

# How to Create a Bully-Free Classroom

(A Teacher's Pocket Guide)

YOUR FREEDOM ENDS  
WHERE MY NOSE  
BEGIN'S!



**Mike Moore** M.Ed.

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**(A Teacher's Pocket Guide)**

**By Mike Moore** M.Ed.

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# Mike Moore's Motivational Plus

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Mike Moore is a popular speaker/humourist and cartoonist on humour, motivation and human potential. His work has appeared in newspapers, and magazines throughout Canada and the USA.**

**Mike works with teachers, parents, healthcare providers, business leaders, government employees and community organizations on the subject of Humour in the Workplace, Humour and Wellness and Humour and Human Potential. He believes that laughter is a universal language that...**

**MAKES GREAT THINGS HAPPEN.**

For information about having Mike speak to your group or to order copies of this booklet...

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# Introduction

This document is not designed to be a thorough treatment of bullying in our educational communities. We all know it exists and is having a disastrous impact on the health and well-being of our students throughout our country and beyond.

What I want to do with this booklet is provide busy teachers with a easily accessible reference guide that provides them with tips, tools and techniques to use to develop a bully-free classroom.

While It might be unrealistic to think that we can stop bullying in our entire school we can do a great deal to stop bullying in our classroom and in so doing sow seeds of peaceful co-existence and mutual respect that will have a positive impact on other members of the school community both staff and students. From one little seed a giant oak will grow.

It is important to realize that people bully others because it works for them and we let them get away with it. If we can make it so it doesn't work for them and we won't let them get away with it unchallenged we have a good chance changing this destructive behaviour.

Why do bullies bully? Well, they bully others for 4 reasons.

**1. Attention**

**2. Power**

**3. Revenge**

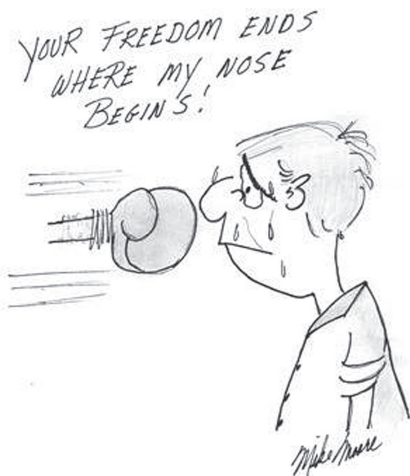
**4. Inadequacy**

## Teaching Strategies

\* **At the beginning of the year have a class discussion on the kind of class we want to have.** Have the students be as specific as possible. This will form the basis of a class vision and values statement which will be displayed on the wall for future reference. Use the vision statement as the standard by which the class can challenge behaviour that doesn't support class values. When people of all ages get together to set standards they always set the bar high.

\* **CHARM your classroom.** This is an acronym that stands for Communication, Humour, Attitude, Recognition and Mutual Respect. These elements alone will do wonders to create a bully free classroom. Just remember that humour can be both constructive and destructive. What we want to promote is constructive humour. Destructive humour, in itself can be an act of bullying.

\* **Celebrate and affirm the giftedness of each student.** Every child has a unique gift that can and should be celebrated and in so doing have a positive impact on the social fabric of your class. Find it and affirm it in the presence of the class and watch great things happen.



\* **Make peace, kindness and non-violence priority values** in your life as an adult and teacher.

\* **Affirm your students daily** especially those who need affirmation. It is difficult to bite the hand that affirms you.

\* **Try the 2 for 10 strategy** to connect and develop rapport with difficult students. It is a simple strategy that works wonders. All you have to do is spend 2 minutes per day for 10 days in a row with a difficult student in light conversation. Ask questions about his/her likes, interests, hobbies etc. Just get him/her talking and listen carefully to what she/he has to say. There is nothing more flattering or bonding as the undivided attention of another human being. This is nothing more than a relationship building exercise to show a young person you care. A student will never care what you think until they think that you care.

\* **Have the students design and create bulletin boards** on peace, kindness and caring themes.

\* **Be the change you want to see in your class.** Both students and teacher must challenge one another in creating a social climate free of sarcasm, ridicule and putdowns.

\* **Turn your class into an ICU (Intensive Caring Unit).** Remember that love is the most powerful healing force in the universe. Put its power to work creating a thoughtful, caring and compassionate community.

