

Robert Higgs
Anti-Bullying
Presentations

Anti-Bullying Drama Resources for Schools

www.rhiggsresents.com

THE BOY IN THE PHOTOGRAPH

an Anti-Bullying play by

ROB HIGGS

'The Boy In The Photograph' is the work of Robert Higgs ©2013

Licence is given for performance of this play in a school or educational setting only.

Students and teachers **MAY NOT** use any material or content contained herein and incorporate it into a body of work without acknowledging and referencing the source of the content or material.

About The Author

Robert Higgs was inspired to begin his Anti-Bullying work after experiencing bullying himself at school. The destructive nature of these experiences motivated him to use his story to inspire others. He established his own company - **'Robert Higgs Anti-Bullying Presentations'** to provide services and resources that empower young people and adults to tackle bullying.

Robert has accumulated a decade of experience of working with schools, colleges, universities, local authorities and corporations throughout the UK, both as an independent consultant and at a strategic level as an Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator for a local education authority.

Robert is the author of two published books on bullying and his work has been featured in various media including: BBC Radio 1, Radio 2, Sky News, BBC Breakfast News and Martial Arts Illustrated, Combat and Teacher magazines.

He has also written and directed several plays on bullying and related PSHE issues.

For further information on products and services available to your school or setting please visit online at www.rhiggspresents.com

About The Play

THE BOY IN THE PHOTOGRAPH is a monologue, a confession really, of what it's like to be bullied and an insight into the emotions that bullying can make you feel.

The story and its characters are fictional but inspired by my own experiences of bullying situations at school.

I wrote the play to challenge young people who bully and the excuses they often make for their behaviour. In particular I wanted to get across the idea that there is no excuse for bullying behaviour and that the consequences for everyone involved are invariably unhappy. I also wanted to motivate young people who are bullied to speak out and have access to the information they need to turn their situation around.

The thing I love most about **The Boy In The Photograph** is it's honesty. Honesty is a powerful tool in drama and in Anti-Bullying. Being open about an issue, encourages others to be open – a desirable outcome with regards to the very real fear and shame that often prevents bullying victims from seeking support.

I have performed this play hundreds of times in schools, colleges, universities and other settings over the past few years and have loved every minute of it. I hope you enjoy working with the play and get as much learning and enjoyment from it as I have and more.

Robert Higgs

Reading The Play

Each number in the play script relates to the Discussion Point's section of the book. Referencing the situations in the script with the ideas in this section will allow the play to be discussed in class or immediately following a live performance.

Using The Resource

The resource is a fantastic way to deliver a powerful Anti-Bullying message to young people in any size group from a single class to a half or whole year group by following the suggested **Lesson Plan** below:

Introduction: Welcome, outline of the lesson and safeguarding warning given to the audience by a member of staff. [5 mins]

Live performance of 'The Boy In The Photograph' by a young person in your school or setting. [15 mins]

Questionnaire: Each audience member completes the Questionnaire 'Speak Out About Bullying' which are then collected as useful data for your school or setting. [10 mins]

Q/A Discussion: The Actor takes questions from the audience about the play [5 mins] followed by member of staff asking the audience questions based on the discussion points provided. [15 mins]

This provides a lesson of 55 mins to 1 hour [allowing 10 mins to get the audience in and seated]

Safeguarding Guidance

The Boy In The Photograph talks about bullying in a very honest and emotive way. After watching the play young people often feel inspired to talk about bullying with the same honesty.

While this is a positive thing it is important to protect the young people in the audience from making personal disclosures that may not be appropriate, especially in front of a large group.

I recommend that a member of staff take time to introduce the play by following the guidance on the next page titled 'Introducing The Boy In The Photograph.'

Young people with any issues or concerns should be encouraged to disclose these in confidence according to your school or setting's Anti-Bullying policy and procedures.

INTRODUCING ‘THE BOY IN THE PHOTOGRAPH’ –

The aim of ‘The Boy In The Photograph’ is to provide a really effective Anti-Bullying Presentation that inspires its audience to consider the wide range of issues involved in bullying.

To make the presentation as effective as possible it is important that the audience are given some pre-warning of the play’s content immediately before the performance.

Here is a suggested script to be used to safeguard everyone in the session, including staff, the audience and the young person performing the play.

The following Safeguarding Guidance should be read to the audience by a member of Teaching Staff before each performance of this play

- The presentation you’re about to see takes the form of a piece of drama about bullying.
- The play is a monologue When [name the actor] begins the performance he will be in character immediately. He’s going to be acting straightaway.
- Some parts of the play might be quite loud. Some parts might even make you jump a little bit. Please be aware that this is part of the situation the character is in and is not directed at you.
- The issue of bullying can be very emotive but this session may not be the best forum to share your own personal experiences. If, after watching the play, you feel you would like to talk to someone about bullying or a related issue in your life, please speak to [name the relevant member of staff in your school or setting that would deal with disclosures, concerns or reports of bullying e.g. Child Protection or Anti-Bullying lead.]
- There will be an opportunity after the performance to ask questions and discuss the play. All you’re required to do until then is listen carefully and watch the play. This is ‘The Boy In The Photograph.’

Please Note: If the young person performing the play is well known to the audience I also recommend making reference to this in the introduction so that this does not distract the audience from the play.

'The Boy In The Photograph'

By Robert Higgs

©2013

A single chair is placed centre stage. A spotlight shines on and around the chair.

The lights fade up to reveal a young man pacing back and forth.

He glances nervously back and forth at the audience.

Can he do this? Will he be able to speak?

He suddenly stops pacing and addresses the audience.

THE BOY IN THE PHOTOGRAPH

“That’s what I remember...(He smacks his fist in his palm. Hard. An audible crack.) The smack of knuckle on bone. My eye stinging. And him stood there. Spitting and snarling. His mates laughing. The air between us crackles with aggression. You see the violence in his eyes, the hate. You know he’s daring you to answer back so he can batter you. But you can’t move. Your mind’s gone blank. He tells you not to do it again. But you haven’t said a word or done a thing. And your whole body’s shaking.

Beat.

You don't say a words till they've all gone. Then everything you wanted to say just comes out. (advances) What d'you do that for? You're standing there bullying me 'cos you think its funny? Stood there with your mates watching? And don't you impress 'em eh?. Punching someone who doesn't want to fight. Who wasn't even looking at you. Sitting there in class, everyday shouting your mouth off, 'cos you know I won't answer back.

Beat.

The words inspire you to speak up, to fight back. But it's too late. He's already walked off, thinking he's 'won.'. You think about going after him. Putting a stop to it because you're sick of it happening every day.

