

Heaven & Hell

An Ancient Chinese Folktale

A curious man once asked to visit heaven and hell. Expecting hell to be a terrible, frightening place, he was amazed to find people seated around a lovely banquet table. The table was piled high with every delicious thing once could possibly want. The man thought, "Perhaps hell is not so bad after all!"

Looking closely, however, he noticed that everyone at the table was miserable.

They were starving, because although there was a mountain of food before them, they had been given three-foot long chopsticks. There was no way to carry the food to their mouths with such long chopsticks, and so no one could eat a bite.

The man was then taken to heaven. To his surprise, he found the exact same situation as he had seen in hell. People were gathered around a banquet table piled with food. All the diners held a pair of three-foot long chopsticks in their hands.

But here in heaven, everyone was happily eating the delicious food, for the residents of heaven were using their extra long chopsticks to feed one another.



From "I Can Make A Difference" by Marian Wright Edelman



MANAGING CONFLICT

Taken from Fall 2006 CANADIAN TEACHER magazine



Written by Gayle Wiebe Oudeh

Conflict is a natural part of life and work, yet people typically will do anything to avoid dealing with it. The perception is that conflict is tough to manage, unpleasant and ultimately irresolvable. In fact, conflict is not a bad thing: it's only bad if you manage it poorly or not at all.

CONFLICT DE-MYSTIFIED

Conflict is a matter of difference-differences of wants, needs, or expectations. We all experience conflict, but we don't all respond to it in the same way. Research shows that individuals adopt one of five basic approaches, or conflict management styles, when they experience conflict. See if you can determine your style from the following list.



The Woodpecker: Woodpeckers are clear on what needs to be done to resolve the situation and will hammer away at their point until the other person agrees.

Woodpeckers don't need to waste a lot of time on niceties. Their concern is getting the other party to see things their way.



The Parakeet: Parakeets are focused on the relationship at risk in conflict. They are willing to concede the point, so long as the relationship remains intact. Parakeets are likely to use humour to lighten the moment or to insist that the situation isn't as dire as the other person may think.



The Owl: Owls move slowly through conflict because they want to make sure that they understand all aspects of the situation, have heard all pertinent information, and have properly communicated their perspective. They want to make sure that the solution is what's best for everyone. Owls are willing to take whatever time is required to work through the conflict.



The Ostrich: Ostriches prefer to stick their heads in the sand and pretend that conflict doesn't exist. They will ignore or avoid potential conflict situations-to the point of physically leaving the room if that's what is required.



The Hummingbird: Hummingbirds want to work things out quickly. They willingly create options for resolution and are open to negotiation. For Hummingbirds, finding middle ground allows everyone to "win" something in the situation. While it may not be the perfect solution, it's "good enough" so that everyone can move on.

A word of warning: there's no single right way to approach conflict. Each style has its uses and its challenges.

USE THE APPROACH THAT BEST FITS YOUR DESIRED OUTCOME

How do you decide which approach to take when you experience conflict? Consider what's important. Is this a situation where the outcome is vital? Is the type of relationship you have with the other person important in the long run?

The Woodpecker is a task-oriented approach and can damage a relationship. So the Woodpecker approach is most appropriate in crisis situations, when critical issues are at stake, and when rules must be enforced.

The Parakeet is more relationship-oriented. Since the Parakeet approach means giving in to the other person, it is most appropriate when the final outcome of the conflict isn't all that important, but maintaining the relationship is.

If both the relationship and the task are important, the Owl or Hummingbird approaches are most appropriate. Which "bird" to use is dependent on the amount of time you have. Is the conflict worthy of a lot or just a little time? Will a quick fix do the trick?

The Owl approach can be time-consuming since all the issues must be examined and addressed. Not all conflicts are worthy of this time investment.

The Hummingbird approach is quicker because it focuses on finding a compromise that everyone can live with, even if the Hummingbird's needs are not completely addressed. This Hummingbird solution may be short-lived and require a return to the issue later on.

Some conflicts require the Ostrich approach- it is really none of your business, or the issue is not important or getting involved would cause more harm than good. Avoiding the conflict in this case is the best way of dealing with it.

