

January 3, 1997

Dear David,

I guess you don't know, and I guess maybe you don't care. But why don't you look around you.

Can't you see that many of the things that I do each day have you and/or Daniel in mind? Where only you guys benefit, not us. And, with mom, too, although we don't get along very well, nor have too much in common, we do want you guys to succeed, get the best of everything possible, to make sure that you have opportunity.

We spend money we just don't have now, go into debt for you, so that you guys can get the best education, best teachers or professors, good violin, good piano, tutoring if necessary, etc. And we "taxi" you guys around to where you have to go -- whether it be downtown for CSCO, to Mr. Forough's for your lessons, or downtown at 10PM to his office, for a school lunch forgotten, a paper that you didn't take to school, that soccer game 50 miles away when we had other things pretty important to do, etc. etc. Or go to Ohio for a violin. All for you.

If you practice, if you get good grades, if you win a contest, if you get first chair at CSCO, if you get your homework assignment correct, if you are respected in school, or wherever you are ----
YOU gain and benefit from all of these things. Our happiness is in seeing you succeed and be respected. Our sadness is when you don't get the opportunity to do the best you can.

I am not saying this to make you feel bad, but simply because it's true.

In reverse, any victory you have in battle, even if the other guy is the "bad guy", is lost when the school calls up and says "David picked a fight today, and we are debating whether to expel him for a couple of days." The pleasure you may have, at the moment, of "winning" is totally lost, even if you succeed in not getting reported. Worse, you gain an enemy of the other kid, who may himself attack you when your back is turned. (Not just physically, but in any other way he can, smearing your name, etc.) Why make the enemy, even if he is the bad guy? And, get this, by showing him, when he is a jerk to you, that you are a better person than he is, you may get him to be a supporter of you. Not by rubbing his nose in your "goodness", but by acting maturely. For he has pride, too. I personally had that happen a few times in high school and grade school.

The only WIN-WIN solution is to walk away, and not let the bad guy get your goat. For, that is their main purpose in insulting you – to get your goat. If they succeed in getting you angry, they have won. And, if they succeed in getting you to be violent, then they have won double. Put yourself in their position and you can see it is true.

They can't win by having you ignore their bad comments. They can't win by having you report them and especially if you have witnesses that back you up. But, they can win if you bust his nose, and they report you, or someone else reports you, with the other kids saying, "yes, David started it". NO matter who is right.

ANY negative action you take against ANY of your class only makes you LOSE. Negative action by you is a LOSE-LOSE situation, almost always. And, school hours or on school grounds or not, the school doesn't care if you were in the right or not, whether you were insulted by someone or not. The school can expel you and get away with it.

If you are in the right, and pick a fight:

If you win the fight, you LOSE the respect of the kids, and adults, for allowing a slimy jerk kid to get your goat and allow you to lose your cool to start a fight. The sensitivity they see in you as a violin player or honors student, is lost when an ugly monster comes out in you to start a fight. Not to say the danger of being reported.

And, if you lose the fight, you are still the guy that started the fight. You are the guy that wasn't "man" enough to recognize that a slimy kid did not deserve the animal in you coming out to try to be a bigger slime than he is/was.

There is no scene, if you pick a fight, where you win. Either way, you lose tremendous respect from people, everyone. And, all of a sudden, the slimy kid becomes the underdog and has other people's sympathy.

EVEN if he picks the fight – the only thing reasonable you can do, unless he endangers your life or safety – is to block his punches, and get to someone to report him to. Any other alternative, including winning a fight - is LOSE-LOSE. The victory of "punching" someone out is totally lost when you lose the respect that took months and years to gain from other people.

Regarding Daniel: The main reason you and I have battles, is because you and Daniel are in constant combat. And, both of you think you are in the right, and expect me to intervene in your behalf as a policeman.

I do not want to be policeman.. And, starting this day forward, I want you and Daniel to talk to each other, find out what is necessary for stopping the combat.

Whether he is bully to you, or you are bully to him.. NO difference. Someone has to start the fight. Someone has to join into the fight. Both are wrong. If either of you REFUSED to battle, REFUSED to become angered and take physical action into your own hands, there would be no fight.

If you WANT us (you and I) not to fight, then, immediately stop your part in this, whether as bully, or as the one that takes part afterward. Lead as a big brother. Show you are becoming mature.

If you don't do this, then I can only assume that mom's hobby of fighting has been cloned one or both of you guys, and that you want us to fight. If this is the case, then I will be very sad, and I can't predict the action I will take.

The choice is yours! Please make it a loving and mature one.

Love

Dad