

**Finding a Mighty Heart: Acquiring the Courage to Stand Up for Oneself and Others**

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December 7, 2004

Presentation for the  
*What's a Parent to Do?*  
*[Helping families deal with bullying and with kids who are out of control]*

Iowa State University Extension

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**Definition**

Bullying is a conscious, willful, and deliberately hostile (but not criminal) activity intended to harm, induce fear through the threat of further aggression, and create terror.

adapted from Coloroso, *The bully, the bullied, and the bystander* (2003)

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**List of handouts**

1. Bully facts
2. Bullying and the recipe for terror
3. Bullying and peer challenges
4. Experiences and consequences
5. Applying the eight steps to practical heroism and predatory bullying

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## Bullying principle 1

The exercise of **control** and the establishment of **influence** are a normal part of human relationships at all ages.

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## Bullying principle 2

Healthy peer groups are **not** always peaceful. Not all challenges are predatory.

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## Bullying principle 3

The primary goal in true bullying is to **isolate** the target from the connection to community while increasing one's own power and status.

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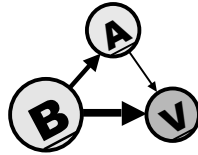
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## Bullying Triangle what the bully wants



B = Bully  
A = Audience  
V = Victim  
→ = Magnitude and  
Direction of influence  
O = Power

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## Bullying principle 4

Bullying is a **test**, a call to valor for **both** the target and the witness.

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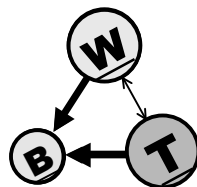
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## Bullying Triangle what the target wants



B = Bully  
W = Witnesses  
T = Target  
→ = Magnitude and  
Direction of influence  
O = Power

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## Bullying principle 5

Any effort to address the problem of bullying must consider where **inequities of power** exist between the three elements in the triangle.

(The most relevant aspects of power are **physical strength, self-control** and **intelligence**.)

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## Bullying principle 6

Any effort to address the problem of bullying requires a **transformation in the human spirit** among all elements that affect the bullying triangle: bully, target, witnesses, parents, teachers.

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## Bullying principle 7

The transformation of the human spirit depends on the creation of **Authoritative Communities** for children.

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## Authoritative Communities

1. A social institution that includes children and youth
2. Treats children as ends in themselves
3. Warm and nurturing
4. Establishes clear limits and expectations
5. The core of its work is performed largely by non-specialists

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## Authoritative Communities

6. Long-term focus
7. Multigenerational
8. Reflects and transmits a shared understanding of what it means to be a good person
9. Encourages spiritual and religious development
10. Philosophically oriented to the equal dignity of all persons and to the principle of love of neighbor

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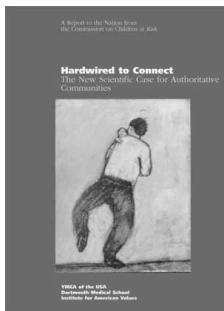
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Hardwired to Connect  
The New Scientific  
Case for Authoritative  
Communities

<http://www.americanvalues.org>

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## Bullying principle 8

The courage to face and overcome bullying evolves over **eight** steps.

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### Raising Courageous Kids

by  
Charles A. Smith

Sorin Books (2004)  
ISBN 1-893732-76-2

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## Courage

Persevering in the face of fear.

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**Heroism**  
Courage in service to nobility.

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**Step one: Willpower**  
Issues: Self-confidence,  
perseverance, self-assertion  
Target: Find the strength to resist  
Witness: Find the strength to intervene

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**Bullying principle 9**  
Violence originates in **powerlessness**.

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## By 2½ years...

- Phoebe occasionally resists authority by asserting her desires
- She talks about what she wants and how she feels

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## Step two: Caring

Issues : Self-respect, love, rapport  
Target: Care about oneself; "I matter."  
Witness: Care about the target

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## Bullying principle 10

Self-respect is a **birthright** not a matter of status.

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## By 3 years...

Phoebe uses words or gestures to communicate a desire for closeness (e.g., says “hug” or gestures to sit on your lap to allow for hugging)

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## Step three: Vigilance

Issues : Fear, risk, safety, protection

Target: Be alert to the circumstances; avoid risk

Witness: Be alert to victimization; recognize when intervention is needed

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## By 4 years...

Phoebe can distinguish between appearance and reality (e.g., she knows a stone can look like an egg and that clouds are really white when seeing them with sunglasses)

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## Step four: Composure

Issues : Self-control, calmness, endure

Target: Calm self when threatened;  
endure attempts to degrade

Witness: Calm self when seeing  
another threatened

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## By 5 years...

Phoebe tunes displays of anger  
appropriately to social situations (not at  
the mercy of her impulses)

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## Step five: Empathy

Issues : Compassion, insight,  
perspective

Target: Accept fear, gain insight for  
oneself and bully

Witness: Experience compassion  
toward target

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## By 8 years...

- Phoebe understands that communicating her feelings can make someone feel better
- She attributes her feelings to another's feelings or situation (e.g., "I feel sad because someone was mean to her.")

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## Step six: Integrity

Issues : Morality, fairness,  
conscience

Target: Recognizes injustice; acts  
from principle

Witness: Recognizes injustice; has  
internal locus of control

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## By 8 years...

Phoebe uses altruistic principles for  
moral decisions (e.g., stops a fight to  
prevent someone from getting hurt)

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## Step seven: Honor

Issues : Duty, accountability, pride

Target: Considers alternatives and accepts consequences

Witness: Accepts responsibility for intervening

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## By 8 years...

Phoebe experiences guilt for not fulfilling an obligation (e.g., she feels awful for not stopping the harassment of a classmate)

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## Step eight: Valor

Challenge: Heroism, risk, sacrifice

Target: Intelligently protects self

Witness: Takes decisive and intelligent action to protect self & other

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## By 11 years...

Phoebe can assist in emergencies with a greater sense of personal responsibility

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[www.raisingcourageouskids.com](http://www.raisingcourageouskids.com)

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