

## Raising Courageous Kids: Bullying vs. Peer Challenges<sup>1</sup>

|                     | Bullying   | Peer Challenge <sup>2</sup>  |
|---------------------|--|--|
| <b>Definition</b>   | <i>Bullying is a conscious, willful, and deliberate hostile activity intended to harm, induce fear through the threat of further aggression, and create terror. (Coloroso, 2003, 13-14)</i> <sup>3</sup> | <i>A peer challenge is a constructive confrontation by one person intended to test the strength of the other. For example, a ten-year-old begins to cry on the baseball field. Another player says, "Jason, quit being such a crybaby! C'mon, let's play!"</i> |
| <b>Intention</b>    | Unnatural, unexpected<br>The bully means to inflict emotional and/or physical pain, expects the action to hurt; intimidation   | Natural, expected<br>The challenger means to evaluate the other's character. Intention to change the other   |
| <b>Initiator</b>    | Humiliation and cruelty<br>Stalk<br>Takes pleasure in witnessing the hurt<br>Threat of further aggression; escalates<br>Desires submission; seeks dominance<br>Cowardice                                 | Encouragement and dignity<br>Avoid (if subject fails), companionship (if subject passes)<br>Expresses disappointment in a failed response to the challenge.<br>Expectation of excellence; deescalates<br>Desires excellence; seeks equality<br>Confidence      |
| <b>Power</b>        | Based on an imbalance of power   | Based on respect as equals.  |
| <b>Relationship</b> | Outside  | Inside   |
| <b>Subject</b>      | Contempt<br>Taunted<br>Dreadful<br>Fear<br>Sinister  | Caring<br>Teased ("A fun thing you do with friends—with people you care about." (Coloroso, 2003, 32)<br>Playful<br>Determination<br>Prosocial  |
| <b>Metamessage</b>  | "I am stronger than you."  | "You can be stronger."   |
| <b>Research</b>     | Well-researched by professionals   | Lacks research by professionals  |



<sup>1</sup> This chart supplements material in *Raising Courageous Kids: Eight Steps to Practical Heroism* by Charles A. Smith (Sorin Books, 2004). Like other resources at <http://www.raisingcourageouskids.com> created by the author, it is likely to be revised. Send your suggestions and comments to [casmith@ksu.edu](mailto:casmith@ksu.edu). This document will be used as a basis for discussion during the *Finding a Mighty Heart: Acquiring the Courage to Stand Up for Oneself and Others* national parenting satellite teleconference originating from Iowa State University. See <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/parent/> for more information.

<sup>2</sup> Peer challenges are not the same as bullying. Any form of predatory behavior, however, should not be recast and excused as a peer challenge. Similarly, adults should not confuse peer challenges with bullying.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Coloroso (2003). *The bully, the bullied, and the bystander* (New York: HarperCollins).