Essay by

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**IF I COULD INVENT SOMETHING NEW**

Two years ago, my mom told me a story about how when she was attending Mayflower Secondary School Ikenne, certain students in SS2 and SS3 popularly known as “seniors” used to be cruel towards some of her friends. They were bullies. It was a culture that allowed students in upper grades treat younger students poorly. You would fetch water and not be able to use it, your food and provisions could be taken from you without anyone there to protect you. There was some sort of unspoken law that prevented even house masters and matrons from intervening. It was a negative culture that everyone knew about yet did little or nothing to prevent.

Today, twenty-seven years after my mom enrolled in secondary school, this kind of bullying still happens. Throw social media in the mix and it is raised to the tenth power. There is a story I read online about a young girl in the United States whose private pictures were shared online, she was so depressed and anxious after the experience that she did not return to her school and her parents had to seek counselling for her. Stories such as these have become common. Recently in a private school in Abuja, a video went viral showing a student slapping another mercilessly while other students laughed. That particular video makes my blood boil.

If I could invent something new, it would be a pair of mandatory shoes for secondary school students that prevents bullies from targeting and abusing other students. Let me shed some more light on this invention. This shoe will be called the “Bullyproof”. The bullyproof shoes prevents bullies from having the courage to intimidate other student for any reason, be it their gender, grade level, religion, appearance or any other reason. If a student wears the bullyproof, at any given time, it serves as a symbol of anti-bullying and fortification where bullies know that they would be severe consequences if they bullied that student. Think about a logo, or banner of some sort, one that needs no further explanation. Once a student has it on, they are literally bullyproof, which means they cannot be bullied, they are immune. The shoes would be sold to all high school students, a percentage of the sales would go to non-profits that help fight against bullying in schools and online.

Think about how many students would escape the mental, physical and psychological torture of bullies with this invention. Schools would be safer and more conducive because I have realized that no matter how teachers and other school staff try to help prevent bullying, some students would still be bullies while others victims. I have also heard about adults today who still suffer from low self-esteem, insecurity, anxiety and even depression because of the negative experiences they had in high school. With bullyproof, I would get a chance to save my generation and future generations from such trauma.

If we put the appropriate publicity mechanisms in place, bullyproof could become the new “it” item for students, much like the iPhone. It could be a symbol of unity and respect among students. That would be a great invention!