Vinjos Martial Arts

www.vinjosmartialarts.com

Bullying is an issue that is happening everyday to people of all ages young and old. If not handled properly, it is an issue that can cost someone their focus, confidence, belief in themselves, their childhood even their life. At our school we teach our students  the techniques they need to stand up for themselves  with both physical and mentally. These tips will help you arm your child with the skills they need to deal with bullies.

Tip #1- Believe in yourself, show confidence and Don’t act like a victim!

Not acting like a victim begins on the inside. How you feel about your self worth is directly related to how confident you are. A child who has a high self worth will be less likely to act like a victim. . It doesn’t mean they won’t be a target for a bully but overall they will be a less likely to be a victim. Typically bullies are looking for victims who will be “easy targets”, targets who will not put up much resistance, physically or verbally. Children must believe that what they feel is of high value and that no one has a right to treat them like they don’t matter. On the other end of that there is a difference in being confident and being conceited, believe in yourself and have strong values but do not put anyone down for theirs. Hold true to your beliefs and your confidence can’t help but to show.

Tip #2- Ready yourself with verbal self defense

Many times kids will clam up because they don’t know what to say.  Bullies are often attracted to kids like this because they won’t say anything back to defend themselves. We often teach our children to turn the conversation around on the bully and disrupt his pattern. For example:

Bully: You are so fat! Fattest kid I’ve ever seen!!

You: Hey I saw you shooting that basketball over there, you’re not bad….or Hey Mrs. Smith is making me meet her after class I need to get there (walk away from the situation)

Bully: I’m going to kick your butt!

You: Step back giving yourself space in case the bully decides to attack- put your hands up with open hands and palms facing the bully- say in a strong firm voice as you look the bully straight in the eyes -Stop! I don’t want to fight, leave me alone! Then walk away keeping an eye on the bully as you do in case he attacks.

-or- Step back giving yourself space in case the bully decides to attack- put your hands up with open hands and palms facing the bully- say in  a strong firm voice as you look the bully straight in the eyes- I don’t want to fight with you but I will defend myself if hit me.

Tip #3- Tell Someone What Happened.

There are many times when a child gets bullied that they keep it to themselves and don’t tell anyone.  It is important that they understand what bullying is and that they shouldn’t keep it to themselves, they  need to share it with a trusted adult. We teach our students that bullies will say or do negative things that will make them feel bad about themselves or hurt them physically this can be in the form of punching, kicking or pushing, no matter what the situation we teach them to communicate so we can have a chance to open the lines of communication and we can properly educate them on 1- if it was a true bully situation, maybe it was just some kids roughhousing or 2- make sure they know they have your support and handle the situation properly. Some kids will no say anything because they feel like they should have done something but were too scared to stand up for themselves. It is important to understand that this is a delicate situation and you shouldn’t show too much excitement  about the situation, this may cause your child to close up even more. It is important to stay calm even if your emotions are running high at this time. We teach our students who to tell if they are in school, teacher, principal or another trusted adult. When they come home- Parents, always tell your parents. When they come to our karate school to let their instructors know. They need to know that we are on their side no matter how they handled the situation. They may not tell everyone as we just discussed but hopefully they will think and let someone know what happened.

(cyber bullying is another topic that comes up often, we will discuss that in future emails)

Tip #4- Defend Yourself!

There are many times the children at our school, and our kids too will tell us they are afraid to defend themselves because they will get in trouble with the school.  I can understand that most schools have a no tolerance policy and that anyone who fights, both kids will get into trouble no matter who started. I get that but as a martial arts instructor and parent I will not let any of our kids stand there and let someone bully them and not do anything about it! The results of a child who doesn’t stand up themselves could negatively affect them for years and possible probably the rest of their life! However a child who stands up for them selves and confronts their bully, the positive effects and how it can change their life for the better more then outweighs what school policy is. Have the conversation with your kids about how you feel, we let our kids know that even if they will get in trouble at school we say it’s ok for them to defend themselves. They may get in trouble at school but they will not get in trouble at home, understand what I am saying , it is NOT OK to start the fight but if a bully starts the fight, they have every right and should defend themselves always! This is a conversation that should be had several times to sink in.