The key to dealing with conflict is recognizing that we all have a choice in how we approach the situation. The Woodpecker approach may work sometimes, but some conflicts will require the Owl or Hummingbird approach. Even the Parakeet and Ostrich approaches are appropriate in some circumstances.

Making deliberate and thoughtful choices in how we approach conflict won't eliminate conflict. But it will reduce the negative impact of those conflicts and it will result in opportunities for new ideas, better teamwork and a more positive morale.

When you identify the source of the conflict and the ways in which people are handling it, you're well on the way to actually resolving the conflict, and moving the situation from toxic to terrific.



TOPIC: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

What kind of Bird are you in a Conflict?

The Owl? The Woodpecker? The Hummingbird? The Parakeet? The Ostrich?

1. This Bird is focused on the relationship at risk in the conflict. He is willing to concede the point as long as the relationship remains intact. More likely to use humour to lighten the moment or to insist that the situation isn't as dire as the other person may think.

2. This Bird wants to work things out quickly. She willingly creates options for resolution and is open to negotiation. Finding the middle ground allows everyone to "win" something. While it may not be the perfect solution, it's "good enough" so that everyone can move on.

3. This Bird moves slowly through any conflict situation because he wants to ensure that he understands all aspects of it, has heard all the relevant information and has properly communicated his perspective. He wants to make sure that the solution is best for all and is willing to take whatever time is required to work through a solution.

4. This Bird prefers to stick her head in the sand and pretend that the conflict doesn't exist. She will ignore or avoid potential conflict situations.

5. This Bird is clear on what needs to be done to resolve the situation and will hammer away at their point until the other person agrees. He doesn't need to waste a lot of time on being nice and really just wants the other person to see things his way.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT CONTINUED

How do you decide which approach (which Bird) is the best in any given conflict situation? Is the outcome really important? Is the relationship important? Or, something else?

Under what situations would a **Woodpecker**'s style of conflict management work?

Under what situations would a **Parakeet**'s style of conflict management work?

Under what situations would an **Owl**'s style of conflict management work?

Under what situations would a **Hummingbird** style of conflict management work?

Under what situations would an **Ostrich**'s style of conflict management work?

WHAT IS **YOUR** PREDOMINANT STYLE to solving Conflict Situations?

As one of your upcoming Journal Writing contributions, describe a conflict situation that you have experienced and the type of "Birds" that were evident. Reflect on this lesson and complete the "So What? Now What?" sections from a leader's point of view.

Anti-Bullying Campaign

This idea/activity was brought to my attention by a former leadership student. It fit right into a lesson on how to "market" an event/idea rather than just doing it and seeing if we could be successful.

Theme: Don't just stand by. Stand up. (taken from the initial reaction by the friends in the Nova Scotia High School)

I have attached the CBC article and further documents for your info. The comment sheet was generated from the responses made to the web article posted on the CBC site.

Marketing Plan for promotion of one week campaign:

1. Initial assembly with Mike Bonnici talking about bullying to our Grade 9 and 10's on the Wednesday.
2. Two minute video on bullying and pink t-shirt day at assembly.
3. Visit home rooms and discuss the comment sheet as a follow-up to assembly on the Friday.
4. Small pink pieces of paper posted around the school (no words on them) posted on the Friday.
5. Pink bake sale on Monday
6. Pink nail polish on pinkies (leadership students only for first day)
7. Pink lemonade on Tuesday
8. Pink music (Pink Panther, Pink Floyd, Pink) on the announcements prior to Wednesday, but no announcement about the connection.
9. Distribute pink bubble gum to purchasers of lemonade or pink shirts
10. Sell pink shirts for \$5

Pink Day was Wednesday, October 17 Students and staff were asked to wear their pink shirt or pink stuff from home.

We had the local paper come in on Wednesday at lunch to take a picture of everyone wearing pink. Over 300 people showed up for the picture and over 100 more were in the school wearing pink.

