

If someone doesn't like the way I act,
well that's

TOUGH!

"We're playing
my way!"



Around here, what I say goes.
No one dares to tell me NO.

"Hey
Jayla,
go tell
Luisa I
think her
boots are
weird."



Sam's Notes

It's *tough* work changing my behavior, but being mean all the time is even tougher. Here are some things I've learned:

Taking my anger out on others only makes me angrier.

Out of control is how I felt before someone helped me change.

Unless I change my behavior, I will keep hurting myself and others.

Giving people a chance is a good way to fit in and be cool.

Having real friends feels a lot better than being tough.



Luisa's Notes

I'm glad Sam is giving up her old ways. I know that I'm not *weird*—no matter what anyone says. Here are some other things I learned as a target of bullying:

When everyone joins together to help, things start getting better.

Every person who is picked on needs someone to stand up for him or her.

I think all people deserve to be treated with kindness, including Sam.

Realizing that no one liked her behavior helped Sam change.

Disrespecting others means you are also disrespecting *yourself*.



Jayla's Notes

I found out that things got a lot harder when I didn't *dare* to stand up for myself and Luisa. Now I feel good about the choices I'm making. Here are some things I know for sure:

Deciding to do what I knew was right took courage.

Assisting Sam when she bullied Luisa meant *I* was bullying, too.

Reaching out to Luisa and being her friend was a good choice.

Eliminating bullying is everyone's responsibility—we all have the power to help.

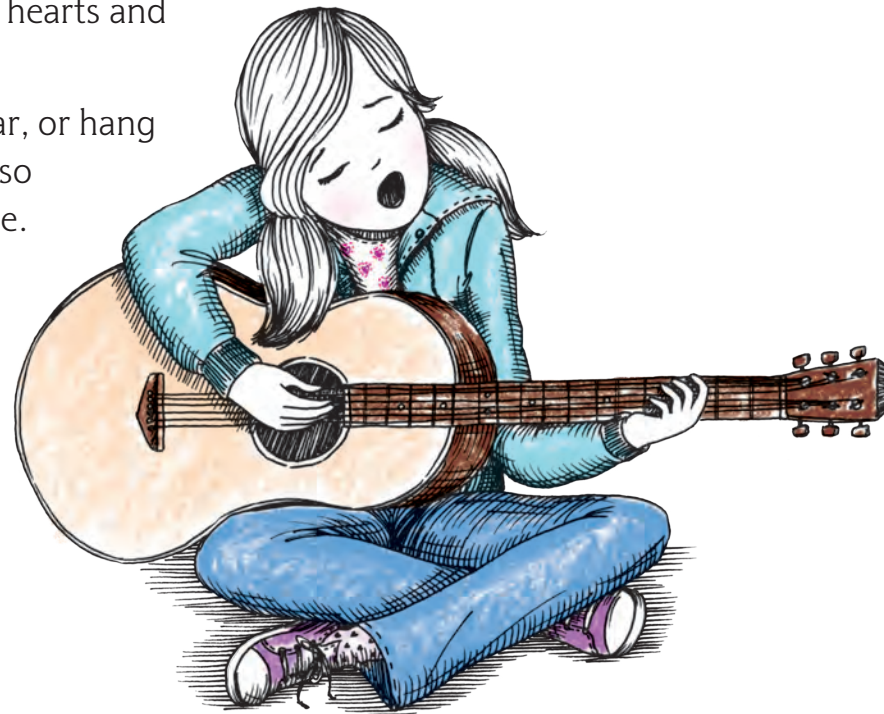


Kindness Club: Sticking to Caring

I figured no one cared about my feelings, so I chose not to care about others' feelings. But then I found out that people *do* care, and I want to be one of those people. I'm done with being tough and I'm sticking to caring! Want to help me decorate a guitar with stickers?

1. Cut out a large guitar shape from a piece of cardboard. Tape six pieces of string on the cardboard—these are your guitar strings.
2. Cut out heart shapes from a sheet of paper. These are your stickers.
3. In the center of each heart, write words to describe what happens when you stick to caring. *Examples:* I am respectful. I feel happy. I make friends. I'm not lonely.
4. Place tape on the back of your hearts and stick them to your guitar.
5. Pretend to play your new guitar, or hang it in your bedroom. You can also teach a friend how to make one.

Can you think of more activities to do in our Kindness Club? Share them with your classmates and friends. Someone who's kind is *tough* to resist!



A Note to Parents, Teachers, and Other Caring Adults

Every day, millions of children are subjected to bullying in the form of name-calling, threats, insults, belittling, taunting, rumors, and racist slurs—and still more are witnesses to it. Verbal bullying, which can begin as early as preschool, accounts for 70 percent of reported bullying and is often a stepping stone to other types of aggression, including physical, relational, and online bullying. As caring adults, how can we help children feel safe, respected, and confident in who they are? How can we help children who initiate bullying make choices they can feel proud of and end the cycle of violence?

We can start by holding children who bully others accountable for their behavior, while modeling and encouraging positive choices. We can provide kids who are targets of bullying with practical coping tools for positive thinking and confidence building. We can help bystanders

explore safe and effective ways to stand up for those who are being bullied. And through stories such as *Tough!*, we can help children develop awareness and perspective-taking skills to help prevent and change bullying behavior. We can help children like Sam understand that by hurting others they are also hurting themselves, and that kindness breeds kindness. We can explore practical strategies to help children act on what they know is right, while providing a trusting environment to support their efforts.

Reflection Questions for *Tough!*

The story told in *Tough!* illustrates a fictional situation, but it is one that many kids will likely relate to even if their experiences have been different. Following are some questions and activities to encourage reflection and dialogue as you read *Tough!* Referring to the main characters by name will help children make connections: *Sam*

Important: Online bullying (called *cyberbullying*) is a real threat among elementary-age children, given the increased use of smartphones and computers in school and at home. It's also the most difficult type of bullying to stop, because it's less apparent to onlookers. Be sure to include cyberbullying in all of your discussions about bullying with kids.