A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR PARENTS

HELPING YOUR CHILD

HANDLE BULLYING *with Confidence*

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BlueRose ONE .com
Stories Matter
New Delhi • London

BLUEROSE PUBLISHERS
India | U.K.

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ISBN: 978-81-6744-468-4

Cover design: Aafiya Saifi
Typesetting: Namrata Saini

First Edition: October 2026

Dedication

This book is dedicated to every parent who wants to better understand their child.

To the parents who worry, who question themselves, and who simply want to do their best—this book is for you.

May it help you recognize the hidden signs of bullying that children often struggle to put into words. May it encourage you to listen more closely, notice the small changes, ask one more question, and create a safe space where your child feels seen, heard, and understood.

Sometimes, a single conversation, a moment of patience, or a listening ear can change the course of a child's life. My hope is that this book gives you the confidence to be that safe place for your child.

Together, let's raise children who are kind, emotionally strong, confident enough to speak up, and secure in the knowledge that they never have to face bullying alone.

With love,
Kashish Sandhu
Certified Early Childhood Educator (Montessorian)
Teen Parenting Coach | Author |
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Introduction

Bullying is something no child should ever have to face. Yet, every day, countless children go to school carrying an invisible weight. Some are teased because of the way they look, the way they speak, or the friends they have. Others are excluded, laughed at, threatened, or hurt online. Many stay silent because they are afraid, embarrassed, or believe that no one will understand.

As parents, we often want to protect our children from every hurt. But the truth is, we cannot always prevent difficult situations from happening. What we *can* do is prepare our children with the confidence, courage, and skills they need to face those challenges.

Helping Your Child Handle Bullying with Confidence is a guide to building self-confidence, emotional strength, empathy, resilience, and healthy relationships. It will help children understand what bullying is, how to respond safely, when to ask for help, and how to stand up for themselves without becoming unkind in return.

For parents, this book offers practical advice, real-life stories, conversation starters, and activities to help you recognize the signs of bullying, support your child, and create a home where kindness, respect, and open communication become everyday habits.

There is no perfect parent, and there is no perfect child. There are only families who are learning, growing, making mistakes, and trying again.

If this book helps one child find the courage to speak up, one parent notices a warning sign sooner, or one family has an honest conversation that changes a child's life, then it has fulfilled its purpose.

Remember this:Bullying can affect a child's confidence, but it does not have to define their future.

With love, guidance, and the right tools, every child can learn to stand tall, believe in themselves, and discover that their greatest strength comes not from fighting others, but from knowing their own worth.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of your family's journey.

Why I Wrote this Book

Every book has a story.

This one began with my own child.

One day, my child came home from school quieter than usual. There was no excitement, no smile, and no stories about the day. As a mother, I could sense that something wasn't right. When I gently asked what had happened, I didn't get an answer. Instead, I heard the familiar words many parents hear:

I'm fine.

But I knew my child wasn't fine.

Over the next few days, I noticed small changes. There was less interest in going to school, fewer conversations, and a sadness that words couldn't explain.

Like many mothers, I always believed I knew my child well. I could tell when something was bothering him, even when he didn't say a word.

But one phase of our lives left me confused.

My son started arguing with me over the smallest things. Every conversation seemed to end in frustration. He became easily irritated, didn't want to talk, and often pushed me away.

As a mother, I kept asking myself the same question that so many mothers ask:

Why doesn't my child listen to me, but listens to his father?

I wondered if I was being too strict.

Was I doing something wrong?

Had I failed as a mother?

But then I realise something very important.

As parents, we often notice that our child has changed, but we don't always know **why**. Even when we know something is wrong, we don't always know **what to say, what to ask, or how to help**.

As I started talking to other parents, I discovered that I wasn't alone.

Many mothers and fathers were facing the same situation. Their children were being teased, excluded, bullied, or emotionally hurt. They wanted to help, but they felt confused, helpless, and afraid of making the situation worse.

Some parents said, I wish someone had told me what to do.

Others asked, How do I even start this conversation with my child?

That stayed with me.

I realized there were many books explaining **what bullying is**, but very few that guided parents through the real-life moments they face at home—the difficult conversations, the tears, the fear, the guilt, and the uncertainty.

That was the moment this book was born.

I didn't write this book because I have all the answers.

I wrote it because I understand the questions.

As a mother, an educator, and a parenting coach, I have seen how one supportive conversation can change a child's life. I have also seen how silence can leave a child feeling alone.

My hope is that this book becomes a trusted companion for you. Whether your child is facing bullying today or you simply want to prepare for tomorrow, these pages will give you practical tools, real-life examples, and simple strategies to help your child feel safe, confident, and understood.

If this book helps even one child feel less alone and one parent feel more confident, then every page will have been worth writing.

Every Parent's Biggest Fear

If you ask a group of parents what they fear most for their children, the answers may vary.

Some will say illness.

Some will say accidents.

Others will say failure, addiction, or negative influences.

Yet, across countries and cultures, one fear appears again and again:

What if my child is suffering, and I don't know it?

This fear is especially real when it comes to bullying.

Research over the past two decades has shown that many children do not immediately tell their parents when they are being bullied. Some stay silent because they are embarrassed. Others fear that adults will overreact, make the situation worse, or tell them to just ignore it. Some even believe that the bullying is somehow their own fault.

As a result, parents are often the last to know.

Instead of saying, I'm being bullied, children may communicate through changes in their behaviour.

A child who once loved school may suddenly complain of stomach aches every Monday morning.

A confident child may become unusually quiet.

A cheerful child may become irritable, argue more at home, or lose interest in activities they once enjoyed.

These behaviours are often misunderstood as disobedience, laziness, or a difficult phase. In reality, they can sometimes be signs of emotional distress.

As parents, we naturally ask,

Why is my child behaving like this?

A more helpful question may be,

What is my child trying to tell me through this behaviour?

Children do not always have the words to describe emotional pain.

Their behaviour often becomes their language.

This is why understanding bullying is not just about recognizing what happens at school. It is about learning to recognize the subtle changes that happen at home.

The earlier parents notice these signs, the sooner they can provide support, work with the school, and help rebuild their child's confidence.

No parent can prevent every difficult experience.

But every parent can become the safe place where a child feels seen, heard, and believed.

That is the purpose of this book—to help you recognize the signs, respond with confidence, and ensure that your child never has to face bullying alone.

Bullying Has Changed—Has Parenting Changed Too?

A generation ago, bullying usually ended when the school bell rang.

Today, it can follow a child everywhere.

A hurtful comment made in the classroom can continue through text messages at night. A rumor can spread across a class within minutes through social media. A single embarrassing photo or video can be shared with hundreds of people before a parent even knows it exists.

The world our children are growing up in is very different from the one we grew up in.

Many of today's parents belong to what experts call the **Sandwich Generation.** We are standing between two generations—caring for our children while also respecting, supporting, and often caring for our aging parents. We are trying to meet everyone's needs while quietly putting our own last.

Many of us grew up in homes where we were afraid of disappointing our parents. We worried about getting scolded for making mistakes or bringing home poor grades.

Today, parenting feels very different.

Many parents tell me,

I'm afraid of saying the wrong thing.

What if my child stops talking to me?

What if they become emotionally overwhelmed?

Some parents even worry that if they react harshly, their child may withdraw completely or make an impulsive decision during a moment of emotional distress. This doesn't mean parents have become weaker. It means we are parenting in a time when children face different pressures, and we are more aware of the importance of protecting their emotional well-being.

At the same time, we are balancing careers, household responsibilities, financial pressures, and the expectations of both our children and our parents. No wonder parenting can sometimes feel overwhelming.

That is why today's parents need more than advice—they need understanding, practical tools, and the confidence to respond with empathy and wisdom.

Parenting has never been easy, but today's parents are carrying responsibilities that previous generations could never have imagined. And despite all of this, we continue to show up every day, doing our best for the people we love.

But here's an important question:

Has the way we parents changed as quickly as the world around our children?

Many of us were raised with advice like:

Ignore them.

Be strong.

Fight back.

It will make you tougher.

While these responses may have been common years ago, we now understand much more about children's emotional development. Research in child psychology has shown that repeated bullying can affect a child's confidence, emotional well-being, relationships, and even their ability to concentrate and learn. They are growing up in a world where friendships continue online after school, where comparisons are constant, and where one unkind message can reach them at any hour of the day.

Today's children face challenges that previous generations never imagined. Friendships don't end when school ends. Bullies don't always stand on the playground—they can hide behind a phone screen. Children compare themselves with others every day through social media, and emotional wounds can spread much faster than they once did. This doesn't mean children are weaker. It means the challenges have become more complex. As parents, we cannot prepare our children for today's world using yesterday's parenting alone. Our role is no longer just to protect them from physical harm. We must also help them develop emotional strength, healthy communication skills, resilience, and the confidence to ask for help when they need it.

That begins at home.

It begins with listening instead of assuming.

It begins with asking questions instead of giving quick advice.

It begins with creating a home where children know they can speak openly without fear of being judged.

The goal of this book is not to teach parents to become perfect. The Goal is to help parents become informed, emotionally available, and confident guides for their children.

Because bullying has changed. The world has changed. And parenting must continue to grow alongside it.

When parents grow, children don't just survive difficult experiences—they learn how to overcome them with courage, confidence, and hope.

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Part 1
Understanding Bullying

Chapter 1

What Every Parent Needs to Know About Bullying

Have you ever picked up your child from school and asked,

How was your day?

And without even looking up, they replied,

Fine.

You ask again,

What did you do today?

The answer is still the same.

Nothing.

As parents, we often think,

Maybe they're just tired.

It's probably just a phase.

Children fight all the time. They'll sort it out.

But what if I'm fine isn't really fine?

What if your child is hiding something because they don't want to worry you?

Or because they're afraid you won't understand?

Or worse... because they think it's their fault.

What bullying really is

Bullying rarely begins with a black eye or torn clothes.

It usually begins quietly.

A child who once couldn't wait to go to school suddenly complains of a stomach ache every Monday.

A child who loves talking becomes silent.

A child starts arguing over small things.

Homework takes longer.

Confidence becomes smaller.

The sparkle in their eyes slowly disappears.

Most parents don't notice these changes immediately.

Not because they don't care.

But because life is busy.

We're rushing to work, helping with homework, caring for our parents, paying bills, preparing meals, and trying to be everything for everyone.

Sometimes, the signs are so small that they look like ordinary childhood behavior.

This is exactly why understanding bullying is so important.

Bullying is no longer limited to the school playground.

It can happen in classrooms, on school buses, during sports practice, in tuition classes, through WhatsApp groups, online games, and social media.

For many children, there is no safe time when the school day ends.

As parents, we don't need to live in fear. We need to live with awareness.

The more we understand bullying, the sooner we can recognize the signs, support our children, and prevent emotional wounds from becoming lifelong scars.

In this chapter, we'll answer four important questions that every parent should know:

- What bullying really is—and what it isn't.
- The different types of bullying children experience today.
- Why do some children become bullies?
- The emotional impact bullying has on both the child being bullied and the child who bullies others.

Knowledge doesn't make us perfect parents.

But it helps us become prepared parents.

And sometimes, being prepared is the greatest gift we can give our children.

Types of bullying

- The Social Bully
- The Cyberbully
- The Relational Bully
- The Reactive Bully
- The Popular/Influential Bully
- The Group Bully
- The Prejudicial Bully
- The Bully-Victim
- The Physical Bully
- The Verbal Bully

Why Do Children Bully?

