

An End

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Throughout history, people have been brutally judged and verbally abused for being different. First, the Jews in the Holocaust and later on, the African Americans as slaves. Even today, gays and lesbians are bullied and harassed on a daily basis. Almost every person in the world has some sort of connection to discrimination and this is mine.

Since I was a very young child, I was always larger than all of my female classmates. Never quite confident with my appearance, all of the teasing brought me severe trauma. It took me until the end of sixth grade to realize that I shouldn't care what others think about me, and only care about how I feel. A couple weeks after I came to that conclusion, things took a turn for the worse. Constant abuse from a fellow student had brought me to a point of such low self-esteem that over that summer between sixth and seventh grade, I suffered from an eating disorder. Not a horrible case, but a mild form of anorexia.

All summer the only thing I could think was that my "friends" had nothing to tease me about anymore, but sadly, that wasn't the case. At the start of seventh grade, the new phenomenon was "pick on Rachel because she has a big Jewish nose." While this verbal torture continued throughout the year, I realized that I had to take control of my life again. I was letting these abusive pre-teens scramble my emotions simply because I was too cowardly to stand up to them.

Around May of that year, a group of them were calling me a toucan, and I decided to put an end to it right then and there. I simply stood my ground and stated that their opinions were irrelevant and that I was proud to be Jewish. Standing up for myself felt so amazing that I planned to every time anyone tried to tease me. Eventually, the teasing stopped due to the fact that antagonists are fueled by reaction and I no longer responded to their childish actions.

From that ordeal, I learned that the best way to stand up to a bully is to confront them. Hold your ground and call them out on every wrong doing they have done. Not only is this an amazing way to gain confidence, but standing up to a bully could save someone's life. Friends of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders have to protect their friends from bullies who threaten to kill them, as Kurt's friends did for him to Kerowsky on Glee.

Honestly, I know that bullying and abuse will be an ongoing problem, but more than anything. I feel that the key to coexistence is tolerance. Learning more about your abuser after the teasing has subsided helps lead to forgiveness. Over this eighth grade year, I have become great friends with the boy who caused me great mental trauma in sixth grade and I have completely forgiven him. Not only is no one perfect, but everyday people call out others' flaws. I know it won't happen in my lifetime, but I would like bullying to come to a stop, one confrontation at a time.