

Dinner for Two

Peace in the rain forest is disrupted when two chameleons each grab the same insect at the same time. They literally get stuck in a conflict, with catastrophic results. Relationships are severed, opportunities are lost, innocent bystanders are harmed and violence seems imminent...

Luckily for the lizards, a frog observing the fracas turns into exactly what they need... (no, not a prince)... a mediator.

Part of the **ShowPeace** series of animated films without words, **Dinner for Two** is designed as a tool for conflict resolution. Everyone from youngsters to business executives can identify with the characters and gain insight on dealing creatively with conflict and anger at school, at home, in the community and in the workplace.

Key Issues raised in the film include:

- Exploring conflict
- Dealing with conflict

- Competition and cooperation
- Roles in conflict

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND DISCUSSION LEADERS

Ground rules for cooperative participation

Exploring the ways we view and deal with conflict and anger requires an honest and open exchange of ideas. Participants may feel exposed if they share personal stories within a large group. Leaders need to assure participants of:

- **Confidentiality.** Everyone must agree to treat what is said with respect and to avoid gossip.
- **Respect for ideas.** Everyone should agree that this is a forum in which everyone has the opportunity to share his or her point of view. No attacks. No blaming.

The guide is adaptable to any age group, but discussion leaders should be sensitive to the make-up of the group and focus on situations supplied in the guide that are familiar to most of the participants.

PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Word-association

- Ask the group to think of as many words as possible to describe conflict. Record all responses on chart paper. Ask the group if these words indicate positive or negative associations.
- Ask individuals to think of (or draw a picture of) a conflict they had recently with a classmate, friend, sibling, spouse, co-worker, parent, child, etc. Did the conflict harm the relationship or improve it? What was lost? What was gained? What influenced the outcome?

POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

- Ask younger viewers to retell the story to determine which elements they caught and which ones they may have missed.
- Use role-playing to create dialogue for the events in the video. What might the chameleons be saying to each other?
- Ask viewers to retell the story and determine decision-points in the narrative. Divide the group into teams, each starting from a different decision-point, to change the action and thereby the story's outcome. Ask participants to explain how their changes would have affected the story.
- Discuss the following statements:
 - Conflict is an inevitable part of life and in itself is not negative.
 - Conflict is an opportunity for growth and change.
 - Conflict is a sign of a healthy relationship.

- On chart paper, write the following headings and quotes:

**COMPETING: I
Win/You Lose
"My way or the
highway."**

**COOPERATING: I Win/You Win
"Let's both try to get what we
need!"**

Ask the group to give examples of both competition and cooperation in the rain forest and/or in everyday life (in the classroom, on the playground, in sports, in the family, in business, in the workplace). Explore the benefits/downsides of competition and cooperation. Describe the dilemma the chameleons face when they limit themselves to competition. (The more they compete, the more they lose!)

- Were there opportunities for the chameleons to reach a cooperative solution before the frog intervened? Why didn't the chameleons take advantage of them? What are some reasons that people might get stuck in a losing situation?
- Role-play the following scenarios twice. First, use a competitive (I win/you lose) approach, then use a cooperative (I win/you win) approach. Compare the results!
 - You leave your place in the lunchroom line-up to help a younger child open the door. When you return one of your classmates refuses to let you back in line.
 - You are about to talk to your neighbour about his barking dog when he calls you to complain about the noise and traffic from the party you held last night.
 - You have just cancelled several meetings and re-arranged your work schedule in order to devote a day to work on a special project with a colleague. Your colleague calls you to tell you he/she needs a "mental health" day and will not be in the office today.

CONFLICT ROLES

- Show the video a second time, asking the group to observe all the parties directly or indirectly involved in the conflict. Which animal(s) played the roles of: disputant (individual in conflict); innocent victim; town crier/gossip; opportunist; onlooker; mediator (someone who tries to help others sort out a "win/win" solution).
- Ask participants to think of a conflict in which they have been personally involved, whether in their family, at their office, at school, or in the community. Ask them to write down the roles played by each of the people involved.
- Ask participants to reflect on the role they normally play in a dispute. Is it a role that fuels the conflict, maintains it or helps resolve it?