All these are normal behaviors which would predict inevitable problems if well handled by adults. However, when poorly handled, children's noncompliance eventually morphs to them losing self-esteem and becoming purposeful aggression against adults. Adults ask and are ignored over and over, and end up being controlled through noncompliance. Recognizing and validating children's strong desire for power and control is the first step to teaching appropriate avenues to gain them. Finally, adults can get so upset at continued misbehavior, noncompliance, or the backtalk that they threaten, "If you don't... I'm going to…!" Adults may make increasingly severe threats but follow through erratically if at all, often with no or only mild consequences. Some parents never hit, but instead constantly emotionally and psychologically assault children. "What's wrong with you?" Even without damning words, the tone can be devastating. Frustrated teachers have their own versions of accusatory words. Children may internalize shame, and learn a model of aggression. Eventually, some may respond with outrage, "WHAAAT!!??" shouted out loud, or silently to themselves. The following statement can also apply to teachers or other adults besides parents.

"Parents inadvertently reinforce child aggression by inadequately reinforcing pro-social behaviour. These parents do not model compliance and constructive problem solving. Instead, they support the aggressive and coercive behaviour of their children. Bullies, therefore, are likely to have primarily negative and hostile interactions with their siblings and parents. The second process relates to the

harsh and inconsistent punishment practices of parents. Parents of bullies usually do not punish many problematic behaviours, and use overly harsh and punitive discipline with other behaviours. In so doing, parents model aggressive and antisocial problem-solving techniques." (CPHA, 2003, page 18)

Noncompliance continues until adults overwrought with hostility may finally lash out unpredictably. The inconsistent use of ineffective punishment winds up intermittently rewarding defiance. Passive defiance or noncompliance is experienced as being successful… at least some of the time. "I got more play time." In any communication, there is a verbal component and a non-verbal component. If the two components are in sync, then the entire message is perceived as being truthful. If the two components are at odds, then the verbal message is normally dismissed as untrue and the non-verbal message believed to be true. Sometimes, adults tell or command children, but don't follow through on implicit or explicit consequences. As a result, their verbalizations are dismissed. Non-compliant children interpret adults' failure to act or acting slowly, which is the non-verbal component as if adults are not really asking them to respond! They infer permission to ignore adults. Ironically, as a result, children may experience subsequent appropriate adult discipline as unfair treatment! After so many times of getting away with it, actual discipline no matter how reasonable becomes unexpected, and therefore "not fair!" "What!?" they say, while they are thinking, "So, why is it suddenly not ok to ignore you?" At this point, some adults who have lost control may respond very harshly and unpredictably. Harsh parenting presents models of aggression that enforce children's feelings of helplessness and vulnerability. This may make any children vulnerable to bullying. When children have repeated experiences of unfair and unpredictable treatment they can develop hostile attributional bias. Teachers do not immediately know whether children have had other adults (parents or teachers) who have been consistent in their verbal and non-verbal communications. Some children have learned to count on teachers being distracted so that they can get away with non-compliance. Practically speaking, it probably only takes most teachers the first few days to discover which children are purposefully and consistently non-compliant. If teachers consistently monitor and enforce compliance with their verbal communications, children will learn that non-compliance is not acceptable.

Physical punishment experienced at home may model physical aggression as appropriate responses to problems. Some frustrated adults blame children for the children getting punished. Adults may model intense self-righteous retaliatory anger that children may duplicate in their aggression against others. "That's what you get for being so bad!" may be the responses of caring, yet frustrated and unskilled other caretaker adults. Punishment also can create resentment among children, prompting greater aggression against others. Anti-social behavior such as intentional physical harm is reinforced. Pro-social behavior is neither modeled nor reinforced. Pro-social behavior would include talking, exploring motivations and emotions, affirming needs in the context of social reciprocal relationships, and so forth. Adults can be intimidated by anticipated disciplinary battles that take so much time and energy with little if any satisfaction. Teachers are often caught between spending time and energy to resolve an issue and needing to attend to academic demands. As a result, adults may avoid confrontation by pulling back or failing to follow through. Children may be victorious in the moment. However, at deeper levels, children know that if they are in control and that adults are out of control, life becomes very scary. All some children can do is continue to be aggressive and hurtful. Immersed in their insecurity, bullies often don't… can't relate or care about other people's feelings. Bullies experience acknowledging other

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people's feelings as conceding defeat in a feelings competition. Acknowledging others' feelings seems to negate the relevance of their own feelings. In a feelings competition, the winners get it all and the losers get nothing. Thus, bullies always assert the righteousness of their feelings, and discount other people's feelings. Admonishing bullies, "How would you like it if you were bullied…" is often completely ineffective.

