

UNDERSTANDING BULLYING

"Why are they bullying me?"

THE **HOPE** LINE

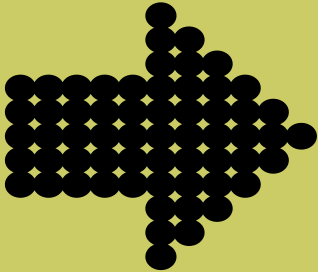


TheHopeLine.com

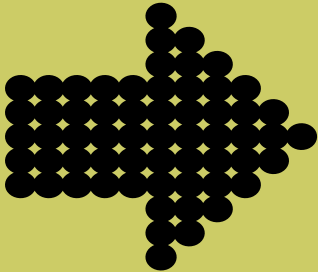


Bullying

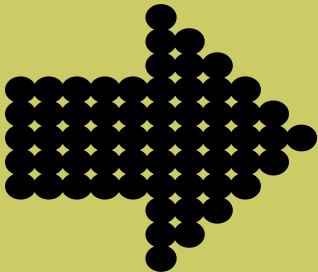
an epidemic of violence



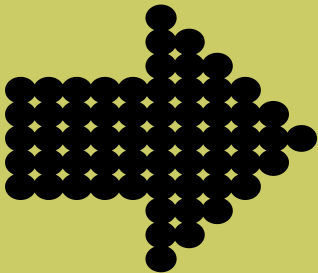
1 out of every 4 students report being bullied during the school year.



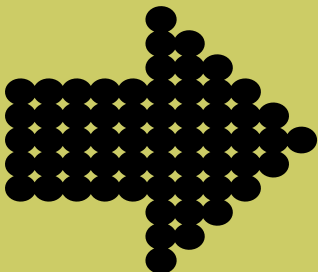
An estimated 160,000 students skip school every day, due to bullying.



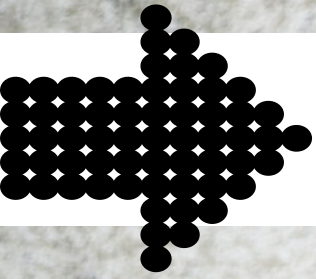
About 1 in 3 teens is a cyberbully victim.



Bullying victims are more likely to consider suicide.



Bullied students are more likely to turn to violence, like school shootings.



Every day, an estimated 160,000 students stay home from school to avoid a bully.

Bullying

has become a national epidemic, all too often culminating in suicide or an act of retaliation.

Anyone can be the target of bullying, every day activities like going to school can be overwhelming.

Understanding bullying, taking a stand and alerting those in authority are essential to stop the hurtful, damaging cycle of bullying.



Bullying is an act of aggression towards someone, and can take on many forms.

Types of Bullying:

Physical bullying

is the most obvious form of intimidation by a bully and includes any physical harm such as kicking, punching, hair pulling, or physical threats.

Verbal bullying

is name calling, spreading rumors, teasing, harassing, degrading, verbally embarrassing, or humiliating another person.

Emotional bullying

is purposefully doing something to hurt someone not using verbal or physical means. An example of this would be leaving someone out of a group activity on purpose, knowing it would hurt them.

Cyberbullying

is using a form of technology to bully someone. Examples: text messages, emails, pictures, websites, blogs or social network posts meant to humiliate, embarrass, or torment someone are cyberbullying.

"I'm being bullied at school and I feel helpless."

If you are being bullied, you aren't alone. Hundreds of thousands of others are right there with you. You are not a loser and they can't make you feel like one unless you allow them to. So don't.

Here are some tips on dealing with a bully:



- 1 Walk Away.** Sometimes the best thing is to ignore him or her and walk away. This takes you out of the situation and shows the bully you aren't interested in what he or she has to say. Don't validate the bully by listening to them. Show them you won't give them your attention.

2 Understand a bully may be a victim too.

In almost every case of bullying, the bully is being bullied by someone else in their life...a parent, sibling, acquaintance, etc. They only know how to respond to someone in hate because they are being treated that way themselves.



