



THE Underlying School Yard

Kerry had been a client of many years, but this time she came to see me, not for herself - but for Florence her 6 year old daughter. Flo had experienced school yard bullying and was very traumatised by the whole experience. Neither Kerry, her husband, nor their other daughter (who was at the same school) had any idea that the bullying had been going on for months.

The first hints were when Flo started to say she was sick in the stomach or the head and did not want to go to school. The whole story came out when Flo ran crying to her sister in the playground.

Even though the school had a 'bullying policy', the culture of the classroom did not create an environment where Flo felt comfortable enough to say something to her teacher or her parents. Flo's trauma was significant enough for her parents to keep her out of school for the rest of the term. She would start at a different school the following term. The new school understood the situation and Flo was going into a small class with an experienced teacher, who would be able to monitor Flo's emotional behaviour.

To help her deal with the problem her parents had encouraged her to talk about how she felt and to get angry with what had happened. She would freely express that she was miserable, and people didn't like her - and that she felt her life was bad and would never get better. No improvement was noted from the release and she felt no hope for the future. Her previous energetic, enthusiastic character had been replaced by a sad and pessimistic child at a critical point in her development - and one that could shape her approach to life.

In infancy, we share our mother's energy field, with the "terrible two's" marking the beginning of the individuation process. From age 2 until around age 8 children are connected to the 'primary mothering energy'. (From then until around puberty, they are connected to the 'primary fathering energy'). During their connection to the primary mothering energy, children learn about their own self-worth, developing their self-esteem later with their primary fathering energy. Self-worth and self-esteem are absolutely fundamental to our emotional and psychological health as adults.

During our first years of interaction within the broader community, we start to shape many of the beliefs that we have developed and inherited from our family. Our experience at this stage will either reinforce or alter the basic psychological mechanisms that we have already developed for moving through the world. These determine our beliefs.

Do we see the world as scary? How will we react to criticism? How do we create forms of self protection? How do we react to power and authority? What is our relationship with trust? Do we believe we can be happy?

As life is experienced within the cocoon of developing self-worth, our experiences are measured against, and impact on, the development of self-worth. It is as if we continually ask ourselves 'am I worthy enough or not at this moment?'

It is also in these years that self-pity emerges as a mechanism for self-protection. Self-pity is the most common of defence mechanisms and generally is the cry of "poor me" and leads to a whole range of dysfunctional patterns in life. This insidious defence mechanism can also involve the self absorption of feeling unworthy - (when it's all about YOU being good enough or not). This can further descend into becoming a Victim or a Martyr in life or being a Blamer or a Struggler with life.

In Flo, these defence mechanisms were beginning to form. Saying that she was 'sick in the head or stomach' as a way of not going to school, shows that she has developed effective means of protecting herself from attack. Being sick is now positioned in her sub-conscious as a way of protecting herself from the unpleasantness or upsets of life.

Her level of self-worth is being negatively impacted, and her beliefs about the world are being shaped and re-shaped. The risk is that she will have implanted beliefs that she is 'not good enough' and 'not worthy of having friends', that 'school is not enjoyable and fun', that the 'future is not something you can look forward to', that 'you cannot change things in your life for the better'. The potential is there for Flo to develop a pessimistic, hopeless and powerless view of life.

So what to do. Firstly, her parents responded well, by taking decisive action and taking her seriously, she felt comfortable that they were there to defend and protect her. Flo has had the experience that she has power in her life; that when she spoke up she was believed, and the situation changed, and she was no longer being threatened. Having Flo talk about the issue is critical to her learning to express

Impacts of **Bullying**



By Anne Matheson



her feelings. However, she seemed to have become fixated on the negative and so was not releasing the emotion. It was also important not to create drama, so that she doesn't 'learn' that melodrama is the best way of getting attention.

I suggested that Kerry start Flo on a program of vibrational essences – one for releasing the anger she still harboured and another for the pessimism and sadness; one to be taken in the morning and the other in the evening. When she started the new school, it was important to monitor her and see how she was coping, and if necessary to use a third essence for any sense of worry or crisis she might experience.

Kerry reported back after Flo had been at the new school for 2 weeks. The essences had worked well and she had stopped fixating on the negative experience. Apart from a little nervousness on the first day, and a lack of enthusiasm in the first week, she had settled in well - and said that she loved her new school and her new teacher. Kerry and her family were overjoyed that Flo had her joy and optimism back, and was full of enthusiasm and life again.

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