When a child bullies another child, it is easy to think, **"He is a bad child."** But bullying behaviour can have different causes. Understanding the reason does not excuse the behaviour—it helps us respond better.

1. **Wanting power:** Some children bully because making another child feel scared or helpless makes them feel powerful.
2. **Seeking attention or popularity:** A child may make fun of someone because friends laugh, giving them attention or social status.
3. **Peer pressure:** Sometimes children join bullying because they want to fit into a group or are afraid of becoming the next target.
4. **Insecurity:** A child who feels insecure about academics, appearance, friendships, or abilities may put someone else down to feel better about themselves.
5. **Copying behaviour:** Children can copy aggressive or disrespectful behaviour they see around them—in friendships, at home, online, or elsewhere.
6. **Poor emotional skills:** Some children struggle to manage anger, jealousy, frustration, or disappointment and express these feelings through hurtful behaviour.

For example: A child who feels left out may start teasing another child to gain attention from classmates.

As parents, we can be firm about the behaviour while remaining curious about the child:

"What you did was hurtful and not okay. Let's understand what happened and find a better way to handle it."

The Emotional Impact of Bullying

Bullying does not always leave visible marks. Sometimes the deepest wounds are emotional, and children may carry them quietly without telling anyone.

Loss of Confidence

Repeated teasing, insults, or exclusion can make a child question their worth.

A child who once loved answering questions in class may suddenly stop raising their hand because they are afraid of being laughed at.

They may start thinking:

"Maybe there really is something wrong with me."

Over time, this can affect their confidence, participation, and willingness to try new things.

Anxiety and Fear

A bullied child may constantly worry about what will happen at school.

They may ask to stay home, complain of headaches or stomach aches, have trouble sleeping, or become nervous before school.

For example, a child who is teased during the school bus ride may suddenly complain every morning that they don't feel well.

The physical discomfort can be real—even when the cause is emotional stress.

Loneliness and Isolation

Being repeatedly excluded can make a child feel that they don't belong.

Some children stop trying to make friends because they are afraid of being rejected again. They may spend more time alone and say, “I don't need friends,” when they actually feel deeply lonely.

Anger and Irritability

Not every child becomes quiet. Some become angry.

A child who feels powerless at school may come home and shout at parents or siblings. The anger may be covering fear, hurt, embarrassment, or frustration.

Instead of only asking, **“Why are you behaving like this?”**, try asking:

“You seem upset today. Is something bothering you?”

Changes in Behaviour

Parents may notice changes in sleep, eating, concentration, school performance, hobbies, or friendships.

One sign alone does not prove bullying, but a pattern deserves attention.

Bullying Can Affect the Whole Family

The emotional impact doesn't always stop with the child.

Parents can experience:

- Anger
- Guilt
- Fear

- Helplessness
- Frustration
- Anxiety about sending the child to school

A parent may think:

"How did I not notice?"

Please remember: bullying is not proof that you are a bad parent.

You cannot be beside your child every minute of every day.

Your role is not to prevent every difficult experience.

Your role is to **notice, listen, support, and help your child navigate difficult experiences.**

Chapter 2
Is My Child Being Bullied?

The Signs Your Child May Never Say Out Loud

One of the biggest myths about bullying is that children will tell their parents when it happens. The truth is.**Most children don't.**

Not because they don't trust you.

But because they don't know how to explain what they're feeling.

Some are embarrassed.

Some think you'll be disappointed.

Some worry you'll go to school and make things worse.

Others believe,

Maybe it's my fault.

So instead of using words…

they use behavior.

As parents, our job is to notice the changes before the child finds the words.

I'm Fine.

If your child suddenly starts saying these things more often, don't ignore them.

- I'm fine.
- Nothing happened.
- Leave me alone.
- You won't understand.
- I don't want to talk.
- Can I stay home today?
- I don't feel like going to school.
- I have a headache.
- My stomach hurts.
- I'm just tired.

Sometimes these are genuine reasons.

But when they happen repeatedly, they may be your child's way of asking for help without saying it directly.

Silent Warning Signs

Children often whisper through their behavior before they speak with words.

Have you noticed your child...

Spending more time alone?

Locking themselves in their room?

Smiling less?

Crying over small things?

Becoming unusually angry?

Arguing with you more than before?

Saying, Nobody likes me.

Becoming unusually quiet?

These small changes often tell a much bigger story.

Physical Changes

Sometimes emotional pain appears as physical complaints.

Your child may:

- Frequently complain of headaches or stomach aches.
- Pretend to be sick on school mornings.
- Have scratches, bruises, or damaged belongings but struggle to explain how they happened.
- Lose their lunch box, water bottle, books, or stationery repeatedly.
- Come home hungry because they skipped lunch.
- Have trouble sleeping or experience nightmares.
- Eat much less—or much more—than usual.

When these changes become a pattern, it's worth looking deeper.

Emotional Changes

Many parents notice this first.

My child has changed.

But they can't explain how.

You may see your child:

- Losing confidence.
- Becoming anxious.

- Getting upset over small mistakes.
- Avoiding eye contact.
- Saying, I'm not good enough.
- Comparing themselves with everyone.
- Becoming more sensitive than usual.
- Suddenly becoming angry with family members.

Remember…Children often release their biggest emotions where they feel safest—at home.

School Behavior

School is often where the first clues appear.

Your child may:

- Stop talking about school.
- Say they don't want to attend.
- Ask to change schools.
- Lose interest in sports or activities they once loved.
- Suddenly I struggle with homework.
- Receive complaints about not paying attention.
- Sit alone during lunch or recess.
- Avoid birthday parties or school trips.

A child who once loved Mondays may suddenly dread them.

That change deserves your attention.

Online Behavior

Today's bullying doesn't always happen face to face. Sometimes it happens through a screen.

Watch for signs like:

- Quickly hiding the phone when someone walks in.
- Looking upset after checking messages.
- Deleting social media accounts suddenly.
- Refusing to use devices they once enjoyed.
- Becoming anxious whenever the phone rings.
- Checking messages repeatedly with a worried expression.
- Staying awake late because of online chats.
- Saying, I don't want to post anything anymore.

Cyberbullying follows children home.

Home is no longer automatically a safe space unless we create one.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Has my child changed in the last few weeks?
- Are these changes happening every day or only occasionally?
- When did I last have a calm, uninterrupted conversation with my child?
- Am I focusing only on their behavior—or trying to understand the feeling behind it?

Sometimes the question isn't **What's wrong with my child?**

The better question is...

What has happened to my child?

That one change in perspective can change everything.

Your child may never say,

Mom, I'm being bullied.

Instead, they may say,

I don't want to go to school.

Can I stay home today?

I'm tired.

Nothing happened.

Listen carefully.

Children often hide their pain in ordinary conversations.

The sooner we notice, the sooner we can help.

Because behind every behavior... there is a feeling waiting to be understood.

Chapter 3

When Your Child Finally Opens Up

The First Conversation That Can Change Everything

There is one moment every parent hopes never comes.

The day your child looks at you with tears in their eyes and says,

Mom... something happened.

Or maybe they don't even say those words.

Maybe they simply ask,

Can I tell you something?

At that moment, everything inside you changes.

Your heart starts racing.

A thousand thoughts run through your mind.

Who did this?

How long has this been happening?

Why didn't I notice?

How could this happen to my child?

If you're anything like me, your first instinct is to fix everything immediately.

You want to march into the school.

Call the teacher.

Speak to the other parents.

Protect your child from ever feeling this pain again.

But I've learned something the hard way.

The first conversation is not about solving the problem.

It's about making sure your child never regrets telling you.

Because if they regret telling you once.

They may never tell you again.

I Made This Mistake Too

When my child started behaving differently, I thought the problem was his attitude.

He argued with me.

He got irritated over small things.

He answered back.

Like many mothers, I found myself saying,

Why are you behaving like this?

Why do you listen to your father but not me?

I thought I needed to correct his behaviour.

I didn't realise...

His behaviour was trying to tell me something.

Children don't always say,

I'm hurting.

Sometimes they show it through anger.

Sometimes through silence.

Sometimes through tears.

And sometimes by pushing away the people they love the most.

Stay Calm, Even If Your Heart Is Breaking

The day your child tells you they're being bullied, you'll probably feel angry.

You might even feel guilty.

You may wonder,

Where was I?

How did I miss this?

Please remember...

This conversation is about your child, not your guilt.

Take a deep breath.

Your child doesn't need to see your panic.

They need to see your strength.

Not the kind that shouts.

The kind that whispers,

I'm here. We'll get through this together.

Listen More Than You Speak

Parents love solving problems.

Children need someone to hear their story first.

Don't interrupt.

Don't finish their sentences.

Don't jump to advice.

Just listen.

Sometimes your child isn't asking you for answers.

They're asking,

Can you handle my truth without making me feel worse?

Validate Their Feelings

One sentence can change everything.

Say,

I'm so glad you told me.

Or,

That must have been really hard.

Or,

I can understand why you're feeling hurt.

Notice something?

None of these sentences solve the problem.

But they help your child feel understood.

And feeling understood is often the first step toward healing.

Please Don't Blame

Even without meaning to, many parents ask questions that sound like blame.

What did you do?

Why didn't you tell the teacher?

Why didn't you fight back?

Why didn't you tell me earlier?

Imagine how that feels to a child who has already been carrying fear and shame.

Instead, ask gentle questions.

Can you tell me what happened?

How long has this been going on?

How did it make you feel?

Your tone matters as much as your words.

Build Trust Before You Build a Plan

Many parents say, Don't worry. I'll fix this tomorrow.

Sometimes that's necessary.

But before making promises, build trust.

Tell your child, **Thank you for trusting me" You are not alone.**

We'll take one step at a time.

Those words tell your child, I don't have to carry this by myself anymore.

What Never to Say

These sentences often come from love.

But they can close the door to future conversations.

- Ignore them.
- Be stronger.
- Everyone goes through this.
- You're too sensitive.

- Fight back.
- It's not a big deal.
- Don't cry.
- Maybe you misunderstood.
- You need to toughen up.

Every one of these sentences tells a child,

Your feelings don't matter.

Instead, let your words become a safe place.

One Thing I Want Every Parent to Remember

Your child will not remember every word you said that day.

But they will remember how they felt after talking to you.

Did they feel safe?

Did they feel believed?

Did they feel loved?

Or did they leave thinking,

I should have stayed quiet.

As parents, we don't have to be perfect.

We just have to be the one person our child knows they can always come back to.

Because bullying hurts.

But feeling alone hurts even more.

And home should never be the place where a child has to hide their pain.

Part 2
Helping Your Child

Chapter 4
Helping Your Child Feel Safe Again

I still remember one evening.

My child came home from school, dropped his bag near the sofa, and went straight to his room.

No Hi, Mom.

No stories about school.

No excitement about what happened that day.

As mothers, we notice these things.

We may not say it out loud, but something inside us whispers,

Something isn't right.

The problem is...

Most of us don't know what to do next.

Some of us knock on the door every five minutes.

Some of us keep asking,

What happened?

Who did this?

Why aren't you talking?

And when we don't get an answer, we become frustrated.

Fine. Don't tell me.

Looking back, I wish someone had told me this earlier.

A child who has been hurt doesn't need more questions.

They need more safety.

Creating a safe home

Home Should Feel Like Their Safe Place

Think about your own childhood.

When you had a bad day.

Where did you want to go?

Home Right

Because home meant comfort.

Now ask yourself honestly

Does my child feel that way about our home?

Or are they worried that the moment they walk in, they'll hear,

Did you finish your homework?

Why are your marks dropping?

Why are you always on your phone?

