

# What Everyone Needs to Know About Bullying

**How to Get On With Your Life When a Bully Steps into It**



**By Kelly Croy**

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## Here's what I want you to know about bullying:

1) **It's wrong and it isn't just a part of growing up.** While I have encountered bullying at each place in my life that doesn't mean it's acceptable. Bullying is wrong. Don't accept it as a part of life. It needs to be dealt with immediately.

2) **Confront a bully.** I researched this and didn't like what I read. Nearly every article said ignore the bully, change your lifestyle to avoid attention from the bully. Well, I'm no psychologist, so you might want a second opinion here, but confronting the bully always worked for me. Involve your family, teachers, friends, coaches, and everyone you can, but confront the bully right away. Always stand up for what is right.

3) **Don't encourage a bully.** If you are laughing along with a bully making fun of someone else, you're a bully too. If you see bullying going on, and you do nothing to stop it, you're part of the problem. You have a responsibility as a bystander. The bully wants your attention and thinks you approve if you do nothing. Repeat these words, "What you're doing is wrong! Stop it! Don't do it again or I will report it to someone who will do something about it." Your behavior will be repeated by others. (Both the good, bad, and the indifferent.) We have all, at times, been guilty of taking a joke too far, and perhaps bullied someone. If so, we need to correct that mistake and make it right.

4) **Invite everyone in on it.** Don't keep the bullying to yourself. Tell everyone you know what is going on. Kids! I'm talking to you now. You must let your parents know. Don't keep it to yourself! It's nothing to be ashamed about. The bully should be ashamed. If you tell someone and they do nothing about it, keep talking until someone does. Heck, email me, I'll get involved.

5) **Use the buddy system.** Navy SEALS are the toughest warriors on the planet, but they don't go into the water or anywhere without a buddy. Why? Because it's dangerous. If you are being bullied take a friend. What if you don't have a buddy? Make one. I knew a teacher that was being bullied by a parent. She went some places by herself and wanted the verbal abuse to stop. She carried a digital recorder with her. Once she played it back the bullying stopped. Surround yourself with positive people.

6) **Bullying ends when confidence begins.** If you really want bullying to end you must work on confidence. I don't mean work on it a little bit; I mean work on it a lot! You can't be bullied if you have confidence.

Confidence doesn't allow you to second guess yourself. Confidence will encourage you to inform others about the problem. Confidence will give you the courage as a bystander to get involved. Confidence will help you in so many ways.



# Is it Bullying?

We must use the word “bullying” with care. Misuse of the term bullying will undervalue the word and lessen the plight of its recipients.

**Rude:** When someone says or does something that is *unintentionally* hurtful they are being rude.

**Mean:** When someone says or does something *intentionally* hurtful, they are being mean.

**Bullying:** When someone says or does something that is intentionally hurtful and they keep repeating, even after you ask them to stop, that is bullying. But don't wait until there are multiple occurrences. Help people when they are hurt and work to prevent future instances of harm.

Rudeness, meanness, and teasing can lead up to bullying and each needs to be addressed at some level.

Bullying quite often involves two or more people that aren't friends, and there is often an imbalance of power. This imbalance of power can be a difference in size, popularity, holding a position of authority, or several children joining in to hurt another verbally, physically, or emotionally.

**If you feel someone's actions are harmful and intentional, intervene.**

There are people in this world that are rude. They are called rude people.

There are people in this world that act like jerks. They are called jerks.

There are people in this world that are mean. They are called mean people.

But these people are not necessarily bullies.

Bullies are people that say or do something that is intentionally hurtful and they keep repeating it, even after you ask them to stop.

**Bullying can take many forms including:**

- Verbal bullying such as calling names and verbal harassment.

- Leaving another person out of a group.
- Physical bullying such as pushing, hitting, or kicking.
- Telling lies and spreading false rumors.
- Taking away things or damaging personal property.
- Threatening or forcing another person to do things they don't want to do.
- Racial bullying.
- Sexual bullying.
- Religious bullying/persecution.
- Cyber-bullying (via smart-phone or computer).

## **The Opposite of Bullying is Leadership. Become a leader.**

It's wasn't easy for me growing up with what many considered a girl's name. A boy named 'Kelly' was often a regular target for bullies. I wouldn't change my name for the world though. It's not only my identity, it has helped me become the person I am today. My name forced me to stand up to the mean-spirited and helped forge a much-needed self-confidence at an early age.

