

Hello?! Is This thing on?

{Tap...tap...tap...} Hello?! Is this thing on? Hello?! Are we good? {Tap...tap...}

Kids say the darndest things. They are definitely good for a laugh every now and then. I know my kids are hilarious! But sometimes, kids, no matter what age, say some things that make you sit back and think, **“Wow! When did my kid get smarter than me?”**

The other day I was able to sit down with a group of about 15 middle school students and just chat. Now, these students were part of a group that focuses on **making their campus a place of peace**. They huddle up once a week and discuss ways to improve their school climate in terms of relationships, bullying, behavior, self-confidence, self-awareness, resilience and a plethora of others.

Of course we got into a brief discussion about bullying. The conversation went something like this: (Please note, these kids were **not** prompted to answer in any specific way. This conversation happened **before** I told them anything about my philosophy and program.)

Me: *What are some things you guys are taught by your school about how to handle bullying?*

Student 1: *Ignore it.*

Me: *How does that work?*

Student 2: *It doesn't.*

Me: *Why not?*

Student 2: *Because they just keep coming after you and bothering you.*

Me: *Ok, what else are you taught?*

Student 3: *Tell an adult.*

Me: *What do you mean “adult”? Give me some examples.*

Random responses: *Teachers, guidance counselors, principal, coaches, assistant principals, librarian...etc.*

Me: *Does that seem to work?*

Chorus of students: *NO!*

Me: Really? Why not?

Student 1: Because the bully just hates you more for getting them in trouble.

Student 4: Yeah, then they just wait for the teacher to leave or they just get you on the bus.

Student 2: Yeah, and besides, all the teacher does is tell them to stop. They don't really do anything anyway.

Student 5: I don't think they really know what to do anyway.

Student 1: Nothing they tell us to do works.

Me: What does seem to work? Anything?

Student 2: I just don't let it bother me.

Me: What do you mean?

Student 2: Like...There's always going to be mean people and people who make fun of you. So what? They can say whatever they want.

Student 4: Yeah, when they see it doesn't bother you they like...get bored and go find someone else.

Me: Interesting. Anything else?

Student 3: I just treat everyone with respect, whether they are nice to me or not.

Me: {Jaw on the floor.} What?!

Student 3: I try to treat everyone with respect, even if they aren't nice to me. They eventually either leave me alone or start treating me respect too.

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Out of the mouth of babes comes **wisdom of the ages!** How is it that middle school students know and understand these things, but so many adults seem clueless?! Does anybody else see the holes in the story? Kids admit the same-old-same-old doesn't work. But, they know what **does** work. They understand that even though the problem is complex, **the best solutions are often the most simple.**

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