He sits down.

Instead you end up sitting at home, replaying it over and over in your mind. Wondering why when it happens you just freeze, you can't think what to say back or any words you do say comes out wrong.

He jumps up.

Some days were really bad. It was like everyone wanted to bully me. And everyone watching has a different reaction. Some of them stand and watch, or film it on their phone. Some of them laugh, they think it's funny. Some of them encourage it – 'Say it again.' 'Do it again.' (shouts) 'GO ON. KNOCK HIM OUT! [1]

Then you get the ones who see it happen and you know what they're thinking. 'Oh my god that's terrible. I'm glad that's not me.'

I used to ask myself why. Why me? [2] I wasn't the type of kid you'd think would get bullied by anyone. I was popular at School. I was captain of the football team. I had loads of mates. Then I had to go to this new School where I didn't know anyone and everything changed.

I walk in my classroom on the first day and everyone turns and stares. And he looks at me, the new kid, and decides to insult me, the moment I sit down. So that's it then. It's decided. Unless I say no. Unless I answer straight back. But the first time it happens, I'm not expecting it. It takes me by surprise. I'm embarrassed. I just sit there and look at the desk. [3]

Stands and paces.

I had to work so hard to be accepted. I had to win a place in the football team. I didn't mind proving myself, I *loved* football. But before and after every game, in the classroom, in the corridor, in the changing room, on the bus, they just never shut up - '*You shouldn't be in the team. You shouldn't be at this school. You're rubbish you are. Rubbish.*'

Nothing I did was good enough, even if I played really well. I remember the cup semi-final, the whole school was watching. (re-lives the goal) I took it past one, past two. BANG. Straight in the top corner. And everyone on the touchline's going mad because we've won, we're in the final! Except him, in the changing rooms after the match. '

'You think scoring that goal makes you good? That was lucky. You didn't mean to do it, you're still rubbish.'

So you get this group of them who start following you round School, doing things to wind you up, like (suddenly punches the back of the chair) Punching the back of you chair, pushing you out the way. Constantly. Relentlessly saying things to get to you. *'Nice coat mate. Where'd you get that? Nice trainers mate. Your Mum mate. YOUR MUM!* (laughs moronically) [4]

Beat

I played rugby at School. I was really good at rugby. I used to dream about playing professionally, playing for England. One day I told them that was what I was going to do. I was just trying to make them shut up. Just shut up and leave me alone. It didn't work. [demonstrates] The next time I walk in the changing rooms and put my bag down, one of them picks it up and throws it over there. [plays the bully] DON'T SIT NEAR ME. MOVE. (*stands and walks away.*)

You try to cope with it on your own. And I did for quite a while. But the longer it goes on, the more it starts to effect you. You start to change. I stopped hanging around with my mates. I stopped answering back. In the end I even stopped playing rugby, I just quit. I quit my favourite sport. [5] Oh who cares? It's a stupid game. I remember the last time I played rugby. It was in PE. I was trying to keep out of the way, then someone kicked the ball towards me and I watched it come down out the sky and they're all shouting at me CATCH IT! And for the first time in my life, I didn't even try. I just took a step back. [he does this].

I'd never done that before. It was so weird. It was like....I don't care, I don't want to play.

He sits down.

When its happening, you just want it to stop. [6]

I thought it might stop if I quit the team. So I quit the team. It still didn't stop. You have to find some escape. I found it in visualisation. At the end of the day I'd go home, sit in my room and re-create situations I'd been in that day. (taps head) I'd see it all in my head, like I'm in a film. Only this time the film's got a different ending. I close my eyes (closes his eyes, concentrates.) I'm back in class. The teacher's a few minutes late. And this idiot looks at me, sees everyone watching. (plays the bully) '*Oi. Shut the door. Now. Or I'll knock you out*' (opens eyes, stands and confronts imaginary bully) Gonna knock me out are you? (quietly) Go on then. (roars) GO ON. (He explodes with a punch, his face contorting with hate, he stares down at the unconscious bully.) (screams) *LEAVE ME ALONE!!!* [a second scream, raw emotion, more upset than angry] JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!

Beat.

I watch him hit the floor with a smack. His nose smashed all over his face. I watch it back. Again and again and again in my head, till I've had enough

[He sits, breaks down.

A beat. Allowing himself to recover. And us.]

And I sit up on my bed and there's adrenaline pumping round my body like mad and I'm so full of energy I feel.....I feel ill.

Beat.

I was so angry at myself for letting them do, but once it starts happening, it very quickly becomes normal, it's not that easy to stop and the kids who do it [7] make you feel so powerless as if there's nothing you can say or do. And he wasn't my first bully. I was at Primary School when it started. [8] In Year Six. I used to go home with bruises, ripped clothes, broken glasses. I'd be worried about going back the next day. One morning I remember kicking and screaming at my dad 'cos he'd dropped me off early for school. And I can see this kid in the playground. And I know he's waiting for me.

I tried everything I could think of to make it stop. I tried making them laugh, I tried messing about, getting myself in trouble, thinking that might impress them, in the end out of sheer desperation I even asked if I could join their stupid gang. You know the usual idiots that follow bullies like sheep, that laugh at everything they say, that can't seem to think or act for themselves? [9] One lunchtime they grabbed hold of me and I was surrounded. I started shouting - LET GO OF ME. LET GO! And as soon as I raised my voice they scattered. And for once it felt like I'd won.

A beat

Then I got to Secondary School. I think about the teachers at my School. Whether they knew what was going on.

Then I remember that time I was waiting for the bus and this kid kept coming up and saying stuff – you know the kind of things people say. And I ignore him, I kept walking away but he just wouldn't leave it and the teacher was stood five feet away. He never moved. I just remember his eyes watching me, waiting to see what I was going to do. [10]

What did he want me to do? Smack him one? Say something really funny back? Did he not know what to do? Did he not care? Did he look at me and think – 'That's his problem, he's got to learn to stand up for himself?' Or did he look at me and think 'He deserves to get bullied. He's a wimp.' [11]

I can't *stand* that word. I wasn't a *wimp*. I was a frightened kid struggling with a problem I had no answer to. I wasn't a *wimp* – there's no such thing as a 'wimp.' I was someone who needed help, support, guidance. And if i'd been given it, do you know how quickly I'd have stopped *that* happening to me? It was pointless him standing there waiting for me. 'Cos I was waiting for him.

And all these kids who bully, they don't care about the effect they have on people, they think its just a laugh and everyone makes excuses so they get away with it, like..... [12]

He had problems at home.

