

the CHARACTER network



Volume 1 Number 3

BULLY ALERT!™ BY JIM LORD

Josh and his friend were two sixth graders who loved football. The two boys always had fun together, and most of the time when you saw them, there was a football nearby!

One day they wanted to throw some passes and run some plays after school. About four o'clock that afternoon, they headed to the practice field. There were other kids there, but there was plenty of room to play. Josh threw a pass, and his friend ran long to receive it—a perfect completion! “This is going to be a good day,” thought Josh. Then, as his friend went to return the pass, a third grader ran between them chasing a runaway soccer ball. Josh’s friend shouted, “Get outta here, kid,” and then hit the boy with the football, knocking him down. Josh couldn’t believe what he had just seen! He quickly ran up to help the boy, yelling at his friend about what he had done. Fortunately, the boy was not hurt, but he was a bit nervous about it all.

Josh said to his friend, “Hey man, I’m not hanging with bullies,” as he took his football and started heading home. His friend had never been called a bully before. “What do you mean,” he asked? “You’re being a bully, dude! Anytime you hurt somebody, even if it’s just hurting their feelings, you’re being a bully—that’s pretty simple. Why don’t you try being a *hero* instead, and *help* other people?” Josh’s friend had a lot to think about. Josh had already helped two people—the third grader, and his friend, who later did have a change of attitude and started following Josh’s example.

From the “Bully Alert”™ CD series produced and distributed by The Character Network for use on elementary school intercom systems.

try a little KINDNESS

The idea that kindness is a good thing has been around for more than just a while. Periodically, someone will attempt a “kindness revival,” with songs like Glen Campbell’s *Try a Little Kindness*, and we



all remember the *Random Acts of Kindness* bumper stickers. But, thanks to people like the late Donald O. Clifton, PhD, the effectiveness of kindness and positive reinforcement has now become the topic of a number of studies. In the best selling book, *How Full is Your Bucket?*, (co-authored with his grandfather, Dr. Clifton,) Tom Rath points out that psychology has traditionally focused on what’s wrong with people, along with studying the effects of being treated badly. But what about the effects of positive reinforcement, one person to another, or one boss to his or her employees, one teacher to his or her students, one parent to his or her children?

One of the most interesting studies cited, followed three different groups of math students for five days of testing. One group was praised for its results at the end of the first day. The second group was criticized. The third group was ignored. Scores from the praised group AND the criticized group increased the second day. They were again praised and criticized respectively. The ignored group showed a slight decline after the first day. By the third day, the criticized group began a dramatic decline, while the praised group continued to achieve even higher scores. By day five, the ignored group showed very little improvement, the criticized group plummeted from its second day high, and the praised group shot to an overall 71% improvement!

Rath is quick to point out that *constructive* criticism in measure is healthy and even essential, referring to a study that calls “five positive interactions for every one negative,” the “magic ratio.” He shows how excessive praise can become insincere and counter-productive, but demonstrates through many more examples how the effectiveness of sincere kindness and positive reinforcement can actually be measured, and the results are amazing.

The bottom line? Kindness is more than just a feel-good idea—it really works!

The Character Network Newsletter is a FREE monthly resource for use in your Proactive Bully Prevention efforts. It also offers Positive Personal Vision for the lives of young people and for those working with youth. To access current AND previous issues, simply click [here](#) to access our website and click on the “Newsletters” link.