While I'm what many consider a 'big guy' today, that wasn't always the case. I was one of the smallest boys in my class until my eighth grade year. I was shy too. My first interests weren't sports but rather art and writing. The combination of all of these qualities that made me, well 'me' often made me different, out of place, and teased. I was not, however, a victim. I guess somewhere deep within my genetic code, my Irish DNA stepped up and helped me confront what I knew was wrong. When I found out that my name 'Kelly' was Irish for 'warrior' that sealed the deal. When others were being teased I would get involved.

I drank my milk, worked out with the football team, and graduated a 'big guy' with big plans. I was always on the lookout for people unable to speak up to bullies themselves. I understand where they're coming from, because it isn't easy. As a teacher there is nothing that I enjoy more than correcting a bully, and helping the recipient of the abuse feel more confident and loved.

Even out in public, far from home, I walk into situations where someone is being victimized. It's just my nature. I'm still the Eagle Scout trying to be helpful, trying to make a difference.

Oddly, the bullying never ended. It didn't matter how old I was, where I was, how big I became, or what accomplishments I had achieved. There has been a bully at each stage in my life. Perhaps others don't call them that, but I do. Anyone that finds enjoyment at the suffering of another is a bully.

It maybe a coworker, a neighbor, or even that mean clerk in the checkout line. Regardless, there is no shortage to negative thinking, mean-spirited bullies. I have even read about cyber-bullying that uses texting, blogs, and social networks to harass and victimize. (Many states are considering more laws about bullying and greater punishments.)

To conclude, I want to emphasize that there are clearly more good people in this world than bad, despite how the media portrays it. Ninety-nine percent of our interactions are good and wholesome, and our focus should be there.

If you have been bullied then you also know how powerful that one percent can be, and how it can alter a life. Don't let it. Be heard. Find a buddy. Confront it. The greatest gift we can give in life is a second chance; in time please try to extend that gift to the person you once considered a bully.



# Can Bullying be Stopped?

That is a great question and one that has no simple answer. Bullying stops when the bully matures and learns to have empathy for others or when the recipient learns to build up enough confidence in himself or herself that the actions of others are less hurtful. Neither of these are easily learned and implemented, however, some relief can occur immediately through the interaction of trained professionals.

As parents, we must understand that the recipient of bullying is injured. Like all injuries it will take time to heal. Just as a person goes through physical therapy for an injured shoulder, the recipient of bullying may need some parental counseling to improve or counseling from trained professionals at the school or elsewhere. It is nothing to be ashamed or worried. If we could afford it, we would all have physical trainer, a nutritionist. Why not a coach to help you sort out your problems, concerns, and improve your attitude? Think of counseling, whether in the house or outside the home as a life skills class teaching us lessons on how live life to the fullest.

Notify the School. There really is a lot the school can do to help, and schools really want to help. Even if they can't help in your situation now, they will be aware of the situation and make adjustments for the future. They can keep their eye out for future situations. Don't expect an immediate solution. It just doesn't work that way.

Most parents become most upset because they find out about bullying after it has been going on for awhile. Typically parents don't find out about bullying, unfortunately, until it has really taken an emotional toll on their child.

Parents often want to lash out at the school or someone because of the emotional toll it has on a family, but the focus needs to be on the child, and letting the child know that everything is going to get better. More attention needs to be placed on the victim than the bully. When parents focus entirely on the actions of the bully the victim continues to feel inferior, insignificant, and worthless.

Talk with Your child often about bullying whether you think they are a victim of bullying or not.

Do you know anyone that is a victim of bullying? *What would you do if you did know?*

Do you know anyone bullying someone? *What would you do if you did know?*

Do you know anyone that is a bystander in a bullying situation? *What would you do if you did know?*

Do you know anyone who has been a hero, and helped the victim of a bully in some way?  
*What would you do if you did know?*



## **Victims of Bullying Need the Following:**

- 1) They need to know things are going to get better and they are going to be safe.
- 2) They need to know that they are helping others by talking about it. 3) They need to know that what they tell you will not hurt them.
- 4) They need to know they are loved and that they matter.
- 5) They need to know that you cannot respond to bullying with bullying. 6) They need confidence and a boost in self esteem.
- 7) They need to be mentored in leadership.
- 8) Most importantly, they need to know that life gets better.