Teachers and parents need to stay calm when providing firm and reasonable boundaries and discipline. However, to do so, many adults would need to address significant emotional and psychological issues, as well as cultural training that may activate their anger or resentment against children. Parental or teacher models and expectations acquired from childhood and other previous experiences need to be examined for relevance to the demands of challenging behaviors by children. In particular, teachers need to be aware of how they react to anger, conflict, and power and control issues intrinsic to difficult behaviors among children. Adults, who do not address personal issues, tend to be less effective with children's challenging behaviors. They also are more likely to be strongly and negatively activated by those behaviors. Sometimes, adults' personal issues may ignite or intensify children's already problematic behaviors. For example, if adults have control issues, having or working with children is sure to ignite them! Trying to control a classroom of children is more difficult than the metaphorical herding of cats. The cats don't talk back and cat herders don't have to teach mandated cat curriculum standards. Children can be directed and guided, but not really controlled. And, being driven to seek greater power and control can be a strength to be activated with adult guidance. This is relevant especially with current philosophies that seek to respect children's development, so that all children can find their own potential. If teachers have significant control issues, they may consider that in choosing to work with children, they may have made a career error! Teachers can help children satisfy their needs for power an control only if they do not get drawn into power struggles with children. Whenever, teachers start to feel it has become an either or situation with children, their personal power issues will contaminate effective discipline. Personal growth about control needs becomes professional growth for such teachers. Teaching will always be about personal relationships amidst the curriculum, theories, strategies, and techniques. Teachers' personal relationships with children who are victimized and with children who bully others are vital to providing firm and reasonable discipline.

YOU CAN'T COME TO MY BIRTHDAY PARTY

At the preschool, Kelli would gather her little covey of girls and purposefully exclude another girl. This girl could be wearing the wrong color, be the wrong color, have trouble keeping up physically or academically, or just be in the line of sight. People often focus on physical confrontations that are typical of male bullying, while minimizing female bullying. "You're not my best friend anymore!" "You can't come to my birthday party." "You can't play with us." They may remember experiencing being bullied by other girls starting as early as preschool. "We don't like you... we don't want to play with you!" It can continue through adolescence, often becoming the most vicious in middle sor high school. Girls definitely can and do bully, but may do so in a different style than boys. Male bullying tends to follow male social dynamics, which often is a struggle for status in the hierarchy. Being or having the best or most, or being the alpha may be the primary social goal for boys. Unless differences are honored, being different often sends one to the bottom, if allowed stay in the hierarchy at all. In childhood, competitive physical aggression and domination usually establishes male hierarchy. In arguably healthier male groups, a hierarchy allows for some status for every member. With ongoing struggles to ascend the hierarchy, everyone still can have a more or less respected and valued place. If members show competence or make status-gaining progress, they can ascend the hierarchy. In the healthiest groups, all members value and celebrate the increased competence of any member. With male bully dynamics however, energy is spent to keep others down. Bullies' self-esteem is based on destroying the self-esteem and power of others, rather than on showing greater personal competency relative to others. Aggressiveness or competitiveness to establish hierarchy in healthier male groups is distorted by bullies' need to destroy others. In normal hierarchies, bullies are at or near the bottom. Not respected or liked, bullies settle for being the most feared in a parallel social hierarchy. Assertiveness becomes aggression becomes intimidation. Competition for higher placement in the hierarchy becomes bullying for an illusion of power and control. Physical aggression expressed in games and sports becomes physical and hurtful exploitation, intimidation, and domination. "Winning" a game or race, becomes opportunities to destroy others emotionally and psychologically. Teachers can monitor these physical interactions, to see that assertion and aggression do not degenerate into abuse. Boys may not hold themselves to appropriate boundaries and may experiment with what is acceptable. When adults assert clear boundaries, it usually serves to stabilize the group. Children are more secure when they know the boundaries and know that others know and will respect the boundaries. Ironically, non-physical aggression characteristic of girls may be indicative of developmental maturity. "Proponents of the stage theory of development argue that young children who lack verbal skills rely primarily on physical aggression. With the development of verbal and social skills, more sophisticated forms of aggression are possible. Social intelligence (the ability to make accurate observations of the social world and use this knowledge to control social situations) is correlated with indirect aggression." (CPHA, 2003, page 15). Girls often are socialized to be more socially conscious than are boys. This potentially results in distinctive female social dynamics or culture. Whereas, hierarchy is foundational for male culture, inclusion in and subsequently, exclusion from the group are often keys to female culture. The relationship among female members strongly determines social status, with intimacy as the greatest value. Sharing feelings becomes a way to bond (even in the supermarket checkout line with total strangers!). Being included within a female peer group becomes critical to emotional and psychological survival. This may be especially true, if those with male partners find them emotionally unavailable due to "man" activities- aka, football season! Exclusion from the female peer group can become tantamount to being emotionally abandoned in the wilderness where one perishes. Female bullying style often becomes about "relational aggression:"