Sometimes our children need five minutes of connection before five reminders.

The Child Who Argues Isn't Always a Disrespectful Child

Can I tell you something that changed the way I parent?

There was a time when my child argued with me almost every day.

Everything became a debate.

I remember thinking,

Why does he listen to his father but argue with me?

As mothers, we take it personally.

We wonder,

Am I failing?

Have I become a bad parent?

But one day, I realised something.

Maybe he wasn't fighting me.

Maybe he was fighting something he didn't know how to explain.

Children don't always cry when they're hurting.

Sometimes they shout.

Sometimes they slam doors.

Sometimes they answer back.

And because home is where they feel safest, that's where all those bottled-up emotions come out.

That doesn't mean we accept disrespect.

But it does mean we try to understand the feeling before reacting to the behaviour.

Stop Trying to Fix Everything

This was probably my biggest mistake.

The moment my child shared a problem, I immediately started looking for solutions.

Call the teacher.

Talk to the principal.

Message another parent.

Solve it.

As parents, that's what we do.

We fix things.

But our children don't always need a solution first.

Sometimes they just need someone to sit beside them and say,

That must have been really hard.

Nothing more.

Just that.

Safety Isn't About Locks on the Door

When we hear the word safe, we think about locking doors, holding hands while crossing the road, or checking if they reached school.

But emotional safety is different.

It's knowing your child can tell you the truth without being shouted at.

Without being judged.

Without hearing,

I told you so.

That's the kind of safety every child needs.

Healing Doesn't Happen Overnight

I think this is the hardest part for parents.

We want our child to smile again.

We want life to go back to normal.

So we say,

Forget about it.

Everything is okay now.

Move on.

But healing doesn't work like that.

Imagine someone broke your trust.

Would you feel okay the next morning?

Probably not.

Our children need time too.

Some days they'll laugh.

The next day they may cry again.

Both are part of healing.

The Little Things Matter More Than You Think

As parents, we often think healing requires big conversations.

Sometimes it doesn't.

Sometimes healing looks like…

Sitting together while eating dinner.

Driving to school without talking about marks.

Watching a movie together.

Going for an evening walk.

A bedtime hug.

A note in their lunchbox.

A simple,

I'm proud of you.

Children may forget the advice we gave.

But they'll remember how we made them feel.

Before Sleeping Tonight…

Can I ask you to do one thing?

Go into your child's room.

Sit beside them.

Put your phone away.

Don't ask about homework.

Don't ask about school.

Don't correct them.

Just ask one question.

How is your heart today?

You may not get an answer tonight.

That's okay.

Ask again tomorrow.

And the day after that.

One day, your child will realise,

My parents aren't just asking questions… they're really here for me.

That is where healing begins.

Not in school.

Not in the principal's office.

Not in a counsellor's room.

It begins at home.

Because no matter how difficult the world becomes, every child deserves one place where they can take off their invisible armour and simply be themselves.

And as parents we have the privilege of creating that place.

Chapter 5

Rebuilding Confidence After Bullying

The Wounds You Can't See Are Often the Hardest to Heal

One day, I asked my child,

Why don't you want to join the football game anymore? You used to love playing.

The answer broke my heart.

He quietly said,

What if they laugh at me again?

That sentence stayed with me.

It wasn't about football.

It wasn't about winning or losing.

It was about confidence.

That's what bullying steals first.

Not marks.

Not talent.

Not intelligence.

Confidence.

And once confidence is shaken, children begin to see the whole world differently.

The Invisible Wound

When a child falls off a bicycle, we can see the scrape.

We clean it.

We put a bandage on it.

We know it will take a few days to heal.

But emotional wounds don't come with a bandage.

No one can see them.

Yet they can last much longer.

Research in developmental psychology shows that repeated bullying can change the way children think about themselves. Instead of seeing one unpleasant experience, they begin to form beliefs about who they are.

A child who hears, **You're stupid,** again and again may eventually stop thinking. Someone said something unkind.

Instead, they begin to think,

Maybe I really am stupid.

Psychologists call these **negative core beliefs**—deep ideas children develop about themselves through repeated experiences.

That is why our job as parents is not only to stop the bullying.

It is also to help our children rewrite those beliefs.

The Child You See Isn't Always the Child They Feel They Are

Parents often tell me, My child doesn't participate anymore.

She won't answer questions in class.

He keeps saying he can't do anything.

She gets upset even when she makes one small mistake.

These are not always signs of laziness.

Sometimes they are signs of fear.

A child who has been bullied starts protecting themselves from getting hurt again.

They stop trying.

Because if they don't try

they can't fail.

And if they don't fail

Maybe nobody will laugh.

This is called **avoidance**, and psychologists describe it as a common response to repeated emotional hurt. Children avoid situations that remind them of embarrassment or rejection—not because they lack ability, but because they fear reliving the pain.

Confidence Doesn't Return Because We Say, Be Confident

I wish it were that simple.

As parents, we often say,

Believe in yourself.

You're amazing.

Don't listen to them.

These words matter.

But confidence isn't built by hearing encouraging words once.

Confidence grows when children experience success, connection, and support over time.

Think about how a baby learns to walk.

They fall.

Again and again.

But someone is always there clapping, encouraging, and saying,

Try again.

That encouragement doesn't stop when children grow older.

They still need it.

Self-Esteem Exercise: Stop Praising Only Results

As parents, we naturally celebrate our children's achievements.

“Wow! You got 95%!”
“Amazing! You won the competition!”
“I'm so proud—you came first!”

There is nothing wrong with celebrating success. But here's a question worth asking:

What happens when your child doesn't get 95%?

What happens when they lose the competition?

What happens when someone else is better?

Will your child still think, **"I'm proud of myself"—or will they think, "I'm only good when I win"?**

This is where we can make a small but powerful change.

Psychologist Carol Dweck's work on growth mindset highlights the importance of helping children see abilities as something they can develop through effort, learning, and persistence.

Instead of making the outcome the centre of our praise, we can notice the process behind i**t.**

So, instead of:

"You're so smart!"

Try:

"I noticed how hard you worked for this."

Instead of:

"You won! I'm so proud!"

Try:

"I loved watching you keep trying, even when it became difficult."

Instead of:

"You're the best!"

Try:

"You didn't give up when you made a mistake."

And here's the part that matters when your child is facing bullying:

A child who learns, "**My worth comes from winning,**" may feel crushed when someone mocks, rejects, or outperforms them.

But a child who learns, **"I am proud of my effort, courage, learning, and character,"** has a stronger foundation to fall back on.

Try This at Home

For the next seven days, catch yourself before saying "Good job!"

Ask yourself:

"What exactly did my child do that deserves to be noticed?"

Then name it.

"You kept trying."
"You were brave enough to ask for help."
"You handled that disappointment really well."
"You stood up for yourself respectfully."

These small changes may seem insignificant, but over time, they help your child build something much more valuable than a need to be the best:

the belief that they are worthy—even when they don't win.

Positive self-talk

Children who experience bullying may slowly start believing the negative things others say about them. Helping your child develop positive self-talk teaches them to challenge those thoughts and remind themselves of their own strengths.

Instead of saying:

"I'm stupid."

Help them say: "I am still learning, and it's okay to make mistakes."

Instead of:
"Nobody likes me."

Try: "One person's behaviour does not decide my worth."

Instead of:

"I can't do this."
Try: "I can try one step at a time."

Instead of:
"Everyone is better than me."

Try: "Everyone has different strengths, and I have mine too."

A Simple Exercise: The Confidence Mirror

Ask your child to stand in front of a mirror and say three positive statements about themselves every morning.

For example:

- I am worthy of respect.
- I can handle difficult situations.
- I don't have to believe hurtful words.
- I am proud of who I am.
- I can learn from my mistakes.
- My feelings are important and valid.
- I have the courage to speak up.
- I deserve to have good friends.
- I can ask for help when I need it.
- I am stronger than I think.

At first, your child may laugh or feel uncomfortable. That's completely normal. Don't force them to repeat unrealistic statements like “I am the best.”

Instead, help them choose words they can genuinely believe.

You can also create a “My Strengths” jar. Every week, ask your child to write one thing they did well, one challenge they handled, or one quality they are proud of.

Over time, these small reminders help children build an inner voice that says:

“I know who I am, and someone else's words cannot decide my worth.”

Small confidence wins

The Small Wins That Change Everything

When confidence has been broken, don't expect your child to suddenly become outgoing again.

Start small.

Really small.

Maybe today they will answer one question in class.

Maybe they smile at a new friend.

Maybe they raise their hand once.

Maybe they walk into school without tears.

Celebrate those moments.

To you, they may seem ordinary.

To your child, they are huge victories.

Confidence is built one small success at a time.

Help Them Change Their Inner Voice

After bullying, children often become their own harshest critic.

Listen carefully.

You may hear them say:
I'm useless.

Nobody likes me.

I'm bad at everything.

I'm not good enough.

These thoughts don't appear overnight.

They are often repeated messages that have slowly become part of how the child sees themselves.

Help your child answer those thoughts with truth.

When they say,

I'm bad at maths.

Instead of saying,

No, you're not.

Try saying,

You're finding maths difficult right now, and that's okay. Let's work on it together.

This teaches children that struggles are temporary—not part of who they are.

A Simple Family Ritual

Every night before bed, ask everyone in the family one question:

What's one thing you're proud of today?

Not the biggest achievement.

Not the highest marks.

Just one thing.

Maybe they helped a friend.

Maybe they kept trying.

Maybe they spoke kindly.

When children learn to notice their own strengths, confidence slowly begins to return.

Remember This

Confidence isn't built in one conversation.

It's built in hundreds of small moments.

A hug after a difficult day.

A parent who listens.

A teacher who believes.

A friend who includes them.

A family that reminds them,

Your worth is never decided by the way someone else treats you.

Remember dear Mommy's and Daddy's

If your child has lost confidence because of bullying, please don't panic.

Confidence is not something they have lost forever.

It is something that can be rebuilt.

Slowly.

Patiently.

Lovingly.

One conversation.

One hug.

One smile.

One small victory at a time.

And one day, without even realizing it, you'll see your child laughing again. Trying again.

Believing in themselves again. And in that moment, you'll know.

They didn't just survive bullying.They found themselves again.

Chapter 6

Teaching Assertiveness Without Aggression

The Things We See Every Day... But Don't Always Understand

Before we talk about teaching children to stand up for themselves, I want you to think about the last few weeks.

Has your child ever said any of these?

Mom, you go and order. I don't want to.

No... you tell the teacher.

It's okay. Leave it.

I don't want to answer.

It's embarrassing.

Or maybe you've noticed these little things...

You send them to buy bread from the nearby shop.

Five minutes later they're back.

The shop was crowded.

So you go instead.

At a birthday party another child grabs the toy your child was playing with.

Your child quietly walks away without saying a word.

At a family gathering someone says,

Come on, sing a song.

Your child immediately hides behind you.

In school, another child keeps cutting in front of them in the lunch line.

Your child says nothing.

At tuition, someone keeps borrowing their stationery and never returns it.

Your child comes home upset...

but never says anything there either.

One day you discover they gave away their favourite pencil because another child asked for it.

Not because they wanted to...

Because they didn't know how to say,

No.

As parents, we usually think,

My child is just shy.

They'll grow out of it.

They're very innocent.

Sometimes that's true.

But sometimes...

it's something else.

Sometimes children aren't shy.

They're afraid.

Afraid that if they speak up...

People won't like them.

Afraid someone will laugh.

Afraid they'll be called rude.

Afraid they'll lose their friends.

Then One Day...

