

## Behind The Curtains Of Bullies And Cheaters

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This article explains and offers guidance as to what to do about bullies and cheaters. Find the home site of author Bill Allin at [http: billallin.com](http://billallin.com)

Forgiveness is an inner correction that lightens the heart. It is for our peace of mind first. Being at peace, we will now have peace to give to others, and this is the most permanent and valuable gift we can possibly give.

- Gerald Jampolsky, American psychiatrist, founder of the International Center for Attitudinal Healing

Forgiveness is only necessary because we believe that others should treat us fairly and they have not, thus we try to hold their offences against them.

This belief in the need for fairness between people is built into us. For a long time it was said that "Life's not fair, get over it." A study completed recently (at the University of Toronto, as I recall) indicated that babies have a sense of fairness. Given a choice, the subject babies tended to turn to a person who had done something fairly and away from someone who had done something we might consider unfair, and that was a fairness judgment involving other babies, not themselves. A sense of fairness, it seems, came along with our genetic material when we were born.

That sense of fairness usually serves us well. Most people are fair with us as we are with them. That builds a kind of unspoken trust, even if it involves a shopkeeper we have just met, because we have had good experiences with other shopkeepers in the past. When someone betrays that trust, we treat it as an act of aggression, as if the person had thrown down the proverbial glove and challenged us to battle.

Those who do not act on their impulse to be aggressive in the face of unfair treatment may hold a grudge. "I'll never go back to that store and I will tell everyone I know for the rest of my life to never darken its door."

The thing about grudges, about acts of unfairness, about betrayals of trust, is that most of the time the offender doesn't know he has committed a violation of our expectations. Moreover, he usually wouldn't care if he did know. With rare exceptions, the offender remains guilt-free. The offended person is the one who gets hurt.

That hurt is totally self inflicted. The hurt usually causes more grief to the person who adopts it than the consequences of the original offence.

Most people believe that people who hurt themselves--for whatever reason--are not entirely sane. No matter how just the cause of the offended person, hurting themselves by holding a grudge or throwing a punch and landing in jail, or beginning a shouting match is considered anti-social.

Everyone accepts that people are not perfect. What we find difficult to accept is when the imperfections of others play themselves out on us through acts we perceive as unfair. It doesn't seem to matter how difficult the life of an offender has been before the offence, the offensive act itself gets the dander of the offended person up.

When the emotions surrounding such situations are laid bare, don't they seem kind of ridiculous?

That's where forgiveness comes in. In most cases, when we forgive we do a great favour for ourselves. Only when we allow ourselves that sense of peace can we spread it around to others. As Gerald Jampolsky said, giving peace to others is the most valuable gift we can give anyone. But we must have that peace within us to share before we can give it to others.

Most people who treat us unfairly don't intend to hurt us. They just don't care. They have their own troubles and have no time for ours or our whining about them. How might we change their life by giving them forgiveness and peace?

Take this as a general rule: the most hurtful people are most in need of forgiveness and peace within themselves.

Which might give you greater satisfaction, venting your anger on someone who has offended you or giving them peace which could make their lives better for years to come? The former is faster, easier and more hurtful to

ourselves.

I have had several occasions in my life to turn a bully into a friend. The first was in grade seven when I nearly strangled a bully who sat behind me in class, when he threatened to kill me at recess and he came at me with that objective in mind at the beginning of the break. I was happy that he didn't kill me and apparently he was pleased that I had let him live. We became friends for the rest of the school year. Other friendships have begun with people who began our relationship by cheating me in a business transaction.

As odd as this may sound, they needed the forgiveness, the peace I offered and the friendship overtures, likely because they lacked all of them in their personal lives. As oversimplified as it may sound, people who treat others unfairly, like bullies, need love and have neither the ready sources (such as from their mother) nor the skills to know how to make friends.

Now you're on notice. You know how to recognize people who need a friend. Someone of good character would accept that challenge.

Bill Allin

***Turning It Around: Causes and Cures for Today's Epidemic Social Problems*, a book that (among other things) explains the background of bullying and ways for children and adults to work their way around it.**

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