school VIOLENCE

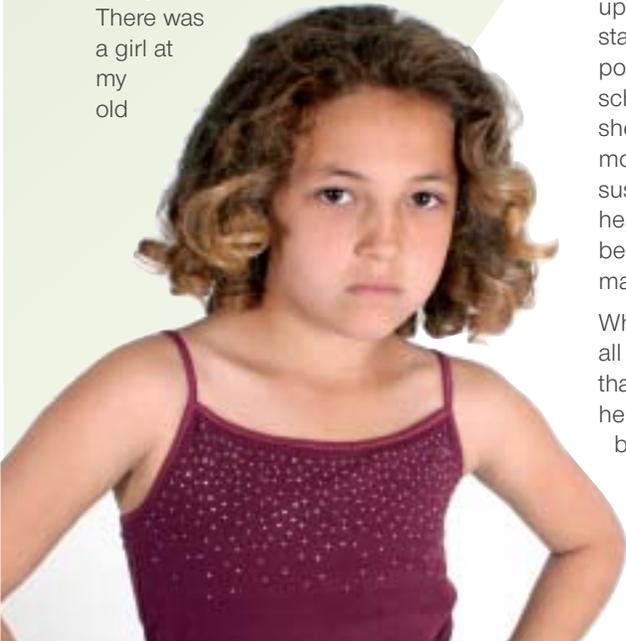
by Hannah Spears

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What is violence? It's what's ripping the world apart. Some forms of violence include murder, stealing, drug abuse, peer pressure, and even using unpleasant words. The pathetic thing is, some of these transpire at school. One example would be with bullies. Why does this occur? One reason I think a person might bully people is because they have relative dilemmas and they just take it out on others. Maybe they feel like they don't fit in, so they hurt people for not being like them.

I have had personal experiences with being bullied.

There was a girl at my old



school that did not like me at all. She and her "posse" would hit me. They would say malicious words to me. I had to do her homework for her. My grades started to slip because I had so much homework to do. Then, I decided to tell her no. When I told her no she was stunned, but she kept on making me do everything for her. After that I decided that I should tell my mom. She was very worried that they would austere hurt me, so she decided to have a conference with the principal. In your opinion do you think it will help? Well...it didn't, in fact it got worse. She was upset that I told the principal so she started to hit me frequently. It got to the point that I didn't even want to go to school. Then, I told the principal that she had been beating me up even more. He finally made a decision to suspend her. While she was gone I heard an anecdote that her dad had beat her. All of a sudden I didn't feel mad at her, I just felt bad for her.

When she came back she had bruises all over her arms. That's when I realized that the rumor about her dad beating her was true, and she hurt people because that's the way her father treats her. She was silent all day. I felt so bad I decided to talk to her, and she talked too. She told me

about her father, and what he had done to her. I told her she needed to tell the police that he was beating her. At first she thought that was just plain crazy, but then she realized what she had to do. I walked with her to the police station and she told the officers. Her father went to jail, so we took her in because she had no other family. She's now legally my sister, and we're BEST friends!!! She is the sweetest, most giving girl I know. She is safe because she took action...in a case like this you should too.

A smart thing to do would be to tell an adult as soon as possible if you're being bullied. They may be able to take action. Another thing to do would be to give people a chance; they may become your best friend.



Hannah Spears is a Middle School student in Central Texas. Hannah was 1st Place Winner in the 7th Annual Middle School Essay Contest, hosted by the Texas School Safety Center. Last school year, TxSSC received over 1,000 essays pertaining to

topics such as bully prevention, making positive choices, the dangers of drugs and alcohol, and violence in America's schools. Watch for the next contest to be announced on the TxSSC website: http://cscs.txstate.edu/txssc/txssc_contests.htm#essay

campus

PRESENTATIONS

by The Character Network™

SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES

Jim Lord's live presentations for elementary school students are fun, motivating and inspiring. They cause even the youngest children to think about their relationships with others as they learn about heroes who help people and bullies who hurt people. Students also learn to visualize themselves in the future and how to become their own heroes by preparing now to make their adult lives better!

FAMILY ASSEMBLIES

Presentations for families are conducted in the evening and are designed to help parents understand what their children are learning in school about bullying. Practical tips are shared to enable parents to further support these concepts at home.

ADMINISTRATORS/FACULTY PROGRAMS

Jim brings a new perspective to the subject of "Bully Prevention", and faculties can learn how to help students visualize their own futures. Tips and life-applications are given to help motivate each of your students to enthusiastically begin preparing for that future!

Call 800-364-6883 to bring Jim's life-changing encouragement to your campus!

