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See Something, Say Something

In this world we often encounter individuals who only find enjoyment in putting down others, and although such a concept is funny to them, it only fuels the negativity we see in society today. Bullying is never a pretty sight, especially considering that it revolves around insulting one's appearance, attributes, and actions just to achieve a form of dominance or better social status. Bullying results in insecurity, loss of interest for a specific activity/place, anxiety, depression, and in the worst cases suicides and school shootings. Bullying affects many individuals in ways big and small, including yours truly during my years in school. In this essay I show you my story with bullying for being overweight, my resources for help with bullying, and my rationale for why when you SEE SOMETHING you should SAY SOMETHING.

Let us start with some context: I was born to a family of lower middle class, my father worked as a small engine mechanic and he had stomach cancer that evolved into esophagus cancer. This, along with many other reasons including my mother's addiction to drugs led to me and my older brother being relocated to my Grandparent's house. My father's cancer only got worse, and the Mother's Day of 2016 he passed, with my mother still being at the crossroads of either her kids or methamphetamine, which she did eventually turn around and she is the best mother ever. My grandparents, although incredibly good natured, provided me and my brother

with junk food and fast food whenever we asked for it, and overtime me and my brother put on some pounds (me more than my brother). Now my weight and body structure is due to both genetics and poor eating habits, however that is changing since I am now much more active and I now prefer working rather than sitting at home. My brother, on the other hand, is actually pretty healthy in terms of weight and eating habits. **This context is not counted as my experience with bullying.**

During the majority of third grade I went to a charter school, yet I found myself performing better at a public school in the fourth grade and from what I recall I was on the side of ornery yet friendly. I suppose since I was new, many kids were not incredibly used to “that one fat kid”. My interactions with people are faint memories, yet I remember some. I recall one morning I had a small packet of donuts for “breakfast” at school and I found out that one girl started a rumor that I ate donuts for breakfast. Then there were another two kids that liked to pick on me separately, with one being new to the class who absolutely hated me. I think I recall him as just being an incredibly rude kid who liked to pick on me, but now he is much more friendly.

The really juicy part of my experience was in fifth grade when I attempted to make friends with some kids in my class. I tried getting them to like me by bringing in some coca cola for all of us, and although at first they seemed nice, that changed fast. One time one of them was touching my stomach in a weird way that was uncomfortable but not horrible, then on one occasion during lunch I was with them and they all of the sudden began to insult me and one

began to push me. They said things relating to how high I could jump along with various other insults. I cannot remember if this was the same instance that led me to be found crying in the bathroom by our family friend who was a campus guard. One of those same kids insulted me by saying that I was the smallest state after I mentioned Rhode Island being the smallest state, which led to the entire class laughing. One day after school one kid at random decided to just start insulting me for no apparent reason, like I am not kidding he just started going off on me. Then when I was in the office one small kid walked up to me and kept asking “why are you so big?”. I don’t think it was to insult me, but it is worth mentioning. Many other times I really hated doing the mile run as part of the curriculum since other kids were much more capable than me and I only wanted to hang around my teacher since I always felt safer around her than with my classmates. By the time of sixth grade I was able to find more friends that did not insult me as much as other kids, thus my experiences with bullying in elementary moved on into middle school.

In seventh grade I had encounters with kids that said some pretty deep insults. One kid who I knew from sixth grade decided to “act cool” by calling me “Big Blue” on account of my rotund figure and blue shirt. Another time I was walking on our track and one highschooler bumped into me and said to me “ew, fatty grease”. Eighth grade was over lockdown and ninth grade was a pretty light year, especially since by then I was able to physically lift people up like no problem. On occasion during the mile runs some boys would pick on me and say something along the lines of “run big boy!” and other times people would actively insult me, but otherwise freshman year was not horrible.

Sophomore year was worse since during the first part of the school year we had just put down our cat and the day after my first period math teacher humiliated me in front of the whole class for not doing homework, and to add onto the already bad day our Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps was picking out personal training gear that same day and I had to try on a tight shirt and one of my friends along with some other people made some pretty mean comments, like how my stomach looked like a watermelon covered in fabric. Then one kid after personal training made a rude comment about how I do exercises at half the rate. THEN ANOTHER KID FROM JROTC INSULTED ME OUT OF THE BLUE AGAIN!! During Junior year I was quite tolerant with people making jokes about me as long as they were in good fun. If anything I encourage them since I want people to feel comfortable around me. At this time I was still overweight, but also just built big, so when something was big, it was sometimes called “Nathan-sized” and one of my friends started calling me ponderous (ponderous being slow and clumsy because of great weight) which I actually found pretty funny. Overtime I have become more tolerant and forgiving when it comes to people making fun of me. Unfortunately my tolerance bit me in the behind during a week-long program when I told some of the people I had met that I found fat jokes funny and for the rest of the program I was constantly picked at, even when it was very much uncalled for. Although I was incredibly tolerant a lot of the “jokes” (many of them were just insults) still stung.

