

INTRODUCTION

SOMEBODY HELP ME! I'm drowning in my mind. I'm screaming so loud, but no one can hear my cry for help! I'm shy, I'm sad, I'm hurting inside, I'm ugly, I'm dumb, I have short kinky hair, my skin is too dark, my forehead is huge. Worst of all, I don't have any friends! What do I do with all these emotions? Why am I even here? I don't fit in anywhere! Where do people who don't fit in go?

For years I tried everything to be accepted by my peers. I wanted to be a part of the popular crowd, but the real me was never good enough. Then I resorted to copying the behaviors and attitudes of the popular kids, but that wasn't good enough either. Well, it worked for a while, but there was always something about me that seemed to later alert others that I was a reject, and I was just tossed to the side. But why? I was a genuinely nice person with the biggest heart. I didn't understand why I was never enough. I wasn't asking for much, I just wanted to be included, accepted, and have a sense of belonging. That would have made me feel so much better about myself, but more than anything I just wanted real friends.

Being popular was always my dream. I admired the popular kids on the Disney Channel because their lives seemed so cool. Sometimes they wouldn't treat the unpopular kids all that nice which kind of bothered me, but I loved how the bullied kids would always win in the end. I'll be honest, when watching those shows, I was empathetic when kids were being bullied, but I never thought about how I would feel if I were in their shoes, until I was the bullied victim. It was a rude awakening.

I was a shy fifth grader who had almost reached my final elementary school milestone, looking forward to making the biggest transition ever at that point in my life, middle school. I had high hopes and big dreams to be the most popular girl in school, but my life took an unexpected turn down multiple paths that I never anticipated.

During my journey, I realize that people need to put themselves in the bullied victims' shoes. This book encourages others to do just that. Whether you're a student or the parent of a student, please take the exercises in this book seriously. Some of the questions seem like a no brainer but notice how it takes on a whole new meaning when you are the victim. This is the game changing

piece of the puzzle that's missing from bullies and their parents. The reality is bullying is a life-changing traumatic experience that has taken the lives of many of its victims. I was almost one of them.

I pray that this book will bring awareness to the issue, change the heart of bullies, encourage bullied victims, and ultimately put an end to this horrific behavior. Please spread the word about this book, so that one by one, we can put an end to bullying.