STAND UP!

BE AN UPSTANDER AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE



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INTRODUCTION

DO YOU WANT TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE?

Maybe you want to change how kids at school or family members treat each other. Maybe you want to change how groups of people are treated or you want to stop animal cruelty or end world hunger. Maybe you want to change how you treat other people when you are upset. After all, you are a human being and human beings make mistakes.

It really does take just one person to start to make changes in the world. Do you want to be that person? If so, keep reading.

You may doubt that one child or teenager could really make a difference when adults have often sought world peace without success. Clearly, you can't fly like Wonder Woman or scale walls like Spiderman, but you could be a hero to some people by speaking up and making small differences that may then lead to bigger and bigger differences.

In this book, you will learn ways to become an Upstander—that means a person who stands up to support fairness and respect while also trying to decrease bullying and injustice. If you believe in yourself, are willing to learn new skills, and set reachable goals, you're on your way!

You will soon read about kids who have stayed motivated, even when people around them didn't always believe in them or when their goals seemed unattainable at first. While the examples in the book are composites drawn from what I have learned from talking to many, many kids over the years, the experiences and thoughts shared here are common among many kids like you who want to make a difference in their community and the world. Hopefully you will find some ideas and strategies that work for you. You will also get the chance to read about some actual people in history, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., who made a difference by standing up for equality and fair treatment.

This book will take you through ways to be an Upstander, including being kind to yourself, having empathy for others, knowing that positive and negative actions can be powerful and affect others, and understanding how to deal with conflicts. You will learn how to tell the difference between reachable goals and goals that might be too much to deal with right now. Upstanders know how to think about a rule and decide whether it is fair or unfair, the possible ways to address problems, and how to work with others toward common goals. There are lots of actions you can take to share positivity and model respect for others, and you will get a chance to focus on some of these skills as you read through this book.

You already made the first big step toward making a difference in the world by caring enough to open this book. Thank you for your efforts to be compassionate toward others and wanting to reach goals that can lead to positive change!

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BEING AN UPSTANDER

CAN YOU IMAGINE HOW WONDERFUL THINGS WOULD BE

if we all got along, respected each other, had no bullying or wars, and looked out for one another? While this may seem like a huge goal, each of us has the power to make things better . . . or worse. Do you want to make things better for yourself, people you know, and others in the world? You don't have to be an adult to make the world a better place.

Let's focus on what you do every day to help yourself and others. Have you already stood up to voice your support for fair treatment of kids and adults? Would you like to learn how to do this more often or more effectively? Maybe you haven't reached out to support others yet, but you want to know how to do that. This book can help!

As a kid, you see lots of social situations: in school, at friends' homes, at sporting events and activities, and so on. You may see more than the adults, because some children and teens tease or upset others when grown-ups aren't watching. Sometimes kids might not go to adults for help, but you know that they feel sad, confused, or anxious. Or, you may even find yourself in situations where you feel that some rules aren't fair for all people and you want to change them. If you see these situations, how do you handle them? In other words, what kind of bystander are you?

Try taking this brief questionnaire to figure it out. For each situation, decide which of the three reactions is closest to how you would respond. This isn't a test. You can't fail it. Hopefully it will help you start to think about how you handle situations around you.

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Quiz

1. At recess, you see a few girls teasing another girl in your grade about how she has no friends and never will because she's "so weird." Do you:
   - **a.** turn your back and walk away because you don't want the girl to think you agree with those who are doing the teasing?
   - **b.** smile when you hear the teasing because you are nervous or don't want the girls to start picking on you too?
   - **c.** try to find a way to help the girl, even if you're not sure how to do this yet?

2. You see a YouTube video or a commercial about a social issue, like animals being mistreated, homelessness, or kids who have serious medical issues. Do you:
   - **a.** change what you are watching because you don't want to feel sad?
   - **b.** make fun of the issues with your friends?
   - **c.** think that, one day, you might want to help those in need?

3. Every day while riding the bus to school, you see a younger boy who sits alone and no one ever tries to talk with him. Do you:
   - **a.** assume he's okay and hang out with your friends?
   - **b.** talk about the boy with your friends and try to imagine what's wrong with him?
   - **c.** think about what you could do to see if he's okay sitting alone?

4. If you hear that one of your friends is being teased because he doesn't have a father in his life, do you:
   - **a.** ignore the teasing and wait to hang out with that friend after school, so no one knows that you are friends?
   - **b.** smile when kids make jokes about the issue, but not in front of your friend?
   - **c.** tell the other kids that it's not funny or kind to ever tease anyone, and that this is a particularly emotional situation?

