

Life application

The first challenge is to use that force, that energy that comes with anger, for something positive: run, lift weights, clean out the garage or reorganize your room. If you're artistic, you can take photos, draw pictures or even build something with your hands—just get busy. By the time you get done, you may not even remember what it was that made you so angry.

Second, begin to dig into the root of that anger. Study the other chapters on fear, jealousy and bitterness. Find out if there's something someone did to you long ago that still burns inside of you and maybe that's the reason you try to punish everyone else. Forgive them. Forgive yourself. Find out what you've been afraid of and get over it. And remember, everyone has got something to deal with. It's not just you! But here's where you separate yourself from the crowd. Be courageous! Be strong! Deal with it and prosper beyond anything you've ever imagined.



BULLYING

Beating the Bully

LA4
TERM

A bully is someone who feels the need to hurt others to make himself feel good, significant or even powerful.

A bully often uses words and even physical violence to inflict on those he deems too weak to fight back. And to go a little further, often people who feel out of control must find a way to control and/or torment others. And by definition, bullying is continuous—not just a single act.

Quick thought

We are defined by our friends and even more so by our enemies. If you are being attacked, it's most likely because you have something (talents, beauty, brains—a future) that has stirred the contempt of an enemy. Make no mistake—the bully is an enemy trying to destroy you with words and sometimes even acts of violence. You need to see it for what it really is ... the fact is that you're on the right track, and somebody's not happy about it. Somebody's jealous. Somebody is a little intimidated. Well, isn't that just too bad.

Remember, these bull-shooters do have one skill. They not only recognize your gifts and beauty, but they can find that one area of weakness just as quickly. You've got to guard it. Again, you've got to recognize what's really going on.

Storytime

“Stuck Up’ On My Way Up”

Discussion questions

This story was not technically a case of “bullying,” but what are some similarities to bullying that happened here?

Have you ever been misunderstood for who you are or what you are trying to accomplish?

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Was there a way for you to clarify your intentions? If so, how did you do it and what was the response? If not, how have you handled this?

Journal entry

Have you ever been accused of something that was not true when you were doing something right? What was it? How did it play out? Looking back, do you see more clearly what was going on?

Storytime

“Jack an Eye”

Discussion questions

How did it make you feel when I was picked on by all the camp counselors because of one thing that happened with the bully? Was that fair? Has something like that ever happened to you?

How did it make you feel when the bully was told to "Jack an Eye?"

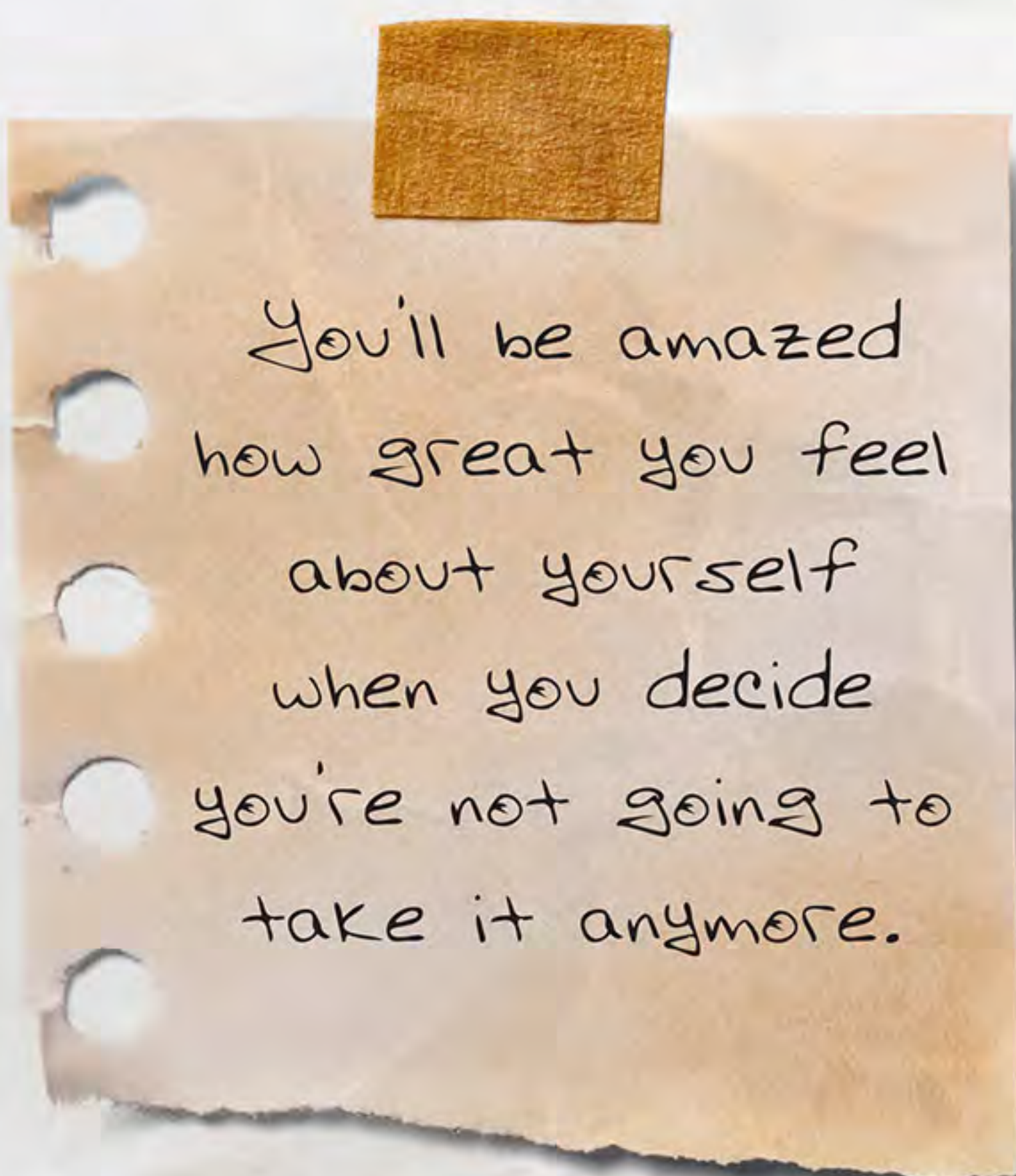
I should have gone back to the coach, since he was the one in authority over the entire camp and told him what happened to me after I followed his instructions. Why do you think I was afraid to go back and tell him? Would you have gone to the coach a second time?