Bullied student tickled pink by schoolmates' T-shirt campaign

Two Nova Scotia students are being praised across North America for the way they turned the tide against the bullies who picked on a fellow student for wearing pink.

The victim — a Grade 9 boy at Central Kings Rural High School in the small community of Cambridge — wore a pink polo shirt on his first day of school.

David Shepherd, left, and Travis Price decided to spread word of their 'sea of pink' campaign on the internet.
(CBC)



Bullies harassed the boy, called him a homosexual for wearing pink and threatened to beat him up, students said. Two Grade 12 students — David Shepherd and Travis Price — heard the news and decided to take action. "I just figured enough was enough," said Shepherd.

They went to a nearby discount store and bought 50 pink shirts, including tank tops, to wear to school the next day.

'Sea of pink' support

Then the two went online to e-mail classmates to get them on board with their anti-bullying cause that they dubbed a "sea of pink."

But a tsunami of support poured in the next day. Not only were dozens of students outfitted with the discount tees, but hundreds of students showed up wearing their own pink clothes, some head-to-toe.



The two Grade 12 students show off the pink shirts they wore to school.
(CBC)

When the bullied student, who has never been identified, walked into school to see his fellow students decked out in pink, some of his classmates said it was a powerful moment. He may have even blushed a little.

"Definitely it looked like there was a big weight lifted off his shoulders. He went from looking right depressed to being as happy as can be," said Shepherd. And there's been nary a peep from the bullies since, which Shepherd says just goes to show what a little activism will do.

"If you can get more people against them ... to show that we're not going to put up with it and support each other, then they're not as big as a group as they think are," he says.

The students' "sea of pink" campaign did not go unnoticed outside the province. U.S. talk show host Ellen DeGeneres expressed interest in their story, and other schools are talking about holding their own "pink day." "It's been totally overwhelming for us. I mean we're just two local boys and I mean we're getting calls from like Alaska and e-mails. It's just phenomenal the support that we've gotten from across the globe," said Price.

The school principal, understandably, was flush with pride. "You're always hearing about the youth of the world and how bad things are. Well, they're not that bad," said Stephen Pearl.

<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/nova-scotia/story/2007/09/18/pink-tshirts-students.html>

Home Room Visits on the topic of Bullying

Your job: create positive discussion with the class

1. Discuss the article behind the Pink t-shirts that we're wearing next Wednesday.
2. Hand out the comments made by people concerning the article (from CBC website)
3. Ask them to write an A beside a comment they agree with and a D beside a comment they disagree with.
4. Ask how many agree with first statement. Why? How many disagree with this statement. Why?
5. Encourage discussion of "getting even" is not always physical retaliation (pink shirts were a way of "getting even"). What can you do?
6. Closing: **Don't just stand by. Stand up.**

Comments about Bullying and Pink t-shirt campaign

Quit whining about being bullied, it is part of growing-up!! Get some intestinal fortitude, suck it up and carry on with life!

Most people don't truly understand the impact of bullying because they haven't experienced it. They may still feel victimized and think they fixed it by standing up for themselves. But the true victim has no chance because they haven't been given the tools to get out of the situation. By that time the victim is so far behind that any action they take will result in more bullying against them - the only rescue is from an external source.

Don't get mad, get even.

Will these pink t-shirts be a lasting solution to bullies? I think not. It could possibly isolate these kids further and mark them as potential bullying targets.

What ever happened standing up for yourself? How will these children deal with the real world when they have a co-worker or boss that bullies them?

It is very difficult to deal with bullying because, often, the efforts of people in authority just drive the bullying farther underground.

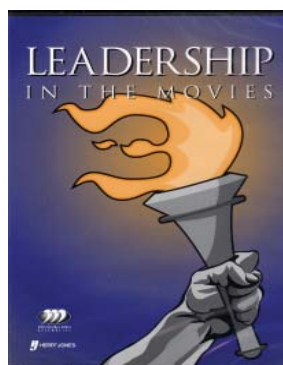
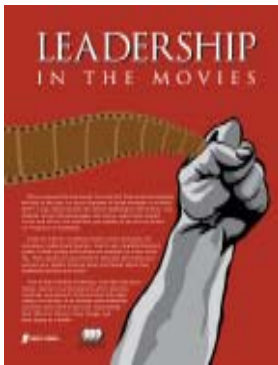
Teachers and principals are often blamed for doing "nothing" but it's hard to find the right thing to do--one that will protect the victim and also persuade the bullies to behave better.