hurting by damaging or manipulating relationships, spreading rumors to damage reputations, negative gossip, telling others to stop liking someone, withdrawal of friendship, social exclusion, and the silent treatment. These methods keep others in line, assert status, and build self-esteem for female bullies. "Femininity is related to dependence, nurturance, passivity, serving others, and maintenance of social relationships. Female aggression is contrary with the gender role expectations for girls. Consequently, they are more likely than boys to develop non-physical forms of aggression for reasons related to social acceptability" (CPHA, 2003, p.15). "To elude social disapproval, girls retreat beneath a surface of sweetness to hurt each other in secret. They pass covert looks and notes, manipulate quietly over time, corner one another in hallways, turn their back, whisper, and smile. The acts, which are intended to escape detection and punishment, are epidemic in middle-class environments where the rules of femininity are most rigid" (Simmons, 2003, p.22). One form in particular of Internet bullying, which is a relatively new phenomenon is similar.   "Mean Girls," so named because it is characteristically female is distinguished from other types of cyberbullying. This occurs,

> "when the cyberbully is bored or looking for entertainment. It is largely ego-based and the most immature of all cyberbullying types. Typically, in the 'Mean Girls' bullying situations, the cyberbullies are female. They may be bullying other girls (most frequently) or boys (less frequently). 'Mean Girls' cyberbullying is usually done, or at least planned, in a group, either virtually or together in one room. This kind of cyberbullying is done for entertainment. It may occur from a school library or a slumber party, or from the family room of someone after school. This kind of cyberbullying requires an audience. The cyberbullies in a 'mean girls' situation want others to know who they are and that they have the power to cyberbully others. This kind of cyberbullying grows when fed by group admiration, cliques or by the silence of others who stand by and let it happen. It quickly dies if they don't get the entertainment value they are seeking." (Stop Cyberbullying, 2008)

The "entertainment" value or the reaction serves to feed cyberbullies. The Internet torture of a 14-old-girl, Olivia Gardner persisted through her moving through two public schools into a private school (Lelchuk, 2007). Her classmates created the "Olivia Haters" web page with postings calling her "homo," "bitch," and suggesting "kicking her ass." Taunting started in school when she had a seizure. This identified her as obviously different, resulting in classmates calling her a "retard." They drag her backpack through mud. Although, she switched schools, friends of students from her old school began harassing her within a week. Harassment followed her again despite moving again to a private school.   In the cyber-community, bullying can be much more relentless than in a school community. There may be little or no escape. Unfortunately, some adults permit children's cruelty in choosing friends through overtly and loudly excluding non-friends. They believe they cannot or should not tell children whom to choose as friends. However, teachers can require individuals to make friendship choices and still be socially responsibility and empathetic. They must stop those children who would intentionally hurt others… who ensuring excluded people feel ostracized and isolated without recourse. And, then delight in the pain they feel. Adults need to intervene immediately to forbid such behavior. And, to administer appropriate consequences for the cruelty.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN… "WE?"
Most people would think Kelli was a sweet little girl playing with the other girls. However, if listening carefully, they would hear Kelli declare, "We don't like Joanie." The three other girls, intimidated or

otherwise under Kelli's influence would go along. Kelli relished her domination of Joanie and of the three girls as a four-years old bully. Very sweet and charming to adults or when getting her way, she could turn vicious. Adult failure to intervene strongly and affirmatively, for everyone involved would have been unconscionable. I intervened. "Kelli, you are on time out. You're trying to hurt Joanie's feelings on purpose. No one is allowed to hurt others on purpose at our school. " Children may be a part of the community only if they not harm themselves, others, or the process of the community. Letting Kelli indulge in bullying Joanie and be rewarded with status or power, portends her bullying others. To Kelli's gang, I challenged "What did she mean… 'we?' You girls need to be on timeout too!?"