Given the response the coach told me to tell the bully the first time, "Jack an Eye," how do you think he would have responded if he would've known I was picked on for following his instructions?

Life applications

Whether it's verbal abuse, written cruelty or physical violence, you must expose these acts. And here's the kicker: not when the abuse is done just to you but to anyone. Don't be ashamed or afraid to tell your parents, a teacher, police officer or any trusted adult. I know ... somebody's going to call you a "snitch," a "tattle tale" or any other ugly name he can think of. Those are terms used by jerks who do jerky things hoping to intimidate others from shining the light on their dirty deeds. Remember, it's the foolish who sit and take it quietly from these bullies, but it's the brave who tell the truth. It's the courageous who stand up and fight for what's right. You'll be amazed how great you feel about yourself when you decide you're not going to take it.

For good leaders like this coach who is there to protect the campers and those under his authority, he can't see everything that happens at all times. He needs help from other people so he can protect those in his care. That means when we see things like this we have to speak up when things aren't right.



You'll be amazed
how great you feel
about yourself
when you decide
you're not going to
take it anymore.

'Stuck Up' On My Way Up

Having grown up with two parents who were not only college graduates but school teachers as well, my post high school options always included some sort of university degree. However, just weeks after high school graduation a few immature summer stunts like getting laid off from work as a result of goofing off on the job, receiving a ticket for running a stop sign and occasionally staying out past curfew put my future in serious jeopardy. My dad told me that he was concerned that I didn't have what it takes to succeed in college and was considering keeping me out a year.

This scared me out of my mind. I had no other options. I resolved to change course quickly, and I did. Not only did I get my old job back, I was promoted within just a few weeks. I put aside childish behavior and just two months later, my parents were packing me off to college.

Though my dad never said it, I felt he still needed to be convinced that his middle son could make the grade at this academically sound institution. Therefore, I trotted off to college not as the victor who convinced his parents he had matured, but still a boy with even a greater challenge ahead.

The first few weeks went well. I had established a sound routine of early to bed, early to rise, and I spent nearly every night in the library. This may seem a bit extreme, but I had not been a good student in high school; I got by. I was there for the sports and the socializing, two things that I didn't concern myself with now in college, until...

...one evening my roommate Terry informed me that one of the other freshmen on our dorm wing (of about 30 other guys) made a comment about me being "stuck up." Sure, I'd been called several names in my time, but not that one. I did some soul searching and concluded that although I had not concerned myself with friendships, I had made myself friendly: smiles and hellos on campus and in the hallways. I moved on.

A few more weeks passed as I found myself roaming down the hallway for a study break. In the distance I heard some John Denver music. I had played from his guitar songbooks for years as a child and was quite a fan so I followed the music to the open door from whence the music came. Inside the room, sitting on the floor was Steve, a fellow freshman, going through all his J.D. albums.

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I tapped on the door and walked in. I asked if I could join him and he invited me to listen for a while. We played a few songs, chatted a bit and then I was back to the books. Terry told me the next day that Steve had been the one who made the "stuck up" comment weeks earlier.