Expulsion isn't always an option and zero-tolerance looks good on paper but is next to impossible to enforce. Bullying is a complicated relationship between the victim and the bully, and bullies can be very clever about how they "get" to a victim.

Growing up I was painfully thin and was the target of several bullies. Unfortunately mob mentality tends to take over when it is easier to stand with the mob than against it. Essentially my entire elementary school experience was one of being beaten up and being afraid to go to school.

Attending a school in the Catholic Separate School system in Ontario made it worse. Those in authority (teachers and Principal) refused to acknowledge anything was going on even when witnessing it first hand.

Leadership in the Movies 1, 2, 3

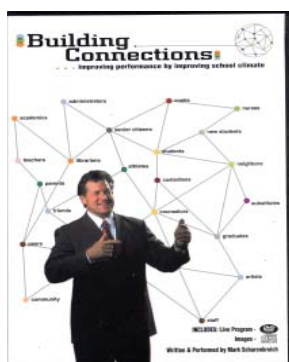


These DVDs each contain fifty-one clips from the top movies of the last three years. Fourteen aspects of leadership responsibility are presented. Topics include: Setting the Course, Commitment, Taking Action, Servanthood, Building Dreams, Facing Crisis, Communication, the Burden of Leadership, Arrogance and many more.

This program is great for trainers, workshop leaders, leadership teachers and student activity advisors. These clips are guaranteed to provoke lively discussion and motivate your leaders to think deeper about their leadership decisions and actions. Cost \$80 each.

There is a complete discussion guide for each clip that can be downloaded from the DVD in pdf format.

Save \$30 by ordering all three Leadership in the Movies DVDs



Building Connections — DVD, CD-ROM and book

An 80-minute live presentation on DVD by Mark Scharenbroich. He helps student leaders and educators understand the significant correlation between positive school climate and achievement.

Mark shares images from more than 100 top-performing schools illustrating how they build strong connections within the entire school community. The book, *Building Connections*, offers a unique assessment tool to measure your school climate that will help trigger ideas and guide your school. The compact CD contains the many images Mark has shown at leadership conferences that capture what schools across North America are doing. This package will help generate additional new ideas for your school. Cost: \$125



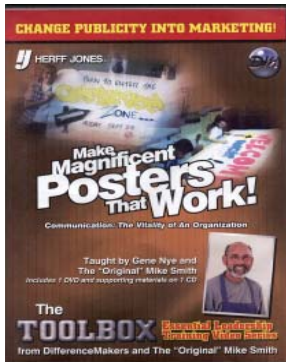
What's it About? A Character Education Program

—4 DVD's and book

This is a four part character education series with multiple uses in secondary schools. Each segment features Emmy award winning speaker, Mark Scharenbroich in a live presentation to high school students. His humour grabs the audience; his messages move them to action.

The course includes a Facilitators Guidebook which features discussion questions and 30 pages of interactive group activities to support the messages. This set won the prestigious Telly Award. Cost: \$180

Making Magnificent Posters that Work! —1 DVD and 1 CD-ROM



Posters, banners and can all be improved into marketing pieces for your organizations. Good mass communication pieces make all the difference for helping others get involved. This video seminar is devoted to improving your large format media, and it is a must for every club and organization —both student and adult— at your school. Gene Nye and Mike Smith show you how easy it is to make your posters part of an effective marketing program.

Program includes one 38-minute DVD video and one CD-ROM The CD-ROM contains pdf files with support materials and handouts for copying. Cost: \$45

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- Tri- pack (three Leadership Movies) ____ copies @ \$210
- Building Connections ____ copies @ \$125
- What's it About ____ copies @ \$180
- Making Magnificent Posters ____ copies @ \$45

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