3 Talk with a parent, school counselor, or teacher.

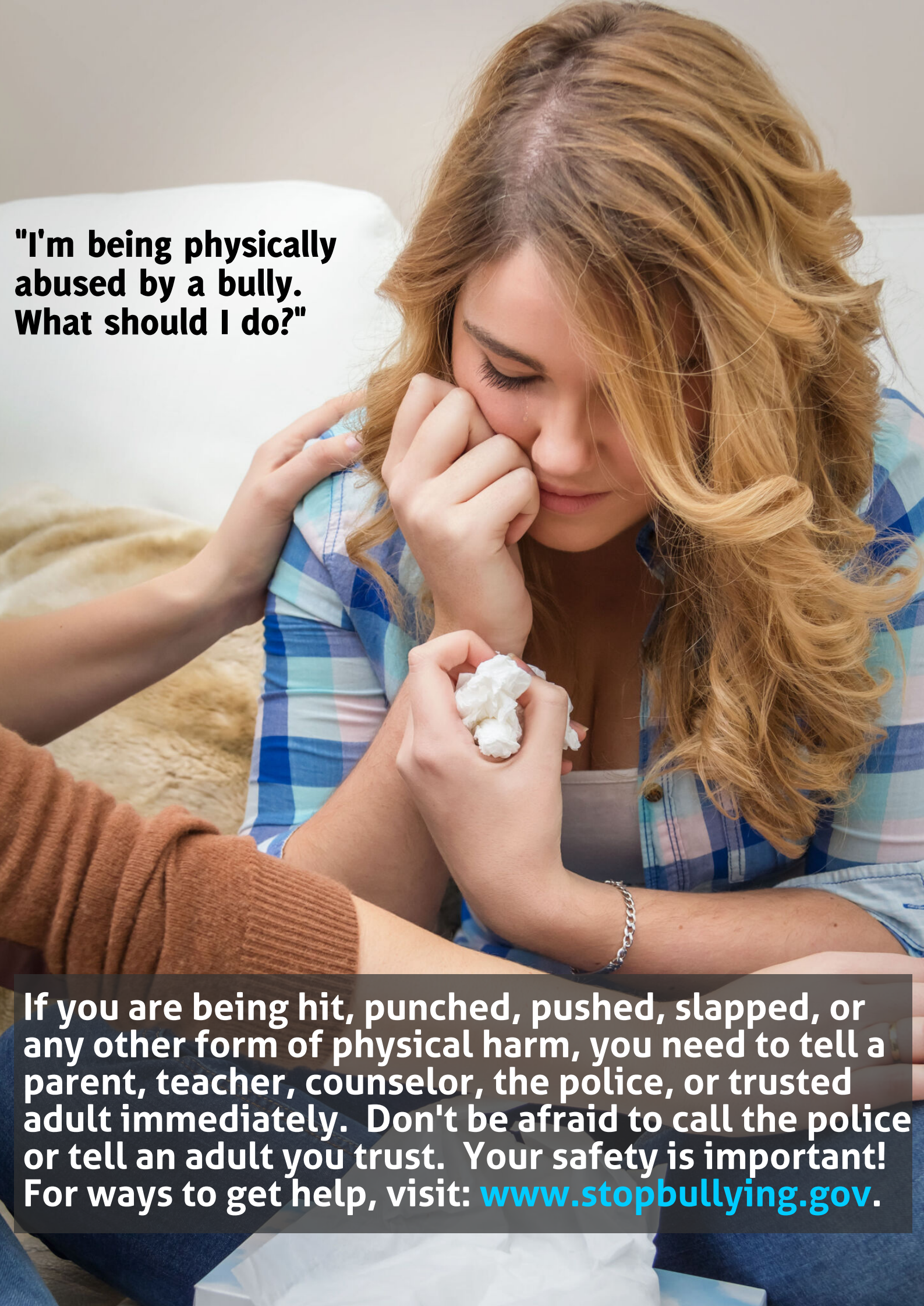
Explain what the situation is and get their advice. If you ever feel unsafe or endangered, be sure to tell someone. Make adults accountable. They need to take action if possible.



4 Understand, life gets better.

A lot of people say it but it's true: life gets better. Middle school, high school, and even college are temporary. You have your whole life ahead of you to be whoever you want to be. The same kids who get picked on for being different usually grow up to be successful. Don't let the opinions of other people define who you are.