5. A girl in your grade has speech problems and often mispronounces words. She is also a little shy. At recess, you hear two popular kids mimicking her and laughing. When the girl walks by, you notice that she overhears the teasing, starts to cry, but keeps walking. Do you:
   - **a.** distance yourself from the kids who are making the jokes, because you know what they are doing is wrong?
   - **b.** smile when the others mimic her, because you think she's probably used to the teasing and should work harder to speak more clearly?
   - **c.** approach the girl who has speech problems and let her know that not everyone is ridiculing her?

If you answered mostly 'a', then you are likely being a bystander who might not make a situation more difficult for someone but does not try to stop a negative situation.
If you answered mostly 'b', then you are likely being a bystander who might contribute to a negative situation, either accidentally or on purpose.
If you answered mostly 'c', then you are likely being an Upstander who tries to stop a negative situation.

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Three Kinds of Bystanders

The good news is that you can always change the kind of bystander you are if you are not happy with how you act when you see an injustice or situation where someone is upset. A bystander is not someone who starts a problem. A bystander simply is there, watching situations where others may feel supported, cared about, isolated, rejected, or ridiculed, for example.

Many people talk about bystanders only regarding bullying situations. In this book, you will get a chance to think about how you could react in many situations, not all of which are negative. For instance, if a friend wins the spelling bee, do you congratulate him and offer to help him practice for the next competition? Do you ignore the accomplishment? Do you ignore your friend entirely because you are jealous? See? Even in this positive situation, you have a choice of how you respond to the world around you.

Throughout this book, all three types of bystanders will discover how to intervene when problems arise, overcome their possible fears of standing up for others, manage self-doubts about speaking up, and figure out when to get assistance.

Neutral

There are bystanders who don't make a situation worse, but don't really do anything to improve it either. Their behavior is neutral. In the questionnaire, the responses listed next to the letter 'a' describe this type of behavior.

Bystanders might behave neutrally because they:

- are shy (they don't feel comfortable speaking up or taking a leadership role);
- believe others would handle the situation better;
- don't know how to handle the situation;
- don't notice the situation or problem;

- are fearful about becoming a target and being bullied if they try to help a person who is currently the target (a target is a person getting picked on, similar to the term victim but a victim has no options and often a target has some choices, especially with your help!).

Some people may not care about an injustice or prefer to focus on fun times and friends. However, assuming all bystanders who act neutrally don't care is really pre-judging them. They may want to help but may not know how.

Negative

Some bystanders behave in a way that contribute to a negative situation. If you selected several 'b' responses in the questionnaire, this may describe your behavior, but this does not mean you are a bully. This does not even mean you want to ever make another person feel uncomfortable.

You may wonder why you, or anyone, would want to make a negative situation worse. But these bystanders don't always mean to hurt others, even if they seem entertained when someone is being mistreated. Sometimes, bystanders may even know that one person plans to upset or even bully another and decide to keep it a secret because it makes them feel special to have this information or because they are riddled with anxiety and not sure what else to do.

Bystanders may behave in a way that contributes to a negative situation because they:

- want the person who is mistreating others to like them so they don't get mistreated too;
- don't know what else to do;
- are nervous and laughing because they are uneasy, not because they are entertained;
- feel that they need to be loyal to friends, even when they are mistreating others;

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DOUGLAS'S STORY

Douglas had a reputation in his grade for being mean and for liking when other kids got teased.

In fact, though, Douglas never really teased anyone.

So, why would anyone think Douglas was mean?

Douglas was good friends with a kid named Jacob. When Douglas talked to his parents about Jacob, he told them he was a really nice and smart guy, and that they had fun together.

What he didn't tell his parents was that Jacob often picked on two other boys in their grade. He called them names and even pushed them against the walls between classes.

While Douglas didn't like this side of Jacob, he wanted to be a true friend and stood by him no matter what.

When Jacob was acting cruelly, Douglas just smiled and even sometimes laughed until he was relieved that the mistreatment was over.

- **Do you think that Douglas was a bully?**
- **Could Douglas have handled the situation differently?**
- **What would you have done?**
- **Do you think being a true friend means accepting all of your friend's actions?**

- fear having no friends if they don't hang out with the person who is making hurtful choices;

If you don't want to be this type of bystander, here are a few questions to ask yourself:

- What would happen if I walked away whenever my friend started to tease someone?
- If my friend might tease me for not laughing at his hurtful comments to others, is he really my friend?
- Do I have true friends, who respect my feelings and whom I am proud to be with?
- If my friend is bullying someone, could I distract her by starting another activity or by telling an adult?
- Do I like how others view me when I'm laughing with the person who is teasing or excluding others?