\* If there is a child in your class who has a reputation as a **bully try to get them on your side.** Give them a productive task to do and affirm their efforts and results.

\* **To develop empathy among your students** get the students writing on How Would You Feel If... (Use stories and photos from the newspaper to stimulate their empathic response).

\* **Have a Compassion Board** illustrating people responding to human need locally, nationally and internationally.

**\* Promote the acceptance of others not just tolerance.**

We as humans want to be accepted and appreciated, not just tolerated.

**\* Make the Golden Rule a visible standard in your class...**

Treat others the way you want to be treated. Have this as a banner in your class and refer to it often.

**\* Give your students the language of caring.**

Make a list of words and phrases that affirm and encourage others to live the Vision and Values statement.

**\* Stress the belief that we are all members of one human family.**

**\* Commit to Random acts of kindness.**

Kindness is contagious and has a positive impact on the atmosphere in a classroom.

**\* Have a quote of the week program**

handled by the students. Have the students break up into groups of 4 and assign each group the task of coming up with an inspiring and motivating quotation supportive of the Vision and Values statement of the class. Have the quotation displayed prominently in the room for all to see and reflect on.



\* **Teach and model manners, politeness kindness and mutual respect.**

\* **Don't indulge in sarcasm, ridicule and putdown.**

All students dislike these three relationship destroyers so don't allow your students to use them in your class. Don't you use them either.

\* **Teach and practice assertiveness skills.** We must teach our students how to say NO when confronted by negative peer pressure. One response I encourage is, "I'd rather not." They don't need to give a reason.

\* **Commit to conflict resolution in your class.** A few years ago it was the rage throughout school systems everywhere. But the commitment waned and shouldn't have. We need to have an on-going commitment to this process. Continuity is vital if we are going to change behaviour.

\* **Teach the skills of social and media criticism.**

Someone once said that if we don't know what we stand for we will fall for anything. Today our young people seem to be falling for the media values and not for the values of dignity, altruism, justice, equality, love, caring, mutual respect and peace etc. When they value these, they will be better able to criticize any attempt to challenge what they cherish.

\* **Remember that young people are like sponges,** they soak up and often imitate, the behaviour and attitudes they see from significant people in their lives. We must all be positive role models for one another.

\* **Situation analysis.** Select stories from the news and analyze them in light of the class vision statement.

\* **Use the positive power of the group** to gently correct negative behaviour when it occurs. You don't want to ever turn the class against another member but you can use the group to support and affirm a stated value and by so doing show other members that their classmates are willing to publicly affirm a class value.



\* **Read biographies of peace and non-violence heroes to the class.** Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa, the Dali Lama, Nelson Mandela, etc.

\* **Seek ways to neutralize frustration.** Violence is often the result of frustration and anger. When frustration is not dealt with anger can result and when anger is not controlled or managed it can easily lead to violence.

\* **Hannah Arendt defines violence as destructive communication.** When we begin to see violence through the eyes of Hannah Arendt we begin to evaluate our own behaviour using a broader lens.

\* **Use community resources to educate your students on various issues that can impact their lives** such as cyber bullying, date violence, texting, sexting, self-esteem etc. Many community resource professionals are more than willing to share their knowledge and experience with young people. They also have more knowledge and experience than a classroom teacher. Remember that the community has a vested interest in the formation of the adult citizens of tomorrow.

NEVER HIDE YOUR HEAD  
IN THE SAND WHEN  
CONFRONTED BY A POSSIBLE  
CHILD ABUSE SITUATION.



**\* Make it clear that every behaviour has consequences** and when you choose the behaviour you also choose the consequences. Encourage them to identify and reflect on the consequences before they choose any behaviour.

**\* Communicate with the parents of your students on what is going on in the area of peace education.** I suggest periodic newsletters home can keep the parents informed and help foster parent support for the program. Get your students involved in the act of writing and publishing the newsletter.

**\* Human beings are motivated by the satisfaction of their needs, social, psychological, and material.** When it comes to bully proofing we must concentrate on meeting individual psychological needs. The need for love, acceptance, approval, appreciation, belonging importance, and pleasure. When your students feel that their needs are being met they tend to be more aware of what they can do to meet the needs of their fellow students.