TEACHERS

by a First Grade Teacher for 20+ years

can be bullies, too

When I was in the first grade, teachers had a lot more freedom in how they dealt with children than we do now. Mrs. Scheen was not just my first grade teacher, she was my very first teacher, as kindergarten was only a luxury afforded by those in neighborhoods other than mine. And though I had greatly looked forward to going to school, it seemed I would never be six years old! Once I made it to that first day of first grade, unfortunately, it did not take me long to begin using my creative skills to figure out clever excuses for NOT going to school. I was terrified of Mrs. Scheen. So were all of the others in my class. Her personal disciplinary tactic was to grab a child by the shoulders, get right in his face, and scream instructions and insults while she shook the poor kid relentlessly. I could already read when I started school, and I was generally a good student in class so Mrs. Scheen never raised her voice at me or touched me. UNTIL, one day in the spring, she had written a couple of paragraphs that we were instructed to copy. The mistake I made was to copy the first paragraph, then because there was still plenty of room on the line, I simply continued writing, rather than going to a new line and indenting. She had never explained the concept of paragraphs to us. Not the least bit suspicious there was any sort of problem with my work, I took it to her desk for approval. Oh, my goodness! It immediately became evident that she was not happy with me. Fearing the hideous shaking routine, I panicked and completely lost bladder control right there in front of the class!

Because of this rocky start, I continued to be nervous and intimidated by every

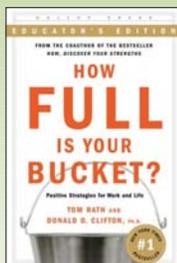
teacher I had from that time forth. I was afraid of teachers well into the time that I became one! Let's just be honest about it. Even with today's strict limitations on a teacher's behavior toward students, teachers can be some of the biggest bullies around! I base this on years of experience as a parent of four children, and as a teacher myself for many years. Children of any age can certainly be trying to the soul, some more than others, but, if we as teachers, or parents, set the example of bullying, shame on us because we are guilty of furthering a serious worldwide problem! Professionals who consciously choose the career of educating our next generations should not yell, insult, grab,

use sarcasm, or play favorites. It's true, that those things are not regulated by modern law. But when we, as teachers, practice these devices, children pay the price of humiliation, and hatred or fear of school, thereby not reaching their full academic and emotional potential. It hurts me to see teachers who behave toward their students as though all children must be bad just because they are children. Those of us who are teachers need to do some deep self-examination. We may never be "written up" for some of the ugly mistakes we make, but for the sake of a child's future, isn't it worth getting rid of bullying tendencies we all can find within ourselves? Words can be firm without being insulting and belittling. I believe that if we treat the little ones in our care the way we truly would have wanted to be treated as a child (surely, we can remember what it was like to be a child.), our students will be so much better off academically and emotionally, and God will smile!



We want you to feel free to share your stories. Maybe, as a child, you were bullied by a peer, a relative, a parent, or even a teacher. Tell your story! Talk about how it made you feel and how it affected your life. Tell how you overcame or how you are still dealing with the results. Even if you have not suffered personally, you have certainly witnessed a bullying situation—your neighbor, your child, your student. Tell about what you saw, and how (or if) it was resolved. Maybe you were the bully. Talk about how you came to realize there is a better way. We see The Character Network as becoming a viable forum for people who genuinely want to make a difference in the way people treat each other. You never know how you might impact someone else's life by sharing your experiences! If you want an article byline, fine. If you wish to remain anonymous, that's fine, too. Just send your stories, your comments, or your messages to: Newsletter@TheCharacterNetwork.com. We're asking your help to grow this much needed resource.