> "It is often said that one girl alone is rarely a problem, but get two or three together and they're different creatures entirely. Because girls often aggress as a group, exclusion and its cruel trappings can be a perversely good opportunity for secure companionship. An odd girl is out is undeniably so; her exclusion is made possible by the banding together of many." (Simmons, 2003, page 134).

There was a quick chorus from the girls of, "Oh no! We like Joanie!!" I responded, "Oh you do? Then take Joanie and go play." "OK! Come on, Joanie… let's play!" And off they would go, leaving Kelli behind on timeout, BUSTED!! Exclusionary bullying met clear boundaries and consequences that were utilized to set a positive model for all the children. Adults must guarantee any social experimentation intimidating others to do cruel bidding turns out negatively for budding bullies. When the other girls were prompted to include Joanie, a new value and behavior of the group was created. The strong desire to be included in a group was still supported, but exclusion was tossed as a group value and behavior. Intervention is critical at the earliest ages in pre-school and early elementary school. It becomes increasingly difficult to intervene against relational bullying later in pre-adolescence and adolescence as social dynamics evolve. Relational bullying in early childhood may be clumsy and problematic, and readily observed by adults. However, in later years, it can become calculating and the norm, and conducted under the adult supervision umbrella. Thunfors (2005) in his study of 379 middle school students found that "Instead of suffering social repercussions for the maltreatment of their peers, the majority of bullies were either high or medium in their peer popularity status." This was particularly true for girl bullies (50%; 7 of 14). "Although bullying is disapproved of, it is a way to assert social dominance and we speculate that it may serve to *facilitate* the attainment of popularity among early adolescent peers." A study of 1756 middle school children in Korea that found that students of high social economic status (SES) were more likely to be perpetrators of bullying, while those of both high and low SES are more likely to be victims (Kim, et al, 2004). Students of higher social economic status (SES) easily victimized more vulnerable lower SES students, while also victimizing other students of high SES to maintain popularity among peers. While it would have worked for preschooler Kelli if there had not been adult intervention, bullying really works for these students! The desire to be popular among classmates is normal. It needs to be guided so that it is acquired in socially healthy ways, without harming others self-esteem. Adults thus need to be vigilant to identify potential bullies early on to prevent early bullying experiments from succeeding and bullying from becoming habitual.   School and district-wide processes need to be developed to direct children to healthier strategies to gain popularity, power, and control. Without adamant and relentless adult intervention, the culture of classrooms and playgrounds can evolve to tolerate and then, condone bullying behavior as a means to social status. The institutional culture of verbalized condemnation but

functional tolerance and permission for bullying behavior in schools can only be changed through institutionalizing greater adult vigilance and supervision. Bullies do not experience what they do as being wrong. To bullies, behavior is only wrong if they get caught. And, some bullies become more clever and secretive as they hone their victimizing skills. Sound supervision after a systemic commitment to stop bullying is critical. Increased supervision cannot just be a matter of vigilance, but requires additional human power in terms of staffing and improved training of supervisors. That also means a financial commitment. The standards movement has institutionalized heightened accountability for academic achievement, and in some cases increased resources. Teachers and other concerned adults, especially parents may need move beyond their individual attention and energy to have schools institutionalize heightened accountability for children's social and emotional safety.

Biography

Ronald Mah, therapist and educator, combines concepts, principles, and philosophy with practical techniques and guidelines for effective and productive results. He uses humor and stories from his many experiences to illustrate important points in a stimulating and highly motivating and engaging style.

A Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist, his experiences include: Asian-American community mental health, Severely Emotionally Disturbed mental health & school partnership programs, vocational programs for at risk youth, welfare to work programs, clinical consulting & cross and multi-cultural training for Head Start, other early childhood education programs, social services organizations, & mental health agencies, supervising a high school mental health clinic, training and supervising therapists, private practice in Castro Valley, author of the Asian Pacific Islander Parent Education Support curriculum.

Professional Education experiences include: 16 years in ECE, including owning and running a child development center for 11 years, Kindergarten, elementary, & secondary teaching credentials and experience, ethnic studies curriculum writer, community college instructor, Masters of Psychology instructor, and former member Board of Directors of the California Kindergarten Association and of the California Association of Marriage & Family Therapists.