

Anti-Bullying Strategies

through Yoga and Virtues



Monica Batiste

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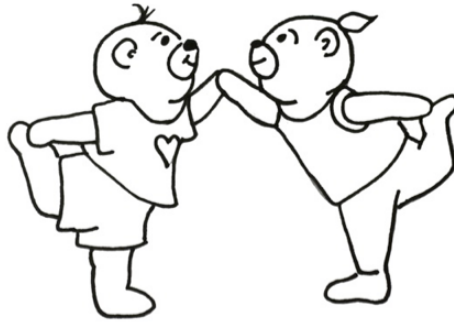
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Bullies and victims have one thing in common – they both have low self-esteem. Low self-esteem causes people to choose behaviour that may be harmful to themselves and others. Most schools have zero tolerance to bullying and put strategies in place to improve behaviour. One of these strategies is to improve self-esteem so children can communicate more effectively. As a result they are able to ask for what they want, and say ‘no’ when they need to.

Studies show that a child with low self-esteem is more likely to accept bullying because they are unable to stand up for themselves, and a small part of them believes they are unworthy of being protected.

Speaking up changes the dynamics of power; changing the reaction to a bully is the most empowering act a child or adult can make.

You cannot change another person, but you can change yourself

Words have power. Teach children to name what is happening.

Example: ‘I don’t like how you are speaking to me.’ Instead of labelling the child, name the behaviour. Say ‘You are being mean and I don’t like it,’ rather than saying, ‘You are mean’. Naming offers an opportunity for the bully to let go of his or her label and gives the victim a chance to learn their strength. Other words that help are ‘stop’ and ‘don’t’.

Actions have power. Assertive behaviour changes expectations, which then changes the experience.

Stand up for yourself

Be a guiding light by your behaviour. It is your strength and kindness that teaches others to treat you with respect.

Assertive behaviour stops bullies from taking advantage, and shows 'victims' how to stand up for themselves.

As you change, the people around you change. When you are strong and empowered, it is impossible for someone to be unkind to



you. They will either be compelled to be kinder, or they will leave you alone.

You cannot be passive enough to make another person be kind to you, and you cannot be nasty enough to teach someone to be nice. You can only change yourself and this is what changes the way people treat you



Yoga and self-esteem

Yoga helps children protect themselves against bullies by helping children develop the ability to speak up. Assertiveness is improved with all poses that open the heart and stand strong. For example, Warrior Poses, Camel pose, Noisy Gorilla pose, and Lion Pose to release the voice. Confidence is improved through poses like, Mountain Pose and Tree pose, resilience through Hand to Toe (Panda Bear) Pose, and patience through Resting Butterfly.

Self-esteem is shaped by the world around us.



Using Virtues to Prevent Bullying

Growing emotional intelligence will protect children from becoming a target for bullies.

Acknowledge a timid child for their assertiveness no matter how small the assertive act. A child might ask for something, and you can respond with 'When you ask me for something you need, you are practising assertiveness. Well done (Name).'

Watch the passive child for signs of confidence. 'I saw your confidence (Name) during show and tell this morning.' Point out confidence or resilience during postures. 'I see your strength (Name) in Tree Pose.' And 'I see your resilience (Name) when you focus in that posture.'

Bullies have the fear that their soft emotions will be ridiculed and might believe they are bad. They are often angry and often have difficulty communicating.

When an aggressive child uses courtesy, take that opportunity to acknowledge it. 'Thank you for asking with courtesy (Name). I see your respect.' The aggressive child may have become accustomed to having their attention needs met through bullying and may never be acknowledged for the times they are peaceful, polite or kind. Even a small act of kindness should be acknowledged, for it demonstrates to the child that they have the ability to be kind. Children with a negative self-image will live down to their beliefs. You can help them change their beliefs by becoming the loving, kind mirror they've never seen.

For some children counselling may be appropriate, but virtues acknowledgments will help create a self-esteem bridge for all children.

By acknowledging virtues during difficult situations, children learn more about their true potential and behave in more loving ways.

Focusing on peace and mindfulness in yoga helps children tune in to their feelings and improve their ability to communicate their needs and protect themselves.

When you encourage and acknowledge postures that demonstrate courage, confidence and assertiveness, you are building a child's repository of resilience to protect themselves. Aggressive children will become more emotionally aware and relaxed through yoga, and learn to self-regulate, which opens doorways to developing empathy.

From 'Yoga for Little Bears' by Monica Batiste

About Monica Batiste

I am passionate about education, emotional intelligence, health and personal expression through whatever medium supports your soul.

All humans deserve a chance to live the life they were born to live, and it's never too late to realise your dreams.

I hope to support the personal development of others through the mediums that bring me joy; Art, Books and Yoga.

More books by Monica

[Yoga for Little Bears](#) (soft cover)

[Simply Yoga](#) (soft cover)

[Your Perfect Body](#) (meditation CD)

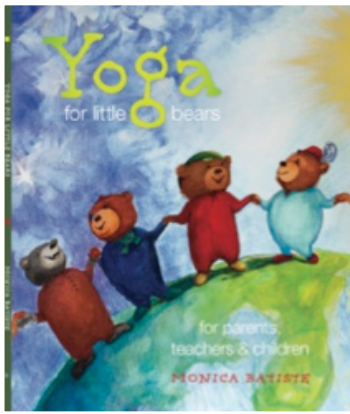
[Growing Self Esteem through Yoga](#) (ebook)

[Anti-Bullying strategies through Yoga](#) (ebook)

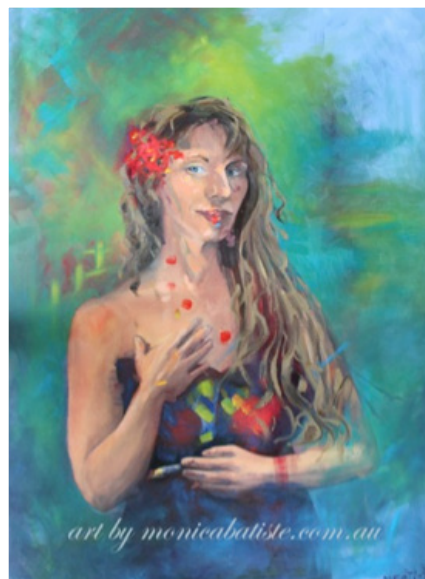
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