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Look away

Have you ever been to the Higashiyama zoo? I have been there once. When I went there with my family, I saw some ostriches. They were unfamiliar to me, so I remember them clearly. Ostriches have a unique habit of sticking their heads into the ground in order to hide from approaching enemies. But by hiding their heads in the sand, and by closing their eyes, they do not make the enemy disappear. In English speaking countries, there is a saying, "you are behaving like an ostrich," which means you are foolishly looking away from a dangerous situation.

Nowadays, we often hear the news about bullying in schools. Bullying happens because teachers or other students look away from physical or mental attacks. They are ostriches hiding their heads in the sand. As a result, some students have killed themselves. If the other students and teachers had not looked away, perhaps they could have prevented such a tragedy. Then, who is to blame? The teachers, the other students, or the bully?

Obviously, the bully hurt someone, so he or she was wrong. When I saw such news, I felt how terrible the bully is. However, now I think that the teachers and other students were also at fault because they didn't have the courage to stop the bullying. If they had really considered the feelings of the person who was bullied, they could have stepped in and changed the situation. But they didn't. They looked away from bullying like ostriches, in order to save themselves. Often we avoid getting involved because we think we will be bullied or it will be troublesome for us.

In my junior high school, our class had had a bully. The bullied student was ignored and excluded from some groups in our class. At the time, I didn't know about that bullying. When our teacher found out about it, he got very angry in class because some of us were involved in the bullying and others knew about it, but no one stopped it. No one except the bullied student asked adults, parents, or teachers for help. No one talked to the bullied student, even to ask, "How are you?" I badly regret not noticing the bullying. Have you ever seen any of your friends bullied like that? What have you done for them?

According to the National Police Agency, about 300 people including children killed themselves due to bullying in 2010. Important lives are being lost. I'm very sad to know teenagers at our age kill themselves and end their brief lives. We must not repeat the same thing. Each of us can help bullied students. They need help. So, stop looking away. Instead, say, "Hello," if you know someone who is bullied and ask them how they are. Only by talking to the victims, or by talking to people around you about the bullying, can we save lives.

"You are behaving like an ostrich." People use this phrase when you foolishly avoid a dangerous situation. But, humans are also foolish. We are looking away from bullying. That will not make the situation any better. Now, lift your head out of the sand, and face the situation!