

Aunt Bossy: The Life Coach Your Mother Never Was

Written by Susan Murphy

Tuesday, 28 January 2014 14:36



The Pregnant Pause

Dear Aunt Bossy,

My oldest daughter recently got married. Her younger sister took the opportunity to formally announce her own pregnancy at the reception. This was not an off the cuff remark; it was a prepared speech.

I was appalled that my younger daughter would so brazenly try to steal the spotlight from her sister. It seems to me that if she so desperately wanted to announce her one-month-old pregnancy, she could have asked the bride to do it for her.

My older daughter is sweet enough not to get upset about this, although maybe she is just used to her sister's selfishness. However, I am furious.

The daughter who tried to steal the show does not think she did anything wrong. What do you think?

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A Concerned Mother

Dear Mom,

You are right. Your older daughter is also right. Your younger daughter is a shallow and selfish person.

Surely, this does not come as a surprise to you.

Foreign Relations

Dear Aunt Bossy,

My son is in fourth grade and is being bullied by a boy in his class. My son is small and very academic. The other boy is much larger and is very good in sports.

One of the reasons we chose the school my son attends is that it is quite diversified in every way. The boy who is bullying my son is Korean.

I am more upset about this than just the bullying because my son is becoming prejudiced against Asians. What can I do?

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Progressive Parent

Dear PP,

You have two problems here: bullying and prejudice.

First, handle the bully by having your son handle the bully. Tell your son the next time the bully says something obnoxious to call him on it immediately by saying, "Why are you being so mean to me? I have done nothing to you." No matter how the bully responds to that, your son should just walk away. Advise your son to try to position himself around others when this happens. The bully will be seen as what he is.

This may take more than one encounter and you and your son should prepare and practice scenarios. For example: "Why do you concern yourself with me?" "Why are you being so mean?" "What do you want to accomplish by being mean to me?" "You are so good in sports and so much bigger than I am, why do you need to bother me?"

I don't have to tell you that if the bullying is physical that you need to get into that school fast and let them know that if it happens again you will hold the school responsible for the behavior.

You COULD also tell your son that if the kid "bumps" into him or something along those lines, he should fall to the floor and let out an enormous scream, but that might be training him to be dishonest and manipulative, and is probably not a good idea. (My lower self came up with that one.)

The great thing about bullies is they are weak and insecure. When called out publicly, they generally withdraw.

Do not go to the bully's parents. Let the school handle that.

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As for your son's stereotyping Asians based on the behavior of one person, just keep reminding him that he is only dealing with one person. Expose him to other Koreans in another setting, without making a big deal of it. Just let him experience you having a pleasant exchange.

My mother never discussed racism with us, but her example made it very clear that it was not an option. She had friends and acquaintances of vast diversity and we grew up taking that for granted.

Remind your son that the bully is a sad individual who is suffering somehow, and certainly does not represent anyone except himself.

PS. I have my own stereotypical view of Koreans: they are the smartest and hardest working group I have ever encountered.

Aunt Bossy is Susan Murphy, an internationally known Communication Skills Coach who adores spending every winter and spring in Beaufort. Ask for advice @ Bossymurph@mac.com

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