

Don't Be An Easy Target

At times victims of bullying can be like a magnet and attract bullies. They can become easy targets based upon how they walk, what they say, or because they are just awkward in social situations. This is not to say that victims are to blame for their treatment. Rather I am offering an approach to help the victim develop resiliency and confidence. This requires coaching. We can't just say to a victim to take action on their own. They have to practice, pick and choose their battles, and know when to walk away. This all comes with the help of a teacher, a parent, or a coach who has their best interest at heart. Here are eleven easy strategies that you can teach your students or your children to help them develop confidence and avoid becoming or remaining a target.

1. Only you know if you are being bullied. The warning signs are the knot in your stomach and the fear in your heart.
2. Bullies don't have to know about the knot or the fear.
3. Learn to stay **"Stop Knock It Off."** Realize that when you say it that the behavior may not stop. After you say it, **walk away.**
4. If what you say doesn't work it doesn't mean that you are a failure. You failed that time. You just haven't gotten there yet.
5. If a bully confronts you simply state "You have mistaken me for someone who wants to fight." And Walk Away.
6. Walk with your head up and your shoulders back. Walk at a moderate pace between classes. Don't give the impression that you are looking over your shoulder.
7. Hold your books under your right arm with a firm grip. Don't clench them like you are thinking that someone is going to knock them out of your hands.
8. Pay attention to your surroundings. When you are walking almost take a panoramic view of where you are going.
9. Listen to your classmates and only respond when you believe that it is absolutely necessary.
10. Don't disclose any information to anyone that you believe that they will use to bully you.
11. Know who your friends are. Keep your friends close and your enemies (the bully closer). Don't try to be friends with the bully or be his sidekick. It won't stop him from bullying you. By keeping the bully closer you are merely trying to understand his motives and how to manage his words and actions.