One day your child comes home and says,

Mom... somebody pushed me today.

You ask,

What did you do?

They quietly reply,

Nothing.

Another day someone tears their notebook.

Again...

What did you do?

Nothing.

Another child keeps calling them names.

Again...

Nothing.

And as parents we become frustrated.

Why didn't you say something?

Why didn't you tell the teacher?

Why do you never stand up for yourself?

But here's the question I want every parent to think about.

Standing up respectfully

Did anyone ever teach our children HOW to stand up for themselves?

We teach them maths.

We teach them manners.

We teach them to say thank you.

We teach them to share.

But how many of us teach them how to say,

Please don't speak to me like that.

Or,

No, I'm not comfortable with that.

Most children aren't born knowing these words.

They need us to teach them.

We Accidentally Teach Silence

Without realizing it, many of us say things like,

Don't answer back.

Be nice

Let it go.

Good children don't argue.

These values come from a good place.

But sometimes children hear a different message.

They hear...

Don't speak up.

Don't upset anyone.

Keep everyone happy.

Then one day they're unable to protect themselves.

Not because they're weak.

But because they were never given permission to use their own voice.

Here's Something That Changed My Parenting

I stopped asking,

Why didn't you do anything?

Instead I started asking,

Did you know what you could have said?

There is a huge difference.

One question creates guilt.

The other creates learning.

And that's exactly what our children need.

No shame.

No blame.

Just practice.

Because confidence isn't something children suddenly wake up with.

It is something they practise at home...

Long before they need it outside.

And maybe today, as you're reading this, you're thinking,

This happens in my house almost every day... I just never realised what it meant.

If that's you...

You're not alone.

I was that parent too.

The good news is that once we recognise these moments, we can start changing them—one conversation, one role-play, and one confident No at a time.

Strong Body Language

When we talk about standing up to bullying, we often imagine a child shouting back or fighting. But confidence doesn't have to be loud. Sometimes, the way a child stands, looks, and speaks can communicate confidence without aggression.

Teach your child to stand upright, keep their shoulders relaxed, look toward the other person without staring aggressively, and use a calm, steady voice. They don't need to look angry. They simply need to look like they are not afraid to set a boundary.

For example, instead of looking down and quietly saying, "Please stop," your child can stand straight, look at the other child, and say clearly:

"Stop. I don't like that."

Then they can move away.

You can practise this at home. Take turns pretending to be the bully and the child. Let your child experiment with

different voices and body positions. Make it playful rather than frightening**.**

You can say:

"Show me what confident looks like."

Then notice the difference between a frightened posture and a confident one.

Remind your child that confident body language is not about looking tough. It is about communicating, "I know I deserve respect."

And most importantly, tell them that body language is only one tool. If they feel unsafe, they should not worry about looking confident—they should move away and get help from a trusted adult.

Using Confident Words

Children sometimes know that something is wrong but don't know **what to say at the moment**. When they are nervous or scared, finding the right words can become even harder.

That is why it helps to practise a few simple phrases before they need them.

Teach your child that they don't need a long speech. A confident response can be **short, clear, and calm**.

For example:

"Stop. I don't like that."

"Don't speak to me like that."

"That's not okay."

“Please leave me alone.”

“I said no.”

“I'm going to tell a teacher.”

Notice that none of these sentences contain insults or threats. The goal is not to win an argument. The goal is to **set a boundary and communicate clearly.**

You can practise these sentences at home through role-play. Ask your child:

“What would you say if someone made fun of you?”

Let them answer in their own words. If they struggle, give them two or three options.

Also teach them that they don't have to respond to every comment. Sometimes the strongest response is simply saying, **“I'm not engaging with this,”** and walking away.

Confidence grows with practice. The more familiar these words become, the easier it may be for your child to use them when they are nervous.

And remind them: **Using confident words does not mean handling bullying alone. If the behaviour continues, tell a trusted adult.**

When to Walk Away

One of the most important lessons we can teach children is that **walking away is not cowardice.**

Sometimes children believe they have to stay and prove themselves. They may think, **“If I walk away, they'll think I'm scared.”**

But when someone is deliberately trying to provoke, embarrass, or hurt them, staying in the situation may give the other person exactly what they want.

Teach your child to recognize when it is time to leave.

If someone continues teasing after your child has clearly said "Stop," they can walk away.

If someone is threatening them, surrounding them, blocking their path, or becoming physically aggressive, they should leave immediately and find a safe adult.

For example:

"Stop. I don't like that."

Then your child can turn around and walk toward a teacher, school office, security staff member, or another trusted adult.

They do not need to get the final word.

They do not need to convince the bully that they are right.

They do not need to fight.

Their safety comes first.

Parents can practise this at home by creating simple scenarios:

"What would you do if someone kept teasing you after you asked them to stop?"

"What if they followed you?"

"What if they threatened to hurt you?"

Help your child identify safe places and trusted adults they can approach.

And tell them something they may need to hear more than once:

"Walking away from a dangerous situation is a sign of good judgment, not weakness."

Knowing when to speak up, when to walk away, and when to ask for help is a powerful part of staying safe.

Chapter 7

Finding Safe Adults

One Trusted Adult Can Change a Child's Life

One day, I asked a group of parents a simple question.

If your child was in trouble at school and couldn't reach you, who would they go to?

The room became very quiet.

Some parents confidently answered their **class teacher.**

Others said, **their best friend.**

But many parents looked at each other and admitted they simply didn't know.

That answer stayed with me.

Because the truth is this...

We spend years teaching our children **not** to talk to strangers.

But very few of us spend time teaching them **who they should talk to when they need help.**

That one conversation can make all the difference.

Why Didn't You Tell Anyone?

Have you ever caught yourself saying:

- Why didn't you tell your teacher?

- Why didn't you tell me?
- Why didn't you ask for help?

I know I have.

Then one day, I looked at it from a child's perspective.

For us, asking for help seems simple.

For a child, it can feel terrifying.

They may be thinking:

- What if the bully becomes even angrier?
- What if nobody believes me?
- What if everyone laughs at me?
- What if my teacher tells me to ignore it?
- What if Mom gets upset?
- What if Dad gets angry and makes everything worse?

Children don't always stay silent because they don't trust us.

Sometimes they stay silent because they are trying to protect themselves... and sometimes, they are trying to protect **us** from worrying.

That realization changed the way I listened to children.

They Were Waiting for You to Notice

Many children don't ask for help.

Instead

They wait.

They wait for someone to notice that something has changed.

Think about your own child.

Have you heard these sentences recently?

- Can you pick me up from school today?
- Can I change my tuition?
- I don't like sitting in that class.
- Can you come early today?
- Do I have to go tomorrow?
- Can I stay with you for a little while?
- I don't feel like going to school.
- My stomach hurts.
- I'm just tired.

As parents, we usually respond with logic.

You were fine yesterday.

You have to go.

Stop making excuses.

Finish the week first.

You'll be okay.

Sometimes those really are excuses.

But sometimes

They are cries for help hidden inside ordinary conversations.

Your child isn't asking you to solve everything.

They're hoping you'll stop, sit beside them, and ask one more question.

Can you help me understand what's making you feel this way?

Sometimes that one extra question opens a door your child has been waiting to walk through.

The Teacher Isn't the Only Safe Adult

When I ask children who they would talk to if something bad happened, most answer,

My teacher.

That's wonderful.

But what happens if that teacher is absent?

What if your child doesn't feel comfortable talking to them?

What if the bullying is happening in that classroom?

Every child should know they have more than one safe adult.

Their support circle might include:

- Mom
- Dad
- Grandma or Grandpa
- A favourite teacher
- The school counsellor
- An aunt or uncle
- A sports coach
- The school bus attendant
- A trusted neighbour
- A close family friend

Developmental psychologists often talk about the importance of a **support network.**

Research shows that children who have trusted adults in different parts of their lives are more resilient, recover faster from stressful experiences, and are more likely to ask for help before a situation becomes serious.

One caring adult can change the direction of a child's life.

A Question Every Parent Should Ask Tonight

Tonight, instead of asking,

How was school?

Ask something different.

If you couldn't tell me something, who else would you tell?

Pause.

Listen carefully.

Their answers may surprise you.

If your child says,

No one.

Don't panic.

Don't lecture.

See it as an opportunity.

Your goal isn't to make them feel guilty.

Your goal is to help them build a circle of people they know they can trust.

Build a Family Safety Circle

This is an activity every family should do.

Take a blank sheet of paper.

Draw one circle in the centre.

Write your child's name inside it.

Around that circle, draw five more circles.

Together, fill them with the names of adults your child trusts.

Then ask questions like:

- What makes you feel safe with this person?
- When would you go to them?
- What would you tell them?
- Is there anyone else you wish you could talk to?

You may learn something about your child that you never knew before.

When Should Children Ask for Help?

Many children believe they should solve every problem on their own.

They shouldn't.

Teach your child that asking for help is a sign of wisdom, not weakness.

They should always tell a trusted adult if:

- Someone repeatedly hurts, teases, or humiliates them.
- Someone threatens them.
- Someone tells them to keep a secret that makes them uncomfortable.
- Someone touches them in a way that feels wrong.
- They are scared to go to school.
- They are being bullied online.
- They see another child being bullied.
- They feel unsafe anywhere.

I often tell children something very simple.

If your heart keeps telling you something is wrong, don't keep carrying it alone. Tell a trusted adult.

When Someone Says, Don't Tell Anyone

This is something every parent should discuss with their child.

Bullies often say:

Don't tell anyone.

If you tell me, it'll get worse.

Nobody will believe you.

Children need to hear a stronger message at home.

There are good secrets, like a birthday surprise.

And there are unsafe secrets that should never be kept.

If a secret makes you feel scared...

If it makes you feel uncomfortable…

If it makes your heart beat faster every time you think about it…

It is never a secret you have to keep.

Safe adults will always help.

They will never expect a child to carry fear alone.

Emergency Situations

Some situations need immediate action.

Teach your child that they should find a trusted adult immediately if:

- Someone threatens to hurt them.
- They are physically attacked.
- Someone shares or threatens to share embarrassing photos or videos.
- Someone touches their private body parts.
- They believe another child is in danger.
- They feel they are not safe.

In these moments, the priority is not being polite.

The priority is staying safe.

Something I Wish Every Parent Knew

We spend years teaching our children to become independent.

Tie your shoes.

Pack your school bag.

Finish your homework.

Clean your room.

All of those things matter.

But independence doesn't mean carrying every burden alone.

One of the strongest children isn't the one who never asks for help.

It's the child who knows **when** to ask.

And that lesson begins with us.

So

Tonight, before your child goes to sleep, ask just one question.

If you were ever scared, who would you talk to?

Don't ask because you're expecting something to be wrong.

Ask because one day, that answer could protect your child.

Sometimes the difference between a child who suffers in silence and a child who gets help isn't courage.

It's simply knowing that there is one adult who will listen without judging...

Believe without questioning

And stay beside them no matter what.

Every child deserves that person.

And every parent has the power to help them find one.

Part 3
Working Together

Chapter 8

Working with Teachers and Schools

When your child is experiencing bullying, you don't have to handle everything alone. Teachers and school staff can be important partners in keeping your child safe. Approach the school calmly, share specific incidents and changes you have noticed, and focus on finding a solution rather than blaming someone. Ask what steps the school can take and how they will monitor the situation. Keep communication open and follow up after a reasonable period to see whether things have improved. Most importantly, let your child know that asking the school for help is not tattling—it is taking care of their safety

Preparing for meetings

You don't have to wait for a major incident before speaking with your child's teacher. If you are noticing changes in your child's behaviour, a conversation can be a good first step.

