



Clever Comebacks for Bullying

by Judy Arnall, BA, CCFE, DTM

As we are heading into back to school from Spring break season, children may encounter bullying situations. Often, children are at a loss of what words to use. Here is a quick guide of come-backs. Use them to write some more and you can practice with your child.

Think "self-talk"

"This kid has a real problem and I'm not going to let it be my problem."
"I'm a good kid and I am not letting her win."

Instead of being defensive, agree. It takes the wind out of the bully's sails

"Yup! I'm the freckle queen!"
"Too many to count."
"Yep, my glasses are geeky and they rock!"

Point out the obvious

"Why do you want to pick on a shrimp when that won't prove anything about your strength?"
"I must be really important for you to give me this much attention!"
"Do you have anything better to do?"
"Guess it's time to pick on me again. No one else smaller around?"
"Yep, if you can't push yourself up, you want to pull me down, eh?"

Sometimes short and simple can deflate the emotional power of bully's comments

"Brilliant"
"That's creative."
"You're right."
"Get a life"

"Whatever"

Try the direct approach

"That's just mean." And walk away

"That's just lame." And walk away

"Get a grip." And walk away

Self-deprecating humour is a trick that stand-up comics (the victim) use against hecklers (the bully) and win over the audience members (the bystanders). It shows that you don't take things seriously. This really deflates the bully's power of control, because control has transferred to the victim.

"Big feet, big understanding!"

The bully says, "Are you ugly or just plain stupid?"

You can say:

- "Actually, both!"
- "Stupid is as stupid does"
- "Yep. So what?"
- "Yep, I'm so ugly that when I was born, they put tinted windows in my incubator!"

One of the best lessons they can learn this school year is how to say "no" to their peers, or even adults that don't always have their best interests in mind. Here are some quick come-backs that parents can role-play with their kids in order to say "no" to actions they don't want to do.

10 Ways kids can say 'No!' to peers wanting to bully

Ask questions - "What if such and such happens?"

Give it a name - "That's bullying! No way."

Refer to the parent - "Nope. My Mom won't let me."

Get an ally - "No, Jason and I are going to Switchbox instead."

Suggest an alternative - "Why don't we play Xbox at my house?"

State consequences - "I want a career in law enforcement and don't need bullying on my record."

Stall - "Hmmmmm...maybe later."

Offer an excuse - "I have to go and meet someone."

Say "No" another way - "I can't." "I don't feel like it today." No explanation needed.

Make a joke - "Yeah, wouldn't that look great on YouTube!"
If all else fails - ignore, act busy, or just walk away.

Judy Arnall, BA, DTM, CCFE, currently teaches parenting at The University of Calgary, Continuing Education, and has taught for Chinook Learning, Families Matter, and Alberta Health Services for the past 14 years. Judy is the author of the International bestseller, ***Discipline Without Distress: 135 Tools for raising caring, responsible children without time-out, spanking, punishment or bribery*** and the newly released ***Parenting With Patience: Turn frustration into connection with 3 easy steps.***

WWW.PROFESSIONALPARENTING.CA Jarnall@shaw.ca 403-714-6766, Sign up for notifications of free monthly parenting webinars

Judy has written bestsellers:



Judy is authorized and certified to teach:

