

Tangled In Our Web

He scrolled through his blog page, liking the occasional post here, reblogging something there. After refreshing the page, he realized a message in his ask box. He opened the mail and regretted it immediately. He read a paragraph describing his flaws, how horrible he was, how stupid he was, and so on. Reading through the long message, he started tearing up. He had gotten these messages before, all from anonymous senders. He already had self-esteem issues before the hate filled letters started to pop up. Scanning over it again with dampened eyes he wondered why someone took so much time to send him such insults. He closed his laptop and plodded to the bathroom. Once inside he looked into the mirror, and stared at an unfamiliar face. He saw himself, but he felt distorted and gnarled by his flaws, the same ones pointed out to him. He even started pointing out more flaws on his own. Analyzing himself, he started to believe those gibes the anons had said.

"Because it's true, you idiot."

That 's why they must 've sent it, he thought, that 's why they took the time.

Looking up through strands of his dark hair he spoke to his reflection:

"You're ugly and stupid. No one likes you, they all put up with you. You're worthless."

He kept speaking to himself, sending hateful words in a loop from his own lips to his ears. Tears streamed down his face and he scrambled through the cabinets with shaky hands. Finally, he found it. He gripped it tightly and slid it across his wrists, over and over. He cried. Blood and tears pooled together to stain his sink.

Everyday kids and teens go through this. This is cyber bullying. It's the same as any other verbal bullying, but instead of staying at school or in public, it can follow you home. Having people bully and send hate to you at home is something no one should have to endure, being harassed at home means there is no safe place to get away from it. Cyber bullying can also be inflicted by anonymous messages that are able to be sent by anyone. Although these anonymous messages are not untraceable, it makes it harder for an individual to retaliate and defend themselves. Being harassed can seriously affect peoples' lives. It can cause them to have psychological disorders, eating disorders, and many other forms of low self-esteem. People may start to see themselves as inadequate. They might think lowly of themselves and unfortunately self-harm of all varieties is an effect of this bullying. In some cases, even suicide can be the only escape for victims. Cyber bullying is a serious issue that needs to be dealt with immediately.

The internet is a great place for individuals to express themselves, for people to communicate, and a fun place to "hang out." The internet also has a downside to its greatness, as most great things do. It has cultivated an easy and seemingly anonymous way to insult, degrade, and send hate to people. Although there is no way to truly relinquish cyber bullying, there are ways to minimize it. Something individuals can do is be safe on the internet. But what does that mean? It means not to go on any strange looking websites or anonymous chat sites. Make sure to regularly update your security settings on all your public pages and most importantly don't do anything on the internet you wouldn't do in real life.

Cyber bullying is possible to minimize, but why should people have to minimize it in the first place? Why do people cyber bully? Most people who send hate to others probably don't even think of the consequences of what they do. They might think they're being funny or joking around, but to the victim it's anything but comedic. Sometimes cyber bullies have their own self esteem problems, and the way they deal with it is to put other people down to boost themselves up. Now, not all cyber bullies are this way. Some cyber bullies truly have the intention of sending hate. We, as a technology based society, need ways to monitor these hateful messages. One way that we can do this is to track certain words or phrases that appear continually on one person's computer and is being sent to relatively the same people. Schools can put filters on their internet servers to prevent certain messages from being sent. Parents should also regularly check up on their kids' web activity to make sure they aren't being bullied or are bullying.

Cyber bullying is an issue that needs to be taken seriously and dealt with immediately. To help prevent cyber bullying, the state of New Jersey can set up more programs in schools informing students on cyber bullying and encouraging victims of cyber bullying to come forward for support. People need to be able to realize when someone needs help or support; we should give them the means to be able to do so. New Jersey needs to come together to show people how to accept one another. The hate needs to stop. We need to coexist peacefully.