Fast forward to now in my senior year of high school and I have been changed by these experiences, with some I hardly recall. I have noticed some effects on my person that are the

result of bullying such as: Reduced self confidence, feelings of rejection, loneliness, changes in the way I eat, holding myself at separate standards, trust issues, self-loathing, rumination, and some hidden anger and emotional issues. These issues I have never received help for since I naturally do not think I need it and although I never talk about this stuff I am still very aware of it. I consider myself lucky that I was not bullied more, because I have known and have heard of some people who have been bullied who attempt suicide, are more prone to developing mental disorders, or just becoming shells of the people they once liked to be. Many of these people have nobody to stand up for them, with many observers watching idly as one of their fellow persons gets their entire reality insulted and ruined by some vile fool.

Notice how I hardly stood up for myself and the only people who stood up for me were my grandmother and family friend? Well that is because of a couple of reasons: one is that most people do not think to stand up for others because they fear that getting involved will have negative consequences and people in general do not notice the bullying around them, especially since it is so common in society now, and so they see something and say nothing. This is a problem. You see, when someone is bullied, they often feel isolated and hurt to the point where they both feel like standing up for themselves and saying something will only make things worse, so when someone sees something and says something it shows them that they are not alone and not every person is a bully. By being a buddy and not a bully (cheesy phrase, but it makes sense) you are able to make an individual more heard and comfortable around you, same as with me and my friends, and this is often done by SEEING SOMETHING and SAYING SOMETHING. Overtime I have established friendships that have made me more comfortable

and have reduced the effects of the trauma, because bullying is truly a nasty thing, the feelings are often indescribable, that feeling when people are so awful to you that you cannot even look at yourself in the mirror without wanting to break that mirror and cut yourself purely due to your own self-hatred is truly one of the worst.

There are many resources and places to go to when you are being bullied. One resort that is common is the 988 suicide and crisis hotline. Other resources are crisis centers such as the [High Desert Behavioral Health Urgent Care Center & Crisis Walk-In Center in Lancaster, California](#), the reviews seem alright, with the center's purpose being to serve people who are having a mental health crisis and they have psychologists specifically there to help you. Even the [Kern County School district website](#) has a section on what to do on bullying which includes a link for [stopbullying.gov](#). I have noticed many school counselors and staff actively comforting students when they are having a crisis, that is simply part of their job and you should in no way hesitate to contact them. Prior to my research I was not aware of some of these resources or how they work. In many ways I wish I would have taken the opportunity to talk to someone about my problems, so you can trust me when I say to take that opportunity because it is much better than ending up like the poor souls that take their lives or other people's lives because of how bullying has affected them, even one of my family members had similar weight issues as me and took his own life in 2009 when he was inebriated. With my new knowledge of these resources I will be more inclined to use them if need be. I will happily mention that these resources are the preferable alternatives to violence, which truly never solves anything in the case of bullying.

So, dear reader, you have seen my story with bullying, rationale for why seeing something and saying something is important, and resources for when one is under the pressures of bullying. Bullying in and of itself is truly a horrible thing that should never be wished upon someone since it is just so damaging to the mind at a young age. Bullies are usually people that displace their own horrible emotions on other people, so although times can be tough I promise you one thing: things will get better and there is a very solid chance you grow up more refined and wise than those who scrutinize. Look at me, I have remained a good student in highschool and now I am much bigger and stronger than those who have bullied me before, so if anyone happens to bully you, dear reader, just tell me, I'm a pretty solid 6'2-6'3 and I can take them (that is obviously a joke). Finally, I beg of you do not let scummy people ruin your life because without a doubt you are loved and you matter. I tell you that now just from my own experiences and there will always be that light at the end of the tunnel, that person to lift you up when you fall down and seemingly cannot get up, you are loved and are perfect the way you are, goodnight.

Works Cited

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