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Cyber Bullying

Cyber Bullying, as defined by the Oxford Languages dictionary, is the use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature. This can include anything from someone telling lies about another person on their social media once or twice to harassing someone over an extended period of time across platforms, and sometimes reaching out directly to friends, family, and employers with false accusations.

This form of bullying has the potential to lead to severe outcomes, and can cross the line into violent forms of crime. The problem is common enough that it should not be ignored, but the solution should not push legal boundaries and venture into constitutionally questionable territory. The problem is multi-factored and has been developing over the last 2-3 decades, and is itself a symptom of a larger cultural problem.

As far as I can reason, there is no ending cyber bullying outside of Orwellian measures. Much like racism, sexism, or other forms of prejudice, human beings have a natural aversion to "the other" and this aversion manifests as targeted discrimination. Perhaps if we survived as a species for another few hundred thousand years, the wiring in our brains may develop beyond prejudices of "the other," but until then, the best we can rely on is cultural indoctrination.

With cultural indoctrination, I'm not referring to the buzz word use of "indoctrination" where Marxist or fascist propaganda is force-fed to the youth, but rather the natural process we all experience in childhood. We are all indoctrinated by the cultures we grow up in, demonstrated by the various cultures around the world and how each of those cultures has a distinct foundational worldview shared by its populace. Abstract concepts most take for granted, like how we view the social relationship between a man and woman, how much value we give to jobs and how long we set our work week, the focus of childhood between learning and discipline or exploration and experience.

The trend of Western society over the last 50-60 years has been towards a more libertarian take on individual freedom with a socialist influence on government operations. This has led to a freer society, but also a less disciplined society. Throw in the development and eventual widespread use of the internet, and we've created a world where people feel entitled to have their perceived reality imposed on others and can react with malice when they're met with resistance, even if that resistance is nothing more than a perceived slight by the bully.

So I think responsibility falls on the people in general to recognize how our culture has become toxic and narcissistic, that what we are seeing are the results of a sick society abusing a neutral technology.

The solution would take years, I think. To shift culture so parents take greater responsibility of their children, allow them to learn "from the world" in a way, and stop affirming every fantasy and delusion a child has and teach them the reality of the world, that would take generations. If it could be done artificially at all, it would take government, media,

and corporate involvement at a scale unheard of before. But given the last 8-10 years or so, I personally feel this is not necessarily and impossibility.

But I think if it happens naturally, which I believe it will as cultural anomalies tend to work themselves out before things return to the relative status quo, it has to begin with the parents. We have to stop treating our children like porcelain dolls and making them soft, teaching them that complaining results in positive change. That's one way to reduce the bullies, but this would also have a positive impact on the greater population as well, since a more grounded worldview leads to less over-reactivity and extremism in the population, and also immunizes the population against taking criticism and insults so personally that they become emotionally affect by them.

It always starts in the home. Even corporations understand that, and if we begin to see parents, or in other words, consumers start to shift their opinions along the political compass, the messages we start to see in marketing change with them. Corporations know they have to play to consumers' preferences to make the sales. As the corporate message begins to change, and one national politics begin to shift, then much like what we are witnessing happen today after the recent election, the media message begins to shift, and when that happens, the new moral system spreads.

The question as to what students could do to help, well I don't think there's much they can do at this moment. Culture today breeds narcissism, and so we will have a high prevalence of entitle individuals being bullies. But if culture in the home starts to change, this problem begins to mostly solve itself.

As for the more dangerous cases, much like murderers and other violent crime, they will never disappear completely. But if greater focus were given on law enforcement methods and technologies so police were better equipped to respond to reports and specifically to determine truth of the events, I believe we'd see a large reduction in cyber bullying evolving into violent crime.

Source:

Bullies Online – Cyberbullying, Mark Williams-Thomas:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRBK80D8NqU