



# Preparing your children for a powerful life

---

**Understanding Bullying**

Leading martial artist Andy Dickinson talks with Felicity Garland from Evolve Counselling about the issue of bully in children and young people.



Andy Dickinson



Felicity Garland

**Andy:** *It's my pleasure to be with Felicity Garland to discuss the topic of bullying this morning. Bullying is something which is fairly close to my own heart because I really believe that one of the biggest reasons I got into martial arts in the first place was because of couple of significant situations in my primary school years, and early high school years. This prompted me to get some more power into my life in a way that would help me to handle bullying situations as they came up.*

*I chose to look at bullying as a way of entering martial arts, as a way to get stronger and learn self-defence, but I understand there is a whole psychological side to understanding bullying which is in effect your expertise.*

**Felicity Garland:** Sure!

**Andy:** *So, bullying is something which is quite prolific in our society, and it's something which has been obviously been on the front page of the newspaper quite a lot over the past couple of months, and it's something which I think it's very, very important for parents to have a good understanding of because no one likes their own child to be bullied.*

*I guess the first question is, what exactly is bullying? Because bullying can be a form of teasing, it can be something which is violent, it can be even internet bullying these days. So, what is the kind of a rule of*

*thumb or a beginning place as far as how we can understand what exactly bullying is?*

**Felicity Garland:** Sure. Well, bullying is difficult to kind of definitively define because it does cover a whole range of behaviours, but I guess the most important factor is intention. So bullying involves acting with an intention to threaten someone, to intimidate or harm, to instil fear, and thereby gain power over that other person. As you mentioned the word violence, bullying is a form of violence.

Therefore, it must be responded to in helpful ways in order to stop that cycle of violence. You mentioned a few of the forms of bullying there. So bullying, yes, it may include physical force, it may be verbal bullying such as ridiculing someone or threatening, humiliating or name-calling, things like that. Bullying can also take non-verbal kind of forms. I have met a lot of kids through my work who have experienced being excluded or isolated from their peers.

**Andy:** *So it could be quite insidious.*

**Felicity Garland:** Absolutely, yes, or even damage to someone's property. That's also kind of a non-verbal violence.

**Andy:** *Did you find it tends to be more than just a one-off event, sometimes it can be on going...*

**Felicity Garland:** Yes, absolutely, and yes, bullying usually occurs more than once towards the particular targeted person and it can happen many times a day or lasting for months or even years. Some of the kids I have met have been subjected to literally decades of bullying.

**Andy:** *And you mentioned that it can take different forms. How do you differentiate between just common teasing and something which is actually considered to be bullying, because teasing particularly with children, it could be sort of a fine line between the two?*

**Felicity Garland:** Absolutely! Sometimes it's difficult to really pinpoint. We tend to want to put a label on things. But I think ultimately it comes back to that intention. If a child is treating another child with the intention to harm them in some way, be it emotionally or physically or otherwise, in order to gain a sense of power, (of course the child doesn't realise this is what it's all about) but when you look at that intention, as opposed to just mucking around and the recipient is okay with that.

**Andy:** *So I guess it comes down in part to the recipient, whether it is teasing or bullying, the definitive line is how it affects the person involved. If they feel that it's something which is going to affect them or intimidate them, they feel they need to create some action around that particular*

*behaviour. I suppose that would be one of the things that needs to be addressed.*

**Felicity Garland:** Absolutely! So along with the intention of the person doing it, also as you say really important to consider the effect that that's having on the other person.

**Andy:** *The media publicises bullying a lot, latches onto it, and it will put it on the front page of the papers. As you are dealing with bullying issues with children and adults, how common is bullying?*

**Felicity Garland:** Yes, that's a good question. I think it would be fair to say that almost everyone has either being bullied, has bullied others or has witnessed bullying during the childhood, especially at school.

Bullying is commonly associated with the playground, but it's definitely not innate to childhood and adolescence. Adults use bullying just as commonly if not more so than children and young people. But I guess the terminology is different. So when we think of things, like we call it road rage, or sexual harassment, or racial slurs, things like that, they are all forms of bullying.

