

Greetings Falcons,

Happy Wellness Wednesday!

An incident of bullying can happen at any time and to anyone. It can even happen *by* anyone. We are all capable of making mistakes and saying something that we later regret. Or perhaps we observe something that we know is wrong or offensive, yet we don't say anything to address it. It can be hard to know what to do or how to make amends. But it's important that we take action.

If you say something that hurt someone or that you later regret, do something about it. If possible, try to speak privately with the person (or individuals) to offer an apology – if it is sincerely on your heart to do so. Acknowledge that what you said or did offended or hurt them. And if you wish to do so, explain that you are trying to learn from your mistake and ask if they will help you understand how your words or actions made them feel. Of course, their willingness to share is entirely up to them. It may also be helpful to self-reflect on how and why you said or did the hurtful thing in the first place. This personal exploration will serve to minimize the likelihood of it happening again.

If someone you know said something that hurt you, talk to them privately. Tell them how their words or actions made you feel. If possible, try to learn more about what was behind their words before judging or blaming them. Talk it out. Listen. Agree together to have an open conversation and learn from each other so you can both move on from the incident without causing more harm. If the person continues to be offensive, walk away and don't engage with their behavior.

If you observe your friends engaging in or planning to bully someone (for example, giving someone the silent treatment or posting something unkind on social media), **do not participate**. Your refusal to get involved may be enough to sway your friends to make a better choice. You can also speak up, even though this may feel uncomfortable. Saying something like, "I'm upset with her too, but I don't want to bully her. That's cruel", may shift your friends' behavior as well. If it doesn't, the direct approach of, "Hey, don't do that." also can be effective.

We all play a part in stopping bullying. From self-reflection to brave confrontation, each intentional step we take towards ending bullying helps to keep us all safer.

This week's affirmation:

I have the power to become the best version of myself.

Take care and be well,
Ms. McDougall