**"I'm being physically
abused by a bully.
What should I do?"**

If you are being hit, punched, pushed, slapped, or any other form of physical harm, you need to tell a parent, teacher, counselor, the police, or trusted adult immediately. Don't be afraid to call the police or tell an adult you trust. Your safety is important! For ways to get help, visit: www.stopbullying.gov.

How to disarm a bully:



If you are the victim, you can *empower yourself* and *disarm a bully* by:

Don't get upset! Even if they insult your race, your looks, your disability, your mom...don't get upset.

Be friendly to your bully! No matter what, respond with kindness. You can even tell them, "I'm going to be happy today, even if you hate me." Don't let the haters ruin it for you!

How to respond to a bully with love:



"Love shines when there is mean people in our lives. It's easy to love lovable people; it's difficult to love unlovable people or difficult people and that's where love shines." - Brooks Gibbs



REMEMBER....

Don't let your emotions--anger, bitterness, unforgiveness, self-hate--control your life. One of the best things you can do is decide not to get angry but instead extend forgiveness to the bully.

Bullies are most likely being bullied by someone else in their life and only know how to respond in hate. They may be dealing with abuse at home, parent's divorce or something equally difficult.

No situation makes it okay to bully. However, understanding where the bully is coming from might help you show them love. People who are hurt are the ones who hurt people.

Signs of bullying:

1. Unexplained Injuries
2. Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewelry
3. Frequent headaches, stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
4. Changes in eating habits like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating
5. Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
6. Declining grades, loss of interest in school work, or not wanting to go to school
7. Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
8. Feelings of helplessness or decreased self-esteem

How to help someone being bullied:

- **Stand up for the person being bullied.**

Think about how you would feel if you were the one being bullied. Would you want someone to stand up for you? Bullies look for those that are alone. They think by intimidation, no one else will step in. By standing up for the person being bullied, you are showing the bully and the one being bullied that they are not alone.

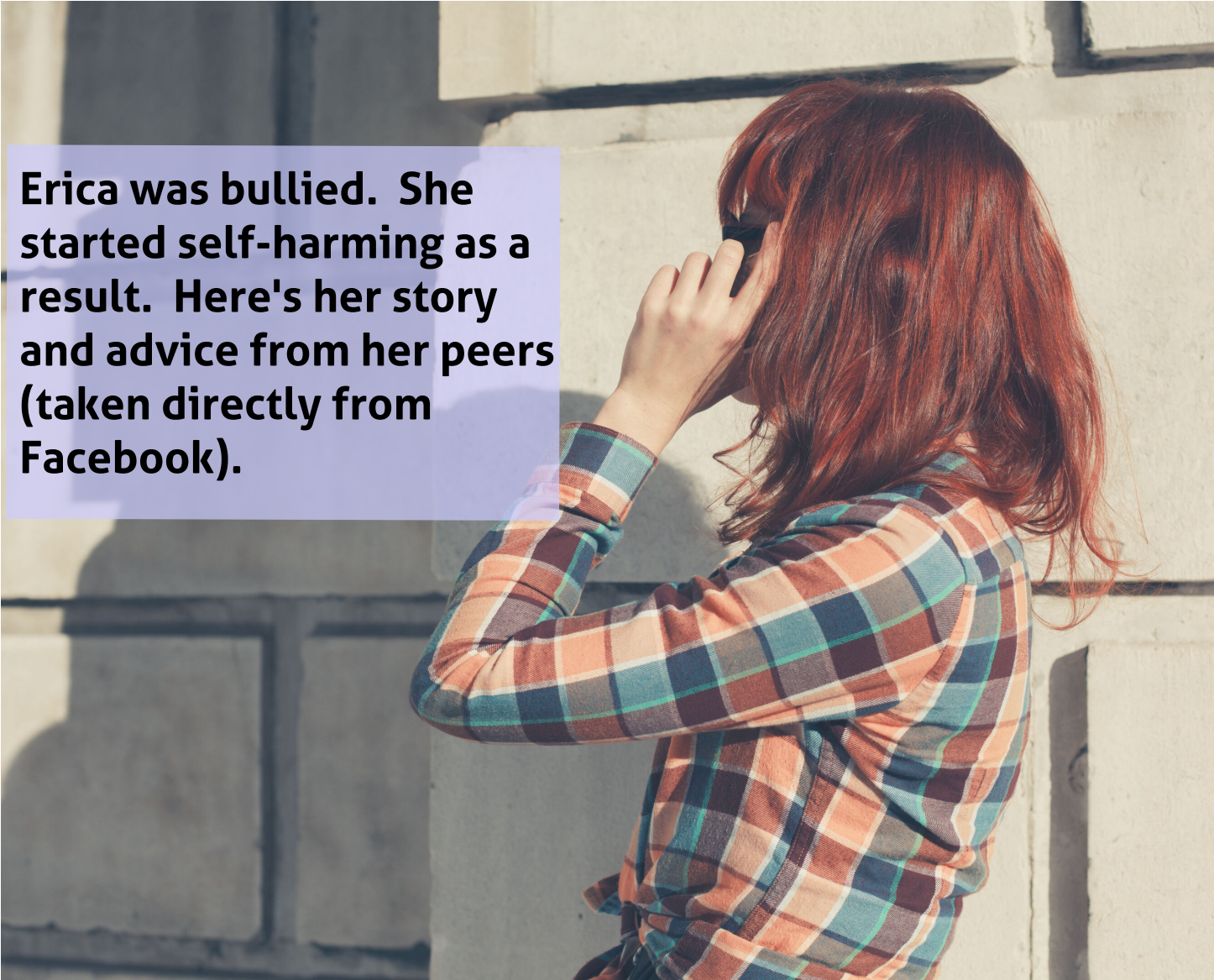
- **Don't give bullying an audience.** Instead of laughing or supporting it, you are letting the bully know it's not entertaining.