He had problems at school.

It wasn't his fault.

Beat

Who's fault is it then? [13]

(laughs) It makes you wonder what's wrong with people. Friendly banter is all right, with your mates. But when its directed at that one person you don't like and you mean to see that look on their face that tells you they're not enjoying it and you get a buzz from doing it so you say it and do it and text it and post it again and again and again. Why do people do that? What do they feel they're getting out of it? [14]

And we have this stereotype that bullies are thick, they're not very clever but they are because they know how to get away with it, how to manipulate people, how to play the game. [15] And bullying's just a game.

[He sits down.]

And playing that game changed me into someone I don't recognise now [16] I lost my confidence. I became so shy I couldn't speak to people, so full of anger I didn't know how to control it. I used to go home every lunch to try and avoid it.

[He stands.]

I'd have a cup of tea and half an hour of peace and quiet. (closes his eyes, enjoying the silence). But you always have to go back to School. You can't escape. It's that feeling when you wake up in the morning – *Is it going to happen again today?* It's that feeling when you get home and switch on your laptop, you're thinking *Is it going to happen again?* There is no escape. I suppose that's why I didn't tell anyone.

I felt weak, I felt ashamed, I felt like maybe in some way it was my fault. I didn't tell anyone.

Until something happened at School. This kid had been winding me up all morning in every lesson and as he pushed past me on the way to lunch he went (plays bully) GET OUT THE WAY MATE (mimes spitting at him) [17]

I just smacked him. (throws a punch)

[plays bully]

[moronic] '*Yeah? YEAH? You startin'?*'

[condescending] '*Yes mate, that's why I punched you in the face.*'

Beat

Eventually I found a way to properly make it stop. But some people don't. It's like they never leave School, because 'bully' or 'victim' is what they've learned to be. And he's still out there now. He's still the same person. Only now it's his girlfriend who gets it when he gets home, or he takes it out on his kids, or its someone at work he doesn't like or someone in a pub he doesn't even know. [18]

And I see people like that everyday and I know inside they're not happy in themselves. But they could be. Because you don't need to be like that.

Bullying taught me so much about people, about life, about myself. We all that impulse sometimes to say and do the things we know aren't right. We all have difficult emotions, anger, frustration, fear. But these emotions are just energy, they fill you with energy and if you take that and channel it in a positive way you create an amazing life for yourself, where you're happy with who you are and you won't let anyone bully you. [19] (sits)

I've got this photograph of me at home, in my school uniform. When I look at that picture now I don't recognise that bullied kid. I can't believe I let that happen to me. [20] And I'm not blaming them. I did let it happen. I could have made a different choice I just didn't know what to do. And the truth is, he never had any power over me. Bullies haven't got any power, only the power you give them when you stay silent, when you don't speak up and what stops you speaking up is that feeling of fear inside that you'll make things worse. [21] But if you're going through something like that, it can't get any worse. It can't. You have to be brave. You have to find the courage within yourself and speak out.

Blackout

Speak Out About Bullying: ‘The Boy In The Photograph’

Bullying is defined as “behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.”

The Presentation:

What was the most powerful part of the play?

Please list three things you learned from the play about bullying

1.

2.

3.

Overall, what message did the play leave you with?

SPEAK OUT ABOUT BULLYING

Tell us about yourself (please tick box)

I am a Boy Girl

1. Have you ever been bullied? (Please tick <u>one</u> box)	2. When were you bullied (You can tick more than one box) (You can tick more than one box)	3. Was the bullying? (You can tick more than one box)	4. Where did the bullying happen? (You can tick more than one box)
No, i have never been bullied	At another school		
Yes, i have been bullied a little	Last year		
Yes, i have been bullied a lot	This term		
	Last month		
	Last week		
<u>PHYSICAL</u> (punched, slapped, kicked or pushed)	Classroom		
<u>VERBAL</u> (called names, threatened, teased about appearance)	Dining hall		
<u>INDIRECT</u> (left out or excluded by others, nasty stories or rumours spread about you)	Playground		
<u>CYBER</u> (abused, harassed or intimidated online or by mobile phone)	Changing rooms		
<u>HOMOPHOBIC</u> (the word 'Gay' or similar remarks used to bully you)	Sports field		
<u>RACIST</u> (offensive comments about your race or religion)	Outside school		
<u>OTHER</u> (please state)	<u>OTHER</u> (please state)		

5. Have you ever bullied anyone? YES NO (please circle)

6. If you said 'Yes', can you give any reasons for doing so?

7. If you have been bullied, did you tell anyone?
(please tick box)

Yes No

8. If you ticked 'Yes', Was any action taken to stop the bullying?
Has the bullying now stopped?

9. If you ticked 'No', Do you know where to go in school for support with bullying? Would you like to talk to someone about bullying?

10. What else do you think your school could do to reduce bullying?

Safeguarding: Please Note:

Prior to the Q/A Discussion commencing I recommend that a member of staff advises the audience [including the actor] to keep any questions or comments in general terms. Any specific bullying incidents that may have happened or be ongoing should not be referred to in the discussion in the interests of safeguarding. I recommend reminding the young people present of the correct procedure in your setting if they have any issues with bullying to report or talk about in confidence.

Hot Seating

A good way to lead into the Q/A section is to ask the young person performing the monologue to take a few questions from the audience. These should prompt the actor to talk a little about their experiences with working on the play, learning the lines, getting into character and any insights that the play has given them about bullying, particularly from the perspective of any of the characters involved.

Discussion Points

The following discussion points are all raised by the play and a selection could be discussed by young people in class or following a live performance.

[1] Relates to Bystander behaviour in bullying. The character relates four types of action that bystanders take:

- Passively watching
- Filming the incident
- Laughing at the incident
- Agitating the incident

Some of these actions are passive, some are aggressive. What impact does each action have on the feelings and behaviour of the victim and bully in the situation?

Ideas

Each action increases the Victim's feelings of isolation and low self-worth. No one is challenging the bullying behaviour which may encourage the victim to feel that the bystanders are in favour of it. Laughing at the incident may increase the victim's feelings of shame and humiliation. Filming the incident may increase the victim's feelings of embarrassment and fear as to how the information might be shared in future.

Each action increases the bully's sense of justification and feelings that people approve of his behaviour. Having an audience to perform to may encourage him to go farther than he otherwise would. Encouraging the bully to be violent may encourage him to be so for fear of looking weak or out of a desire or need for approval and status.

How does it feel to be a bystander in a bullying situation?