Recommended Reading



How Full Is Your Bucket? Positive Strategies for Work and Life

(also available in an Educator's Edition)

By Tom Rath
(See article on page 1)

[Click here to order](#)

Recent Additions:

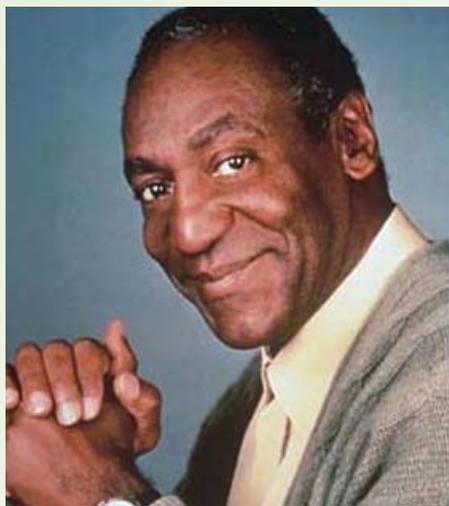
We want to thank the District and Campus Administrators of two West Texas school districts, the most recent additions for The Character Network school programs. All of the elementary schools in San Angelo and in Abilene, Texas are now using The Beginning of a Hero™ / Bully Alert™ series on their campus intercom systems.

THE BEGINNING OF A HERO™

the **BILL COSBY** story

by Jim Lord

Bill was only six years old when he started his first job, near his home in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He made money by shining people's shoes for them. Later he worked in a grocery store and made 8-dollars a week. He gave the money to his mother, Mrs. Cosby because his father had left and gone away for good leaving his family very poor.



Everyone loved Bill because he was so friendly. He also made up funny stories and told them all the time, wherever he was. Even when he was in elementary school, Bill Cosby could make everyone laugh. One time, he told his jokes and funny stories in a school assembly! Later, Bill went to college for a while, but soon he went to work as a full-time comedian. He began appearing on television and making a lot of movies. But he realized how important college was so he went back. This time he worked very hard and graduated, but then he went right back again and earned his master's degree and even a doctorate in education. He could have easily been a school principal! But more and more, people wanted to see him on television and in the movies with his funny stories.

One thing that has always been special about his humor is that it is clean (and very funny). He has proven that jokes don't have to be dirty to make people laugh. For a long, long time, he starred in his own television show called *The Cosby*

Show. Just like everything else he has done, *The Cosby Show* was very funny and brought laughter to millions of people without having to tell dirty jokes.

But there's a lot more to Bill Cosby than just being funny. He often tells people the secrets to being happy and successful. He talks about hard work and honesty. He talks about living clean and being friendly. He helps a lot of people with his words of wisdom, while at the same time, bringing smiles to their faces! Yes, Bill Cosby, that hard working little boy who helped make money for his mother by shining shoes, grew up to be Bill Cosby, the hero.

The preceding story is true, and is an example from The Beginning of a Hero™ CD series produced and distributed by The Character Network for use on elementary school intercom systems.

a reflection of your **FUTURE**™

by Jim Lord

Remember the old story of the tortoise and the hare? The slow moving tortoise with no natural ability for winning races with rabbits did indeed win the legendary contest because he put forth persistent effort.

A recent study surveyed the parents of two rather large groups of students; one substantially outranking the other academically. One simple question was asked of these parents: "Which plays the bigger role in achievement—ability or effort?"

The parents of the achieving students overwhelmingly agreed that effort was the great ingredient.

The parents of the other group—the underachieving group—believed that success depended on ability. They said that other students achieved more because they had more ability, and that underachieving was a result of a lack of ability, not even recognizing the importance of effort!

It's important to learn the lesson of the rabbit in the story. Ability without effort is pretty much worthless.

A Reflection of Your Future is a series of 1-minute audio segments broadcast on middle school and high school intercom systems as part of a Positive Personal Vision program of The Character Network.

ABOUT THE FOUNDER JIM LORD

Jim Lord, founder of The Character



Network, is a long-time broadcaster and public speaker. A father of six, Jim can be available to bring his experience, insights, and encouragement to your

students on any grade level campus, Kindergarten through High School. [Click here](#) to see what others are saying about Jim's presentations. Call 800-364-6883 to schedule an assembly program, teacher in-service, or workshop. For more information, email info@TheCharacterNetwork.com.

SEND US YOUR STORIES

Send us your story—whether as a child, as an adult, or as a professional who works with children. If you think your experience can help someone else, please send it! If selected, your story will be featured in a future edition of The Character Network™ newsletter. Send stories to:

Newsletter@TheCharacterNetwork.com

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