Twitter Thread by Shuvo Ghosh, MD



Shuvo Ghosh, MD
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1) This reminds me of junior high back in the Chicago suburbs when some classmates pretended my name was ‘too hard’ & relentlessly teased me as ‘Shoehead,’ ‘Shitvo,’ & ‘Shamu’ for almost 2 years until my social studies teacher Mr. C decided to absolutely GO OFF on them:

@KaylaAncrum 2) In class one day, to everyone’s utter astonishment, he stopped his lecture & said ‘I think some of you are having trouble pronouncing Shuvo’s name. It’s easy to say shoo-VOH, but your behaviour inspires me to give you new names now. Let’s point out a few examples.’

@KaylaAncrum 3) Mr. C turned to a red-haired jerk who often led the bullying and said ‘If you don’t shape up, you’ll be known as Carrot Head in my class, since you’re uglier than Carrot Top and you’re certainly bigheaded and arrogant.’

His face turned redder than his hair.

@KaylaAncrum 4) He then then turned to a classmate named Edie & said to her ‘I won’t call you Edie anymore, I’ll call you Dedie, as in DD, since that’s the grade you get in my class & it’s short for Dum-Dum, which is what you proved to be.’

I actually felt bad for her she was so mortified.

@KaylaAncrum 5) Then he turned to another kid whose last name was McCracken & said ‘You will be known as McChicken, since you’re a coward, & based on your performance it seems the most you can ever aspire to be is a fast food server, so wipe that smug grin off your face, cluck cluck.’

!!

@KaylaAncrum 6) He actually said ‘cluck cluck’ in front of the whole class!!

Then he said ‘If you don’t like these names, & I have many more for the rest of you, then learn to pronounce Shuvo’s name properly. I had better never hear another version of it ever again.’

I was shocked.

@KaylaAncrum 7) I never heard my name mispronounced or teased again for the rest of the year.

A few months later, at our junior high graduation, Mr C. retired.

He came to me & my parents to say ‘I just want you to know that I’d been waiting to tell off kids in this school for a long time.’

@KaylaAncrum 8) ‘I came over from Britain,’ he continued, ‘settled here to become a teacher, & had to shorten my name to Mr. C, because they couldn’t be bothered to pronounce my damned last name. I even had to change my accent for them to understand me. I’ve seen kids bullied for years.’

@KaylaAncrum 9) ‘The administration always capitulates & does half-hearted measures when it’s this sort of thing. Mispronouncing names or ethnic teasing is always minimised. I saw you tolerating it quietly just as I have all these years & I felt compelled to say something before I retired.’

@KaylaAncrum 10) ‘I hope it helped to know that I’ve noticed, & tried to stop it before. I had to put my foot down because with you it was truly beyond belief. I only wish I could’ve done more over the years. You’re a good man, Charlie Brown.’

He shook my hand, patted my shoulder, & left.

@KaylaAncrum 11) That’s the last thing he ever said to me, & the last time I saw him. But it has stuck with me, almost 35 years later. All those moments & words are laser-burned into my memory.

I still try to be a good man, like Charlie Brown. And thanks, Mr. C. You were a good man, too. ■■