What goes through your mind? What is your typical reaction? Who do you normally side with? Would you feel confident in intervening? Would you report the incident? If so, who to? If not, why not? Would you ask the person who was being bullied if they were ok? Would you see it as someone's else's problem? Ask the class to discuss in groups and feedback.

What alternative actions could the bystander's have taken that could possibly have changed the situation in a positive way?

Ideas

- Reported the bullying to a member of staff.
- Intervening in the situation – either individually or as a group.
- Speaking up for the 'victim'
- Supporting the 'victim'
- Joining together as a group and telling the 'bully' to stop.

Develop this by:

Creating a short piece of drama involving the 'bully' and 'victim' character's encircled by a crowd of bystanders. Ask the bystander character's to act out as many different courses of action as possible that help to stop the bullying.

Final Points on Bystander behaviour

Everyone in school has a role to play in reducing bullying. They should do all they can to help when they witness or overhear bullying. When people – adults and other pupils keep quiet, walk by, bullies succeed. When people are brave enough to talk about bullying, report bullying, confront bullying, bullies can be deterred and hindered.

[2] Relates to the question: why do people get bullied? The character asks himself ‘Why me?’ This is an understandable question for someone who is being bullied to ask. But is it a productive one?

Ideas

Bullying is very abusive and it changes people. When people find it difficult to challenge bullying, they can revert into what is called a ‘Victim State’ that leaves them feeling powerless.

A ‘Victim State’ is learned behaviour and is comprised of three things:

1. Fear.
2. Shame
3. Self-Bullying.

These three things combined make it a real challenge to tell someone, to ask for help. Bullying can quickly become accepted as normal. It is at this point that damage begins to be done.

The most destructive part of the ‘Victim State’ is self-bullying. When victim’s internalise a bully’s words and actions and question themselves they begin to lower their self esteem. As their self-esteem and self-confidence lower they feel increasingly powerless to change the situation.

It is not productive to ask yourself ‘Why me?’

A person who is being bullied should not waste a single second thinking trying to answer this question or feeling that they have in some way invited or are deserving of the bullying. All bullying is abuse. No person is deserving of abuse.

A much more productive question for a person who is bullied to ask is:

‘I’m being bullied. I must stop this. What must I do?’

A person who is being bullied should be encouraged to disclose the problem to someone they trust and to be allowed to work through their feelings. This is a good starting point from which action can be taken to stop the bullying.

[3] Relates to the process a bully follows in selecting a person to bully. The character does not respond to the bully’s comments in an effective way. Why does this act as a starting point for all the bullying that follows?

Ideas

Whether a bully succeeds or not is entirely reliant upon the ‘victim’ or ‘target’s’ reaction. There are three possible reactions to bullying:

- Passive response
- Aggressive response
- Assertive response

A bully intends their words or actions to have an emotional impact on the person they are aimed at. The character in the play gives a passive response when he looks at the desk and does not answer back. Having ‘tested the water’ the bully character feels more confident of being able to bully successfully the next time.

Other people in the classroom see this and some of them also start to bully the character because they start to feel confident of getting the passive reaction they want every single time.

An aggressive response can also sometimes be a bully’s aim because that aggression shows that their words or actions have had the desired impact on the other person’s emotions.

Bully’s will often say things to antagonise their ‘victim’s’ or ‘wind them up’ to the point that they lose their temper or lash out.

An assertive response however makes things very difficult for the bully.

An assertive response allows a person to stand up for themselves, while remaining calm and portraying confidence. Some simple examples of the character doing this verbally might be the following:

Bully You're stupid.

Assertive response I'm very intelligent actually.

Bully No one likes you.

Assertive response I like 'me.' That's all that matters.

Develop this by:

Looking at the situation again and brainstorming ideas of what the bully might have said to the character.

Act out or suggest examples of some passive and aggressive responses to this.

Brainstorm ideas for assertive responses to what the bully said. Act these out and discuss the different effects the three responses might produce and decide which of the three is most effective in terms of stopping a bully from having the emotional impact they intend.

[4] Relates to the relentless nature of bullying – is it bullying that the character is experiencing? If it is, why?

Ideas

This is bullying that the character is experiencing because it is not a one off incident. It is repetitive and persistent and involves the 'victim' being placed in situations where they feel disempowered and that it is difficult to defend themselves.

[5] The character talks about the emotional impact of bullying. How many different emotions and feelings does the character experience in the play?

Ideas

Anger, fear, shame, sadness, rage, hope, despair

[6] The character says that he just wanted the bullying to stop. Why is not an empowering attitude to have?

Ideas

Wanting bullying to stop is the right attitude but wanting or hoping is not enough. There must be some action taken to make it stop. Hoping and wanting a difficult situation to end without any action is too passive.

Activity

Discuss in pairs or groups and come up with a list of actions that the character should take in order to make the bullying stop and report to the class as a whole until a workable plan has been created.

[7] Relates to the issue of ‘power’ in bullying. The character says that the bullies made him feel ‘powerless.’ Is it true that people who are bullied are powerless?

Ideas

It is not true. However, bullying impacts upon a person’s self-esteem and confidence and they can begin to think of and see themselves in a very negative light. Bully/Victim relationships, like all abusive relationships, are based on an imbalance of power.

This is a perceived imbalance however. People who are being bullied often find they have had the power to stop the bullying and change the situation all along. Often all it takes is one moment of courage and determination to speak out.

[8] He reports the bullying starting at Primary School. Is this shocking? At what age does bullying start? When do people start learning these behaviours?

Activity

Ask the class to discuss in pairs or groups. Do they remember any bullying at Infants or Primary school. How can people be helped to change their behaviour earlier before it becomes normal to them?

[9] Relates to the scene where he was grabbed by the bullies in the playground and he shouted and they let go. Why do you think they did?

Ideas

Bullies can only succeed when we make things easy for them. The moment we challenge their behaviour in anyway, they retreat. Bullies also rely upon secrecy and silent compliance, by shouting and making a loud noise, the character draws attention to his situation and puts the bullies at risk of being found out. Using the voice to shout and attract attention when in danger is a very effective way to protect yourself.

Activity

Working in pairs, ask each pair to roleplay a bullying scenario with one person playing the 'bully' and the other playing intended 'victim.' Instruct the 'bully' to approach the 'victim' and make some request, for example, 'Give me your phone.' and instruct the 'victim' to practise saying 'NO' assertively in response, building up to shouting 'NO' and practising using the voice for self-protection. Give each person equal time in each role.

[10] Relates to the character's disappointment in a teacher who witnessed him being bullied and did nothing to help him.