**Andy:** *Really?*

**Felicity Garland:** Absolutely! So I had a little bit of a look at the research that's been done in the area, and recent Australian research indicates that 20 to 25% of children aged under 15 experience bullying on a regular basis.

**Andy:** *And that would probably be fairly conservative.*

**Felicity Garland:** I think so, yes, that's what I was also thinking, that's probably quite underestimated.

**Andy:** *There would be a lot of playground incidences that would never be recorded.*

**Felicity Garland:** Yes. Also it's said, that one in five Australian children have been found to use bullying as a means to get what they want, again that's possibly a bit of the



conservative figure. But yes, I mean overall I think most people will experience some form of bullying in their life-time and everyone has the capacity to use bullying approaches or to experience it.

And I guess the reason why it is so widespread is because it can be an extremely effective way of getting what you want. Using forms of violence or power like that is very good at getting the outcome one is looking for. So long as it continues to be effective the child or the adult will keep using those methods. So it's not until it becomes ineffective, which means some kinds of responses are put in place that shifts that cycle, that it will stop.

But yes, it really can run in a cycle, and it's a cycle that can become quite difficult for the person using the bullying to shift because it does instill that sense of power and that's very difficult to step away from.

**Andy:** *Do you think that people that are bullied have learnt that behaviour from someone else or have they seen that behaviour as you say. Is it something which has been instilled in them through a process of using that tactic in order to gain what they wanted?*

*What I am saying is, for example a child may see a parent bullying someone over a parking spot, and imagines that to be the norm and thinks that yes, if he does raise his voice he can get what he wants.*

**Felicity Garland:** Look for sure! And in my work, in counselling families and young people, I have never had a conversation where blame has been helpful. So I am not interested in blaming children or their parents for bullying taking place. However, what I do know is helpful is to invite everyone in the family to take responsibility for reflecting on how they might have been contributing to a situation.

So in the case of bullying, I would ask parents, how they might have contributed to their child's understanding of how they relate to others? How might they have perhaps inadvertently remodelled behaviours that have influenced their child's use of bullying behaviours, you gave the example in the car park. Little things like that.

I actually worked with one parent, one dad, who was able to identify that his "explosive" temper at home was not giving the messages that he wanted to give as a parent about respecting others. And he bought his child to come and see me for counselling because the child had

been suspended on the grounds that he got another child in headlock and threw them down and his father just couldn't think of where this came from or how this could be.

Certainly, other families I have worked with are really committed to creating a harmonious family environment, and they really don't know where this behaviour has come from. So obviously there are lots of other influential factors to consider, it doesn't always mean that the parents have had a role, but it is a possibility.

**Andy:** *Bullying was significant certainly in my life. One of the things that had affected me was that I felt like there was no one I could talk to about the situation. I thought it was fairly helpless, because I didn't really know what it was, because a five or six-year old doesn't really know what bullying is, they just experience it, and the effects of that bullying might be reflected in the change of personality. We are talking about back when I was six or seven-years-old. But I feel that that has significant enough effect on me, to want to understand it a little bit more and to work out how we can understand the effects of bullying on other children. So we can maybe see the effects of what's going on without having to say anything because it's hard for them to label the behaviour and say, "hey mum, I am being bullied at school."*

**Felicity Garland:** Absolutely.

**Andy:** *But what kind of effects are we looking for, what are the effects of bullying over a period of time?*

**Felicity Garland:** Sure. Well firstly what you began saying there, when you through your own personal experience that you felt, you had no one to talk to and that can be a really common experience and alongside that, often when a child is experiencing bullying, there can be a lot of shame around that, that the child has taken on that this must mean something about me that I have failed in some way or that I am not good enough in



someway or that I am different to the other kids and that's why the bullying is happening to me.

**Andy:** *Yes, I guess in my situation, because we basically came from England and I have an English accent and I was white and freckle-faced and I was different. They were really picking on me about my accent and the way I was speaking. For me, I actually wanted to change the way that I was speaking so I wouldn't attract that attention. So I can see what you are saying.*

**Felicity Garland:** Yes, and so certainly by naming the behaviour that brings the behaviour as central to the problem rather than the child experiencing the bullying. So by reminding the child, or certainly this is part of my intention when I am working with the child experiencing bullying, to name it for what it is, and to try and support the child to step away from those negative conclusions they were making about themselves on the account of the bullying happening.

