

# PARENTING ON CUE

with **Queenie Tan**



## POC 134 : What to do when your children get teased by friends?

Hi. Queenie Tan here. Welcome to another episode of Parenting on Cue Podcast. Now, for today, I'm going to talk about what we can do when our children get teased. I know this is not exactly a pleasant feeling. And a lot of times, parents come to me and they say things like "my child has been bullied, some other children have been saying really nasty things to her to him about the way she looks, about his glasses" and it is really hard.

And I think that the problem here is that we feel that we need to stop this really unpleasant feelings, and to stop injustice. And there's always this maternal instinct inside of us to protect our children, and often it is also to retaliate, and to inflict as much pain as we are feeling. That's a very natural, very normal reaction. So if you feel that way, don't feel bad about it. This is just how most people will react. However, I think that in the midst of all this, us trying to figure out what to do, and how to feel, and how to respond. I think we need to hold a space so that we can sit with our children's feelings, and be in that space with them, and feel what they feel. Find out if they're upset, if it makes them feel angry, if it makes them feel sad, if it makes them feel disappointed, if it makes them feel frustrated, just sit with them and sit with their feelings because I think most often that's all children really need from us.

They don't need us to dismiss their feelings. They don't need us to indulge in their feelings. They definitely don't need us to help them blow it out of proportion. They just need us to feel what they feel, to hold the space of being sad, being angry, being frustrated, being frightened, and just hold that space for them.

At the end of the day, if your child wants you to speak to the people who are nasty to her, then, I mean fine you can do that. But I would like to think that most times when we are able to hold a space and sit with our children's feelings, that's usually all they need. And if indeed they do want you to speak to someone then I would gladly do it. And I want to do it because I want my children to see that this is important to me just as it is to them. I'm not necessarily doing it, speaking to people because I'm expecting to change them, because that's not going to happen. Fundamentally, it takes a lot more than that to change someone.

Also, I truly believe that these things happen, children get told off for no apparent reason, they get picked on. And I don't think it is because they're surrounded by bad people per se. I think that

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this world, there's so many different types of people in it. And a majority of the people on this planet are just in a lot of pain.

If you look at my classroom, and typical classroom in Asia, and with Asian children and Asian parents, and you ask this Asian parents how many of them, what they really wanted to do more than anything else, "have children and to be a parent." You're not gonna get a straight answer because a lot of people haven't thought about it. A lot of Asian parents have children because their parents told them to have children, and the culture expects them to have children. And a lot of times, they have children and then they wonder "oh my god, what did I get myself into?" And a lot of times, this is the cause of abuse. And I won't say that parents are bad, and they abuse their children. No. But a lot of these parents are stuck in really tricky predicaments. And the children are the victims of this whole situation. And so you're talking about very anxious parents, very anxious children, that's the reason why they would behave in a way that isn't reflecting of children who are happy, who are grounded, who are calm, whose emotional needs are met.

So it's kind of a very sad situation when this happens. And I do try to have conversations with children as well every time they feel like they've been bullied or teased. And I ask them how they feel, and at the same time I ask them, not an interrogation per se, but I do say things like "I wonder how that person feels. I wonder what they're going through for them to have said these things. I wonder what they're struggling with at home."

I'm not saying that their behaviors can be excused or justified but it helps to be curious about what kind of lives these people have, about whether they need help or not, about how they are coping with their difficulties. So that is an angle that I would like to take where I'm coming from a place of curiosity because I want to find out what's happening, or I'm wondering what's happening. I'm also coming from a place where I care and that's why I'm asking my children how they feel. And I'm also coming from a place where I can be grounded enough to sit with my children, and to sit with their feelings so that they know that these feelings are like every other feelings. It comes and goes, and it's okay for us to sit with it and to feel it and to let it pass.

So I hope that this podcast has given you something to think about with regards to what we can do or how we should react when we feel that our children is being teased or bullied or attacked.

And I know this is a really hard topic. A lot of times, parents come to me with this, and they get really upset. So I hope that this will give you something to think about. So 'til next week. Remember, happy and confident parents have happy and confident children.