

Jaclyn Charbauski

7th Grade

Northern Hills Middle School

Where the Hate Ends

As Maya Angelou once said, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." I believe that one of the biggest problems in this modern world is bullying and its injustice. My One Wish for the Future would be the end to mean comments and snarky retorts, the end to rolled eyes, and that feeling of embarrassment after only a few words: the end to bullying.

Bullying is a much larger problem than most people comprehend. No matter if it's big or small, bullying can have a larger impact than you may think. For example, imagine you are with your friends, just joking around, and someone says something about your shoes, your clothes, your hat. It doesn't really matter. They say something along the lines of, "What are those?" The question is drawn out and exaggerated, as they point at the victim of this conversation. Of course, everyone will start laughing and you'll go along with them, but it's not all light-hearted - is it? Think about it; what is the next thing you do? Probably, you're going to be thinking of an excuse or joke to laugh it off and then make a mental note not to wear this or that again in front of these people. It doesn't matter if the person who said it really cared or not, because you care.

As a middle school student, I have plenty of experience seeing this happen over and over again. In the halls, in class, or at lunch. It doesn't matter where you are or who you are; you can be a victim, or feel you have to be the bully, in front of others. And I'm not alone. According to "11 Facts about Bullying", in the United States, 1 in 5 students ages 12-18 have been bullied during the school year. The numbers are too high, and that's just in our country. And it's no small thing, bully victims are between 2 to 9 times more likely to consider suicide ("Bullying and Suicide"). I have seen too much bullying, especially in school, to believe that people are aware of how damaging it can be. On the other hand, if people are aware: most of

them don't do anything about it. This is why I'm wishing for an end to bullying, not just in my school, but in all schools worldwide.

What is genuinely astonishing about this, is that we don't have to depend on a wish come true to end bullying. Even if it's optimistic; it is not hopeless. In fact, more than half of bullying situations stop when a peer intervenes on behalf of the student being bullied ("11 Facts about Bullying"). We can stand up for others. We can stand up for ourselves. We can fight peer pressure. All there's left to do is to take action. As Martin Luther King said, "The time is always right to do what is right."