

Ramblin' Ruth



## Leading By Example

By Ruth LeBlanc

A friend and I were talking about the problems her two young daughters were having with bullies. It was obvious she was suffering along with her children, as any parent would.

Like many people, I was bullied as a teenager and it is a terrifying thing to endure. And despite recent media attention, the problem seems to be as bad as ever. But are we as adults sending mixed messages with our words and actions? Are we saying bullying is bad for kids but stalking and tormenting adults is okay?

This was brought to mind when I was driving to my mom's house in Uxbridge, listening to a radio

talk show about the Rob Ford scandal. Since I don't subscribe to a newspaper and rarely tune into TV news, I'm often unaware of major events. This I could not escape. It was everywhere, dominating local and international news on radio and television.

At first I thought it was funny, but I found the "Toronto is cracked" jokes embarrassing. And although I was intrigued by the endless allegations, after weeks on end I became bored and then sickened by what I perceived as a witch hunt.

Can you imagine what it would be like if someone decided to trail you constantly and watch your every move? As the media frenzy continued

with Rob Ford updates and jokes about his weight and red face, I started to feel for the man, especially when reporters were hiding in bushes around his house, taking pictures and not giving him or his family a minute's peace.

I pondered who gave us the right to seek and destroy. At times it felt like we were all in the Roman Colosseum, cheering as lions ripped a man to pieces for the purpose of entertaining the masses.

If I were a kid or teen how might I view this? I would think there were no boundaries that couldn't be crossed or things that couldn't be said, no matter how cruel. I would think it was all right to

criticize someone for their body shape or size.

Adults set the example and kids follow their lead, so why would this be any different? It is great to have television ads showing the horror of bullying and the pain it causes, but when adults are doing the same thing to each other surely that sends the wrong message?

No wonder kids are confused and bullying continues; it's one set of rules for kids and another for adults. On moral issues like this we should all follow the same path and show the same respect. We learn from example, so maybe we should treat others the way we want to be treated regardless of our differences.

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