That night I pondered the whole thing. It just didn't make sense. I was "stuck up" yet it was I who pursued him for relationship, not knowing his previous disposition toward me. How was I to treat him now?

That question needed no answer since Steve flunked out after the first semester. All I had known about him prior was that he attended college on an academic scholarship, something to do with a ridiculously high SAT score.

And there you have it! I wasn't "stuck up." He was offended. Offended by my dedication to the task at hand. My force of desperation to make the grade was a flashing reminder that he could have and should have done better, certainly better than I.

Yes, somebody's always going to be smarter or more talented, but it's the hard worker, the one who gives it all he's got, who makes all the difference in this life.

So, if you're called names because of your hard work and determination, those comments are often made by those who are not willing to work as hard as you do. If you're called "stuck up," let it be on your way up.

Troy



'Jack an Eye'

Isn't it funny how things stick to the soul and don't want to let go? I was shooting some hoops the other day and for some reason my mind replayed an incident from the summer of my freshman year in high school some 25 years earlier.

I was 15 years old and had set a goal to improve in my basketball skills by practicing every day and by going away to basketball camp at a college just 50 miles away. I had exceeded all hopes the prior season by being moved up from the freshman team to play at the junior varsity level, and I even got invited to practice with the varsity squad on occasion. My sophomore year was to be my "break out" year and I just knew this week-long camp would help me develop the edge I needed.

The first two days went well. I worked hard, met new friends and began to establish myself as one to be watched. However, things were about to change. That night as I headed across the lobby to the cola machines, I passed most of the campers and counselors huddled around the television to watch the baseball all-star game.

Not interested in the game, I walked away minding my own business, and headed directly to the vending machines. One of the counselors (Kent) yelled out, "Hey, Kidder! Get over here. I need a back rub."

Having already been warned that the counselors often treated the kids as their personal lackies, I was ready. Besides, he already had two campers attending to his needs. Without further thought, I proclaimed, "I didn't come here to rub your back. I came to play basketball." I continued on my way.

Now that the entire camp was watching, he couldn't let it ride. He jumped to his feet and got right in my face and said, "what did you say?"

A little intimidated by his towering height and large biceps, I meekly repeated, "I'm here to play ball, not rub your back." He said, "we'll see about that," as he grabbed my arm.

Just then, a strange resolve came over me. I yanked my arm away and said, "Yes, we will see. I'm going to ask the coach if I have to rub your back." Kent consented, and I quickly headed down the hallway toward the coach's office while the campers gawked, waiting to see how this night end.

I knocked on the coach's door, and he quickly invited me in. To my surprise, he had apparently just gotten out of the shower. He sported

a t-shirt and sweatpants and was towel-drying his hair while talking on the phone. I tried to wait quickly, but he encouraged me to tell him what the trouble seemed to be. I gave him the synopsis, and his answer was startling to say the least: "Tell him to Jack an eye!"

"What?"

He reiterated, "You don't have to rub his back. Tell him to Jack an eye."

"Thank you, Coach," I squeaked out on my way back to the boys. I was about to use a phrase that I'd heard neither before nor since. It sure sounded provocative, maybe even a little vulgar. I couldn't wait to use it.

As I entered the lobby, everyone was waiting for the verdict. With each step my confidence grew and grew. Finally, without missing a beat I looked the counselor in the eye and blurted out: "Jack an eye."

Chico hit the floor and Kent jumped up and literally ran to cut me off. So I repeated myself, "The coach told me to tell you to 'Jack an eye.'" So ask him," I added. Then I walked out of the lobby, leaving a rather stunned group of campers and counselors behind.

Needless to say, the rest of my camp experience was tension filled. The counselors who refereed our games let people foul me without a call and in turn, called fouls on me I never committed. The other kids stayed clear of me for obvious reasons, and at 15, this was tough to take emotionally.

Admittedly, I went to bed a couple of nights with a few tears in my eyes, but somehow managed to turn in the best performance of my basketball life as I led my team in scoring and to the championship. I also made it to the finals in two individual competitions. But to nobody's surprise, my name did not appear on the all-star roster.

Daily, what should have been at least a moment of joy and accomplishment for a young boy ended only in a burning sense of injustice. I'm willing to bet that you too have a few of those lodged in your gut as well - a moment of triumph ruined by poor leadership or abuse of power.

But before we curse everyone that ever hurt us, let's make that burn count. Let's make a decree that we will not abuse our power, our realm of authority. Every day we have an opportunity to knock someone down or build them up. So when things get tough, let's forget about the "Jack an Eye," an "Eye for an Eye," and remember, "The greatest of these is love."

Troy