This would be a good opportunity to refer to school Anti-Bullying policy and the message that school's take all bullying extremely seriously. It is also an opportunity to remind students of specific procedures they should follow with regards any bullying incidents.

[11] Why do you think the teacher didn't help? What should the teacher have done?

Ideas

Intervened. Verbally or physically to stop the situation. Order the bully to stop. Make a joke out of the situation to try and defuse it.

[12] Relates to reasons 'why' people bully others. The character's lists what he perceives as excuses he has heard for bullies and their behaviour.

Are any of the 'excuses' legitimate?

Ideas

There are many reasons for bullying behaviour and it is important to investigate these.

Bullying is completely unacceptable in any form and there is never any excuse for it. Empathising with these reasons is important though as it allows people to understand bullies and why they behave that way. An understanding of bullies can reduce the destructive impact of their actions. As stated before – bullying is destructive to people when it is internalised and the ‘victim’ begins to accept it and see it as their fault. An understanding of bullies allows people to see ‘bullying’ as the bully’s problem, rather than blaming themselves. It can increase compassion and empathy and reduce the feelings of fear that bullying thrives on.

Develop this by:

Listing as many possible underlying reasons or ‘excuses’ for bullying behaviour. It is important to emphasise that all of us can be a bully, a victim or a bystander in different relationships and situations in life.

[13] Who’s fault is bullying? Is it all the bully’s fault or is the ‘victim’ in anyway culpable? What part does the ‘victim’ play?

Ideas

Without a ‘target’ or ‘victim’ there can be no bullying. The ‘victim’ plays a vital part. The character is not to blame for being bullied, bullying is always very wrong, but he also does many things that help the bully, such as trying to avoid the problem and not telling anyone and seeking support.

[14] The character questions why bullies behave as they do, suggesting that there must be a reason. What possible benefits do people who bully believe they gain from their behaviour?

Ideas

People who bully may feel they gain something from it. Possible ideas include:

- Status or acceptance/approval.

- A feeling of power or control over someone.
- Displacement of uncomfortable emotions or dislike onto someone else.
- Identity – their identity is ‘the bully’ – they behave in the way people have come to expect.

Bullying is ‘learned behaviour’ and can be difficult to change. The ‘buzz’ the character talks about can become addictive as a short term boost of confidence or power. In order to change, a bully must let go of this behaviour and find more positive ways to feel confident and good about themselves.

[15] References the idea that bullying is a game and that bullies are skilled at playing it. Is this true? What methods do bullies use to disguise or justify their actions so they do not get into trouble?

Ideas

Bullies know they will be in trouble if caught because they know that bullying is wrong, or at very least that it leads to unpleasant consequences for them. So they become good at lying, projecting blame onto their ‘victim’ or pretending that they are the ‘victim’ or that the bullying is justified because of something the ‘victim’ has said or done. Often they pretend not to understand the seriousness of what they have done and seek to pass the bullying off as just banter or ‘a laugh.’

[16] The character says that the bullying changed him. What are the effects on the person who is being bullied?

Ideas

Bullying can affect every area of a ‘victim’s’ life. The constant fear and anxiety of being bullied can manifest in some of the following ways:

- Profound personality change

- Loss of confidence/self-esteem
- School phobia
- Aggressive outbursts
- Depression
- Withdrawal from social situations
- Nightmares – the character reveals that bullying gave him nightmares. Is this a surprise to the class?

Final Point on this:

Bullying can have a very serious and negative impact on a person's physical, emotional and psychological well being. It is important that all bullying behaviour is challenged, that 'bully's' are supported and encouraged to build self-esteem and behave in more positive ways and that an environment exists within school or college that allows and encourages 'victim's' to disclose any incidents of bullying and to be supported.

Activity: Ask the class to work in pairs and either improvise a peer mentor session with one person playing the 'victim' and one playing the mentor or ask each pair to write the 'victim' a supportive letter advising them on what to do to improve their situation,

[17] The character says that one day he 'snapped' and lost his temper and lashed out at a bully. While this is understandable, what is potentially dangerous about this?

Ideas

- Physical injury to either person in the fight.
- Possible exclusion from school or legal consequences that effect education or future employment.
- Use of violence as a problem solving tool could lead to a habit developing that will create consequences for that person if continued into adulthood.

A person who is bullied experiences a range of powerful emotions and a 'victim's' anger and frustration are understandable. The best course of action with bullying however is to report it immediately. The longer the bullying goes on, the greater the negative effects on the person being bullied. It is better to tell someone and attempt to resolve the situation straightaway.

[18] The character mentions that a former bully in his school life is still a bully as an adult. Why is it important to avoid being a 'bully?' What are the long term consequences of being a bully? How do you think being a bully affects the bullies relationships and happiness as an adult? Can bullies ever change? If so, how?

Ideas

All relationships [both personal and professional] make us happiest when they are healthy and based on mutual respect. Whether the bullying happens at school, at home or in the workplace, playing the role of 'bully' or 'victim' in any relationship does not allow anyone to be happy.

You cannot ever be happy if you are regularly making other people feel unhappy. Your relationships with everyone you meet will be unhappy and unhealthy. All bullies can change – bullying is learned behaviour and always an effort to get a certain need met – when bullies have the courage and self-awareness to identify what they lack, they can find a healthy way to meet their need that gives them happiness in the long term. Bullying only ever provides a short term effect.

[19] The character talks about taking all the emotions he feels and channelling them all in positive ways and that this now allows him to live a successful and happy life. What does he mean by this?

Ideas

All emotions are energy. They create energy in a person. That energy has to find a direction. This direction can be negative or positive.

Develop this by:

- Compiling a list of emotions that people feel.
- Ask the class to consider how they feel when they are feeling angry. The next time they feel angry, ask them to consider how energised they feel. How sometimes if the angry feeling is very intense, a person can feel as if they are about to explode.
- Ask the class to consider how they feel when they feel fear. Fear can cause you to feel nauseous or cause your body arms and legs to shake with adrenaline.
- Ask the class to consider how they feel when they feel sad. The emotion feels different. It can make you feel like doing nothing at all, but it still fills a person with energy.
- ALL emotions are energy seeking direction. Ask the class to consider, next time they feel angry to write or talk about how they feel, or do some exercise or drama or music – whatever it is that they enjoy. It is best to find a ‘safe release’ for emotions – in particular angry or fearful emotions otherwise they can sometimes come out in negative ways that create pain and unhappiness. Learning to channel your emotions in positive ways however, creates happiness in a person’s life.

