

How Does *8 to Great* Prevent Bullying?

- 1) Presently what are we seeing schools do?
 - a. increase supervision
 - b. enforce rules
 - c. implement a school-wide anti-bullying policy
 - d. rally parents to be vigilant for signs of bullying

These are all external changes. We know they do not work long-term. Internal change within the students is the only one that lasts...

The right brain cannot bully. Only the left brain can. Only the left brain judges. Only the left brain fears. When we remind students how to access their right brains, as *8 to Great* does, they naturally become more compassionate, more respectful and more courageous.

(The following is a Letter from an 8th Grade Girl as part of her 8 to Great Class. Students were invited to write forgiveness letters to someone who had hurt them. While most letters are burnt that same evening, this student chose to share hers with her teacher.)

Dear Bullies,

This is really hard for me to do this, but I forgive you all for what you have done to me. You may not have known it, but you did hurt me. I am ready to forgive my past and move on with my life.

I know you all will most likely bully me in the future, but I will handle it differently. You will not bring me down, break me, or ruin me. You will only make me stronger. I will not run from you because the grass is never greener on the other side. Yes, sticks and stones can break my bones and your words will always hurt me, but not scar me.

I am done crying because of you and your wrong doings. You will make me cry no more. I will be the strong one and you will be the weak ones because of the things you do. I am done with you, so goodbye. For the old me is gone.

Sincerely,

The One Who Is Being Bullied

From Oakland Craig High School Faculty Member:

*From the journal entries I've seen, my students see **8 to Great** as having a very positive effect on themselves and their classmates. My biggest success story isn't about a bully changing his ways. It's more about how **8 to Great** made one of my freshman students more confident, helping her find her voice to be able to speak out. The journals have really helped her come out of her shell. Now I see her carrying herself in a different manner. She's **not afraid** to use her own voice to let people know how she feels when she's being mistreated. I just had a parent/teacher conference with her mother and she agreed it was a pretty amazing transformation!*

- Aaron Meyer, high school teacher and basketball coach, Oakland Craig HS, NE

Wendi Anderson's class journals, Oakland-Craig Middle School: (First names have been changed for privacy. Gender is accurate.)

***8 to Great** shows us that if you follow your dream you will be happy, but if you spend your whole childhood bullying people you will never be able to follow your dream.*

- Bailey, 7th grader, Oakland Craig Public Schools

***8 to Great** helps people realize that there are good reasons to be nicer. People realize there are dreams out there and they would not want to destroy dreams or harm the dreamers.*

- Jake, 8th Grader, Oakland Craig Public Schools

submitted by Wendi Anderson, **8 to Great** trainer, Oakland Craig, NE

Cody Wintz' class journals, Battle Creek Middle School:

(First names have been changed for privacy. Gender is accurate.)

***8 to Great** has made people let go of their anger. One recess, we were so mean to people, then we were all friends (again) because we thought about **8 to Great** and said we are being stupid like this.*

Seth, 7th grader

*The **8 to Great** program is a good way to change people's lives for the better. I've found out lots of new things about my classmates. I think every school should have this class once a day. Every student around the world should be able to have this as a class.*

Sincerely,

- Jeremy, 8th grader

*I would like to say that I am really thankful for the **8 to Great** program. I realize that things were foggy for me before, like how to forgive people. I can see now that forgiveness doesn't just benefit them, but takes a weight off my shoulders. I have to be honest and say that before this program I used to be stuck up but now I'm widening my friends circle. It might not seem like a big deal, but it is. My new friends are more trustworthy. Now when I get sad or mad I sit and think about **8 to Great** and soon I feel much better. Thank you!*

- Shawna, 8th grader

*I have learned so much from **8 to Great**. I no longer bottle my feelings up inside. I take way more risks and because I take more risks, I feel a lot better about myself. I wish I would have been taught **8 to Great** a long time ago because I would have done things differently, but as you have taught us, I did my best with the information I had at the time. Now I even teach my family some of what we learn. Thank you so much for making this program up.*

- Michaela, 8th Grader

*Thanks for bringing **8 to Great** to Battle Creek Schools. It seems there is a lot less bullying. I'm also more grateful for the little things in my life. Hearing the stories our teacher reads us every day about people reaching their goals makes me want to reach mine even more. Thanks again!*

- Lonna, 7th grader

***8 to Great** has made a big impression on me. I'm able to feel my feelings and stand up against someone who bullies. I've learned that people aren't "bullies," they are people who bully. Sometimes they let out their pain on others in a bad way. Instead of taking your anger out on them, you have to let yourself feel sad and mad. Otherwise you can go into depression or rage. I've learned to look at things in a better way. I've learned a lot. Thank you.*

- Brianna, 8th grader

This class is my favorite. I have a journal by my bed and I write my gratitudes in it every day. This process has transformed my life. It should be as long as all the other classes. It should be for high school too, not just for junior high. It's fun. Thanks.

- Madison, 7th grader

I like the fact that we get to learn this now, and not have to wait till we are older.

- Tamika, 8th grader

*I think this program has helped. I hope our whole school learns **8 to Great** so we can stop the bullying in our whole school. I love the journaling so I can release what I am feeling and share what I am grateful for. Thank you.*

- Jordan, 8th grader

*I can see huge changes in my 7th grade class since we started **8 to Great**. I'm not afraid to feel my feelings anymore. I now teach it to my family. I used to be full of anger and sorrow, but now I've released my anger and found joy. I love **8 to Great**. It has changed my life.*

- Darian, 7th grader

***8 to Great** boosts my day and makes me look forward to improving my athletic ability. I took a risk and went out for wrestling and now I'm really good at it. I have used **8 to Great** a lot at my house. I use **8 to Great** when I hear from people how hard it will be to be a pro football player and I have even heard of the life expectancy of pro football players from my family, but I don't care what anyone says. I will keep believing and I will follow my dream.*

- Brice, 8th grader

Testimonials from Counselors:

"A semester into the program, I have lots of students coming in after school to share ideas or to talk more about an **8 to Great** activity we've completed. Last week we reviewed High-Way 2: Risk. Afterwards, I was presented with poems written by students, quotes found, even a little brother who can break dance (he's five)! One freshman said that this class is what is keeping her in school! I love teaching this program."

Rick Marez, Counselor, Gering High School

"The **8 to Great** concepts have changed my daily outlook and life significantly, even more than attaining a masters degree in counseling. I decided to get into high school counseling to help teens with their everyday problems and concerns. This program does that and more. I feel I learned more from this program than I did my Master's degree in counseling."

Sue Walsh, Counselor, Bryan High School

*"I have found what I believe to be the missing piece to whole-child education. The program, **8 to Great**, is a comprehensive curriculum that provides a process to instill those skills that are core to living a successful, resilient life. How I educate and counsel children has forever been changed as a result of this process. The brilliance of this program is its simplicity. Just imagine the growth in your buildings if your students were provided a process that encouraged the skills, dignity and empowerment that comes with accepting personal responsibility for one's choices and actions. **8 to Great** is a gift to the world."*

April Netley, Counselor, Sioux City North High School

"I love, love, love this program. Before we had 8 to Great's amazing handouts, knowledge and resources, we were using a program that was very unorganized and we struggled to reach the students. Now we are all on the same page - consistent - and we are motivating the students in a powerful new light."

Danell Anderson, Teacher, South Sioux City High School

8 to Great. Now hope has a process.