I mean you asked about the effects, certainly there is widespread consensus that bullying can be harmful to not only the physical wellbeing of children but also the emotional and mental wellbeing, whether it is that they are experiencing

bullying or whether it is that they are choosing to use bullying themselves. So everyone is affected differently. It's how to say definitively what's going to be happening but there is certainly some common experiences that parents can keep an eye out for which may indicate that this is happening.

So firstly, potential ethics for the person experiencing bullying. Well, frequent exposure to bullying has been linked to feelings of helplessness, powerlessness or worthlessness, lower levels of confidence and these effects are actually what enable the bullying to continue, because these feelings of powerlessness position the child to feel that they are unable to stand up against the bullying.

Children might therefore be finding it hard to concentrate at school or they might want to start avoiding school life altogether. So these have obvious implications for learning. Some of the young people that I have worked with, beginning high school, and it has come to their parent's attention that they are truanting, they are skipping school and this has been linked back to having conversations that bullying is actually happening.

**Andy:** *So maybe something is inwardly happening, but the effect of that maybe the child is making excuses about not wanting to go to school?*

**Felicity Garland:** That's right.

**Andy:** *And as long as you dig a bit deeper and ask some questions... Don't you feel that also there needs to be a fairly good relationship between the parent and the child for that to happen?*

**Felicity Garland:** First, the talking must happen.

**Andy:** *Yes, so I guess this is where you come in.*

**Felicity Garland:** Yes, absolutely. I mean I would make it a point to facilitate helpful conversations. But

often families will come to me and they already have a fairly good level of communication with their kids, but sometimes, as I mentioned, the shame around that bullying might be getting in the way of the child actually telling mum and to a dad what's actually going on or potentially fear of what mum and dad might do, how they are going to respond if they find out these other kids are really picking on me.

**Andy:** *So when you talk about shame, do you mean the shame of the child, about how they feel, not being able to stand up for him/her self?*

**Felicity Garland:** Yes. How they feel.

**Andy:** *And so there are self-esteem and confidence issues around that?*

**Felicity Garland:** Yes, that's right.

**Andy:** *How can they relate to that?*

**Felicity Garland:** Yes, the shame that well I must be the loser kid, because I am the one that gets picked on, whereas all the other cool kids, all the popular kids, they are all bigger than me and I am less than them.

**Andy:** *I remember in my own situation, I hope you don't mind me giving you some of my own examples, because it can help some of people who listen to this. I think I was six or seven-years-old, and as I said, we just come out from England to Australia, and I remember this other boy, he was older than me, he was a year older than me. He was constantly at me and niggling me and pushing, I mean physically pushing me around, and I remember him saying to me that he wanted to fight me.*

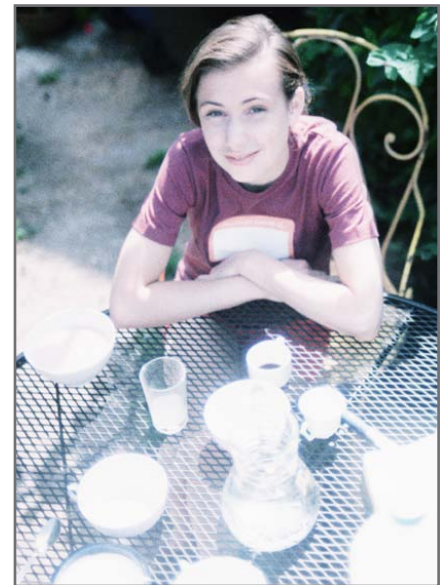
*This is significant memory I've got. I remember right back to when I was of that age, this is how much it stuck with me, and he said, "Look, well, I will meet you after school at 3 o'clock and we'll fight then and because (for whatever reason) we can't fight in school time". I am pretty sure that I didn't go, I am pretty sure that I went straight home. But there is the other*