Activity

Ask each person in the class to stop and reflect the next time they are angry or stressed or worried about something. Ask them to check how they feel. Can they feel their emotion as energy welling up inside them? Ask them to find a safe release for that emotion and see how much better they feel afterwards.

The character is talking about his experiences in retrospect. He no longer feels angry at what happened, is this a good thing? Do you think forgiveness can work in allowing him to move on in his life?

Ideas

Anger is a very toxic and destructive emotion and forgiveness is healthy in that it allows the character to let go of his anger and move forward. If he were to remain angry at the bully, he would in effect still be allowing the bully to affect him and his life, when in fact he has survived the situation, learned from it and created a happy life for himself. It would be unhealthy emotionally to remain angry about something that happened in the past.

Final Point: A person's emotions are their own responsibility and they need to be managed.

[20] The character says that he 'let' the bullying happen to him. Without blaming him at all, in what ways did he allow the bullying to happen and continue happening?

Ideas

Bullying is about choice and however powerless you feel, you always have a choice. You can choose to tell someone and take some action or you can choose to feel deserving of it and allow bullying to become normal and not tell anyone. This is the choice that the character made for a long time, until eventually he found the strength to speak out and overcome the situation.

Bullying only affects people when they internalise it and question themselves and think of themselves as being at fault. The character now understands how bullying works and how it can affect people, he knows that he can only be bullied if he ‘internalises’ what the bully wants him to believe – that he is worthless or that he deserves it and in effect, begins to bully himself with his thoughts. His understanding allows him to be prepared for this and less likely to allow bullying to affect him in such a profound way again. He has now developed self-confidence, self-esteem and emotional resilience and has too much knowledge and strength to be bullied again.

[21] The character talks about the fear that prevented him speaking out about the bullying sooner. This is a common and understandable concern of people who are bullied. Why is it important to overcome this fear and speak out?

Ideas

- The effects of bullying worsen the longer the situation carries on. It is healthier to deal with it immediately. Look again at the character in the play. You do not need to go through all that. Speak out!
- Bullying only succeeds through secrecy. Being brave and speaking out can encourage other people to challenge bullying as well.
- Many things we fear in life never happen. Fear is a fasttrack to confidence. When you face your fears, your confidence grows. Talking about bullying can be a real relief and can help you understand that you are not alone. This can remove the shame you often feel. This can help you stop bullying yourself. If you don’t bully yourself, you make it very difficult for anyone else to.

Activity

Ask the class to discuss in pairs or groups and report back – Do they feel the character was brave in telling his story?

Final Point

Bullying can happen to anyone at anytime. But ALL OF US have within us the power to turn these situations around.

Follow Up Exercises

1. School Photo

Look at the last few lines of the play the character makes reference to looking at his old school photo and not recognising the person in the picture because he has grown and changed so much.

Ask students to imagine looking at their school photo ten years from now. How do they want to feel when they look at the picture? Will they be happy with their memories? Will they feel good about how they behaved and treated other people? Will they feel upset that they allowed people to bully them or that they did not help others when they had the chance?

Ask them to set some goals NOW that will enable them to feel good in ten years time when they look back at that picture.

2. Challenge students to write their own monologue about bullying.

This could be done as part of a competition or Anti-Bullying Week activity with a selection of the monologues being performed in school by the students themselves.

This is a highly effective way to engage young people with Anti-Bullying issues in a creative way and allows bullying to be discussed from a wide variety of perspectives.

Please find a template for a Monologue Competition flyer on the next page!

ALSO

Girls & Bullying

The Boy In The Photograph is written from a male perspective, why not ask students to write a monologue about bullying from a female perspective, have the winning entries performed and ask students to compare bullying from the experience of boys and girls and the similarities and differences.

Template for Monologue Competition Flyer

[Name of school, college or setting] Anti-Bullying Week Monologue Competition
'Competition THEME or TITLE'

An exciting new opportunity for young writers & performers to write and perform a monologue that explores the issue of verbal bullying from the perspective of young people.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR:

- Dramatic monologue's for the stage with an engaging character and a powerful beginning, middle and ending that is honest and brave and explains the issues around verbal bullying and name calling.
- The story can be inspired by real life experience or completely made up!

The monologue should be written from the perspective of a single character. Below are examples of some possible character viewpoints to help you get started:

- A young person who was bullied at school and is reflecting on that experience as a young adult.
- A young person who is being bullied at school and is describing what is happening and how they feel about it.
- A young person who is a bully, describing the way they go about bullying others, the things they says and do, why they do it and how they feel about what they do.
- A young person who is part of a group of others who bully, how this happens and how they feel about the rest of the group and the person or group they are bullying.

TYPES OF BULLYING YOU CAN TALK ABOUT:

- Physical, verbal, indirect [ignoring or deliberately excluding someone], cyber bullying [using mobile phone or internet] or any other form of bullying related to gender issues, sexuality, race, disability or appearance. The theme of Anti-Bullying Week is 'verbal ' bullying, but your story can contain as many of the different types of bullying as you feel it necessary to include.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- [Explain who will judge the competition, the number of entries that will be chosen to be performed and when this will happen]

HOW TO ENTER:

- [Enter deadline date]

GUIDELINES FOR WRITERS

- Your play should be fictional and **must not** include any of the following:
 - The real names or details of people at this school/college – this includes other pupils, parents or staff.
 - Details of any incidents of bullying in real life that clearly identify other pupils, parents or staff at this school/college or incidents that have taken place or are happening now. The situation and the characters involved must be fictional.
- Your monologue should however contain the thoughts and feelings of your character about the situation they are in as this will help you to create a powerful and effective piece of work.

TIPS ON WRITING A MONOLOGUE

- A monologue is a short play written from the perspective of a single character. This character is going to show us the situation they are in and talk us through the whole story on their own. Therefore there should only be one character onstage in your play.
- Try to start with a powerful beginning, a word or phrase or piece of action that immediately grabs the attention and brings the audience into the story straight away.
- Write your monologue by imagining you are sharing this story with a good friend, be open and honest about the character's thoughts and feelings.
- Try to include a message you would like the audience to get from your play. The more messages you can include, the more thought provoking and effective your play will be.

- When you have finished your monologue, read it aloud or ask a friend to read it aloud for you. Hearing the words spoken allows you to hear the lines that you are happy with and the lines you can re-write and improve. To increase your chances of writing a great monologue you should re-write it several times.
- Write. Read aloud. Re-write! Until you are satisfied with it.

Good luck!

Performing The Boy In The Photograph – Guidance for Actors.

As the play is a monologue for one actor to perform, I would like the actor to have every opportunity to use their own ideas and create their own interpretation of the role.

