

Hey Jupiter!

I always thought you either love high school or you hate it. I started school when I was thirteen and went in with a few good friends. But as time progressed I began losing friends, I began feeling alone in my new huge setting. It wasn't long before I started getting online messages from girls in my grade, making fun of me. I got comments like "you're annoying and that's why no one likes you", "you'll never have friends" and "no one wants to spend time with you because you're ugly". One moment in school that I remember vividly was sitting in French class alone, and receiving more text messages. There was a group of girls passing the phone around and they were taking turns writing clever insults. I remember hearing the laughter from the back of the room. I messaged back only one line "leave me alone", but to them that made the joke funnier. That was when I finally went to my mom with everything and she took it to the school. I thought everything would end after that, but no such luck. After that, no one in the school would speak to me. For the whole eight months left of school, I had no one. I didn't think there would ever be a way out of that hole. My anxiety and depression got so bad as time went on that I missed three weeks of school because I couldn't get out of bed, and had to take prescribed medication to get through the couple days I went back. Even the thought of going to school made me hyperventilate. That's when I decided to change schools, and I've never looked back. The transition from one high school to another was definitely hard, and I still didn't have people that I considered friends until the last year of high school. However, even with the amazing people that I have by my side now, I don't feel like I can openly talk about my bullying experience. In fact, most of them think I changed schools because the facility was terrible. I feel like if I were to share my story, they would think of me as a weaker version of myself, or see me in a different light. At the same time though, if I hadn't made the switch I'm scared to think of where I might be today.

When I saw *Bully Fighters*, I felt like I wasn't alone in what I was feeling anymore. I wasn't in that hole by myself and even though I didn't go to extremes like we saw in the movie, I very well may have if I didn't remove myself from the situation. I came to realize after seeing the film that while there is a wide debate about that bullying, it's an issue that touches everyone. No matter whether they're a victim, a bully or even bystander. All in all, I loved the message of the film and think it would help a lot of people in similar situations to myself. Because of the way it affected me I think every student should watch it, it brings a certain understanding of the issue and brings awareness to adolescent mental health. To this day, I see people who I used to go to school with and get really anxious and scared. Bullying is incredibly hard to cope with but also to move on from. There is still a sense of post dramatic stress that's associated with being reminded of everything that happened that first year of high school. This is why bullying is such an important topic, it sticks with individuals for so long and affects them years down the road. With films like *Bully Fighters*, I hope that one day, the stigma of bully victims being weak will disappear and others that are going through the same thing as me can feel like they're not alone. One day I want to be able to speak about my experiences without the associated shame. It's films like *Bully Fighters* that will help us get there!

Sorry it took so long! I wanted it to be perfect.

Sincerely,
"Hurt"

Age 17 (watched the film at age 15)

Name has been omitted to protect bullied victim who is a minor