Consider requesting a meeting if your child suddenly:

- Doesn't want to go to school or asks to stay home
- Becomes unusually quiet, anxious, angry, or withdrawn
- Stops spending time with friends
- Loses interest in activities they previously enjoyed
- Has unexplained missing or damaged belongings

- Complains frequently of headaches or stomach aches, especially before school
- Shows a sudden change in sleep, eating, or school performance
- Say things like “Nobody likes me” or “I don't want to go there anymore.”

Before the Meeting

1. Write down what you have noticed.
   Note specific changes, dates, and situations rather than saying, “My child is unhappy.”
2. Listen to your child first.
   Ask what has been happening and what they would like you to do.
3. Stay calm and avoid accusations.
   Begin with:
   “I've noticed some changes in my child's behaviour, and I'd like to understand what might be happening at school.”
4. Ask specific questions.
   Where does your child spend break time? Who do they usually sit or play with? Have teachers noticed any changes?
5. Agree on next steps.
   Ask what the school can do and when you should follow up.

Remember, the goal of the meeting is not to find someone to blame. It is to work together to understand what your child is experiencing and help them feel safe again.

Questions to ask

When you meet with the school, go prepared with clear, practical questions. You don't need to ask everything at once—choose the questions that fit your child's situation.

- Have you noticed any changes in my child's behaviour, mood, or friendships?
- Have you noticed any conflicts or incidents involving my child?
- Who does my child usually spend time with during breaks and lunch?
- Have you noticed my child being excluded or left alone?
- Where does the concerning behaviour usually happen?
- Are there particular times or places when my child seems uncomfortable?
- Have other children or teachers reported any concerns?
- What steps can the school take to address the situation?
- Who will be responsible for monitoring my child's safety?
- How can we work together without making my child feel singled out?
- When should we meet again to review the situation?
- What should I do if my child reports another incident?
- Or you must have something else in mind to ask, ask that without hesitation.

Most importantly, try to approach the meeting with the attitude of "Let's solve this together" rather than "Who is responsible?" A strong partnership between parents and teachers can make a child feel supported

Following Up: Why It Matters

One meeting with the school may not solve everything immediately. **Following up is important because bullying can change over time, and children may need continued support.** After the initial meeting, check in with the teacher or school to find out whether the situation has improved and whether your child is feeling safer.

Don't wait for another serious incident before asking how things are going.

You can ask:

"I wanted to check in and see how things have been going for my child since our last conversation."

Also check in with your child:

"Do you feel things are getting better at school?"

If the problem continues, share the new information with the school and discuss the next steps. Keep a simple record of important incidents, meetings, and actions taken.

Most importantly, **follow-up shows your child that you meant it when you said, "You don't have to handle this alone."** It reassures them that the adults in their life are paying attention and are committed to helping them feel safe.

When the School Doesn't Respond

Sometimes parents raise a genuine concern about bullying, but the response they receive is:

"All children fight."
"It's just a phase."
"They are only playing."
"Children sort these things out themselves."

While disagreements between children are normal, repeated intimidation, humiliation, exclusion, threats, or physical aggression should not simply be dismissed as "part of growing up."

If the school doesn't respond the first time, stay calm but become more persistent.

1. Keep records.
   Write down what your child has reported, when it happened, where it happened, and any changes you have noticed in your child's behaviour.
2. Follow up in writing.
   After a meeting, send a short email summarising what was discussed and the steps agreed upon. This creates a clear record.
3. Ask for specific action.
   Instead of only asking, "What will you do?", ask:
   "Who will monitor the situation, and when can we review whether things have improved?"
4. Escalate when necessary.
   If the concern continues to be dismissed, request a meeting with the appropriate senior school authority or safeguarding/child-protection contact.
5. Keep your child informed.

"Don't promise, "The school will definitely fix everything tomorrow." Instead say:
"I hear you, I believe you, and I will keep working with the adults at school to help you stay safe."

Most importantly, don't teach your child that they simply have to tolerate bullying because "children fight." Conflict is part of growing up. Feeling repeatedly unsafe, humiliated, or targeted is something adults need to take seriously.

Documenting Incidents: Teach Your Child to Keep a Record

When bullying happens repeatedly, **documenting incidents can make a big difference.** Teach your child to remember or write down what happened, rather than simply saying, "He bothers me every day." Specific details can help adults understand the pattern and take the concern seriously.

Let me share a story a friend once told me about her son, who was studying in the USA.

A child at school was bullying him regularly. Whenever he complained, the teacher would say something like, "Children fight. Maybe your son also did something."

It was everyday work , but this time the boy had an idea. When the other child started provoking him, he calmly said:

"Stop. I don't like it."

He then moved toward an area covered by a school security camera. The other child followed him, shouting, hitting, and continuing the behaviour. The boy did not fight back

or provoke him. He simply stayed calm and repeated that he wanted him to stop.

Then he told his father about the guy and day, his father went to the school to discuss the situation.When the teacher again suggested that perhaps both children were responsible, the boy confidently said:

"I didn't do anything. There is a camera there. Please check it."

The school checked the footage. It showed what had actually happened, and the school took disciplinary action against the other child.

This story teaches an important lesson: **when words are questioned, clear documentation and evidence can help reveal the truth.**

Teach your child these five things:

1. **Remember what happened —** What was said or done?
2. **Remember when and where —** Note the date, time, and location.
3. **Identify witnesses —** Who saw what happened?
4. **Save evidence —** Keep relevant messages, screenshots, or other evidence safely.
5. **Tell a trusted adult —** Don't carry the burden alone.

And remember: documenting is **not about getting revenge or trapping another child.** It is about helping adults understand what is happening, especially when the behaviour is repeated or the child is not being believed.

Sometimes, when a bully continues despite being asked to stop, **clear evidence is what finally helps adults see the complete picture.**

Chapter 9
Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is the use of digital devices, social media, messaging apps, online games, websites, or other digital platforms to repeatedly hurt, threaten, embarrass, humiliate, exclude, or intimidate another person.

Unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying can happen 24/7 and may reach a child even when they are at home. It can include sending cruel messages, spreading rumours, sharing embarrassing photos or videos, creating fake accounts, posting hurtful comments, threatening someone, or deliberately excluding them from online groups.

One important difference is that online content can be shared quickly and may remain online, making the experience especially distressing for a child.

Simple way to explain it to parents:

"Cyberbullying is bullying that happens through screens—but the emotional impact is very real."

Social Media Dangers

Social media can be a wonderful way for children to connect with friends, but it can also become a place where bullying follows them home. Unlike playground bullying, online bullying can happen at any time and may reach a large audience within minutes.

Children may experience hurtful comments, embarrassing posts, fake accounts, exclusion from groups, rumors, or unwanted sharing of photographs and videos.

One important thing parents should understand is that children may be afraid to tell you because they worry you will take away their phone or social media access. Make it clear that coming to you will not automatically mean punishment.

Teach your child to pause before posting and ask: "Would I be comfortable if my parent, teacher, or entire class saw this?"

Also remind them that popularity online does not equal worth in real life. A nasty comment, a few dislikes, or being excluded from a group does not define who they are.

Most importantly, keep communication open. You don't need to monitor every conversation, but your child should know that if something online makes them uncomfortable, frightened, or embarrassed, they can come to you without fear of being blamed.

Gaming Bullying

For many children, gaming is not just entertainment. It is where they meet friends, communicate, compete, and spend time together. Unfortunately, bullying can happen there too.

Gaming bullying may include insulting another player, deliberately targeting someone repeatedly, excluding them from a team, threatening them, making fun of their skills, using offensive usernames, or sending abusive messages through voice or text chat.

For example, your child may lose a game and another player repeatedly call them "stupid" or "useless." What begins as competition can quickly become personal and hurtful.

Teach your child that **losing a game is never a reason to accept abuse.** They can mute, block, report, or leave a conversation when necessary.

Parents should also teach children not to retaliate with insults. Saying, "You are stupid too!" may escalate the situation and make it harder to resolve.

Ask occasionally:

"Who do you usually play with?"

"Has anyone ever made you uncomfortable while gaming?"

Keep gaming conversations normal rather than turning every question into an investigation.

And remind your child: **They are allowed to leave a game or online space that makes them feel unsafe.**

WhatsApp Groups

WhatsApp groups can be useful for school communication and friendships, but they can also become a place where bullying spreads quickly.

A child may be deliberately removed from a group, ignored, mocked, repeatedly tagged in embarrassing messages, or targeted with rumors and hurtful comments. Sometimes children

may even create a separate group specifically to talk about or make fun of another child.

One of the biggest challenges is that children may feel they have to stay in the group because "everyone else is there."

Teach your child that they don't have to respond to every message. If something becomes uncomfortable, they can stop engaging, mute the group, save evidence, and tell a trusted adult.

Parents can also teach a simple rule:
"Don't forward something that you wouldn't say directly to someone's face."

Before sharing a photograph, screenshot, joke, or message about another child, pause and think about how that person might feel.

If your child shows you something hurtful, try not to immediately grab the phone and start replying yourself. First understand what happened.

Ask:
"Can you show me what happened from the beginning?"

Then decide together whether the situation needs blocking, reporting, school involvement, or another response.

Online Safety Rules

Children need simple online safety rules that they can actually remember and follow.

1. Keep personal information private.
   Don't share your home address, passwords, school details, phone number, or other private information with strangers online.
2. Use strong, private passwords.
   Teach children not to share passwords with friends. Where appropriate, use two-factor authentication.
3. Think before posting.

Once something is shared online, it can be copied or saved even if it is later deleted.

4. Don't meet online strangers alone.
   Someone may not be who they claim to be.
5. Don't respond to threats or abuse.
   Block, report, and tell a trusted adult.
6. Keep accounts appropriately private.
   Review privacy and messaging settings regularly.
7. Never share intimate or embarrassing images.
   Children should know they can always come to a trusted adult if someone pressures or threatens them for images.
8. Tell an adult when something feels wrong.
   Most importantly, don't make online safety a one-time lecture. Technology changes quickly, so keep having small, regular conversations.

Tell your child:

"You will never be in trouble for coming to me because something online made you uncomfortable."

Digital Evidence

When cyberbullying happens, children often want to delete everything immediately because they are embarrassed or upset. But before deleting abusive messages or posts, preserving evidence can be important.

Teach your child to take screenshots of relevant messages, comments, usernames, dates, and posts. If appropriate, save links or other identifying information. Don't encourage your child to keep looking at upsetting content unnecessarily; save what is needed and then step away.

For example, if someone repeatedly sends threatening messages, your child can show you the messages instead of replying.

A useful habit is to keep a simple record:

What happened?
When did it happen?
Where did it happen?
Who was involved?
Who else saw it?

If the behaviour happens through a school-related platform or group, this information can help the school understand the situation.

Remind your child:

"You don't need to prove your worth to someone who is trying to hurt you. Save the evidence and get help."

Don't encourage children to secretly provoke someone into producing evidence. Their priority should be safety, not catching the bully.

Depending on the situation, evidence may be useful when reporting the account, speaking with the school, or contacting the relevant platform or authorities.

Reporting Abuse

Many children hesitate to report online bullying because they are afraid of being called a "snitch," losing their phone, or making the situation worse.

Teach your child that **reporting abuse is not tattling when someone is being threatened, harassed, or repeatedly targeted. It is asking for help.**

Start by helping your child understand the difference between responding and reporting. They don't need to argue with the person, prove them wrong, or send an angry message back.