*side of me, that would like to think that I did go and he didn't turn up.*

*So I have got these two scenarios banging in my head but I am pretty sure that I didn't go. I think I just went home. There were a couple of girls over there that told him to stop picking on me. But there was a sense of shame that I didn't go. I didn't know that what that shame was because it was a sense of shame and that has stayed with me, and manifested in other ways as I got older. So there can be significant effects like you said on a person being bullied.*

**Felicity Garland:** Absolutely, alongside the things we have already touched on social withdrawal or isolation. There was young girl that I worked with and she told me that her family actually brought her to me, because she was repeatedly washing her hands and cleaning her teeth. Now they were of the opinion that there were some sort of obsessive compulsive disorder, for want of a better term, going on there. And what was uncovered in my conversations with this young girl was that she was being really acutely bullied by this particular group of girls who would follow her after school and she was being pushed downstairs and all sorts of stuff was going on.

Now as we addressed these things, the washing the hands and the cleaning the teeth was still going on, that were diminishing a little bit. But then we sort of got to a bit of a stuck point, and I am thinking there is something missing here, what am I missing? And then in one of our sessions it was uncovered that, not only was she experiencing bullying from these girls, but her group of friends who she had been very close to since the very beginning of primary school, they had all shunned her because she was now being known as the kid who gets bullied. She was actually experiencing huge amounts of grief from the loss I guess, for these girls her friends who had ditched her.



So not only was she being bullied, but she also had no friends to support her. So that can be really tough for a little one. Just to finish on that story, after we uncovered that grief kind of experience, we were able to start to look at, well what are some of the things that she does have to offer as a friend, regardless of whether these girls are with her or not. We started to build on other ways of knowing herself, inviting her to stand outside of the kid who gets bullied and that seemed to really help.

Anxiety is a common effect as well, anxiety might be just from noticing your child who is being a little bit worried about things and then there is the other end of the spectrum where a child is experiencing full blown panic attacks at the thought of even going to school. Certainly, a prolonged experience of bullying has been found to increase the likelihood of depression. Now this is not in all cases, I don't want to be alarmist about these things, but certainly it is possible. And in a relatively small amount of situations bullying might lead to suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts and even death. Now again I want to say this is uncommon, I don't want parents to panic, but I guess this just really points to the seriousness of the issue.

And just before we go on, I wanted to make a distinction here. These effects that I have just listed do not define the person being bullied. They are often situational. So for example, you know your child to be outgoing and confident at home, it's still possible that at school they may experience a lot differently.

But most importantly as a parent, it can be really helpful to avoid letting the effects of bullying colour the view of your child, or to obscure the other things you know about them because inadvertently, if you are relating to your child as a victim of bullying, this will simply further position them to see themselves as unable to stand up for themselves.

**Andy:** *With my own parents, they were supportive around the situation, but I really had to find my own way. A good many years later I actually became involved with martial arts. I guess the other side of the coin is that when we are dealing with bullying, there is the person who is actually doing the bullying, so we need to discuss what the potential effects of the person choosing to bully others because obviously they have got some issues as well.*

**Felicity Garland:** Yes, look in some situations definitely, a young person, like the young boy, I spoke about earlier who got the other kid and headlock him, threw them to the ground and ended up getting suspended and got this reputation as the angry violent kid. But he, in the lead up to that, was being heavily taunted, these comments being made, derogatory comments about his family. So yes, it's an interesting.

**Andy:** *And he was the product of bullying?*

**Felicity Garland:** Yes, that's right. But as I mentioned earlier as well, studies have proven that children and young people who use forms of violence including bullying are likely to continue to use those things in their relationships as an adult unless



something is put in place to shift that cycle. So for a person choosing to use bullying, there can be huge implications for their experience of relationships later in life, for their understanding of how to treat others obviously and also huge implications for their views of themselves, being feared by others can become a default position of getting used to that instilling a fear, that can be really detrimental over time.

You will notice that I have used the words, the person choosing to use bullying. It's really important to remember that bullying is a behaviour. I do not define people as bullies. So if a child is referred to me to come for counselling, who has been using bullying, I don't see that kid as a bully, because I know that there is a lot of other things that that child stands for, that stands outside of the purposes of violence.

**Andy:** *So that's a really good one....*

**Felicity Garland:** Yes. And every child that I have met who is using bullying, well, I have met other kids too who are using other forms of violence but if my question is timed well, when I have been able to ask that child, you are telling me that everyone is calling you a bully or they call you the violent or the angry kid, is this okay with you? 100% of times,

their answer is no. They prefer not to be known as the bully, as the violent kid, as the angry one who people are scared of.

But as I mentioned earlier, bullying and this form of violence can become bigger than the person using it. They find it really difficult to stop because it's a very powerful strategy. So having listed all of these effects for the child experiencing bullying and the child potentially using bullying, these effects may or may not be linked to bullying. But most importantly, if you notice any of these things as a parent, just talk to your child, let them know what you've noticed and ask them to tell you about it.

**Andy:** *Don't blame them.*

**Felicity Garland:** Yes.

**Andy:** *Just ask them, communicate clearly with them about it and then get your own ideas about what is good and correct behaviour. I suppose the form of bullying which I am not familiar with, but a lot of Y-gen people are more familiar with is the idea of Internet bullying and email bullying, what they call 'cyber bullying'. A lot of times, a parent has no idea that its happening. I think that's a fairly insidious form of bullying because it's very indirect.*

**Felicity Garland:** Definitely and in many of those cases, they don't press delete. I have met young people where there has been SMS text messages, really threatening in some instances that the police have become involved and those emails or those messages can become very important evidence. But yes, sometimes a hidden form behind the guise of technology where sometimes parents who aren't so computer literate tend not to go there and so they may not be aware that that kind of stuff is happening.

**Andy:** *What part does the parent play when it comes to the child that is showing characteristics of bullying?*

**Felicity Garland:** Yes, I guess we have kind of touched on this earlier. Sometimes parents yes, unknowingly or knowingly on some occasions, but often unknowingly may be modelling behaviours that kind of influence their child's understanding of how to be in the world and how to gain what one wants, so how to relate to others.

**Andy:** *So support from the parents is really important.*

**Felicity Garland:** Yes.

**Andy:** *Sometimes parents can miss the signs. This fast paced living, where everyone is moving a million miles an hour, kids go to school, come home, do their homework and go to bed, there could be, maybe disconnection between the parents and the child, so they can go on without maybe noticing.*

**Felicity Garland:** Yes, yes.

**Andy:** *A lot of the time it's just not brought to the attention, of the parents until the school actually calls them up and tells them what's going on.*

**Felicity Garland:** Yes, that's right. Yes, and similarly for parents. I meet parents whose kids, yes have been using bullying and yes they are, it has come to the attention of the school and speaking about shame, I don't know any parents who want their kids to be known as the bully. I haven't met any in my career. So there is an element of shame sometimes for parents, because society often wants to blame the parents for everything that's happening and certainly sometimes yes, the parents may have had a role as I said, often that's inadvertently they didn't realise, that I spoke about earlier, who made the link that, when he go off his brain that the kids were not doing their homework or whatever those little explosions, that was actually modelling the very things, that he was baffled that his son was trying out.



But I always believe that whilst everyone may have a role, it is the young person's choice and it's important that they need to take responsibility for their choice to use bullying and to understand the seriousness of what they are doing. If two adults in the community, just walking down the street grab someone and push him against the wall and threaten him or her, they would potentially be charged with intimidation or physical assault or something like that.

Now, in the playground if this happens, it's called bullying, I heard someone who went to the Department of Education, a Home School Liaison Officer say that bullying is a baby word for assault and kids often don't realise the seriousness of what they are doing. I have seen police be called into the school grounds and get involved.

So yes, inviting the child to be responsible for those choices and to say that it is a choice. People sometimes say "oh! but the anger, I have got no control over my anger." But that anger is often calculated at specific times which indicates yes there is control there, there is choice. But again, when I am working with the child who is using bullying, this behaviour is the problem.

The child themselves is not bullying, it's something they are choosing to use. So I certainly don't relate to the child as being a problem. It's like the bullying, here is the problem and I will often gesture to the lolly jar in my office there and say, let's just pretend that there is the bullying. That's not you, but you are choosing to connect with that jar of lollies there and let's take a look at what other choices you might be able to be making.

