

A proposal of change

Dignity. What do we mean when we talk about *dignity*? According to the Cambridge Dictionary, it means:

1. *the importance and value that a person has, that makes other people respect them or makes them respect themselves.*

Is it, actually, an *important value*? Of course it is. Although, if it is that important, why does not everyone still own it? Why are there thousands of children that are being bullied, and as a consequence, commit suicide? Why are there people that take away people's dignity as if it owns them? If every single person in the world, had dignity, there wouldn't be homeless. There wouldn't be women forced to prostitute. And there wouldn't be 10 years old children that are found dead in their beds, by either child abuse or bullying.

It is the fundamental pillar of the Universal Declarations of Human Rights, but the lack of human dignity still is one of the worst humanity problems that exists. And it belongs to us, because whenever we discriminate, insult or put someone aside, we are stealing them part of his dignity. It is said that we all born with the same dignity and rights, and it is true. But as we can gain dignity we can lose it. And, in the long run, this can be horrific.

Dignity is quite next to self-esteem. If you lose one, it's very likely that you lose the other. That's why, low self-esteem people are so afraid of socialising, talking and being with big groups of people. Well, actually they're not afraid of those things, they fear people to laugh about them and to take off their dignity.

I have noticed that most of the harassment is suffered by children and teenagers. As the gloomy story of Steve, who was bullied every single day by two of his classmates. And at the same time, sinking in the deep ocean, along with his dignity.

See you tomorrow

It is the first day of class for Steve in his new high school. Unfortunately, he was forced to moved school because of many boys of his old high school were picking on him constantly.

At first, he didn't want anyone to know it, despite being down in the dumps.

Those annoying kids were winning, because, as Steve wanted, neither the teachers nor their parents knew what was happening. But one day, "Steve's friends" gave him such beating that when his parents saw him, they knew that something what's going wrong. He started going to therapy and their parents thought it would be a great idea if he started a new school life in a new high school. It would finish with the bullying and the suffering he was going through.

Although Steve's parents reported the bullying to the school counsellor, but also to the regional Ministry of Education nothing happened to the kids. They were just "punished" without attending school for 2 days.

Once Steve started classes on his new high school, he began feeling that he didn't fit in any group. But this feeling wasn't new, he felt it in all of the other schools he's been to. He hadn't had many friends, and the friends he had had, in the long term, have put him aside. Despite this, he thought that this time was the opportunity to fit in the society.

He started very excited to meet new people and find a group with he could hang out and have fun. The first month was good with regard to all he has been through in his other high school. He had gone unnoticed and nobody had picked on him. He even got one friend, George. George, as him, was new in the high school and that made them to be very linked. They both liked watching movies and playing tennis. So, whenever they could, they went to play tennis or go to the cinema.

But everything started getting worst when two cruel boys of his class saw him as a vulnerable person. And, instead of helping him and integrate him in the class, they used Steve as a "toy" for laughing. As a first impression, they looked nice. It seems as they wanted to integrate in their group. So, Steve started losing trust with George to centre his aims on being with his "new friends".

But what Steve wasn't noticing was that, these two classmates, John and Andrew, were laughing about him. At first, they only made jokes that he couldn't understand. But, later on, they insulted him or put him aside, depending on the day. And, when he wanted, George wasn't there, he was alone.

Steve was going to therapy because of everything that happen in the other high school, but his feelings weren't shown to anyone, he always kept everything inside. So that, their parents weren't aware of the situation. And, as a result, the problem became bigger.

John and Andrew got Steve's number, and if it wasn't enough, they were cyberbullying him constantly. Posting pictures of him, insulting him. He was the toy they had to have fun when they were bored.

The most shocking for Steve, was that nobody in the class made anything to help him, George included. They were just public that were watching an 'WWC Fight' where, needless to say, Steve was losing.

Although he has been always a very good student, Steve's marks starting getting lower. Besides, he didn't want to go to school, because he was afraid. He just woke up every morning and pretended everything was okay for their parents. He thought that they had already suffer lots of things with him, so he didn't want them to go through this again. But on the other hand, Steve's parents thought that the low marks were caused by the fact of moving school. And to try to help him, they signed him up for math classes. And, what a coincidence, it was the same academy John and Andrew went.

