Lesson: Standing Up Against Bullying
As our kids spend more and more time online, children are being subjected to cyberbullying more than ever. Why is this happening? Many kids (and adults) are emboldened and less likely to practice good sense and common kindness when they are sitting behind a screen.

Using this medium, there is no real human contact and less connection than face-to-face interactions, making it easier for kids to bully. People make comments online without thinking of the pain it will cause the other person and without seeing it. We need to teach our children to stand up for themselves and others online.

Letting other people walk all over you can cause pent up frustration and anxiety and lead to depression. This is the opposite of standing up for yourself. When you stand up for yourself, you defend your opinion, protect yourself, support yourself, are assertive, and are confident. We must teach our kids to stand up for what they believe in, stand up for who they are, and not be afraid to do so. Likewise, it’s important to stand up for others! Our children should understand that this takes practice. When we practice standing up for ourselves, it becomes easier to stand up for others as well. When we stand up for others, we are letting them know that they have value and their opinions and feelings matter.

**PREPARATION**

- Evaluate how comfortable you are in standing up for yourself and others.
- Determine why you do or do not stand up for yourself and others.
- Think about your child and their ability to stand up for themselves or others.
  - Evaluate why your child may or may not stand up for themselves or others based on their individual qualities and characteristics.
Think about what you’ve done to help your child learn how to stand up for others and themselves and how you can improve this habit.

**OBJECTIVE**

- Help your kids understand the benefits of standing up for themselves and others.
- Help your kids understand how and when to stand up for themselves and others.

**LESSON**

Learning to have confidence to stand up for ourselves and others is a lifelong skill that will always be beneficial. It’s important to learn this skill as early as possible so that you can have confidence to be yourself and protect your beliefs. When someone feels they are being walked all over, it doesn’t create feelings of confidence, but of insecurity and anxiety. Be an example of someone who has confidence to stand up for themselves and others.

**DISCUSSION**

**YOU are worth standing up for**: Be confident in yourself. Don’t let someone else tear you down or step all over you.

There are many examples of good people standing up for what they believe in and in the process, standing up for many. One example is Rosa Parks. She refused to give up her seat for a white man on a segregated bus and move to the back where, at the time, people of color were supposed to sit. She was tired of black people being treated differently. This act helped to strengthen the Civil Rights Movement. Her courage to stand up for her rights led many others to
stand up for what was right and made a huge change for the better.

- What are some great qualities that you have?
- Why do you believe you are worth standing up for?
- When standing up for yourself, try to be kind--avoid worsening the situation.
  - If possible, stay positive and have a smile on your face.
- When standing up for yourself, be assertive.
- Be authentic and real, always.
- You can stand up for yourself by:
  - Letting others know your beliefs and opinions and sticking to them, but not making your views or opinions seem better than theirs, just different.
  - Not allowing others to take advantage of you, manipulate you, or use you in any way.
  - Not allowing others to speak ill of you or make degrading comments.
- What does standing up for yourself look like?
- What does standing up for others look like?
- Are there times when we must escalate the situation or use physical means to stand up for ourselves or others?

**FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES are worth standing up for**

Family members and friends deserve your encouragement, friendship, support, and voice, if necessary, in order to stand up for them.

Sometimes good people stand by while something bad happens to another
person. In 2013, a 23-year old gay man was assaulted on a New York City subway. It started with two women throwing gay slurs at him. Next, the two suspects and three others, including a man, began beating up the gay man. Everyone stood by and did nothing while it happened, except for the man’s boyfriend, who was unsuccessful in helping.

- When standing up for others, if possible, be kind. Don’t worsen or escalate the situation.
- If possible, have a smile on your face.
- When standing up for others, be assertive.
- Be authentic and real, always.
- Don’t participate in gossip, and stand up for those who are being gossiped about.
- You can stand up for others by:
  - Not allowing people to gossip about other people.
  - If they are being bullied, go up to the bully and interrupt the bullying.
  - Be kind to others and be a friend to everyone.
- When someone is being hurt physically or emotionally in front of us (or online):
  - Report it to a trusted adult.
  - Let them talk to you about it and talk out their feelings.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CHILD

- Do you stand up for yourself? Why or why not?
- Do you stand up for others? Why or why not?
- Have you noticed me standing up for myself or others?
Have you ever been in a situation where you had to stand up for yourself?

Have you ever been in a situation where you had to stand up for someone else?

How do you feel when you stand up for yourself or others?

How do you feel when you don't stand up for yourself or others?

What are some things we can SAY to stand up for ourselves or others?

What are some things we can DO to stand up for ourselves or others?

ACTIITIES

#1 Role Playing

Directions:

1. Choose someone to be the bully, the victim, and the onlooker.

2. Invent a scenario in which the victim is bullied (at school, on the street, at a party, etc.)

3. Come up with what the bully will say to the victim (“You smell like feet,” or “Your religion is stupid,” etc.)

4. Start role playing! Have the bully go up to the victim and say the mean comment. Then have the onlooker stand up for the victim, and have the victim stand up for themselves (responses like: “I’m sorry if you think that I stink when I don't, but if you think I do then you should go somewhere else,” or “What do you know about my religious beliefs? What are talking about exactly?”)

5. You can keep going and have the bully give mean responses. Make sure the victim and the onlooker respond in a way that isn't aggressive, but rather assertive.
#2 Make a Plan

Supplies:
- Pencil or pen
- Paper or journal

Directions:
1. Have everyone come up with a mean comment they have heard, and write it down in a journal or on a piece of paper.
2. Next, write down two ways to respond to that comment that are assertive.
3. Repeat the process with more negative comments (at least five, but possibly more).
4. Have a discussion. Talk about all the responses that everyone came up with.
5. Do this activity often to teach your children how to best respond to negative comments, gossip, and bullies!

FOLLOW UP
Continue to remind your kids to stand up for themselves and others. Help them to continue to find positive ways to stand up for themselves and others in an assertive manner. Be an example of someone who is confident and kind in all situations. Talk to your children about times they stood up for themselves or others and when they didn’t. Let them know that no one is perfect. We might not do it right every time, and that’s okay.
RELATED DISCUSSIONS/RESOURCES
All of the following topics can be found in our book *30 Days to a Stronger Child*

- Friendship
- Respect
- Assertiveness
- Attention
- Empathy
- Self-confidence
- And many more!

Lesson: Kindness: Online, Face-to-face, and Everywhere
How to Raise a Bully

GLOSSARY

**Active Listener**: Someone who is attentively engaged in a conversation—not distracted, half-listening or dozing off during the conversation.

**Assertive**: Bold and confident; standing up for yourself.

**Confidence**: A feeling of pride in yourself and in your abilities.

**Degrading**: Disrespectful actions that are meant to embarrass or humiliate others.

**Escalate**: To rapidly cause a situation to become more intense.

**Gossiping**: Talking about others, usually in a negative way behind someone’s back.

**Manipulation**: When someone tries to control the situation in an unfair way and attempts to get their way without consideration for the feelings or needs of others.