

STICKS AND STONES

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I know that all of you could finish this statement:

"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words (names) can never hurt me." "Sticks and Stones" is an English language children's rhyme. It is reported to have appeared in 'The Christian Recorder' of March 1862, a publication of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. It encourages kids not to be hurt by others calling them names.

Of course, we know this statement's sentiment is not true. Sticks and stones can break our bones and names definitely do hurt us. You may recall the effects of the deeply cutting words spoken to the school girl in a previous story and blog titled, "The miracle of forgiveness."

Cruel words are never acceptable. They come from many different sources. It might be from thoughtless, critical words from a schoolteacher or parent, or the taunts of other children. We can be pretty confident in knowing that at some time in our lives we are going to be exposed to cruel words.

Can we shield our children from the taunts of others? I don't think we can totally protect children against the cruel jibes of others, but perhaps we can prepare them for the inevitable.

As parents we need to:

1. Refrain from speaking hurtful words to one another AND to our children.
2. Talk to our kids about respecting each other and what that looks and sounds like.
3. Explain that critical words hurt, and their effect can cripple us for many years.
4. Explain that almost everyone gets teased in their life and that it often comes from those who wish they were like us or from those who lack sensitivity.
5. Encourage our kids to tell us if they have been hurt by others so we can help them process it.
6. Teach them to walk away from someone who is calling them names, if asking them to stop doesn't work.
7. Fill our kids' 'mind banks' with positive words so that they are assured of their own value, rather than just believing whatever others say.

Life can bring some pretty hard knocks at times but when we think ahead and prepare our kids for what to expect and how to respond, they will be better equipped to ride the waves.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at sally@forefrontfamilies.org and check out our blogsite at

www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com and our website at
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