Steve couldn't put up with it. He was humiliated in the school, in the academy and in the internet. He wanted to solve everything, but he didn't have enough strength to go to school counsellor and tell him everything what was happening. The insults just turned into beatings. He couldn't do anything to calm John and Andrew down. Everything was an excuse to beat him, to laugh about him. Just

one look to them, and he was dead. Just having a better mark than them, he was dead. Just saying anything, he was dead.

He didn't know what to do. He had nobody to talk about it. He had nobody who could help him. His teachers didn't know anything or they just acted as if they didn't know anything. His classmates were neutral, they were just for watching and keeping quiet. Maybe, it was like a kind of entertainment for them or something, who knows? And George? He was not his friend anymore.

Deep down, he felt everything was his fault. If he didn't trust John and Andrew, George would be his friend. If he wasn't so stupid, anyone would pick on him. If he hadn't look at them, they wouldn't beat him.

At this point, Steve thought to tell their parents what was going on. But he felt like it would be too much for them. Something that they had to put up with. He didn't want to be that, an encumbrance, the problematic kid. He just wanted to make their parents relieved and happy. He wasn't aware of what he was doing, he thought everything would finish after that. So, before thinking twice, he put an end to the problem, to everything.

Unfortunately, many children are or have been in Steve's shoes. Studies shows that 31% of boys and girls between nine and sixteen years old are suffering or have suffered bullying or cyberbullying. We cannot let this to continue happening. We cannot let many children end like Steve. Because this is not fair. And this is not his parent's fault, this is not his teacher's fault. His parents didn't imagine that something like this could be happening to his child. They had always thought that Steve was a shy and a withdrawn boy, but he wasn't. They, Andrew, John, and the bullies from the other high school, made him to be like that. Insecure. Afraid of life. Vulnerable. Shy. They aren't respecting his human dignity. They are taking off his personality, his values. They're humiliating them. And that's not fair, not for Steve and not for the thousands of children that are bullied every day, and not only in the European Union, in the world.

Honestly, I do not care if I achieve or not the scholarship, I just want justice. I just want this to finish. I want answers and measures of the European Union to stop this problem. I just want that nobody has to be Steve anymore.

Politicians can say whatever they want, but it is easier said than done, isn't it? Fortunately, as of today, bullying is not taboo anymore. But that's not enough. The problem won't be eradicated until the word *bullying* doesn't exist. I know it sounds crazy, and I know it will be very difficult. But we're in the XXI century, aren't we? Things are far easier than before. We cannot stay in our comfort zone pretending nothing is happening, because it is happening. Sadly, it's too late for my generation to see the problem erased. But, who knows? Maybe my son, or the son of my son don't know what *bullying* means. And I hope so. Because that would mean that we have done it well. That everything that we are doing, does some good. But also, that we have mature socially speaking.

So, there wouldn't be so many social disparities, lack of humanity, lack of dignity, and many other current problems we have.

But maybe not. Maybe in fifty years we're the same. The same selfish society that its only purpose is money and power. That only looks for itself and doesn't help anyone unless it is given something in exchange. But I don't think in this way. Because, by the same token, women wouldn't be able to vote or have a job, the world would be ruled by a dictatorship and we wouldn't have the right to say what we think without being judged by anyone.

The world needs to improve constantly, and we won't be perfect, but we, as a society, have to look ahead and try to improve with it. In order to eradicate problems such as kidnappings, trafficking in women, child abuse, bullying and many more of an extensive list. Problems that does not respect our dignity, that grab it.

But what is the solution of the problem? It's difficult to say, but I think that we should normalise these situations when we are just children that are learning how to live together. Because if Steve's classmates would know what could happen to him, maybe he had had someone to trust, and someone who could help him. But it's not that simple. School and parents should instil values to children, values such as respect, kindness, tolerance, generosity, humility, confidence and many more. But also, the school should be aware of everything that happens in it. And teachers should be the parents of the class, the ones who take after everyone and give advice to children; because, when all's said and done, children spend almost the same time with their teachers at school, instead of being at home with their parents. So there is where the children learn, be mistaken, socialise, have fun, etc. There is where children live. So if we; apart from teaching maths, history, geography; teach them how to live, they will, without a doubt, go far.

So, I make a proposal of change, in order to develop this society that the only thing that does, is not letting us to grow as a person. Because as the Cambridge Dictionary says, *dignity is a value that a person has*, so don't let anyone to make that definition wrong.