

questions & answers



normandy d. piccolo

Q. How did you become involved with bullying?

I was severely bullied from the age of five until my mid-twenties.

Q. Were you ever suicidal because of being bullied?

Yes. It did reach a point where I attempted suicide one time.

Q. What stopped you from ending your life?

I realized that if I ended my life, the bullies won. And, they were not worth my life. I decided I wanted to no longer be a victim. I wanted to overcome the pain and help bullied kids to not feel the horrific pain I had experienced for years.

Q. Did you write 'Bullied Dying to Fit In' as a way to help you heal from being bullied? It is put together in an unusual format, not like most books about bullying.

Yes and no. Yes, because it did help me heal as the words poured forth.

But, the main reason I chose to write *'Bullied Dying to Fit In'* and, in that particular format, was because the market is flooded with so many "my bully story" books. I wanted the reader to know that "I get it". I understand how they feel because I have been there. But, at the same time, I also wanted to allow the reader (*a person who is being bullied*) to see it as "their story". I also wrote

it this way for those who have never been bullied, to help them realize how painful it is to be bullied. And, I am hoping to help parents who have a child being bullied or lost a child who was bullied to understand the pain and maybe answer some of the 'whys' which are often asked after a tragedy.

Q. What do you hope the book accomplishes for those who are being bullied?

By the turn of the last page, I want bullied kids to see their future in a positive light and to heal from the pain and know that they are not alone. The book contains five sections; hurting, facts, scoop, healing and #tbh, which range from the pain of being bullied, to information, to the bold truth about bullying and how to gain strength to rise above it.

Q. How do we end bullying?

Unfortunately, there will always be bullying. Bullying exists even in the animal and insect world. As for humans, hopefully through better education programs at school, more communication at home with their parents, the teaching of basic manners, learning how to agree to disagree and develop better acceptance and tolerance of others. As a society we need to become more sensitized and less desensitized. This happens by having more

human contact vs electronic communication.

Taking these steps, a bullied victim will better understand how to stop being a victim and see their bully through new eyes. The same goes for the bully. Hopefully he or she will learn how to better communicate with others without using physical, mental or emotional abuse towards them.

Q. What was one of the most surprising things you learned while writing 'Bullied Dying to Fit In'?

I discovered I had a lot of pain that was tucked away down inside that I never dealt with.

Q. And have you since dealt with the pain?

I have. But, I would be lying if I told you everything in my life is perfect since dealing with and healing from the pain. Perfection is an unrealistic goal. And, if anyone tells you otherwise, they are mistaken.

Q. If you had one piece of advice to give, what would it be?

Life throws us challenges every day. It's how we choose to handle those challenges that makes us or breaks us. You have the power – you have had it all along. The power of choice. You can choose to allow a bully to ruin your life. Or, you can choose to take your life back. Your choice.

Q. What do you think makes a good story?

The truth.

Q. What were your goals and intentions in this book?

To help someone not feel the way I did about myself for the longest time because of bullying. Having people hate you hurts. And, I did hate myself right along with the bullies. When someone says hateful things about you over and over, it's hard not to believe them after a while.

Q. How do you feel you achieved your goals and intentions in 'Bullied Dying to Fit In'?

If I help only one person overcome bullying and heal, then mission accomplished.

Q. What was the hardest part of writing this book?

I would have to say the section entitled, "hurting" because I had to reach deep down inside and basically bear mine and every bullied person's soul. It was a very painful, and yet at the same time healing journey. Being bullied is very damaging to a person mentally, physically and emotionally. It goes deeper than I think most people realize.

Q. What did you enjoy most about writing this book?

I really enjoyed writing the section entitled, "#tbh" because it is truthful, honest and positive. The section talks to you, not at you. So, for those who have no one to talk to or get advice from, this section can be helpful. ■

Excerpt from *Bullied Dying to Fit In* 'hurting' section:

beware of the closet

Beware of the closet
It is where hurtful secrets hide
Beware of the closet
Venture inside and you might die

Beware of the closet
A roped serpent dangles above
from a wire shelf
Beware of the closet
Peace may not thrive while
hanging yourself

Beware of the closet
Rumors and lies are meant to
deceive
Beware of the closet
Stop! Don't hand your life over to
a lying thief

But, I want to go into the closet
Make a noose, let the pain end
I want to go into the closet
For I am nobody's friend

I want to go into the closet
I hate the way I feel
So, what if I hang myself?
It's not that big of a deal

I want to go into the closet
Silence the repetitious voices inside
my head
I want to go into the closet
Kids at school say they wish I were
dead

I want to go into the closet
Nobody wants me around anyway
I want to go into the closet
I want the world to stay away

The closet represents darkness
It's where truth, half-truths and
skeletons reside
But, if I choose to stay out of the
closet
Then, I won't, I don't have to die

One step in
Another step back out
I pull on my hair
I scream, and I shout

F**k you!
I hate you!

You fail me again and again
Why do I have to make this
choice?
Why did you push me to the end?

No! No! No!
I scream then slam the closet door
shut
I drop down to the floor
And tell the pain, "*Shut up!*"

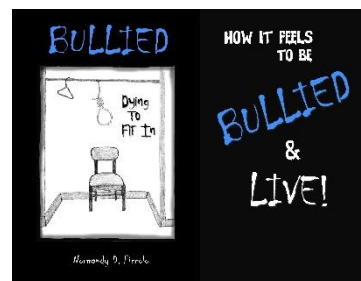
I then let out a wailing cry
God, please show me how to
survive
Life, come on, stop failing me
Please, help me, I need to revive

I mean, why should I give up?
Why should I let them beat me?
If I go into the closet and hang
myself
I'll be labeled a sell-out, a wimp or
a wussy

Church once taught me that
suicide's a sin
So, if I quit and go into the closet
I lose
They win

No! No! No!
I won't give up that quick
I won't let them get the better of
me
I'm no longer absorbing their sh**

I am staying out of the closet
At least, now, for me
I am not going to exhale
No! Instead, I am going to breathe!



Bullied Dying to Fit In is available at
Amazon and Barnes & Noble.