



## ROOTING FOR THE UNDERDOG

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By Jackie Glass, MACP, LPC

10/26/2012

**Editor's Note: Today, October 26, 2012 is "Stand Up to Bullying Day." Jackie Glass, a regular contributor to Divorce Ministry 4 Kids, asked that we publish this article from her about bullying. As first glance, you might ask yourself, "Why a bullying article on a website about ministering to children of divorce?" I offer one simple explanation, bullying affects everyone including children of divorce. In our Divorce Care 4 Kids class just a few weeks ago, one of the young boys in the class asked that we pray for him because he is being bullied in school. At a time in his life where he is struggling to come to terms with the divorce of his parent, he is also forced to face a bully every day. The kids we minister to are in a very vulnerable state and particularly susceptible to bullying. I hope that you will join us in recognizing this importance day and standing together against bullying of any kind.**



Ever since I was a little girl, I have rooted for the underdog. And, this is not simply because I'm a Cubs fan. My "underdog" antenna always seemed extra sensitive. I remember feeling extreme sadness when no students on the bus would move over and let the boy from the farm sit next to them. I remember a girl being called "titanic" even though she was not overweight. I felt weird for crying when people I hardly knew endured pain. I had no idea how this seemingly silly sensitivity would continue to transform my beliefs about people's value and equality.

Fast forward my life and here I am today, passionate about bullying—passionate about equality for people. Bullying is especially close to my heart because the definition of bullying is an imbalance of power amongst two people with a bully seeking to gain power and control (Garrett). This goes against the very belief that all people are created EQUAL and possess equal value.

However, we've been lead astray. We tend to believe that aggressive behavior trumps assertive behavior, and we see children repeating these behaviors in preschools, elementary and high schools, and brace yourselves...even in our workplace and families.

Now, bullying has been around for years and years and years, but the good news is now bullying is no longer going unnoticed or undefined. We are clearer than ever as to the different categories of bullying, including cyber, emotional, relational, and physical.

So, today on Stand Up to Bullying Day, let's do more than stand together and wear pink. Let's commit to doing a couple things. First, let's practice assertive communication skills—when people express their thoughts in respectful, non-threatening ways. Second, let's develop ever growing "underdog" antennas. Let's be aware of those whose bodies get beaten or ideas get shutdown or opinions that don't matter. Finally, if you know children and students, call out leadership skills in them. Instill in them courage and confidence to stand up to this issue. 80% of students are bystanders and only intervene 20% of the time. Infuse them with bullying plans



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and capabilities to talk with adults about this issue. Always be a safe place for them to process thoughts and feelings and ideas and questions.

Together we can bring awareness about bullying and healing to those being bullied.

“Defend and protect those who are weaker, fight for those who can’t fight for themselves, and stand between the defenseless and anyone or anything that might harm them.” Peretti.

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