



Losers Like Them

Page 1 of 5

Loser! Reject! Degenerate! Sound familiar? These are some of the messages that mean-spirited people will try to pound into your brain. And it's easy to let these messages get to us, especially if we encounter such hostility day after day after day. Caring about what others think of us is programmed into our DNA. It's a basic part of our human nature. So when others are cruel, we tend to let the hurt sink in.

The problem is that most of the time, the hurtful things others say and do will have absolutely no merit to it. Mean or angry people seldom base these judgments on impartial observations or established fact. It's based upon their own prejudicial, irrational viewpoints. So as much as we're programmed to care about what others say, we also need to know when it's best simply to ignore them.

Unfortunately, ignoring hostility isn't easy. However, it helps to have the right knowledge and perspectives in approaching the situation. So we wanted to give you some evidence that proves these people have no idea what they're talking about, and we'll do this by looking at some of the other people who have been labeled as "losers" and "rejects" in times Past:



Losers Like Them

Page 2 of 5

It seems you can find these "losers" scattered throughout the music industry. Christina Aguilera used to be taunted 'by peers who seemed to be jealous of her musical talents and success in singing competitions. "They would thrash my tires if I would win," she recalls. Lady Gaga describes a similar situation in which she was repeatedly traumatized throughout high school. "(I was) teased for being ugly, having a big nose, being annoying....I didn't even want to go." *1

Rap artist ASAP Rocky also describes being bullied as a child. His mom experienced some addiction problems which forced him to move in with an aunt, "which was pretty hard because it was like an upper-middle-class kind of neighborhood, so I didn't get along with any of the kids. They used to pick on me and tease me and make fun of me at the bus stop. When I went to school, all my friends were the kids from the poor neighborhoods." *2

Rapper Eminem may be a multimillionaire now with tens of millions of adoring fans, but he wasn't always so popular. All throughout his childhood, he was teased about being "trailer trash" and being an extremely white kid with blond hair. Taylor Swift was picked on throughout her school years, and even now, with her millions of fans and untold riches, she still sometimes has to put up with ugly treatment by paparazzi or other haters.

After his parents divorced and he was forced to move into the slums of Hawaii with his father, the pop star Bruno Mars found himself to be bullied. He was assigned the nick-name "Peter Pan Hyma Bingler," in part for his pixie like looks. "Even the nurds were calling me that!" he says. "Oh man, it was rough. I didn't even want to go to school." *5 Eventually though, the kids who were calling him that began to become his friends, and he even became popular. But he says he never forgot what it felt like to be an outcast.



Losers Like Them

Page 3 of 5

Actor George Clooney doesn't like bullies very much. This world-renowned movie star used to be bullied and teased by classmates who called him "Cloon-dog" because his face took on a droopy basset-hound look, due to a genetic condition called Bell's Palsy, which can cause partial facial paralysis.

Actress Jessica Alba was also teased and bullied as a child...for her looks, of all things. You may wonder how such a gorgeous actress could be ridiculed for her appearance, but when she was young, she was frequently teased about her exotic features. "All the stuff I got made fun of as a kid – bubble butt, fish lips, the dark skin – I'm proud of now," she says, although getting to a place where she felt truly beautiful and good about herself has been a journey. "I was a lot more insecure when I was younger," she says. "I was very sensitive to criticism. Now I'm definitely a lot more self-assured."

Before he was dishing out punishment to bad guys for his role in Batman, actor Christian Bale was the one on the receiving end, getting beat up by bullies in his school. *1 "They put me through hell," the star says about his classmates. Zooey Deschanel, the star actress from the television show *The New Girl*, says she was an outcast during middle school. "Girls spit in my face" she told *Allure*. "people were so mean to me, I'd cry every day." Actor Woody Harrelson says that he, too, was regularly bullied throughout his school years, and that people would taunt him because his dad was in prison for murder. *3

Actor Tom Cruise had to move around a lot as a child, which sometimes put him in a difficult predicament, "You're always the new kid, with the wrong accent, the wrong shoes." But, he says, "you learn about people and yourself and how to deal with what was not always a safe environment. You had to figure it out. That is what life's about, change and solving problems and living with it."



Losers Like Them

Page 4 of 5

You might assume that a champion boxer would have no problems with bullies. You'd be wrong. Growing up in Middletown, Connecticut, Monique McClain says that as a teen, her life was spiraling downhill in 2010 after years of relentless bullying; on the bus, at the bus stop, and in school. She describes being pushed down, having food thrown at her, and syrup poured in her hair. She was also viciously verbally abused by a group of girls. On the verge of suicide, it was then that boxer Sergio Martineza stepped in and helped her find her place. "Sergio stepped in in a time of my life when I didn't think I had anyone on my side. Everyone was against me, but he made me feel welcome." Now it is Monique who dishes out the punishment...in the ring, that is. In-between her bouts in the ring, she now works to fight bullying in schools. And as for that champion boxer who pulled her back from the brink? He, too, was also bullied by kids in his youth for coming from a poor family. *4

When Barack Obama was a young kid growing up in Indonesia, kids would lob rocks at him wherever he went and shout insults about his race and the way he looked. He wasn't so popular back then, when being the racially mixed kid in a foreign place established himself as an outsider. It felt pretty crappy to be in his shoes at that time in his life, but he's also quick to point out that experiencing this adversity helped to shape who he would become.



Losers Like Them

Page 5 of 5

So tell me this: If bullies could find fault with many of the most accomplished and special people of our times – people who would grow up to prove themselves highly talented and would later earn the admiration of millions – what does that say about how accurate and legitimate their scorn is? If famous rappers and successful boxers could be targeted by bullies; if future presidents could be labeled as losers and outcasts; if they taunted famous Emmy-winning actors and some of the most famous and prolific pop stars; and if they could label one of the world's most beautiful women as ugly, then really, how much credence should you put in what these type of people have to say about you/?

It doesn't feel good to be excluded or subjected to ridicule. Hostility always feels bad when you're on the receiving end. There isn't anything we could say that would make the pain from this completely disappear. But it's important to put this hostility in its proper place, and recognize it for the irrational nonsense it is.

You may not become president or grow up to be a movie star or famous musician. But I guarantee you that you possess many talents and admirable qualities all your own, and that your bullies have no idea what they're talking about. No matter what you experience, you should always remember that just because you might find yourself being bullied or targeted by a group of your peers, that hardly puts you in bad company. It certainly doesn't make you a loser or reject. In fact, considering that some of the most valuable and successful people in life have been in the exact same position, I'd say that puts you in some pretty good company indeed.

References:

1. US Weekly, "Stars who were bullied," Feb. 6, 2012, p. 14
2. Interview Magazine, Feb. 2012, p. 117
3. Men's Journal, April 2012, p. 62
4. Bob Velin, "Between bouts, Martinez fights against bullying," USA Today, March 15, 2012
5. Brian Haitt, "The Golden Child," Rolling Stone, May 9, 2013, p 42

*And other sources