They can:

Save relevant evidence → Block or mute the person → Report the content/account → Tell a trusted adult.

If the bullying involves school friends, tell the school and share relevant evidence. If there are serious threats, extortion, sexual exploitation, or concerns about immediate safety, seek appropriate professional or law-enforcement support rather than trying to handle the situation privately.

Parents should also avoid immediately posting angry messages about the other child or contacting their parents in the heat of the moment. Pause, document what happened, and choose the safest next step.

Most importantly, reassure your child:

"You did the right thing by telling me. We will deal with this together."

The goal is not simply to get someone punished. The goal is to **stop the harmful behaviour and help your child feel safe again.**

Chapter 10

When Your Child is the Bully

This can be one of the most uncomfortable situations for a parent. We naturally want to protect our children, so hearing that our child may be hurting another child can bring denial, anger, embarrassment, or even the urge to defend them.

But this is exactly when our child needs us to stay calm and take responsibility seriously.

Being labelled a "bully" does not mean your child is a bad person. Bullying is a behaviour, and behaviour can be changed. Our goal is not to shame the child, but neither should we minimise what happened.

Recognizing Warning Signs

Sometimes the signs are subtle. Your child may frequently talk about being "popular," enjoy having control over other children, laugh when someone is upset, deliberately exclude others, or seem to enjoy getting a reaction.

You may also hear comments such as:

"Everyone is scared of me."

"I was only joking."

"They deserved it."

Don't ignore repeated patterns of cruelty simply because your child calls them a joke.

Understanding the Reasons

Ask yourself: **What might be driving this behaviour?**

Your child may be seeking attention, trying to fit in, wanting power, feeling insecure, copying behaviour they have seen, struggling with anger, or trying to impress friends.

Understanding the reason does **not** excuse the behaviour.

It helps you address what is underneath it.

Instead of:
"Why are you such a bully?"

Try:

"Help me understand what was happening when you decided to do that."

Listen carefully, but keep the boundary clear: **hurting or humiliating someone is not acceptable.**

Correcting Behaviour with Empathy

Discipline should teach, not simply punish.

Avoid humiliating your child or calling them names. Instead, separate the child from the behaviour:

"I love you, but I will never support behaviour that hurts another person."

Explain how their actions may have made the other child feel.

Ask:
"How do you think they felt when that happened?"

Help your child learn another way to handle anger, frustration, competition, or the desire for attention.

Teaching Responsibility

Responsibility means helping your child understand that **actions have consequences.**

Don't make excuses such as:

"They were only playing."

"My child didn't mean it."

"The other child probably started it."

Instead, ask your child to take ownership:

"What part of this situation was your responsibility?"

Depending on the situation, consequences might include losing a privilege, changing behaviour, apologising, or following a school plan.

The consequence should be connected to the behaviour and should teach accountability—not simply create fear.

Repairing Relationships

Saying "sorry" is only the beginning.

If your child's behaviour has hurt another child, help them understand that repairing the relationship takes time. A genuine apology should not be forced as a performance.

Teach your child to say something like:

"What I did was wrong. I understand that I hurt you, and I'm sorry. I will work on changing my behaviour."

Sometimes the other child may not want to immediately forgive or become friends again—and your child needs to respect that.

The goal is not to force friendship.

The goal is to teach your child **empathy, accountability, respect, and the courage to make better choices next time.**

Most importantly, let your child know:

"I love you enough to tell you when your behaviour is wrong—and I believe you are capable of doing better."

Part 4
Building Resilience

Chapter 11

Building Confidence Every Day

Confidence Isn't Built in One Big Moment

As parents, we often think confidence comes from big achievements.

Winning a competition.

Scoring high marks.

Being selected for the school team.

Standing on a stage.

Those moments certainly make children happy.

But they don't build lasting confidence.

Real confidence is built in the ordinary moments that happen every single day.

It is built at the breakfast table.

On the drive to school.

During bedtime conversations.

While making mistakes.

While trying again.

Children don't suddenly wake up one morning feeling confident.

Confidence grows through hundreds of small experiences where they feel loved, capable, and accepted.

I Thought My Child Had Changed...

Have you ever found yourself saying,

My child wasn't like this before.

Earlier, they used to talk so much.

Now they just stay in their room.

They get irritated over everything.

They don't even want to meet their friends anymore.

As parents, we often think,

It's just hormones.

It's just their age.

It's probably a phase.

Sometimes it is.

But sometimes...

your child isn't changing.

They're struggling.

Children don't always lose confidence overnight.

It disappears slowly.

- One comment.
- One comparison.
- One failure.
- One rejection.
- One difficult friendship.

Until one day they stop believing in themselves.

Daily habits

The Words We Say Become Their Inner Voice

Think about the sentences your child hears most often.

Hurry up.

Why are you always so slow?

How many times do I have to tell you?

Look at your brother.

Look at your sister.

Why can't you be more responsible?

Most of us don't say these things because we're unkind.

We say them because we're tired.

We're rushing.

We're stressed.

We're trying to manage work, home, school, and life.

I've said some of these things too.

But one day I realised something that changed me.

Children **borrow** our **voice** until they develop their own.

If they hear criticism every day...

They begin criticising themselves.

If they hear encouragement every day

They begin believing in themselves.

Psychologists call this **self-talk**—the conversation children eventually have with themselves. Much of that inner voice

is shaped by the words they hear repeatedly from the important adults in their lives.

So ask yourself. **If my child spoke to themselves the way I spoke to them today... would I be happy?**

That question changed the way I parent.

Emotional Intelligence

Begins at Home

When your child comes home angry

What do you usually say?

- Calm down.
- Stop crying.
- It's not a big deal.
- Forget about it.

Most of us grew up hearing those same words.

But emotions don't disappear because we tell children to stop feeling them.

Research in child development shows that children learn emotional regulation when adults first help them **name and understand** their emotions.

Instead of saying,

Stop crying.

Try saying,

You seem really disappointed. Do you want to tell me what happened?

Instead of,

Don't be angry.

Try,

I can see you're angry. Let's figure out why together.

Children who can understand their emotions are better able to manage them.

Problem-solving skills

Every Problem Doesn't Need You to Solve It

This one was hard for me.

Whenever my child had a problem...

I immediately started giving solutions.

- Call your friend.
- Tell your teacher.
- Ignore them.
- Do this.
- Do that.

One day my child looked at me and said,

Mom... can you just listen?

That sentence taught me something.

Sometimes children don't need advice.

They need space to think.

Instead of solving every problem, try asking:
What do you think you could do?
What are your options?
How can I help you?

Problem-solving is like a muscle.

The more children use it, the stronger it becomes.

Friendships

Friendships Matter More Than We Think

One evening, my child came home unusually quiet.

I thought it was because of homework.

Later I discovered...

A friend had stopped talking to him.

As adults, we often think,

It's just friendship.

They'll make new friends.

But for children...

Friendships are their whole world.

Research shows that having even **one supportive friend** can reduce the emotional effects of bullying and increase resilience.

Instead of asking,

Did you finish your homework?

Sometimes ask,
Who did you sit with today?
Who made you smile today?
Did anyone make you feel left out?

You may discover far more than you expected.

Positive routines That Build Confidence

Confidence isn't built once.

It's built daily.

Try these simple habits:

- Spend 10 minutes every day giving your child your full attention.
- Eat one meal together whenever possible.
- Let them make age-appropriate decisions.
- Allow mistakes without immediately correcting them.
- Celebrate effort, not just results.
- Tell them what you appreciate about their character, not only their achievements.

These moments may seem small.

But they become the memories children carry into adulthood.

One Thing I Wish Every Parent Knew

Children don't remember every toy we bought.

They don't remember every expensive holiday.

But they remember how they felt at home.

Did they feel safe?

Did they feel heard?

Did they feel accepted?

Did they feel enough?

That's what builds confidence.

Not perfection. Just Connection.

Before you close this chapter, I want you to think about one question.

When your child makes a mistake, what do they expect from you?

Do they expect a lecture? Or do they expect understanding?

Because one day

Your child won't just need someone to celebrate their success.

They'll need someone to sit beside them after they've failed.

And if they know they can always come to you

You've already given them one of the greatest gifts a parent can give.

Not perfect confidence.

But the courage to keep trying.

And in the end,That is what confidence really is.

Chapter 12

Preventing Bullying Starts at Home

The Way We Raise Our Children Today Shapes the Adults They Become Tomorrow

A nine-year-old boy came home from school one afternoon.

His mother asked the usual question.

How was school?

He shrugged.

Fine.

A few days later, the teacher called.

There's something we need to talk about.

The mother immediately assumed her son had been bullied.

Instead, the teacher said something she never expected.

Your son has been making another child cry almost every day.

The room went silent.

But he's such a sweet boy at home.

The teacher nodded.

I know. That's why I wanted us to talk before this became a habit.

This story is more common than most parents realize.

When we hear the word **bully**, we imagine an angry child who enjoys hurting others.

Reality is often different.

Many children who bully are not bad children.

They are children who have learned unhealthy ways to deal with emotions, power, frustration, attention, or relationships.

The good news?

These behaviors can often be prevented long before they begin.

And prevention almost always starts at home.

Bullying Doesn't Begin on the Playground

It Begins in Everyday Moments.

Children are constantly learning.

Not from our lectures.

But from our lives.

They notice…

How we speak to our spouse.

How we react when someone makes a mistake.

How we treat waiters, drivers, domestic workers, teachers, and strangers.

How we respond when we lose our temper.

Whether we solve problems by shouting or by talking.

Whether we respect people who disagree with us.

Long before children understand the word **empathy**, they are watching ours.

Raising kind children

Many parents proudly say,

My son never lets anyone push him around.

Sometimes that confidence is healthy.

Sometimes it slowly becomes aggression.

There is a difference.

A confident child protects themselves.

An aggressive child controls others.

Children often confuse the two when adults praise domination instead of kindness.

Instead, teach your child this simple rule:

Never be the one to start a fight.

If someone is being unkind, stay calm and clearly tell them to stop.

If they continue, warn them again.

If they still refuse to stop and are physically hurting you or putting you in danger, you have the right to protect yourself and get to safety. Self-defense is very different from revenge.

As a parent, stand behind your child when they have tried to solve the situation peacefully first. If your child gave the other person a fair chance to stop, sought help when possible, and only acted to protect themselves, they should know you will support them.

Teach your child that **real strength is shown by choosing peace first—but also by having the courage to protect themselves when there is no other safe choice.**

A Real Story

Eight-year-old Aarav came home from school upset.

"Mom! Rohan pushed me during football today."

Without asking what had happened, his father immediately replied,

"If someone hits you, hit them back harder. Make sure they never mess with you again."

Aarav nodded.

The next week, another child accidentally bumped into him while running.

Remembering his father's words, Aarav pushed him hard.

Soon, every small disagreement ended the same way—with shouting, pushing, or fighting.

At home, his parents believed they were teaching him to be strong.

At school, teachers noticed something different.

Other children had started avoiding Aarav because they were afraid of how he would react.

When his parents were called to school, they were surprised.

"We only told him to stand up for himself."

The teacher gently explained,

"Standing up for yourself is important. But Aarav has learned that every problem should be solved with force."

That evening, his parents had a different conversation with him.

"We made a mistake," his father admitted.

You never have to start a fight. If someone is being unkind, tell them to stop. Give them a chance to make a better choice. If they don't stop, walk away and ask a trusted adult for help whenever you can.

Even after this if someone is being unkind, stay calm and clearly tell them to stop.If they continue, warn them again. If they still refuse to stop and are physically hurting you or putting you in danger, you have the right to protect yourself and get to safety. Self-defense is very different from revenge.