## **How do you build self esteem?**

- 1) Praise, especially in public.
- 2) Regular conversations and involvement in activities.
- 3) Surrounding them with positive role models and peers. Build these sessions.

4) Giving them some options and tools on what to do when bullying occurs.



# Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying happens when children or teenagers bully each other using technology. It could be texts, status updates on FaceBook, tweets on Twitter, a photo on Instagram, or any method that bullies someone using technology.

We must teach young people to be good digital citizens. Schools are a great place to teach digital citizenship, but they have a lot on their plate already. As parents, we too must teach our children about the proper ways to use technology and most importantly we must model good behavior.

A growing trend among recent reports of cyberbullying is that these technology-driven assaults on a person's character or emotions is quite often modeled by the bully's parents or an older sibling. That's right, they witnessed an adult, or older role model use technology to embarrass, poke fun at, insult, or demean another individual. Much like other forms of bullying, cyberbullying is most often an imitated act.

One of the biggest dangers of cyberbullying is that the images and words posted can be potentially around forever. Once a photo or words are posted they are difficult to have removed from the web. They are even more difficult to remove from someone's memory and emotions.

Devices need bedtimes too. Put your devices away in a special spot, out of sight, on mute, certain hours of the day. No devices in bedrooms. You need a break!



# Seven Ways to Address Teen Mobile Device Addiction

I just read [an article in USA Today](#) citing a report from Common Sense Media that 50% of teens say they are addicted to their mobile devices. I am sure if you think about it, you would most likely agree with those finding as well. It seems everyone has their head in their device.

So, what do we do about it?

## Here's my advice:

1. Model the use of mobile devices that you wish to see. They are watching us.
2. Limit their alone time with their devices.
3. Encourage “creating with their device” over consuming with their device. Work with them to create movies and other creations.
4. Enforce bedtimes for devices. That’s right, the device is put away at a certain hour for the night and it does not go with them to their bedrooms.
5. Establish device-free zones and device-free times. (e.g. No device in the bathroom or during dinner.)
6. Have them show you what they do on the device. Sit with them. Remember that time you spent with them when they were little? Get that back.
7. Create alternatives for your children and play with them. (Board games, walks, workouts, any type of social interaction will trump device consumption. They grow up so fast!)
- 8.

These seven methods to help address teen mobile device addiction may be a little challenging to set-up at first. **I recommend not trying to implement all seven at once.** Start with one, but be firm.

Ultimately, begin this conversation with your child using a mobile device regardless of their age.

Technology is awesome when it is used well, and it can be destructive to families and lives when it is used poorly. Teach your children and students to use their devices properly. This same advice can also be helpful **to you.**



## 6 Things Children Need to Hear:

Children hear a lot of things during the course of a day. Each and every word makes a lasting impact. Parents, teachers, coaches, advisors, and mentors must choose their words carefully. We aren't always going to have the right words at the right time, but we always need to try. Here are six things I think children need to hear more often:

1) **Yes!** We want to keep children safe and prevent them from becoming unruly and spoiled. The word "No" is often set as default. I think children need to hear 'Yes' more often. You don't have to give in to every request, just quantify when they can do something. "Dad, can I go to a friend's house?" Try, "Yes, but not today. When your room is clean ask me again for another day."

2) **I Make Mistakes Too!** Children need to know that everyone makes mistakes, and that failing is the pathway to success. We want students to accept and demonstrate responsibility, show leadership, and try new things. When we as adults use the wrong words we need to let children know we made a mistake for that too.

3) **You Can Accomplish Anything!** I use to think everyone heard this from their parents. By the end of my first year of teaching, now twenty, I knew this isn't true. This really was a great gift my parents gave me. I placed no limitations on my future. I dreamt big, and went after and achieved goals that really should have been unobtainable. Remind children every day that they too are limitless despite any odds or environment. Remind them they can accomplish anything.

