

**Confronting Your Bullies**

Katrina VanBrugh , Allen Avenue UU Church, Portland, ME, June 6, 2011

Opening Words:

He who fears something gives it power over him. ~Moorish Proverb

There are very few monsters who warrant the fear we have of them. ~Andre Gide

A bully is someone “who harms or threatens weaker people.” (Farlex Trivia Dictionary) and “bullying results in fear, for fear is the means by which all abusers, including bullies, disempower and control their victims. It's natural to feel fearful when a bully is undermining and disempowering you daily by whittling away at your self-confidence and self-esteem. Constant trivial nitpicking criticism sows the seeds of self-doubt which eventually take root and sprout into full-blown fear. Bullies co-opt others into isolating you, bad-mouthing you, ignoring you and distancing themselves from you.” (<http://www.bullyonline.org/stress/fear.htm>).

Check-in/Sharing: How is your world today?

Discussion:

What elements in your life are bullying you? Is it an outside force or that little voice in your head that tells you that you aren't good enough, rich enough, pretty enough, etc? What “undermines and disempowers” you daily?

Byron Katie, author of many self-help books, outlines the 4 questions that make up her transformative philosophy, called The Work. The Work of Byron Katie is a way of identifying and questioning the thoughts that cause all the fear, violence, depression, frustration, and suffering in the world. (<http://www.thework.com/index.php>). Byron Katie's 4 Questions are these:

1. Is it true?
2. Can you absolutely know that it's true?
3. How do you react, what happens, when you believe that thought?
4. Who would you be without the thought?

Do you have ideas about yourself and your life which are bullies, belittling you and disempowering you? Are those ideas actually true? How does believing these ideas affect you? And finally, how would it feel to let go of these ideas?

Check-out/Likes and Wishes: How was the session for you?

Closing Words:

Kathryn Lee Ryder tells us, “The only way to live a happy, fulfilling life is to stand up to your unhealthy fears. Fear is a like a bully, when challenged it disappears like a coward. Fear can only have substance in your life if you let it. A few years back I learned that unhealthy fear is "Fantasized Experiences Appearing Real". It will control you if you do not control it.”