**\* Young people have a desire to do the right thing** but frequently don't know how. Our job involves showing them how and enjoying the consequences that flow from doing what is right.

**\* When the media constantly presents violence and meanness as the norm in solving human conflict our media saturated young people start believing it. We really do need to criticize or affirm the values presented by the media.**

**\* Don't accept the "Kids will be kids." cliché when it comes to bullying.**

**\* Teacher should be aware of their body language** when they are relating to students. Rolling your eyes or looking at the ceiling give a message that isn't productive and can be seen as a put-down.

\* When a student is ill or injured **have the class write “Thinking of you” notes** to express their caring and concern. You can also form an outreach committee to do this as well.

\* **Try to affirm caring remarks and actions made by your students in class.** You just have to say.” What a nice thing to say, Jack...or Jill. I always try to use a student’s name when interacting with them. It is so connecting.

\* **Always end the day with, “Be kind to one another.”** It shows the class that kindness is a true value of their teacher.

\* When you fail to measure up to the vision and values statement the most important healing phrase is “I’m sorry.”

\* Often students want to stand up for others being bullied but really don’t know how to do it and what to say. **Invite someone from the community to visit your classroom and give how to information and answer student questions.**



\* **Teach lessons on why people treat others poorly** and use the motives of attention, power, revenge and inadequacy as the framework of your lessons.

\* When an issue has been discussed in class **have your students write a reaction paper** on the topic. Don't tell them it has to be a certain length just ask them to write an honest reaction to the topic discussed.

\* Young people have a keen sense of fair play. We frequently hear them say, "That's not fair." **Use their sense of fair play in analyzing and discussing anti-social behaviour.**

## **The Art of Being a Friend (Friendship is a Two-Way Street)**

While these ideas are not directly related to bully proofing they can go a long way to stopping bullying before it begins.

It is important to point out here that friendship is a two way street. It has to involve mutual affirmation and encouragement. If, in your friendships, you are doing all the listening, all the giving and affirming then they aren't genuine friendships.

\* Be alert for any chance to praise another.

\* Be fun to be with.

\* Be genuinely concerned about what's going on in the life of the other.

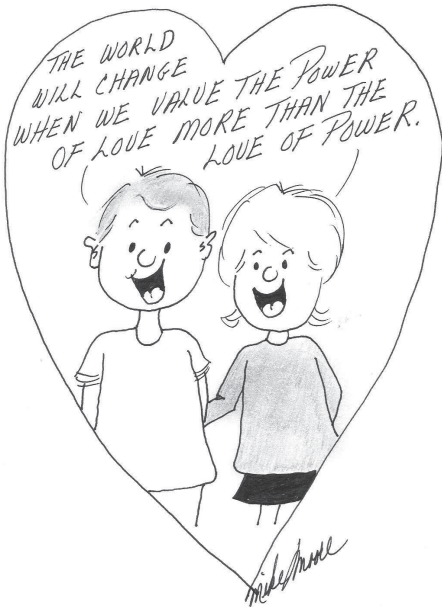
\* Suspend your agenda in the interest of your friend's needs.

\* Encourage and affirm your friend at every opportunity.

\* Listen twice as much as you talk.

- \* Give genuine compliments frequently.
- \* Accept the person as they are and not as you want them to be.
- \* Ask questions and listen to their answers. There is a difference between prying and being interested.
- \* Be enthusiastic.
- \* Be a friend without conditions.

**EXPECT THE ABOVE TO BE APPLIED TO YOU AS WELL.**



“

**Every child is equal in dignity to another.**

**Never try to build yourself up  
by putting another person down.**

**You don't exist to take abuse of any kind  
from anyone at any time.**

**Never believe the negative things  
you say about yourself to yourself.**

**If you can't say anything nice  
about another person...say nothing at all.**

**Bullying is abuse.**

**~ MIKE MOORE**

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As I close this booklet I want to suggest that you write these quotations on the board and have the students memorize them. Get them to say them often throughout the day.

***“I don't exist to be a doormat for anyone.”***

***“We are loveable and capable  
and deserve to be respected.”***

Mike Moore speaks to teacher and parent groups across Canada on parent/teacher/student relationships and teacher burnout...

To have Mike speak to your group, or to order more copies of this report, contact Mike at  
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