4) **How Can I Help You?** Children need to understand that they can always ask for help, but also need to know that we aren't going to give them the answer or do the work for them. In the age of Google, answers sometimes come too quickly. Let a child know you are willing to lend a hand when they get frustrated, but at the same time you're excited to see what they can do independently. Solutions don't always have to be immediate. Help them understand the process of discovery, questioning, learning, and reflection through collaboration.

5) **Thank You!** There are many positive ways to express this sentiment. Let a child hear you tell them they did a great job or that you like they way they said or did something and you will give them the equivalent of a 5 Hour Energy Drink for their confidence. Even better, brag on them to a third party. This is the biggest reward a child can receive. A thank-you can

arrive in different packages, and they are fun to open at any age. A thank-you to a child can mold their behavior and attitude on the world. (And they're free, so give a lot of them.)

6) **You Are Loved!** Can anyone ever hear this enough? Sometimes we need to tell children we love them, and sometimes we need to remind them that others love them. (You know, in that non-creepy way.) As a mentor, coach, teacher, or advisor, we may need to remind a child that even though their parent, or another person in their life was hard on them, or held them to a higher standard, it was an act of love. Children and teenagers sometimes need a little perspective from a third party to see how high standards are indeed acts of love.

I've put my foot in my mouth plenty of times and had regrets about some of the comments I have made. My intentions were always to challenge others to become their best, but it didn't always come out the way I wanted. The art of communication is one we must continually practice and adjust. This list serves as a reminder to me to be quick to correct and find words of encouragement. What would you add? What do you believe every child needs to hear?



## Dealing with What Other People Say

Other people's perception of you does not define you.

You are NOT what other people say about you!

What you don't say, says the most about you.

You can become and achieve whatever you put your mind to, and you define yourself.

Set high standards for yourself.

Don't live for the compliments of others, nor their likes and hearts on social media.

"Those who gossip to you, gossip about you," is one of my favorite sayings. I remember it whenever anyone tries to entice me with a piece of gossip. I simply excuse myself. Usually, I say, "You'll have to excuse me. I don't know the whole story." And that's really the point, isn't it? We never really know the whole story. So, why do people automatically want to jump on the less flattering and negative side? I guess we know why, and that tells us much about their character.

Our world has never had a greater ability to communicate than we do today. We communicate through social networking, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, texts, emails, and even video chatting, and more. Still, we find gossip and ill-will, more often than not, at the center of communication. Sad. It seems our ability to communicate has unfortunately improved our ability to gossip.

“Gossip is as hard to unspread as butter, ” another of my favorite quotes and it’s as accurate as it is funny. I see too many people’s lives being harmed by gossip and rumoring. Our digital age is adding a permanence to much of it and creating a so-called digital footprint. Leaders must work to take care of their digital footprint and teach future generations to do the same.

Still, gossip is gossip no matter the form. We cannot allow a digital format to hold any more credence than word of mouth especially when its sole purpose is to harm. **What we say and do behind others’ backs says more about our own character than it does about the person we are talking about.** Gossiping is poison for any organization or leader. There is nothing but trouble to be gained by continuing a rumor or talking poorly about someone.

Parents and educators teach their children not to gossip and organizational leaders must teach it as well.

I encourage leaders to put an end to gossip in their personal lives and in their organization. Teach leadership that discourages all gossip and rumoring. Address it outright by letting your people know, “*we don’t talk like that here. That’s not what we’re about.*” Don’t assume that it is “understood” that gossiping is against our vision, make it clear.

“A man or woman should always be remembered by their best qualities,” another of my favorite quotes. When something negative comes up about someone else I choose to walk away or mention one of their endearing qualities. You can use a positive phrase to let someone know you’re uninterested in gossiping. For instance, when someone starts with a negative comment you can reply with some positive truth about the person, like, “Well, he sure knows a lot about marketing and gave a fantastic presentation last week.” They will get the idea.

We would think that adults would have a profound understanding about the dangers and improprieties of gossip, but that is sadly not the case. Gossiping about others is bullying, a waste of creative energy, a cause of inefficiency and trouble in the workplace, and a count against a leader’s character.

Leaders make no room for gossip.’

Remember:

Those who gossip about OTHERS to you, will indeed gossip about YOU to others!

When someone tells you what others said about YOU, ask them what they said to DEFEND you!

You need to model this. When you hear someone gossiping about someone, let everyone know that, that person is your friend and tell them what you like about them. If it continues, you really do need to let everyone know that gossiping is wrong, and that you will not be a part of it.