- **Help them get away.** You can create a distraction or offer a way for the bully to leave the scene. Only intervene if it feels safe to do so.

- **Tell a trusted adult.** An adult can help stop bullying by intervening and can help by giving the victim support.

- **Be their friend.** Being friendly to someone can go a long way in letting them know they are not alone.

- **Set a good example.** Don't bully and others



Erica was bullied. She started self-harming as a result. Here's her story and advice from her peers (taken directly from Facebook).

Erica called into our radio show to talk with Dawson. She was hurting because of bullying. Erica had started getting bullied about 3 years earlier. She said the entire class was involved in bullying her, and when she started to believe what they were saying she relieved her pain by cutting.

On the following few pages is the advice she was given on Dawson McAllister's Facebook page by people listening to the show and listening to Erica's struggles. Advice and encouragement from caring people, who have been where she's been and some advice... which might just help you as well.

""I'm sorry to hear you're getting bullied, no one deserves to be bullied in any way. I know how it is personally, I know words hurt, can make you feel bad and it can be very easy to believe what someone is telling. Please don't believe what these people are saying, because it's not true at all.""

-Greg

**Don't let the
opinions of others
define who you are.**

""Bullying will be everywhere you go, don't hurt yourself because someone else is taking things out on you negatively. Be proud of who you are and stand up and show the world that bullying won't take you down.""

-Justin

""Erica, I know it is hard to be bullied (yes they may be words) but they still hurt, and I know it's hard to get over sometimes but you have got to find happiness, don't let those words make you hurt yourself,

be strong and there are all these people on here or myself to help! Find a friend that is willing to listen and they will help guide you down a right path and make you to where nothing those people say affect you anymore!!""

-Clayton

""Music helped me a lot. I also made daily reminders which consisted of positive quotes. Surround yourself with positive influences. I struggled with depression and self harm. It is no laughing matter. Now, I just brush it off. I know the truth, so it's all that counts. I know I'm beautiful and loved so it doesn't matter if someone says differently. Stay strong.""

-Jordyn

**I know I'm
beautiful and loved
so it doesn't
matter if someone
says differently.**

""I was bullied every day at school from 4th grade to 9th grade.. I was always told by them I'd never amount to anything and that I should kill myself.. until 1 day I stood up for my self.. I'm not saying to fight back like I did cuz I had so much anger built up I attacked my bullies physically and sent one to the dentist.. my point is you have to stand up for yourself don't believe a word they say, only you know the truth and what's real and what's not.. trust me it's not worth hurting yourself over.""