From that day on, Aarav learned that real courage isn't about hitting harder.

It's about staying calm, giving others a fair chance to stop, and knowing the difference between **self-defense** and **revenge**.

His parents learned something too.

The lessons we teach our children in moments of anger often become the rules they follow for years

Teaching empathy

Small Behaviors Grow Into Big Habits

Bullying rarely appears overnight.

It usually starts with small moments that adults ignore.

- Laughing when someone gets hurt.

- Calling siblings names.
- Enjoying embarrassing someone.
- Refusing to apologize.
- Believing rules apply to everyone except themselves.
- Thinking about being popular is more important than being kind.

Each behavior is like planting a seed.

The more it is ignored...

The stronger it grows.

What Child Psychologists Have Learned

Psychologists who study child development have found that bullying is influenced by many factors—not just personality.

Children are more likely to bully when they repeatedly experience or observe:

- Harsh punishment without emotional connection.
- Aggressive conflict between adults.
- Lack of consistent boundaries.
- Being rewarded for dominance instead of kindness.
- Poor emotional regulation.
- Little opportunity to develop empathy.

Research also shows that children who have warm, supportive relationships with parents and caregivers are generally more likely to develop empathy, self-control, and healthy social skills. A close emotional connection acts as a protective factor against aggressive behavior.

This doesn't mean loving parents can never have a child who bullies.

It means that connection, guidance, and consistent teaching matter.

I Was Only Joking.

One of the most dangerous sentences children learn is…

I was only joking.

Imagine this conversation.

He cries so easily.

I was only joking.

I called her fat.

I was only joking.

I hid his bag.

It was just for fun.

Ask yourself.

Who was having fun?

If only one child is laughing

It probably isn't a joke.

Children need to learn one simple rule:

If it hurts someone, stop.

Respectful communication

Home Is the First School of Respect

Respect is not taught by saying,

Respect your elders.

Respect is taught when children hear,

I was wrong.

I'm sorry.

Thank you.

What do you think?

Parents who apologize to their children are not losing authority.

They are teaching accountability.

One sincere apology from a parent teaches more than fifty lectures about kindness.

The Words We Use Become Their Inner Voice

Many parents say things without realizing their impact.

Why can't you be like your brother?

Stop crying.

Boys don't cry.

You're so lazy.

You're impossible.

Children hear these words over and over until they become beliefs.

Some children turn those painful words inward.

Others pass the pain to someone else.

Hurt children sometimes hurt children.

Managing Anger Without Fear

Every child gets angry.

The goal is not to stop anger.

The goal is to teach what to do with it.

A child who learns to say,

I am far less likely to hit someone than a child who has never learned to name their feelings.

Try teaching these simple steps:

- Pause.
- Take three slow breaths.
- Name the feeling.
- Talk about the problem.
- Think of one solution.

Practice this often—not only during arguments, but during calm moments too.

Healthy family relationships

Sibling Relationships Matter More Than We Think

Many parents believe sibling fights are harmless.

They'll sort it out.

Sometimes they do.

Sometimes they don't.

When one child is constantly mocked, excluded, or humiliated by a sibling, they may begin to believe that this is how relationships work.

Some children become victims outside the home.

Others become bullies because they think power earns respect.

Home should be the safest place to learn kindness.

Another Real Story

A mother noticed her ten-year-old daughter often rolled her eyes whenever her younger brother spoke.

She interrupted him.

Laughed at him.

Corrected him.

The parents ignored it.

It's just sibling rivalry.

Months later, teachers reported that the girl was speaking to classmates the same way.

She wasn't born disrespectful.

She had simply practiced those habits every day.

Children rehearse at home.

Then perform at school.

Questions Every Parent Should Ask

Instead of asking only,

Did anyone bother you today?

Also ask,

Did you help someone today?

Did you make anyone feel left out?

Did you notice someone sitting alone?

Did you stand up for someone?

These questions teach children that kindness matters just as much as achievement.

What Your Child Needs Most

Your child does not need perfect parents.

They need emotionally available parents.

Parents who listen before judging.

Correct without shaming.

Discipline without humiliation.

Notice effort, not just success.

Teach courage without encouraging cruelty.

Children remember how home felt.

Long after they forget what you said.

Pause and Reflect

Take a moment to answer these questions honestly.

- How do we speak to each other in our home when we are angry?
- Does my child hear more criticism or more encouragement?
- When was the last time my child saw me apologize?
- Do I praise kindness as much as I praise grades, trophies, or winning?
- If my child copied the way I speak to people, would I be proud?

Practical Ways to Prevent Bullying at Home

- Model respectful communication every day.
- Teach children to name and manage emotions.
- Never laugh at cruelty, even if it seems funny.
- Correct hurtful behavior immediately—but calmly.
- Encourage friendships based on kindness, not popularity.
- Read stories and discuss how characters might feel.
- Praise empathy more often than achievement.
- Help children repair mistakes by apologizing and making amends.
- Make home a place where every family member feels heard and respected.
- Remember that the little moments of today become your child's habits for tomorrow.

Bullying is not prevented by teaching children to be stronger than everyone else. It is prevented by teaching them to be stronger than their anger.

Kinder than their impulses.

Braver than peer pressure.

And wise enough to know that real strength is never measured by how much power you have over someone else but by how safe people feel when they are with you.

Chapter 13

Real-Life Stories: Hope, Healing, and Second Chances

Every child has a story. Every parent has a lesson. And every family has the power to change the ending."

Bullying is more common than many people realize.

It happens in classrooms, playgrounds, school buses, sports teams, neighborhoods, and even online.

Behind every bullying incident is not just one child—but many lives that are affected.

A child who is hurting.

A parent who feels helpless.

A teacher trying to understand.

Sometimes, even a child who bullies is silently asking for help.

The stories in this chapter are inspired by situations that families and schools face every day. Names and identifying details have been changed to protect privacy, but the emotions, struggles, and lessons are very real.

As you read, you may find yourself thinking,

"My child has said that."

Or perhaps,

"I wish I had noticed that sooner."

If these stories help you see your child differently—even for a moment—then they have done their job.

Story 1
I Thought She Was Just Being Sensitive

Eight-year-old Meera loved going to school.

She would rush to tell her mother about her friends, her teacher, and what she learned each day.

Then, little by little, something changed.

She became quiet.

She started complaining of stomach aches every Monday morning.

She took longer to get dressed.

She asked if she could stay home.

Her mother assumed it was a phase.

"Everyone gets tired of school sometimes."

One evening, while brushing Meera's hair, her mother noticed tears rolling down her daughter's face.

"What happened?"

"They laugh at me every day."

"They say my glasses make me look funny."

"They hide my water bottle."

"I didn't tell you because I thought you'd be disappointed."

Her mother felt her heart sink.

She had been looking for signs of illness.

She hadn't been looking for signs of emotional pain.

Children often don't say,

"I'm being bullied."

Instead, they say,

"I don't want to go to school."

"My stomach hurts."

"I'm tired."

Sometimes the behavior is the message.

Story 2
My Son Was the Bully

When the school called, Rajesh was certain there had been a mistake.

"My son would never bully anyone."

At home, twelve-year-old Vivaan was polite and affectionate.

At school, teachers described someone very different.

He laughed when classmates made mistakes.

He excluded children from games.

He spread rumors in class.

His father was shocked.

That evening, instead of shouting, he asked one question.

"Can you help me understand what has been happening?"

Vivaan stayed quiet.

Finally he whispered,

"If I'm not the funny one, nobody notices me."

It wasn't an excuse.

But it was the beginning of understanding.

His parents worked with the school.

They taught him empathy.

They apologized to the other family.

Most importantly, they helped Vivaan learn healthier ways to build friendships.

A year later, the same teacher said,

"I've seen an incredible change."

Sometimes children bully because they are looking for power, attention, or acceptance.

Punishment alone rarely changes behavior.

Understanding, accountability, and guidance do.

Story 3
The Child Who Finally Spoke Up

Eleven-year-old Kabir had been bullied for months.

Every day, older boys took his lunch.

They laughed when he asked for it back.

They told him,

"If you tell anyone, it'll get worse."

Kabir believed them.

He stayed silent.

One afternoon, his grandmother noticed he was throwing away his untouched lunch box.

Instead of asking,"Did you eat?"

She asked,"Something seems different. Do you want to talk?"

Kabir burst into tears.

That conversation changed everything.

The school stepped in.

The bullying stopped.

Months later, Kabir said,

"I wish I had told someone sooner."

Children don't always need the perfect words.They need adults who notice when something feels different.

Story 4
The Teacher Who Changed a Classroom

A teacher noticed one boy eating lunch alone every day.

No one spoke to him.

Instead of forcing children to include him, she started something called the "Kindness Challenge."

Every week, students secretly drew the name of one classmate.

Their mission was simple.

Make that person's week a little brighter.

A smile.

An invitation to play.

A kind note.

A helping hand.

Within a month, the classroom felt different.

Children began noticing who was left out.

Not because they were told to.

Because kindness had become part of the classroom culture.

Bullying decreases when kindness becomes normal.

Children learn empathy by practicing it.

Story 5
A Father's Apology

One evening, ten-year-old Arjun shouted at his younger sister.

His father immediately yelled back.

"What is wrong with you?"

Later that night, the father realized something.

He had asked his son not to shout.

But by shouting.

The next morning he sat beside Arjun.

"I'm sorry." "I lost my temper."

"I should have spoken more calmly."

Arjun looked surprised.

"So… grown-ups say sorry too?"

His father smiled.

"They should."

That simple apology became one of the most powerful lessons Arjun ever learned.

Years later, when Arjun hurt a friend's feelings, he apologized without being asked.

He had learned that strength is not about being right. It is about making things right.

Children copy what parents model—not what parents preach.

Story 6
The Boy Who Became a Protector

When Aarush joined a new school, he noticed another boy being teased because of his speech.

At first, he stayed quiet.

He didn't want to become the next target.

Then he remembered something his mother always told him.

"If you can't stop the bullying alone, stand beside the child who is being hurt. No one should feel alone."

The next day, Aarush sat beside the boy at lunch.

Soon, another student joined them.

Then another.

Within a few weeks, the teasing stopped.

The bullies had lost their audience.

You don't always have to fight a bully.

Sometimes, standing beside someone is enough to change their day—and sometimes, their life.

What These Stories Teach Us

Although every family is different, the lessons are remarkably similar.

- Listen before you judge.
- Believe your child when they tell you something feels wrong.

- Don't ignore repeated unkind behavior.
- Teach empathy every day, not just after a problem occurs.
- Apologize when you make mistakes.
- Encourage children to speak up.
- Work with teachers instead of against them.
- Remember that every child can learn and grow.

Dear Parent

You will not always notice the signs immediately.

You will not always say the perfect thing.

You will make mistakes.

Every parent does.

What matters most is what you do next.

Children don't need parents who never get it wrong.

They need parents who are willing to learn, to listen, and to keep showing up.

One conversation can rebuild trust.

One apology can heal a relationship.

One caring adult can change the course of a child's life.

And that caring adult might be you.

Chapter 14

Activities to Build Courage and Confidence

Confidence isn't something children are born with.

It grows little by little through everyday experiences.

Every time a child solves a problem, speaks up, tries again after failing, or receives encouragement from someone they trust, their confidence grows stronger.

As parents, we can't remove every challenge from our child's life.

But we **can** give them the tools to face those challenges with courage.

The activities in this chapter are simple, fun, and designed to help children believe in themselves. You don't need expensive materials—just a little time, patience, and encouragement.