**Andy:** *I guess bullying is something which has been around and will continue to be around, it's not something which will be stamped out, maybe as a human race as we all evolve, maybe it will kind of slowly reduce. But all we can really do is just deal with Band-Aid issues when it comes to bullying. It's so prolific? So, I guess, making sure that the individual is carried forward by doing things like we are doing now and then ensuring that there is a model in place or information in place you can tap into.*

*Obviously the most important thing about a child being bullied is the communication they have with their parents. But what can a parent do to support their child when they discover that they are actually being bullied?*

**Felicity Garland:** Sure, that's really important question. I guess all the parents I have met here, have found out that their child is being bullied; often their reaction is angry, frustrated and protective.

**Andy:** *Absolutely. I will give you an example, my own son Tom was being bullied at school and certainly something rose up inside of me.*

**Felicity Garland:** Oh yes, absolutely.

**Andy:** *And it's very primal.*

**Felicity Garland:** That primal urge of wanting to protect is normal, but it is extremely important for the parent to have a keen awareness about how they are going to respond. In a perfect world, as we say bullying would not exist, but the reality is that it does and it maybe something that this child will face again later in life.

So the experience of bullying ideally wouldn't be happening at all, but if it is happening it can be used to support your child to learn helpful ways of being in this life. It's also a great opportunity for parents to do some good role modelling for their kids. So as parent you might feel tempted to become vigilantly protective and this might actually translate into bullying type behaviour.

So for example, you know using a threatening approach to the parents of the child who is bullying your child, frustrations with the school's response sometimes, parents might be responding to the school or speaking about teachers in ways that are mimicking the very thing that they are angry about happening in the first place.

So it's understandable that parents want to fix it up, fix it on their child's behalf and obviously it is really important to advocate for your child and I am not saying that parents shouldn't do that, but it's also equally important for the child to play a part in addressing the issue. Because if the child is able to feel some sense of control in the situation, then this

will help them to develop the skills that they may need in life. Whereas if they feel like mum and/or dad are just taking over and they do all the cleaning up, again there is the child left feeling paralysed, as they haven't been able to take a stand.

We spoke a little earlier about parents inadvertently relating to their child as a victim, is also really unhelpful. So by taking over and not letting the child have a voice or not letting the child assert themselves in some way, this just reaffirms the child's position as the victim. We spoke also a little earlier about kids making conclusions about themselves as not being good enough. So by separating the experience of bullying from the child who is experiencing it, this gives some space to say that the bullying is something that's happening in their life, but it does not define who they are.

So as I say, making sure that this experience of bullying doesn't colour the child's world and the child's view and the parent's view of the child, it's important to remember to keep an eye out for the other areas in the child's life where they are able to be assertive, or they are able to have control because often these things get bulldozed, these noticing get bulldozed because it's all about looking out for the bullying.

So an example, that a parent might want to do to support their child to assert, how might be something like, encouraging your child to jump online and look at some websites that talk about bullying. There is some really good news, friendly ones, one is [www.reachout.com.au](http://www.reachout.com.au) and then there is also [www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au) which is actually the kids helpline, they have great little fact sheets and tips and things like that and you might even want to sit with your child and ask them to do the research and have a look at it together.

**Andy:** *Because I run a martial arts school, a lot of parents bring their children because they have been*



*bullied or they are being bullied or they are afraid of their child being bullied.. Part of what we do is teach children how to defend themselves and one thing which has really come up for us within the martial arts school is we don't breed bullies.*

*Martial Arts doesn't breed bullies and this question comes up very rarely with the parent. Will my child use their martial arts for bullying? Do you have many parents talk about martial arts?*

**Felicity Garland:** Yes, look not really, to be honest, it hasn't come up with the families that I have met. Certainly through meeting you, this is something that is really interesting for me to have thought about. The idea of parents bringing their kids to martial arts, obviously well intending, meaning that they want their kids to be able to look after themselves.

But also that's potentially a mixed message for a child by condoning violence. So that's why I really appreciate the fact that you are looking at doing this project because to make that distinction that martial arts is okay and it's fine and it's something that can be really healthy for a child but violence against others is not.