However, if any guidance is wanted or needed I have included a few notes below on how I have approached performing the play myself.

Pre-Performance

Done properly, the play is very physical and takes a lot of emotional energy to perform. I always stretch and warm up before every performance and get myself into the right state of mind. The character goes through a range of emotions during the play, but what helps me most is to get myself into quite an aggressive state immediately before I go onstage. There are lots of ways I've done this, sometimes I would picture situations that had made me angry in the past, or sometimes I would simply talk to myself in an aggressive and motivating way and encourage myself to put a huge amount of emotion and energy into the performance. When the audience come in there is usually a lot of noise as everyone takes their seats and sometimes there is still noise while the play is being introduced by a member of staff. One key thought I always had performing this play was to silence the audience. My aim was always to engage people so immediately and so well that I had complete silence within a minute or two of starting the play.

Opening Scenes

I use the pacing back and forth at the start as way to focus the audience on me and the key emotion I'm concentrating on is fear. The character is remembering himself being in a situation he found intimidating and frightening – a fight, so I try to put the audience into the character's position straight away. I concentrate on making a loud sound with the punch – when I smack my fist into my palm I try to get a loud CRACK to represent a punch landing and this usually grabs the attention of the audience immediately.

I speak the opening paragraph quite quickly to stress the urgency of the fight and when I talk about the character's body shaking, I show this physically.

In the second paragraph the character is speaking to the bully who hit him with the benefit of hindsight, so the delivery of the lines is quite sarcastic and making the point that he sees the bully as very weak for targeting someone who he knew would not fight or answer back.

There are different characters in the play that you have to voice, there's a bystander to a fight shouting 'Knock him out,' there's various bullies saying things, there's a Teacher and a Headteacher – I just try to give them all a voice or character of their own.

The section on playing rugby and being 'worn down' by the bullying is a quite important as it leads into one of the most powerful scenes of the play. In the rugby section I usually concentrate on the emotions of feeling worn down, tired and despairing and defeated by the constant bullying and I allow people to see this in my body language. I try to lower the volume of my voice so that, when I sit on the chair and take the character into the scene in the classroom, my volume can start to rise until the character is standing up, facing the bully that has threatened to 'knock him out.'

When I answer back I normally say the first 'Go on then' in a passive way – I say the line in a quiet voice and I'm deliberately looking at my feet as if too afraid to face the bully. Then I SHOUT the next 'Go on then' and immediately throw a punch, usually screaming in aggression as I do so. This usually has the effect, because I have started the scene so quietly, of making everyone in the audience jump. Immediately after the punch there are two screams – the first one is very angry, full of rage. The second one is completely different. In the second scream I allow my emotions to well up and be heard in my voice – this scream is about being upset and distressed rather than angry. As the character talks about the bully hitting the floor after the punch, my voice is still emotional and reaching a high pitch which culminates in the line 'i've had enough.' This is possibly the most powerful scene in the play so I always, always really go for it and shout as loud as I can and really let the character's emotions be seen and heard.

After this line 'i've had enough' I take the character out of the scene, I bring him back to the present, where he is looking back on being bullied with hindsight, rather than being in the moment. I normally take several deep breaths and visibly calm myself, this allows the audience a much needed moment to gather themselves as the previous scene is so emotive.

There are moments in the play which can be quite funny and they can be played for laughs, particularly the scene with the bully spitting on the character, being hit and then asking if that means that he wants a fight.

In the final few paragraphs I am usually concentrating on getting the message of the play across – that people can learn a lot from bullying and they can go on to create amazing lives for themselves – that it is possible to overcome bullying. The last paragraph is also usually very memorable because of its positive messages and in this last scene the character is very happy, he's at peace with what happened, he has no anger about it – in fact he's inspired by everything he has overcome and is passionate and enthusiastic in communicating this to the audience.

From the feedback I have had the thing that people always say is important to them about the play is the rawness of the character's emotions and the way these are so visible in the actor's facial expressions and voice.

In order to have the necessary emotion it always helps to imagine that the character has never told anyone what happened to him before. There should always be a sense that this is the first time he has shared the story and the fact that he tells it so honestly and emotively gives the play much of its power.

The play is demanding of the actor, so my final tip is to drink plenty of water before the performance!

Good luck!

Robert Higgs

Tips for Tackling Bullying:

**Powerful Advice for Young People
By Robert Higgs**



**Robert Higgs
Anti-Bullying
Presentations**

www.roberthiggs.co.uk

‘Tips for Tackling Bullying’ by Robert Higgs

All schools and educational settings have a legal duty to establish policies and procedures for preventing and responding to incidents of bullying, but the attitude and strategies a young person can use to help themselves are often overlooked. As a former ‘victim’ of bullying at school, I can say with confidence that the following tips will be instrumental in allowing you to resolve any issues with bullying in your life.

- **Take responsibility**

It is easier to deny a problem involving bullying than it is to confront and resolve it, but avoidance strategies like denial place you in the weak position of it being someone else’s decision if or when to stop bullying you. Taking responsibility for resolving the situation is empowering. This approach is not about self-blame – you are not to blame for the bullying and should not allow yourself to feel deserving of it. Taking responsibility for seeking support and guidance from others to ensure the bullying stops will often bring a speedy resolution.

- **Allow yourself to feel angry**

Bullying is very frightening and distressing and it is tempting to bottle up your emotions to prevent anyone seeing how much pain you are in. People often accept bullying until they become so angry they damage themselves or others because they have denied their emotions about the situation for so long. You should feel angry if you are being bullied - all bullying is abuse and is wrong. Writing or talking about how you actually feel are healthy ways to release these emotions. Allow yourself to feel angry. Connect to that feeling and use it as leverage to report the bullying and seek sources of help.

- **Speak out immediately**

The longer bullying endures the more accepting a ‘bully’ and ‘victim’ become of their roles in the situation. Bullying becomes normal and everyday and a bullying situation that gathers momentum becomes increasingly difficult to stop. Follow your school or college procedures and speak out immediately. Tell someone you trust what is happening. People always fear that speaking out will bring greater consequence, but

'victim's' must be brave. The real danger of bullying is not the imagined consequences of telling, but the psychological and emotional damage it can do to the person that refuses to speak out. Bullying can destroy people. Telling someone NOW could save your life. It will certainly be healthier in the long term. Many schools and colleges have peer mentoring and counselling services that will help. You can also speak to someone confidentially and anonymously. The Anti-Bullying charity 'Beatbullying' has designed a Cyber-mentoring website for young people at www.beatbullying.org.