1. My Brave Jar

You'll Need:

- A glass jar or box
- Small pieces of paper

How to Play:

Every time your child does something brave, write it on a slip of paper and place it in the jar.

Examples:

- I answered a question in class.
- I introduced myself to someone new.
- I stood up for a friend.
- I told the truth even though I was scared.

At the end of each month, read all the notes together.

Lesson: Courage grows when children notice their own progress.

2. The Compliment Circle

Sit together as a family. Each person says one kind thing about every other family member. Examples:

- "I like how you help Grandma."
- "You're very creative."
- "You never give up."

No repeating compliments.

Lesson: Children learn to notice strengths in themselves and others.

3. My Superpower Poster

Ask your child to draw themselves in the middle of a large paper.

Around the picture, write or draw:

- Things I'm good at
- Things I enjoy
- People who love me
- Challenges I've overcome
- Dreams I have

Hang it in their room.

Lesson: Confidence grows when children recognize their own strengths.

4. The Courage Challenge

Create a weekly challenge.

Examples:

- Say hello to someone new.
- Ask one question in class.
- Help someone without being asked.
- Order your own food.
- Speak politely to a shopkeeper.
- Read aloud to the family.

Celebrate effort—not perfection.

5. Feelings Detective

At dinner, ask everyone:

"What feeling visited you today?"

Happy?

Excited?

Embarrassed?

Jealous?

Scared?

Then ask:

"What helped you feel better?"

This teaches children that feelings come and go.

6. Kindness Mission

Each family member secretly chooses one person to help during the week.

Ideas:

- Write a thank-you note.
- Help with chores.
- Share toys.
- Invite someone to play.
- Encourage a classmate.

At week's end, share what happened.

7. Problem Solver Game

Present everyday situations.

Examples:

"My friend won't let me join the game."

"What can I do?"

Let your child think of three different solutions.

Discuss each one together.

This teaches flexible thinking instead of reacting with anger.

8. Screen-Free Family Hour

Choose one evening every week.

No phones.

No television.

Play board games.

Cook together.

Go for a walk.

Tell stories.

Children build confidence through connection—not screens.

9. Mirror Talk

Every morning, ask your child to look into the mirror and say three positive things about themselves.

It may feel silly at first.

Soon, it becomes a habit.

10. The Courage Ladder

Help your child write one thing they're afraid of.

Then break it into tiny steps.

Example:
Speaking in class

Step 1:
Read aloud at home.

Step 2:
Read to one friend.

Step 3:
Answer one question in class.

Step 4:
Give a short presentation.

Celebrate every step.

Small wins create big confidence.

Confidence Journal

Encourage your child to spend just five minutes each evening writing or drawing.

My Confidence Journal

Today's Date: _____

Today I felt proud because...

Today I showed courage when...

One kind thing I did today...

One kind thing someone did for me...

Something I learned today...

Tomorrow I want to...

Today I feel (Circle one)

- Happy
- Excited
- Calm
- Okay
- Worried
- Sad
- Angry

Or add a few more emotions to help children identify their feelings better

Positive Affirmations

Encourage your child to read one each morning.

1. I am brave, even when I feel scared.
2. My voice matters.
3. I deserve kindness and respect.
4. I believe in myself.
5. Mistakes help me learn and grow.
6. I am stronger than my fears.
7. I can solve problems calmly.
8. I choose kindness every day.
9. I am proud of who I am.
10. I don't have to be perfect to be amazing.
11. I can ask for help when I need it.
12. Every day I become a little stronger.

Family Discussion Cards

Cut these out and place them in a jar.

Pick one during dinner or bedtime.

Card 1

What made you smile today?

Card 2

Did you help someone today?

Card 3

Did someone help you today?

Card 4

What was the hardest part of your day?

Card 5

When did you feel proud today?

Card 6

If you could change one thing about today, what would it be?

Card 7

Have you ever seen someone being left out?

What could you do next time?

Card 8

What makes a good friend?

Card 9

What does courage mean to you?

Card 10

What is one goal you want to achieve this month?

Card 11

When do you feel most confident?

Card 12

What is something kind you can do tomorrow?

Role-Play Situations

Practice these together. Let your child play different roles.

Situation 1

Someone calls you a mean name.

How would you respond calmly?

Situation 2

A classmate tells everyone not to play with you.

What can you do?

Situation 3

You see another child being bullied.

How can you help safely?

Situation 4

A friend pressures you to make fun of someone.

What could you say?

Situation 5

You accidentally hurt someone's feelings.

How can you apologize sincerely?

Situation 6

Someone keeps asking to copy your homework.

How can you say "No" politely?

Situation 7

You're nervous about answering in class.

How can you encourage yourself?

Situation 8

You lose a game and feel angry.

What can you do before reacting?

Daily Emotional Check-In

Every evening, ask your child these five questions.

- How are you feeling today?
- What made you happy?
- What made you sad or worried?
- Did anyone make you feel included or left out?
- Is there anything you want to talk about before bedtime?

Remember: Listen more than you speak.

Children open up when they feel safe—not when they feel judged.

Self-Esteem Worksheet

All About Me

My Name: _____

Three things I like about myself:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Three people who make me feel loved:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Something I used to find difficult but can do now:

_____

One thing I want to learn:

_____

One kind thing I will do this week:

_____

When I feel scared, I can

☐ Take deep breaths
☐ Talk to an adult
☐ Walk away
☐ Use kind words

☐ Believe in myself

Confidence doesn't come from always winning.

It comes from trying again after losing.

Courage doesn't mean never feeling afraid.

It means choosing to do the right thing, even when your knees are shaking.

Every encouraging word, every hug, every conversation, and every small success helps build a child who believes,

I am enough. I am capable. I can handle hard things.

Acknowledgement

Writing a book is never a journey taken alone. It is made possible by the love, encouragement, and support of many wonderful people, and I am deeply grateful to each of them.

First and foremost, I want to thank my two beautiful children. You inspire me every single day to learn, grow, and become a better parent. Through your laughter, questions, challenges, and unconditional love, you have taught me lessons that no classroom ever could. This book exists because of the countless moments we've shared together.

To my husband, thank you for your unwavering support, patience, and belief in me. Your encouragement has given me the strength to pursue my passion and continue helping families through my work. I am truly grateful to have you by my side throughout this journey.

To every parent, reader, and member of my community who has supported my previous books—Rise and Shine: The Story of a Girl Who Believed, 3P Golden Tips for Easy Parenting, and Only for Girls: The Truth No One Told You About Growing Up—thank you from the bottom of my heart. Your kind words, thoughtful reviews, messages, and unwavering encouragement have meant more to me than you know. Your trust and love have inspired me to continue writing books that make a meaningful difference in the lives of children and families.

I would also like to thank every parent who shared their experiences, every child who bravely spoke about their

feelings, and every teacher who works tirelessly to create safe and supportive classrooms. Your stories have inspired many of the lessons in this book.

Finally, thank you for choosing to read The Bullying Survival Guide for Kids. I hope these pages help you better understand your child, recognize the hidden signs of bullying, and build a relationship where your child always feels safe, heard, and deeply loved.

With gratitude,
Kashish Sandhu

Message from the Author

Dear Parent,

If you're holding this book, it's because you care deeply about your child.

I want you to know that I understand your fears—not only as a Parenting Coach but also as a mother of two children.

Like many parents, I have wondered, "Will my child be accepted?" "Will they have good friends?" "Will they tell me if something is wrong?"

As parents, we can protect our children from many things, but we cannot be with them every moment they are at school, on the playground, or online. That thought can feel overwhelming.

Over the years, I have spoken with hundreds of parents. Again and again, I heard the same painful words:

"I wish my child had told me sooner."

"I thought it was just a phase."

"I never realized those small changes were signs of bullying."

Those conversations stayed with me.

I realized that bullying is not always obvious. Sometimes it doesn't begin with bruises or tears. Sometimes it begins with silence, excuses to avoid school, a sudden loss of confidence, changes in eating or sleeping habits, or a child who no longer smiles the way they once did.

As a Parenting Coach and Certified Early Childhood Educator (Montessorian), I have seen how early support

can change a child's life. But the greatest lessons haven't come only from my professional training—they have come from being a mother.

My children have taught me patience, humility, and the importance of truly listening. They have reminded me that children don't always need us to have all the answers. They need us to make them feel safe enough to ask the questions.

That is why I wrote this book.

I didn't write it to make parents feel guilty or afraid. I wrote it to help you notice what is often hidden, understand what is often misunderstood, and feel confident in supporting your child through one of the most difficult experiences they may face.

My hope is that this book becomes more than something you read. I hope it becomes a conversation starter in your home, a source of reassurance during difficult moments, and a reminder that your relationship with your child is their greatest source of strength.

If this book helps you recognize one hidden sign, start one meaningful conversation, or give one child the courage to speak up, then every page has served its purpose.

Thank you for trusting me to be a small part of your parenting journey.

Together, let's raise children who know they are loved, valued, and never alone.

With love,
Kashish Sandhu
Certified Early Childhood Educator (Montessorian)
Teen Parenting Coach | Author | Founder, Mindful Parenteen Circle

About the Author

Kashish Sandhu is a Teen Parenting Coach, Certified Early Childhood Educator (Montessorian), author, and the founder of Mindful Parenteen Circle. As a mother of two, she understands that parenting is one of life's greatest joys and one of its greatest responsibilities.

Passionate about helping families build stronger relationships, Kashish combines practical parenting strategies with child development principles and Montessori philosophy to help parents raise emotionally healthy, confident, resilient, and compassionate children. Her guidance is rooted in empathy, connection, and real-life solutions that families can apply every day.

Kashish believes that every child deserves to feel safe, valued, heard, and loved. Through her books, workshops, and educational resources, she is on a mission to empower parents and children with the knowledge and confidence they need to navigate life's challenges.

She is the author of:

- Rise and Shine: The Story of a Girl Who Believed
- 3P Golden Tips for Easy Parenting
- Only for Girls: The Truth No One Told You About Growing Up

Her fourth book,**Helping Your Child Handle Bullying with Confidence,** is a practical guide designed to help children understand bullying, develop self-confidence, learn healthy coping skills, and know when and how to seek

help. It also equips parents with meaningful conversations and practical tools to raise emotionally strong and courageous children.

Kashish's vision is simple: to help every child grow up with confidence, kindness, and the courage to stand up for themselves and others, while supporting parents in becoming their child's safest place.

About the Book

Helping Your Child Handle Bullying with Confidence is a practical and compassionate guide designed to help parents understand bullying and equip children with the confidence, courage, and skills they need to navigate difficult situations.

Through relatable real-life stories using imaginary names, easy-to-understand explanations, interactive activities, confidence-building exercises, role-play scenarios, and reflection questions, this book helps children recognize bullying, understand their emotions, respond safely, set healthy boundaries, and know when and how to ask for help.

Parents will discover practical strategies to notice the signs that a child may be struggling, start meaningful conversations, listen without judgment, strengthen communication, and create a safe and supportive home environment where children feel comfortable sharing their experiences.

Rather than focusing only on stopping bullying, this book takes a broader approach by helping children develop lifelong skills such as self-confidence, emotional intelligence, resilience, empathy, problem-solving, and healthy communication.

Whether your child is experiencing bullying, witnessing it, or simply learning how to build positive friendships, this guide provides practical tools and reassurance for both children and parents.

Most importantly, it reminds families that children do not have to face bullying alone. With the right support, guidance, and connection, every child can learn to feel **safe, valued, heard, and confident enough to speak up. One must read this.**