Positive

The goal of this book is to help readers become positive bystanders, also known as Upstanders. Upstanders stand up for themselves and others. They are caring people who want to help others and are willing to help others. A person is considered to be an Upstander when he or she prevents, or tries to prevent, someone from being bullied—but Upstanders act in less extreme situations as well! In the questionnaire at the start of this chapter, an Upstander would mostly answer 'c' to the questions.

Upstanders try to be positive role-models who make a difference in the world around them. After reading this book, you will gain ideas about how to handle situations that you feel need to be changed. You can also learn some important skills to help you along the way, like perspective taking, conflict resolution, and collaboration.

Upstanders generally:

- care about others;
- want a more peaceful and positive world;

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Upstanders try to be POSITIVE ROLE-MODELS who make a DIFFERENCE in the lives of those around them and in the world.

- have basic ideas of how to stand up for themselves and others;
- have some confidence in themselves;
- have a support group of friends and adults who they can talk to about their own feelings and concerns.

The confusing part is that bystanders who behave neutrally or even negatively may share in these Upstander characteristics, and an Upstander may face the same challenges as the other two types of bystanders. Here's the difference: even at the risk of not being totally successful or not having everyone applauding their efforts, Upstanders stand up for others. They are focused on righting the wrongs in the world and are willing to face anxiety and self-doubt.

Are you an Upstander? Are you a positive role-model who cares about the needs of those around you? You might not even need to confront a bully, but you would need to be aware of when another person could use your help. You will also need to be open to helping another person if he asks for help and you feel it's safe and appropriate to support him.

ABBY'S STORY

Abby worked hard to be an Upstander and help others out. She wanted to stand up for kids who were being bullied, but doing so still made her a little nervous. She was an Upstander, though, because she cared about supporting others and being a role-model. Olivia, age 11, was a classmate of Abby's. Olivia was quiet and had only one close friend, but they weren't together in the same social studies class. Prior to a big test, Olivia realized that her social studies notes weren't complete since she had been out ill for a week. Olivia looked around at her classmates and decided to ask Abby for help. She picked Abby because Abby always seemed to respect and accept others. Abby was nice and funny and Olivia hoped to develop a friendship with her.

When Abby learned that Olivia needed help, she could have said, "Sorry, I have to run" or "I took the notes, so they're mine." In other words, "I don't want to focus on your needs." Instead, Abby looked over the pages in Olivia's notebook, found the gap in her notes, and promised to make a copy of her own notes for Olivia by the end of the day.

Olivia feared that Abby would forget or not care to show up at their designated meeting place right after school ended. Sure enough, though, Abby showed up and gave Olivia a copy of her notes. One of Abby's friends saw the exchange and later said, "I can't believe you and Olivia talked. She barely ever talks." Abby smiled and said, "I'm glad she trusted me enough to ask for help."

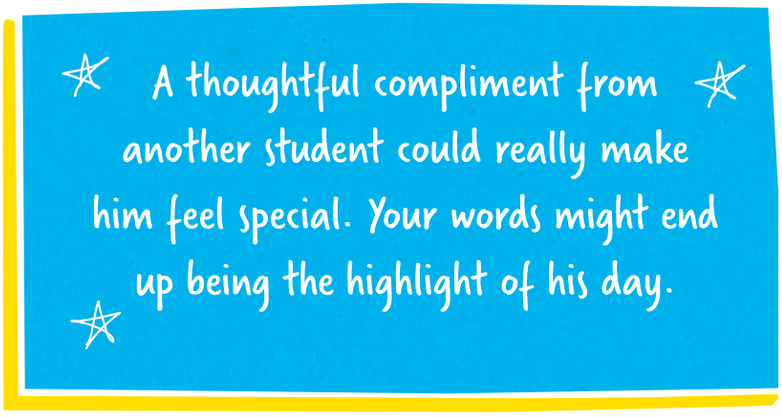
- **Do you think that Abby acted like an Upstander?**
- **What would you have done?**

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Would you like others to know that they can count on you? Since you are reading this book, the answer is probably yes! This book can help you learn ways to build a reputation as a positive bystander, or Upstander. Imagine calling a kid who has been out sick, even though you aren't best friends, just to let her know that you hope she feels better soon. That could have a positive impact on her, but also on anyone else who learns of your action.