- **De-personalize the situation**

People bully for many reasons: boredom, jealousy, approval, insecurity, fear, displacement of anger, low self-esteem and lack of confidence to name a few. Do not make a bully's problems your own by blaming yourself or feeling deserving and worthless. Never internalise the things bullies say about you or accept them as truth.

- **Become Assertive**

Bullying is about reactions. Bullies say and do things with the intention of making others feel so bad they create a negative image of themselves. Understand that bullying is a game and the bullies success depends entirely upon your reaction to what they say and do. If you respond passively to bullying – refusing eye contact, not answering back, showing fear, distress or upset, or if you respond aggressively – lashing out verbally or physically, the bullies will have achieved their aim. Bullies rely upon the emotional impact of their words and actions. Learning to respond assertively – using eye contact when you speak or answer back, staying calm, refusing to get angry or upset makes it far more difficult for a bully to 'play the game' and get the reaction they want. Take nothing a bully says personally. Bullies are very good at discovering the names people do not like being called, but everything they say is a reflection of them, not you. To deal with verbal bullying, write down some insults and think up some answers to each one, then roleplay them with friends or family at home. Sample answers might include: 'Thankyou,' 'you could be right,'

‘I don’t mind,’ ‘I don’t care,’ ‘thanks for the opinion.’

As you get better at the skill, begin working with any names that you do not like being called. Practise answering back to these names and the words will lose their power.

You will become desensitised to their impact and develop great resilience. Anti-Bullying charity ‘Kidscape’ calls this technique ‘fogging’ and they run Zap assertiveness courses for young people at www.kidscape.org.uk.

- **Identify and Confront your Fears**

Fear prevents people from asserting themselves in bullying situations. Identifying the root of your fear and then confronting it will massively build your confidence. Take a sheet of paper and a pen and write down all the things you fear happening in a bullying situation. This will help you locate the cause of the fear that is preventing action. Then set a series of challenges with the goal of confronting your fear until you are able to control it and assert yourself. For example, if you have a fear of defending yourself physically, take steps to learn to do this by joining a self-defence class, a boxing club or a martial art. The training itself will place you in controlled situations where you will feel your fear and learn to control it. A good class and instructor will allow you to do this in gradual steps. If you have a fear of speaking up for yourself, then taking steps to join a drama group or perform in a play can be a great confidence builder. The nerves and fear you feel before going onstage for a live performance replicate the emotions you feel in a bullying situation. Performing despite these feelings will allow you to develop control over yourself when you need to speak up. Facing fear is the fasttrack to gaining confidence. Confronting your fears allows you to develop mastery over them, you become a braver person and bullies and the threat they once posed will seem insignificant to you.

- **Build Self-Esteem**

Self-esteem or the value you place upon yourself is the most important quality to develop. When self-esteem is low you can attract situations and people that reinforce that low opinion. When self-esteem is high, you attract situations and people that make you feel good and reflect that higher value. Confronting your fears and succeeding at challenges will give you a strong feeling of achievement. Self-esteem cannot be given to you by another person, but it can be earned by achievement and by doing things that make you feel good about yourself. When you feel good about yourself, you make it extremely hard for a bully to take away that feeling. Make developing confidence and self-esteem a long term, lifelong strategy and both qualities will continually grow and allow you to be successful and happy.

- **Be your own best friend**

A bully's insults can become a person's view of themselves when the bullying is not challenged. Your self-image comes from your thoughts. If you have a negative self-image it is because you have been thinking negative thoughts about yourself. Often these thoughts are inspired by the words of bullies and it is imperative that you challenge them. You can do this by becoming aware of and tuning into your 'inner voice.' Every person has an inner voice. This is the voice we hear in our head's that is continually talking to us and voicing our thoughts. Here are two exercises you can use to train this voice to be positive and develop a positive self-image:

- Find a quiet room and sit in silence for two minutes. Daydream and allow your mind to wander. After this time, reflect on the exercise. During the silence you will have noticed a voice in your head speaking to you, reminding you of things, reflecting your thoughts. This is your 'inner voice.'
- Take a pen and paper and draw the outline of a person. Then brainstorm words that describe your thoughts about yourself for one minute. Analyse the words you have written.

- If any of the words are negative, or nasty and make you feel bad about yourself, ask yourself where these words have come from.
- Often they come from your thoughts in response to any bullying you have experienced and the hurt that this has caused. Develop a healthy and strong self-image by replacing these negative words or thoughts with positives.
- Begin listening to and noticing your thoughts. Tune into them by paying attention to the 'inner voice.' Everytime the 'inner voice' says something negative say the word STOP aloud in your head. The 'inner voice' responds to your commands and will stop when you tell it to. When the 'inner voice' has stopped, re-phrase the negative thought or words with something positive, for example, transform the thought 'i'm useless at this' – by saying STOP – then 'This isn't my best subject but I'm trying hard and I'm getting better.'

You can trace the damage that bullying causes people from loss of confidence and self-esteem to destructive behaviour to this simple truth:

Bullying is designed to make people feel bad about themselves, but your thoughts are responsible for how you feel about yourself. And you are in control of those thoughts. Therefore no person can bully you and make you feel bad about who you are unless your thoughts allow them to do this.

Training your 'inner voice' to be encouraging and positive is the single most effective technique you will learn in terms of developing confidence, succeeding in life and preventing yourself from the damage that bullying can do.

- **Move On**

People sometimes struggle to move on and leave their bullying experiences behind because they refuse to let go of the hurt and anger they feel at having been bullied. People often dream of taking revenge on their bullies or live their lives waiting for a bully to apologise to them.

Re-framing the situation to take the positives from it can help you move on.

Bullying is weak behaviour and an ugly trait of human nature, but it is remarkably commonplace. Do not feel self-pity for the fact that you have been bullied. Feel sorry for the bully's. Allow yourself to see how weak their behaviour was and forgive them for it.

People often belittle themselves for what they perceive as their 'weakness' for having been bullied.

Congratulate yourself for surviving and overcoming bullying instead. If you have followed the tips above, the person you were when you were bullied will not be the person you are NOW. You will have grown in confidence and placed a higher value on yourself. You will be positive and encouraging of yourself. You will understand bullying and it's nature and with this knowledge it is unlikely that you will allow it to happen again.

- **Keep Moving On!**

Learn everything you can from your experience and apply this knowledge. Set goals for the things you want to achieve and focus without distraction on these. Find a purpose in life and live bravely.

Rob Higgs

Rob Higgs is an author and speaker. Visit www.rhiggspresents.com for further information.