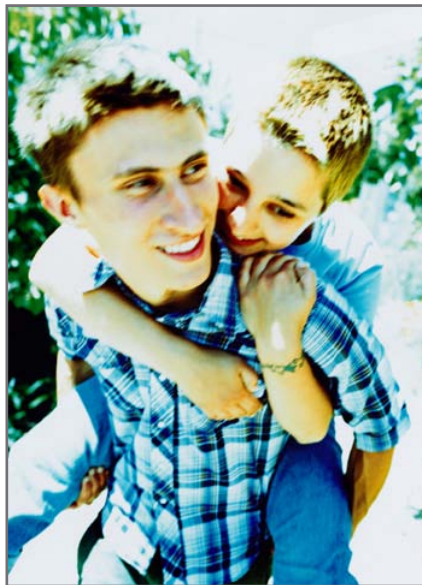
**Andy:** Absolutely, and this is the key distinction that we make within our own martial arts school and I am sure that many other martial arts schools do the same, is that the martial arts for children is about self-esteem and confidence building and about having a strong ethical code which overlaps over any form of physical self-defence.

I have had countless stories of students that have done really well in bullying situations, where they have been able to diffuse a situation without any form of violence whatsoever. But on the other side of the coin is that some of them are being physically assaulted because they have stood by this moral code and not defended themselves.

So it's a fine line. I think that the martial arts is a good start for children but it must be remembered that it is self-defence only and it must be a good company with a very strong moral.

**Felicity Garland:** Yes, absolutely and that ethical moral code that you speak about in terms of martial arts, I think is great in terms of life. Having kids being supported to uncover what it is that they value and what it is ethically, how do they want to treat others and how do they want to be known by others. If a child is trying to decide how to respond to the bullying, well bring them back to that ethical code and what action might you take that would fit with what you are really committed to in life. And if that means non-violent ways of being and then great.

**Andy:** So I guess that the real benefit of studying martial arts particularly the way that we teach it is that we inadvertently prepare children for bullying by instilling this moral ethical code and particularly the idea of confidence and self-esteem. I believe they will have a really good blueprint to fall back to and refer to. I think this is where we have been very successful and the only real gauge that I have got is my own son and as a parent I see the way that he's



developed, the way that he's handled bullies and by using the martial arts as a kind of a reference point, to deal with the situations.

**Felicity Garland:** Definitely and just coming to mind as you say that, for parents as well, often I have parents that come and they don't know how to respond because this bullying is happening and they feel called to do certain things but they know they might regret that. So it comes back to what are your values as a parent, and what are your hopes for yourself as a parent and what do you see as your role as a parent and if your action comes from those places, then go right ahead and do what fits for you.

**Andy:** Perfect. I think today we have had a really good overview on what bullying is and what constitutes a person being bullied and how parents can get involved.

But one thing we haven't discussed today which I think we'll save for our next talk is what some of the steps that the child and parents can take in an actual bullying situation. Again that is a really kind of interesting conversation and interesting topic because I am sure that a lot of people have different ideas about that. On one side of the coin you have got the complete submissive side where, the

parent will say, you have just got to turn around and walk away.

But on the other side of the coin, the father will tell his son, you are being bullied son, you have got to turn around and you have got to hit the bully. So there is a whole range of topics in that whole kind of a conversation.

**Felicity Garland:** Absolutely, yes that's a very large, large area and what will fit for some, might not fit for others.

**Andy:** Absolutely, but I am definitely of the opinion after all these years of teaching martial arts and having been associated with bullies myself, is that the non-violent path is absolutely first choice. One thing we tell our own students, at the end of the day, if you have to defend yourself because your life is in danger, then so be it.

So I look forward to that conversation with you in the future.

**Felicity Garland:** Oh yes.

**Andy:** Thanks Felicity, great to have you.

**Felicity Garland:** My pleasure.

## Contact Details:

### Felicity Garland

Evolve Counselling  
felicity@evolvecounselling.com  
ph: 0407 041 477  
www.evolvecounselling.com

### Andy Dickinson

andy@northstarmartialarts.com.au  
<http://northstarmartialarts.com.au>  
<http://andydickinson.com.au>  
ph. 02 9810 5790