

# Book suggest ways to deal with a bully

## ■ Solving conflicts nonviolently in our violent society.

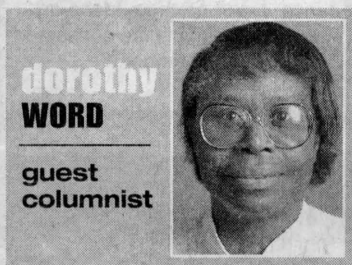
I retired five years ago but I still remember those dreaded ISTEP tests. If my second-hand information is accurate, the ISTEP tests for third graders include writing an essay on a given topic. I have an essay question but it certainly won't appear on the ISTEP tests - When is a goat not a goat? (When it's a scapegoat).

A scapegoat is a person who bears the blame of others, a person who has to shoulder all the blame. In other words, a scapegoat is the person who gets picked on. And for students who get picked on, "Back-to-School" are three words that are as unwelcome as dandelions in a well-manicured lawn.

My friend's oldest son, Matthew, attends the junior high school in Newburgh, a suburb of Evansville. Matthew is black, athletic and makes good grades. His ISTEP scores are high. About a year ago, for whatever reason, Matthew was the scapegoat of some school bullies.

Matthew's birthday was in July and I almost sent him a Benjamin Franklin Award book for his birthday. Instead, I sent him a card and birthday money. I kept the book and read it myself.

"Why Is Everybody Always Picking On Me? A Guide To



Understanding Bullies For Young People" by Terrence Webster-Doyle is the book I almost mailed to Matthew. It is a book that can not compete with the "Harry Potter" craze. It is a "how-to" book, based on the real world. A book that suggests ways to solve conflicts nonviolently in our violent society.

Webster-Doyle dedicated this book to "young people who have been bullied and who want to understand this problem and deal with it creatively." The book is also dedicated to young people who bully others so they can learn "healthy, peaceful ways to get what they want."

This author was bullied a lot as he was growing up. "I am now fifty years old and I still remember how it felt...That's why I've written this book."

Bullies come in all sizes, shapes, ages and nationalities, he wrote. They can be rich or poor, educated or ignorant, male or female. This is what bullies have in common: They verbally or physically pick on others, and they are people who are hurt, angry, afraid and frustrated.

"Why Is Everybody Always Picking On Me?" is a guidebook

with a workbook format. There is a list that defines 11 types of bullies. There are short stories that illustrate important points, roleplaying skits, questions with space for responses and opportunities for journaling.

I think Matthew would have been motivated to share some of these ideas with his younger brother, Jonathan, who will attend the junior high in a few years.

Contrary to popular belief, schools do not make bullies, and kids are not born bullies. Nevertheless, bullies seem to arrive at school "ready-made" from a place called HOME. Unfortunately, school is a place where bullying is acted out in front of a captive audience, and where there is an ample supply of scapegoats.

Back-to-School is a good time for parents, teachers and other caring adults to unite and work toward zero tolerance of bullying. Webster-Doyle said, "If we can begin to create programs directed at understanding this issue of bullying, then we will help raise a generation of young people who will have the possibility of being free from its devastating effects."

This school year is just getting underway and that's when school bullies also start up. Webster-Doyle's book is definitely a Back-to-School survival book, so I think I'll send it to Matthew after all.

Dorothy Word of Kokomo is a retired teacher.