- Justin

""I had a friend who had this problem. All of her friends got together and bought a diary. We each wrote a page full of how much we loved her and everything she had done for us. We each sat down and read our pages to her. Then every morning before school she would read a page or two. She quit cutting and is now happy. You need to surround yourself with friends who love you and only say positive things about you. It isn't what the bullies think or even what they say. It's about what YOU think. Don't let

them control your life."" -Nina

DO YOU KNOW A FRIEND BEING BULLIED? START A DIARY LIKE NINA DID, TELL YOUR FRIEND HOW MUCH THEY MEAN TO YOU AND GET OTHER FRIENDS TO WRITE IN IT TOO.

""I suggest that Erica gets help either from a church pastor or a professional help from someone. Also, i suggest that she gets the heck away from her bullies and ignore whatever they say."" -Jazzlyn

""I've been there. It will get better!! Pray and it will stop I promise!""

-Kortny

Know your worth.

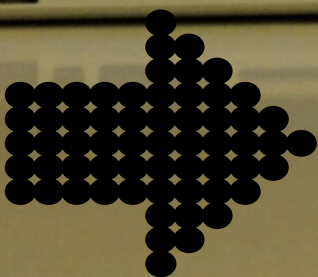
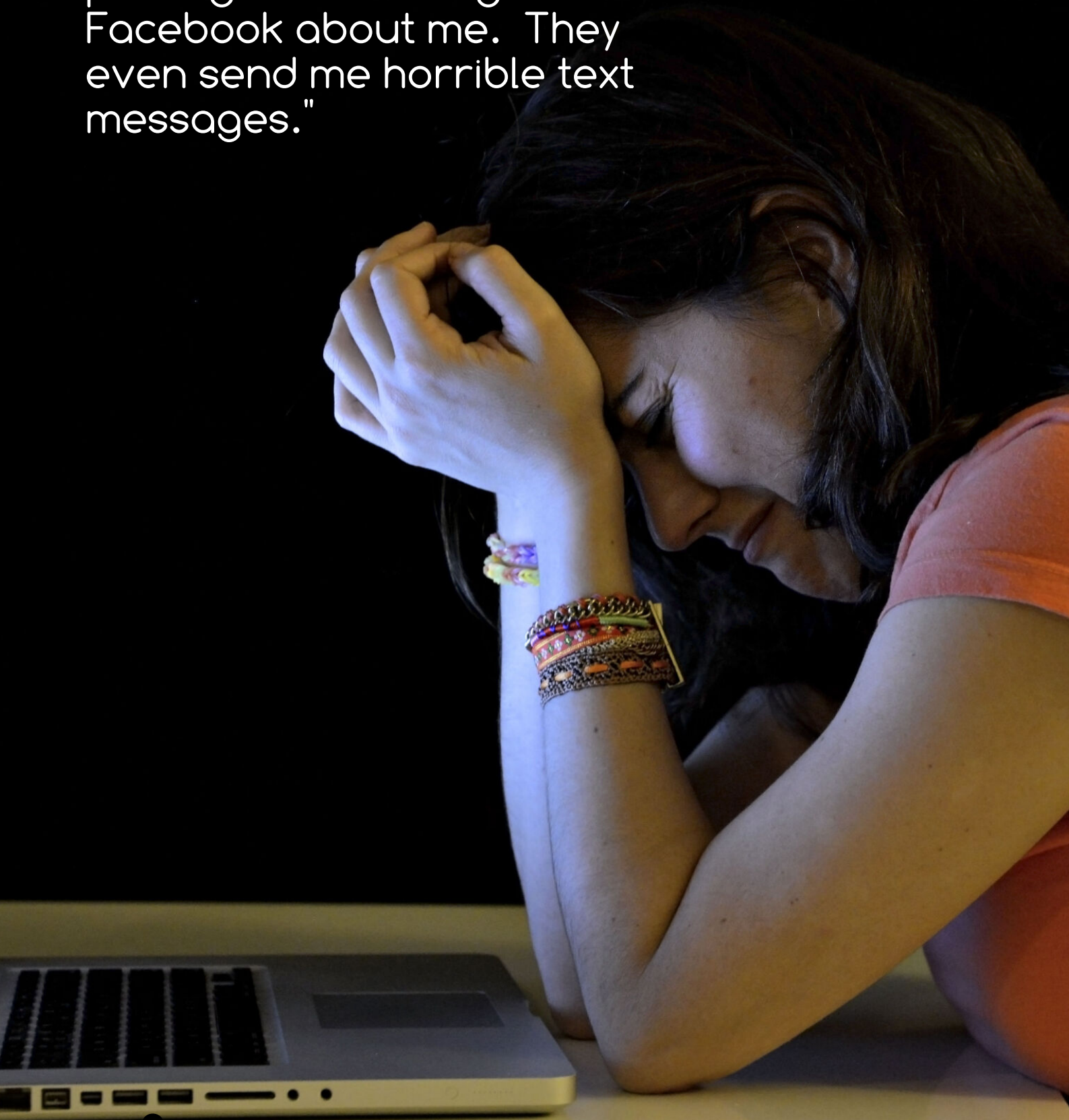
""Know your worth...to whom you belong...get help mentally, spiritually, and emotionally to begin to take charge. Strive-n-thrive.""

