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Good will vs. contempt in bus bullying issue

Like people all over the world, we were outraged seeing how mercilessly seventh graders taunted 68-year-old Karen Klein, retired New York school bus driver now working as a bus monitor! This particular bullying is just one example of the bullying that is taking place across our land. Where does this come from? Can it stop?

Eli Siegel, founder of the educational philosophy Aesthetic Realism, explained the cause of all cruelty, all human injustice, including what makes for the pleasure in bullying. It is contempt, the “disposition in every person to think he will be for himself by making less of the outside world.”

Contempt is present in people at the workplace, for instance, luxuriating in gossip

about a co-worker; or a family around the dinner table making fun of their neighbors. The feeling aboard the school bus was: “We’ll be important, feel big, have a good time, if we can look down on this woman!”

Every person has felt something like this. Yet people were so ashamed to see sheerly how far contempt can go, that thousands of people were impelled by good will to want Karen Klein, through their donations via the Internet, to be more at ease.

When we have good will, we see another person’s feelings and thoughts as real. Only when contempt and good will are seriously studied in our homes and schools will America be safer and kinder.

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