This is not easy. Being a leader is not easy. This is what leaders do.

Remember this: There are people in this world that will treat you right.

It gets better.

There are friendships ready for you.

## **How to Handle Insults & Teasing:**

- 1) Always take the high road. This may be shocking, but try saying something positive about your critic, even when they are being critical of you. This will disarm many critics. Others will look at you with respect and as a person of class. They will be more sympathetic to your situation and want to help. You will emerge as a leader. Try it. It doesn't work in all situations, but it can be effective. This will show others the confidence you have and remove you as a target.
- 2) You are part of a team. You are not a self-made person. You are the result of your parents, your siblings, your teachers, your community, and all of the influences of your life. This is your team. Share how you are feeling with your team. Ask them for help. Do not burden this alone. It's not your's to share alone.
- 3) Be a creator, not a destroyer. Despite the criticism you receive, use your words, time, and energy to create a positive experience for others. So many allow themselves to become what other people say about them. Don't fall victim to this trick. Being positive and happy is the best revenge. It feels good to create great experience for others.
- 4) Put the rock down. Criticism is like a forty pound rock that you are carrying around. You don't have to carry the rock. Put it down. Leave it. It's not real. It's not true. It's not you. You put the rock down by downplaying what was said to you. Tell them, it's no big deal. Just because you say it, doesn't make it so.

# Social Media is Lying to You, Don't Believe What You See and Read!

Don't believe the things you see on social media.

Comparison is the thief of joy.

Be careful what you label a flaw or a weakness.

You see perfect images all the time on social media. These aren't real. People are using apps to modify their faces and figures. They hold the camera at a certain angle and take twenty pictures until they find the perfect one. It's fake.

You are seeing the best moments of someone's life or photoshopped or face-tuned versions of it.

These images will start making you feel badly.

Everyone is different.

Focus on your life and your journey.

Don't compare your chapter 3 to someone else's chapter 20.

Get Real: People are using Face Tune apps. Camera apps. Twisting their body. Exaggeration of words. One out of fifty pictures is a gem. Don't believe it. Quit looking at it.

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## Advertise to Yourself

You may not be aware of it but you are advertising to yourself every minute of the day. I'm talking about those little comments that you say to yourself. Everyone engages in self talk, whether it is audible or just thoughts inside our head. We need to be careful about what we say, because it is more powerful than the billions spent each year on commercial advertising.

The following is an excerpt from my upcoming book:

I read a wonderful book years ago on sports' psychology titled *Toughness Training for Sports* by James E. Loher. In it, I learned that the majority of our self-talk is negative. The author emphasizes that negative self-talk is damaging and that positive self-talk improves the success of Olympic and professional athletes. This is huge, because we can change our self-talk and practice giving ourselves a great advantage.

What we say to ourselves is far more damaging than any criticism from others. Be intentional about how you talk to yourself and

about yourself.

Sometimes this negative self-talk is picked up by others. They hear us talk to ourselves. They hear the "I blew that one!", "I suck!", and the occasionally "I'm an idiot!". Some people are even posting their failures on social media sites like Twitter and Facebook. You don't have to go around bragging all of the time, but why advertise failures? Turn that loss into a lesson and post what you learned. Work at making the majority of your self talk positive.

The expert suggests replacing, "Crap! I always miss that shot!" with "Next time I'm going to nail that shot!"

You must learn to make positive statements about yourself and when talking to others. You might be surprised by who is actually listening to the comments you think you are only making to yourself, and even if they can't our bodies do indeed project what we say to it. I can see "Crap! I always miss that shot!" on a person's face as easily as I can hear it. Feed yourself doses of positive self talk and begin to be amazed at your results. Talking positive and creating some default positive mantras has been a major source of productivity and success for me personally. I also attest that doing so has helped me to create a winning attitude. People will always choose to follow and spend time with someone positive over someone negative any day of the week.

You have to discipline yourself and work at how you communicate with yourself. Make a challenge or game out of it. Positive self talk will directly impact your dealing with others, your attitude, your tenacity, and most importantly how you think, especially when confronting a challenge.

