

## BOOK REVIEW

# 1 NATIONAL BESTSELLER

# BARBARA COLOROSO

AUTHOR OF THE BESTSELLING *kids are worth it!*



## the bully, the bullied, and the bystander

*From Pre-School to High School—How Parents  
and Teachers Can Help Break the Cycle of Violence*

All too often, the tragic consequences of bullying are a topic we are forced to reflect upon as we open the newspapers or listen to the evening news. The focus of our attention often becomes the bully, who is he/she and what can be done to combat his/her destructive behaviour? In her book, the bully, the bullied, and the bystander, Barbara Coloroso tackles the issue of bullying with a fresh perspective.

The first part of the book focuses on highlighting the attitudes and behaviours of all three players in a bullying scenario: the bully, the bullied and the bystander. Coloroso identifies seven different types of bullies and provides clear definitions for different types of bullying (i.e. verbal, physical, sexual, racial). Next, she discusses the shame, secrets and sorrows of the bullied, identifies potential targets of bullying and lists the warning signs that a victim of bullying may exhibit. Coloroso finishes the first portion by identifying the “acts of omission and commission” that highlight the role of bystander. This section is of particular interest for those who *know* their child is neither a bully nor a victim as it describes the negative consequences of assuming the bystander role.

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Part two of the book deals with breaking the cycle of violence. Coloroso asserts, "A kid must *want* to be the kind of person who acts courageously – or kindly, or fairly, or justly – must know *how* to do it, and must be *willing* to do it." Thus she begins this section by identifying three different kinds of families; the brick-wall family, the jellyfish family, and the backbone family. She continues to explore family relationships as well as issues such as tattling vs. telling and teasing vs. taunting. Next she illustrates concrete actions to both identify and cope with a child who may be involved in bullying or may be a victim of bullying. The final two chapters help adults move children along the continuum from bystander to witness, as well outlining school programs and ways to facilitate communication between the home and school.

the bully, the bullied, and the bystander by Barbara Coloroso is a *must read* for the parents of middle school children. Of particular importance is the way in which she addresses the role of the bystander in the cycle of violence. For those who know or suspect their child may be engaging in bullying behaviour or may be the victim of bullying, this book provides practical strategies for addressing the issue. However, for those that assume, because their child is neither the bully nor the victim, their child is immune to the cycle of violence; Coloroso gives us food for thought. She provides parents with the background knowledge and understanding of the effects bullying has on the bystander and guides us from the role of bystander to witness and to the development of a kind, courageous child.