

Sticks and Stones

Sticks and stones will break your bones, but names will never hurt you. That's what I was always taught as a youngster, but times have changed. It is now obvious that those names do and have done more damage than we gave them credit for. It is now referred to as bullying. Names do hurt, the damage is just buried deep and not as visible.

I don't think of myself as oversensitive, but I do admit I can remember every mean thing ever said to me. For example, I remember a boy taunting me at the age of 12 because I was wearing a training bra. I was an obvious late bloomer and very self-conscious about it. Did the insensitive comment ruin my life? No, but it did hurt enough for me to remember it 45 years later. I have never been at the (intentional) receiving end of the proverbial sticks and stones, so cannot compare the two hurts.

Bullying is rampant in today's society. [Suicide rates](#) are skyrocketing with bullying the leading cause. With the availability and popularity of so many forms of social media, bullies can strike anywhere, anytime, without ever having to meet their victim in person, face to face.

When social media first came to be my eldest son was ten years old. That was in 1999, the year AOL, Yahoo, and MSN all released their own messenger services. All of a sudden it became very easy to (bully) say hurtful things to classmates, (former) friends, acquaintances, even strangers. His teacher was so concerned about the hurtful comments that were going around she organized a parent meeting to warn parents and curb the bullying behaviour. I remember telling my son then "you should never message someone things that you do not have the nerve to say to their face"

That was before every child over the age of six had their own

cell phone, in fact, many parents did not yet have one. Most of the messages sent, both good and bad, were done on a home computer. Parents had some control over what and when their children were communicating and who they were communicating with.

Today our teens and preteens (and many adults) are glued to their cell phones, with access to everyone and everything, anywhere. The advances in technology make it easier to do just about anything on a cell phone.

Everything except communicate face to face.