



THE WATCH KEEPER

Answers to Discussion Questions

Please use the following questions (and the answers I provide) as a way to generate discussion. The questions are not intended to be a test of the reader's knowledge. My answers are not the only acceptable answers to the questions. My responses come from what I was thinking or feeling as I wrote *The Watch Keeper*. Please share your thoughts, opinions, ideas and feelings openly and without fear of being judged as right or wrong.

- 1. What could Romeo have done the first time Eli met him to not be seen as a person easy to intimidate?**

Romeo stood in fear and I think it showed on his face and in his body posture. He could have stepped forward slightly, looked Eli in the eyes and said, "Whatever" or "Leave me alone" and walked on. Bullies are looking for a smaller, weaker person to pick on. When you act confident and assured you're less likely to be targeted by a bully.

- 2. Why are some parents and teachers slow to respond to a young person's complaint of being bullied?**

A couple possible reasons exist. First of all, many kids say things that are exaggerated and not entirely accurate. They add to the facts or tell the story from only one point of view. Adults don't know for sure who or what to believe. Second, adults want kids to learn to fix their own problems. Some teachers send students back by themselves to address the problem, others walk the students through the process of resolving conflict initially and then later expect the students to follow-up on their own.

3. What could Romeo have done or said to get the principal and teachers more involved?

Romeo could have reported more directly what Eli said. He could have told the principal the exact words Eli used, (“Looks like I found someone that’ll be doing my homework this year.” “You do what I say or I’ll beat the crap out of you.”). He needed to ask for help and be specific and present facts about the problem.

4. How is Czordix like a bully?

Czordix and Jamilon have similar strengths and powers, yet it is how they use their strength and power that establishes the difference. Czordix attempts to influence, intimidate and control others. He doesn’t care about the feelings of others and is mostly concerned about himself and his own personal gain.

5. Jamilon used aggression and fighting as a way to solve problems. Why is he not considered a bully?

Jamilon uses his ability to help others in need. His intension is to establish safety for other people. He doesn’t strike out in anger or revenge. He doesn’t fight to take advantage of anyone or overpower. He fights only when needed in order to protect and serve others.

6. Why did Romeo’s grandma not give him the answer to his problem?

There are always more solutions than you think. The process of Romeo figuring out the solution to his problem is part of learning. As the “new” watch keeper, Romeo has to learn what solutions fit him and the situation best. Romeo’s teachers do not help him to solve his problem in this way because they did not see the problem as being that bad for Romeo.

7. Why does a bully's power increase when others attempt to fight back?

Bullies like to fight. So when someone else joins them in fighting they're getting more of what they like. They feel more powerful when they get what they want.

8. How does the involvement of other people take a bully's power away?

I think this is the answer to stopping bullying in schools. When everyone else, and I mean everyone, stands up and says, "That behavior is not acceptable here" the bully can't identify a victim and their power diminishes. Here, the strength is in numbers, so the victim's peers must stand up for him or her.

9. On page 266, when Romeo confronts Eli, why does he raise his chin slightly, turn his shoulders to face Eli and look him directly in the eyes?

Romeo is taking a stance of not being a victim. His is looking the person in the eyes, holding his head up and putting his shoulders back. This type of body language sends a message to others that I am not going to be a victim here.

10. If using violence to stop violence is not the answer, then why do we have wars?

Like the Gor in the book, some people create war for power and control. Others engage in war to protect themselves, their families and their beliefs from being taken away by those who want power and control. If people would be tolerant of others and show love toward one another then there would be no need for war. **Sadly, this** hasn't happened in our world yet.

11. What are the signs that suggest someone is being bullied?

Although a variety of signs can occur, none indicate that bullying is happening for sure. A drop in grades, fear of going to school, anxiety about going to school, sadness and depression, withdrawal from social activities, and low self-esteem are some of the most

common signs. The reason behind any of these signs happening for a child needs to be looked into more thoroughly by parents and teachers.

12. Have you ever been bullied by a peer, teacher or parent?

I have and that is one reason why I wrote this book. If you haven't noticed, Romeo is a lot like me. I had a similar experience in school. My parents helped me to learn about bullying through my experience. I decided to share what I learned in *The Watch Keeper*.

13. Have you ever tried to intimidate or influence another person by spreading rumors, creating fear, or using force?

If I'm really honest with myself, I suppose I have tried to influence my little brother by getting him to pick the movie I wanted watch or sit in the car where I wanted him to sit. It's hard to admit but we probably all have tried to influence another person in one way or another. My hope is that all kids through reading *The Watch Keeper* and having discussions with parents and teachers can let go of intimidation and create an environment of tolerance and love.

14. Who are the people in your life that you could go to if you were being bullied?

I went to my mom and dad for assistance. They helped me learn how to talk to my teachers and be more confident in myself when I am confronted with a difficult social situation with my peers. It is a good idea to identify a couple people who would help in the event of something happening. Just knowing that you have someone to talk to is comforting.

15. How can you get involved in bringing an end to the bullying at your school?

You can start by standing up for and helping anyone that is being bullied. The more people (students and teachers) who confront the bully at the very moment bullying is taking place the less power a bully has. If Romeo's friends, who knew what was going on, would have stood directly behind Romeo and told Eli to stop bullying their friend, Eli would have had

less power over the situation. Get everyone who is not a bully to stand-up together and tell the bully to stop. This could take place in individual classrooms as well as school wide.

Report any bullying that you see taking place at your school. If it's you, a friend, or someone you don't even know, tell an adult what you've seen taking place. Let the adults around you know that you want a safe learning environment.

You can also talk to your student council about creating a group to establish a plan to bully proof your school. The Students at Romeo's school formed a group. Many schools already have similar groups such as S.A.D.D. (Students Against Drunk Driving). You could be instrumental in starting an Anti-bullying group at your school.

Research several anti-bullying programs and talk to your school counselor or principal about having an assembly that addresses respect, responsibility and accepting the differences of others. Visit: www.challengeday.org and www.antibullyingprograms.org for a place to start your search.