

from Stand Strong

by

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## BULLY DEFENSE STRATEGIES

### 1. *Assess the Situation*

Before anything happens, consider whether the bully is a physical threat or just trying to scare or hurt you. It's best not to overreact, but it's better to overreact than to not be careful enough. If you know this bully is capable of causing you serious physical harm, you should talk to an adult, whether it's a parent, relative, teacher, coach, minister, or police officer. If you are certain that this bully just wants to embarrass you or harass you, it still would be a good idea to let an adult know you are having this problem, but you should also prepare yourself to stand tall and let the words bounce off you. Remember, you have a safety zone where you can go mentally and emotionally to be out of reach of hurtful words.

### 2. *Call in Your Backup*

If you think a bully plans to confront you at school, on the street, at a game or some other event, tell your parents and at least one other adult in a position to help you. You should also tell your friends. There is no glory in going it alone. If it is possible to always have at least one other person with you, try to do that. The people who care about you want to be there for you. Even if they can't be there when the bully confronts you, it is important to let them know that you feel threatened and to tell them who your bully is.

### 3. *Stay Chill*

Easier said than done, I know. If you think a confrontation is coming, read through your Bully Defense System statement a couple of times a day to build your confidence. Take some time to go through the scenarios of what might happen so you are mentally and emotionally prepared in the same way an athlete prepares for a game or match. Again, do your best to keep friends and supporters close.

If the bully confronts you, one of the best ways to stay calm is to control your breathing, taking longer breaths and slowly releasing them. If you've heard this bully's taunts before, try to take the sting out of them by picturing his words bouncing off you. They are only words after all. Sticks and stones, right? They only have the power to hurt if you allow that to happen. You have the power to just ignore them.

Your best first move might be to make no move at all. Ignore the bully's words. You should look at your antagonist, but don't get into a staring contest. Instead, acknowledge the bully and just keep walking. Most bullies thrive on getting a reaction that brings attention to them and feeds their egos. If you refuse to play that game, the bully might just decide you aren't worth picking on.