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Grade: 7

It hurts me to know that one person's actions can cause someone to feel so horrible that they want to take their own life. Thankfully for me, I have not experienced the pain of bullying or losing someone because of bullying. But, I have stood by and watched someone get bullied. I know I should have done something, but at the time I felt like I couldn't do anything, so I just sat by and watched. It was always that one boy. He was a grade higher than me and he had some sort of problem that resulted in him not being able to have fully functioning legs. This boy couldn't walk by himself. He needed a walker to help him move around the school. He always had to take the elevator. He never sat down with the other kids at lunch. He had no friends who would allow him to sit with them. He always sat upstairs with the teachers. I never actually learned his name. He had always been "that boy" or "the retarded one" to everyone at school. When people teased him, I sat by and pretended like it was a joke and sometimes laughed along. But the look in his eyes had always bothered me, the way he pleaded without words. But when I came to school this year for seventh grade, he was gone. I still don't know where he went. Rumors flew around school that he had moved to somewhere far away or had changed schools. I wish I knew so I could find him and properly apologize. When I told my friends about this boy, they thought I was joking. I don't know how it is to be bullied, but I do know how it feels to be the bully. And it feels horrible. People need to stop this. If everyone could just feel how everyone else felt for a moment, we could all get along. We need to put ourselves in someone else's shoes and take a walk. I think that we get so fed up being popular and cool, that we forget how to treat people. We forget the "treat others how you want to be treated" rule and we forget that everyone is a person and everyone deserves to be treated fair. We shouldn't care about the physical condition of people, how much money they have or what they wear. We should focus on who they are in the inside. Now, if I see someone sitting alone at lunch, I ask if I can sit. I don't know if it makes a difference for them, but it makes one for me.