-Shelia

**KNOW
YOUR
WORTH**



"Some kids from school are posting hurtful things on Facebook about me. They even send me horrible text messages."



More than 25% of preteens and teens have been bullied repeatedly via internet or cellular device.

Cyberbullying

When people bully you using social media, text messages, websites or other forms of technology, it's called cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is just as hurtful as being bullied in person. Here are some things you can do:

- **DON'T RESPOND.** Responding to the bully will only communicate to them that you are reading their posts, texts, emails, etc.
- **SAVE ALL TEXTS, POSTS, PICTURES OR ANY OTHER FORM OF COMMUNICATION.** If the situation continues to get worse, law enforcement or school officials will want to see a record of the cyberbullying.
- **BLOCK THE PERSON WHO IS CYBERBULLYING**
- **IF THE HARRASSMENT CONTINUES CONTACT THEIR INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND/OR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND REPORT THE CYBERBULLYING.** For more information on reporting cyberbullying, go to: www.stopbullying.gov.
- **TALK WITH A PARENT OR TRUSTED ADULT ABOUT THE CYBERBULLYING.** Letting someone know about the cyberbullying is good, just so they are there to help should it continue. Having a support system, like parents, teachers and good friends, can help you through the bullying and remind you of your self-worth and value.



"I'm struggling with being bullied so much, that sometimes I think about suicide."

Being bullied can really destroy your [self-esteem](#) and alter the way you see yourself. After hearing hurtful things about yourself constantly from a bully or bullies, you might start to believe it. But don't make that mistake.

You have infinite worth and a full, amazing life ahead of you. Don't give in to them. Don't allow their lies to have that impact.

If you are struggling with suicidal thoughts, call the [Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) at: 988.

Also, you can download the Guide: [Understanding Suicide](#).

A Spiritual Perspective

Bullying is a terrible thing to have to endure and other people's words can really get in your head. Here at TheHopeLine, we truly care about you and want to help you through the bullying and help you realize your self-worth.