Practice makes perfect! What you say while playing a game will later on impact what you say at the office or on the field. Identify some key phrases you know you make and shouldn't as well as some situations in which you make them. It might sound easy to but it takes some focused effort and discipline.

Please know that when I am talking about self-talk, I am not just referring to what you say out loud. I also mean those little negative comments you make to yourself in your head.

Those count just as much as what you say out loud. When you catch yourself feeding your mind junk, replace it with a positive thought and statement. It works!

You need to work on positive self talk and eliminate negative self-talk entirely. Be your own public relations worker. Get the message out there that you are confident, successful, and have a winning attitude. You need to sound like a leader.

### Mantras, Slogans, and Mottos

Positive self talk is used by top executives, professional and Olympic Sports athletes, and by corporations. We can use it too. Create a mantra, slogan, motto, or creed to live by, or adopt someone else's you admire until you do.

I believe every organization should have a slogan and most importantly they should live up to it. There is nothing worse than having something arrive late from someone proclaiming to be fast and on time. You know what I mean. Live by the words you use as your motto. I cannot help but think that much of my success stems from my Tuesday night Boy Scout meetings. Every Tuesday at seven o'clock I pledged to keep myself physically fit, mentally awake, and morally straight. Furthermore, I took a weekly Oath and recited the twelve points of the Scout Law.

Every Sunday I recited my Christian Creed aloud with my fellow Parishioners, as well as each night and morning.

The words we use matter, whether we are using them to describe others or ourselves. We need to communicate these meanings very carefully and intentionally. Write and recite your creed regularly. We become what we envision. We become what we say.



## **Teach and Model, “What We Don’t Say!”**

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# Parenting a Leader

Do you really want your child to be a leader? I posed this [question](#) a while back; it received a notable response, and [it](#) remains one of my most popular [posts](#). Where do we stand as parents in the responsibility of raising leaders? Weigh the question carefully. Consider the contrasts between raising a leader and a star. Do you really want your child to be a **leader**?

I hope you answered yes, but I will understand if you didn't. Leadership and popularity rarely go hand in hand, and leadership requires a lot of hard work. For me the answer is simple; I want to raise leaders. I want my children to be prepared for anything, to make a difference, and live a life of purpose.

If you really want to help parent a leader, you need to make three clear commitments.

- 1) **I will educate my child about leadership.** Leadership really needs to be taught. It amazes me how many people don't understand this simple truth. If you want your child to become a leader, surround her with leadership resources. These can be books, audio, video, and so much more. This includes the comments you make about leaders in front of your children. This includes the leadership examples *you* take within your community, church, school, and work. If you don't serve a leadership role, your child probably won't either.
- 2) **I will provide my child with leadership mentors.** A mentor is the greatest gift you can ever provide for your child. Mentors can arrive in the fashion of a relative, a coach, a teacher, an advisor, or many other roles, but don't take it for chance, and don't assume these people are mentoring. Set it up. Contact someone you admire, or talk with your child about possibilities, and then meet with them and discuss what you are looking to accomplish. I will include a future post about how to do this, but know this: Mentoring Works. A recent study demonstrated that a teen with a mentor is 46% less likely than their peers to start using illegal drugs. For me, sports, Scouting, and my family surrounded me with lots of authentic mentors that provided me with the one on one discussions I truly needed. Mentoring must be one-on-one, consistent, and have a clear purpose.
- 3) **I will encourage opportunities for my child to lead.** If you want your child to lead you must allow them to accept leadership roles and encourage them. It may require some extra driving and scheduling responsibilities on your part, and may even create some unwanted drama, but leaders are made during moments of discontent, not harmony. They will not get it right the first time either. They will need to make several attempts at it. With the proper support, education, and mentoring your child will fail their way to becoming a successful leader. Sadly some students finally receive an opportunity to lead, but have not received any education or mentoring about leadership, and fail so badly they vow to never lead again. I understand I need to listen to my child about the types of leadership roles they

are interested in, and at other times I will need to encourage possible leadership roles for them.

Leaders make leaders of others, and parenting is one of the most important leadership roles we may ever serve. I hope will join me in raising a leader and give great thought to how you can provide the education, mentoring, and opportunities of leadership for your child. I look forward to reading your comments.



If you or an organization you know is in need of a speaker on leadership and bullying, please consider:

Kelly Croy

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