What an Upstander Can Do

- If you see a classmate being picked on, ask her to join your group. It's a lot harder to bully someone who is in a group.
- If there is an isolated kid in your school, compliment him on something specific. Don't just make something up, though. A thoughtful compliment from another student could really make him feel special and appreciated. Your words might end up being the highlight of his day.
- Be a role-model in how you treat others and yourself. If you are a respectful, honest Upstander in class, at recess, at sporting events, and on the bus, others will notice.



- Be an Upstander at home too. For example, referee between your siblings when they are arguing. Show them how to respectfully work out a disagreement.
- Take on an issue that means something to you (e.g., discrimination; teasing; bullying; certain school rules). How you do this is important. You'll read a lot about how to do this in as you explore later chapters.
- Notice if another person needs help, then offer to help, if appropriate. If you offer to carry a few books for your teacher, help a new student find his classroom, or volunteer to do an extra chore at home, you can show that you value altruism. That means that you value doing things just because they are the right things to do and because you care about others.

Stand Up to Bullying

If you see a person who is purposely bothering or even bullying others, you might want to yell or publicly embarrass her so she will start acting more caring and compassionate. There is nothing wrong with feeling anger, frustration, or even outrage. How you express your emotions, though, is important. You don't want to bully the person who is bullying others, even if your motivation is that you care about someone and want to end mistreatment.

Think about some of the famous activists, Nobel Laureates, and their messages that were heard despite their respectful demeanor. Martin Luther King, Jr. (activist for civil rights), Malala Yousafzai (teenage activist who supported the rights of girls to attend school and youngest Nobel Laureate), and Elie Wiesel (Holocaust survivor who spoke up for human rights) are just a few famous role models who showed that individuals can be heard while acting as respectful Upstanders and without resorting to violence.

The following are some ideas for how to be an Upstander when you see bullying or mistreatment.

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When the Aggressor is Your Friend

If you see the kind and funny side to your friend but don't like how he treats others, should you end the friendship? Not necessarily. What can you do? What would you do?

Let's review two tips that you might find helpful:

- If your friend is doing the teasing, you could let him know that you aren't entertained or enjoying it. You could say: "Hey, this isn't fun. Let's do something else," or "Ease up on teasing him. He's actually okay when you get to know him."
- Avoid publically confronting your friend, though, so that he's not focused on his possible feelings of embarrassment or even betrayal and can really listen to what you are saying. Find the right time to let him know how it makes you feel when he bullies or upsets other kids. You'll learn about how to use 'I' messages in Chapter 5, which could help you in these situations.

Being an Upstander and sticking to your values isn't always easy. When you like someone who isn't acting like an Upstander, you don't have to become her teacher. However, you also don't have to simply accept her actions or words.

Try These Quick Comments

If you see mistreatment, here are some quick comments that you might consider saying:

- "We like her!" This lets the target know that she is not alone, while letting the person who is acting aggressively (verbally or physically) know that others will stand with this target and support her;
- "Not funny!" This is best said if the person teasing is your friend; just remember to say it privately so as not to embarrass him;
- "Let's get on with the game." Distract the aggressor until you can figure out how else to respond.

Tell Someone

If speaking up to the aggressor might put you in danger, or if the target seems to be in danger, it's definitely time to tell an adult. This is not tattling; it's just telling. Tattling is generally when you tell on someone because you want that person to get in trouble. Telling is when you want to improve a situation. Chapter 5 will help you figure out when to report issues. For now, just keep in mind that it's okay to sometimes tell others, especially adults, who might be able to help.

Upstanders Are Perfect . . . Not!

Upstanders are human, and human beings aren't perfect. If you want to be an Upstander, but are worried that you can't because you had a fight with your brother last week, that just means you know it's hard to always be a role-model, especially when you are upset.

Upstanders work on controlling their temper and calmly dealing with frustration. In the next chapter, you can learn how to do this. For now, though, pay attention to when you lose your cool and when you are proud of your choices. Having this information can help you understand yourself better, so you can act as an Upstander more often. It's great that you care and are motivated to be an Upstander! Compliment yourself for that.

START SMALL!

Smile or say "Hi!" to three kids who you don't normally talk to each day. It's one way to let them know that you acknowledge them and care.

If you try this, think about how it made you feel the first time. Think about how it made you feel after you did it for a while. Are you getting more comfortable connecting with others in this way? Hopefully, you can be a role-model to show other students that they can also connect with new people, starting with a simple "Hi."

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You may not be able to fly like Wonder Woman or scale walls like Spiderman, but you could be a hero to someone just by speaking up.

STAND UP! is packed with practical advice, quizzes, real-life examples, and small steps you can take to be an upstander like, being kind to yourself, having empathy for others, spreading kindness, and dealing with conflicts. It only takes one person to stand up and make changes in the world.

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