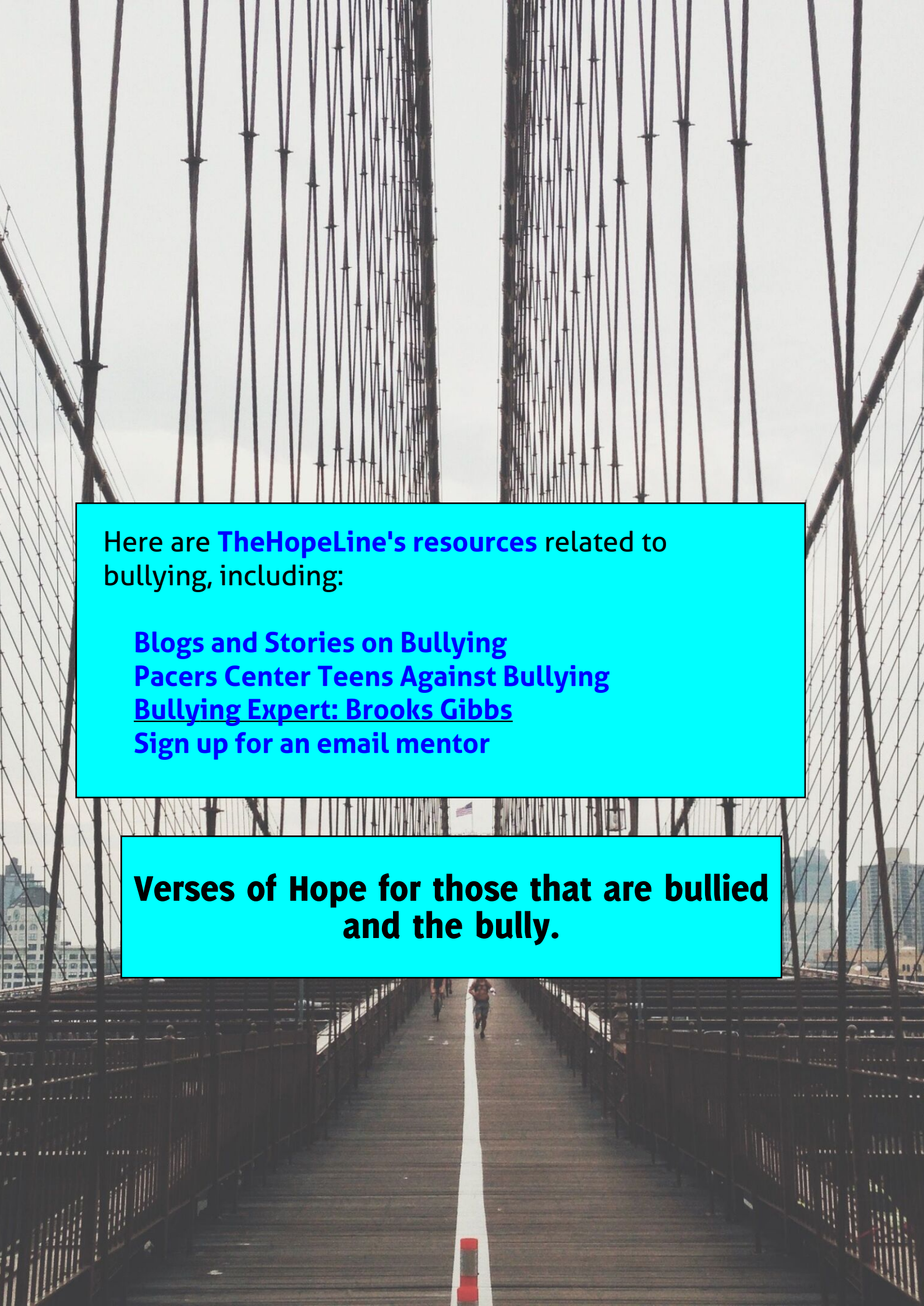
No matter what problems or issues you're dealing with, know that God loves you no matter what and you are valued and worthy in His eyes. God has a plan for your life beyond what you can even imagine. The Bible says that Jesus came to earth and died so everyone can have "real and eternal life, more and better life

than they ever dreamed of..."[John 10:10 The Message].

God's plan for your life is unique, because you are unique. Remember, the Creator of the universe knows you by name! You are loved and accepted, regardless of what has happened in your past or what is going on during your current struggles.

God wants to have a real, personal relationship with you and to help you discover your true self-worth and identity in Him.





Here are **TheHopeLine's resources** related to bullying, including:

Blogs and Stories on Bullying
Pacers Center Teens Against Bullying
Bullying Expert: Brooks Gibbs
Sign up for an email mentor

**Verses of Hope for those that are bullied
and the bully.**

Check out our other Guides:

Understanding Depression

Understanding Suicide

Understanding Self-Worth

Understanding Lying

Understanding Dating

Understanding Anxiety

and more at:

<http://www.thehopeline.com/guides/>

If you have found this guide helpful, please help us get our guides into the hands of others by donating [HERE](#).

Sources

Be More Than A Bystander. Stopbullying.gov Web. 14 October. 2015. <http://www.stopbullying.gov/respond/be-more-than-a-bystander/index.html>

Pacer's National Bullying Prevention Center. Web. 14 October. 2015. <http://www.pacer.org/bullying/about/media-kit/stats.asp>

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Dawson McAllister Network

