

“ECHOES AND REFLECTIONS”

Maturity in Relationships **Improving the way we relate with others.**

Aims of this Exercise:

- ✓ *To realize that the attitudes others display towards us are nothing but a reflection of ours towards them.*
- ✓ *By becoming aware of the way others relate with us, we discover the way we relate with them.*
- ✓ *To understand that most of the complaints we have against others are the very ones others have against us.*
- ✓ *To realize that in order to improve our relationships with others it is we who have to make the first step. .*

Uses of these notes:

- ✓ *Examination of one’s personal attitudes.*
- ✓ *Talks and sermons*
- ✓ *Discussion groups*
- ✓ *Growth sessions.*
- ✓ *Human relations workshops*
- ✓ *Marriage preparation courses.*
- ✓ *Family encounters,*
- ✓ *Community building sessions.*

Target Audience:

- ✓ *All audiences.*

Dynamics of this exercise Instructions for the moderators.

- *Start the session by asking the participants to fill the questionnaire*
- *Don’t disclose to them the aim of this exercise until they have finished answering the questionnaire given below.*
- *In that questionnaire we ask the participants to disclose to us the attitudes they feel, people in general, have towards them.*
- *In the course of the exercise we shall make the participants realize that the way others deal with them is nothing but an echo or a reflection of the way we deal with them*
- *Relating to people is like being on the dancing floor. If you wish to change the mode of your dance, you have to change your step first, automatically, your partner will follow suit.*
- *To improve your way of relating to others, first, change your step. `*
- *At the end of the Sessions, experientially, we shall confirm these findings by Role playing activities such as: “The Labeling Game” “Friendly/Unfriendly Game.” and others.*

Introductory session

- Quiet down. Relaxation and or breathing exercises will help
- Opening prayer. Singing hymns.

Personal Work. Replying to the Questionnaire:

- Distribute copies of the questionnaire “**My Personal Experience of People**”
- Instruct the Participants how to fill it. After that tell them to keep it with them for later use.

QUESTIONNAIRE

My Personal Experience of People.

Instructions:

- You have 10 minutes to complete your work
- You will find in this questionnaire pairs of opposite words joined by a line of dots and numbers.
- The numbers range from 0 to 5, both on the right hand and on the left hand of the page
- Encircle the number, either at your right or at your left that seems to express best the way you feel about people in general, for instance:

As a whole I feel that most of people are

Friendly: 5...4...3...2...1...0...1...2...3...4...5 Unfriendly:

Namely, if you feel that people **as a whole, are friendly**, encircle any number at the left hand of the page: If you feel that people **as a whole are unfriendly**, encircle any number at the right hand of the page.

Encircle that number precisely that expresses best the way you feel. The ratings to be given are:

1. Little friendly/unfriendly.
2. Not so much friendly / unfriendly
3. Rather much friendly / unfriendly
4. Much friendly / unfriendly
5. Very much friendly / unfriendly

Part (A) My Experience of People

In your Life as a Whole, DID YOU EXPERIENCE PEOPLE AS BEING:

Friendly? 5..4..3..2..1..0..1..2..3..4..5 Unfriendly?

Cooperative? 5..4..3..2..1..0..1..2..3..4..5 Uncooperative?
 Loving? 5..4..3..2..1..0..1..2..3..4..5 Unloving?
 Ready to listen? 5..4..3..2..1..0..1..2..3..4..5 Not ready to listen?
 Interested in you? 5..4..3..2..1..0..1..2..3..4..5 Not interested in you?
 Ready to forgive? 5..4..3..2..1..0..1..2..3..4..5 Not ready to forgive?
 Smiling? 5..4..3..2..1..0..1..2..3..4..5 Not smiling?
 Appreciative? 5..4..3..2..1..0..1..2..3..4..5 Non appreciative?
 Grateful? 5..4..3..2..1..0..1..2..3..4..5 Ungrateful?

Part (B) My Self -Experience:

All in All, I EXPERIENCE MYSELF AS BEING:

Friendly? 5..4..3..2..1..0..1..2..3..4..5 Unfriendly?
 Cooperative? 5..4..3..2..1..0..1..2..3..4..5 Uncooperative?
 Loving? 5..4..3..2..1..0..1..2..3..4..5 Unloving?
 Ready to listen? 5..4..3..2..1..0..1..2..3..4..5 Not ready to listen?
 Interested in you? 5..4..3..2..1..0..1..2..3..4..5 Not interested in you?
 Ready to forgive? 5..4..3..2..1..0..1..2..3..4..5 Not ready to forgive?
 Smiling? 5..4..3..2..1..0..1..2..3..4..5 Not smiling?
 Appreciative? 5..4..3..2..1..0..1..2..3..4..5 Non appreciative?
 Grateful? 5..4..3..2..1..0..1..2..3..4..5 Ungrateful?

Note: *After you finish replying your questionnaire, keep it with you till further notice.*

Starter: A STORY

SURESH THE NAUGHTY BOY

Read or vividly retell the story of Suresh

Narrator: Suresh was a charming little boy. And like most boys, he grew up very playful and full of fun and mischief too! Sometimes or rather often, you would see him stamp his feet and yell at everybody and everything around him, so much so, that the noise you heard would almost equal the noise we hear at our Diwali Festival.. One day Suresh felt hungry. He knew his mother had prepared some sweets a few days ago. He searched for them. When he found them. He said to himself:

Suresh: Here they are! I knew, I knew that Mum would hide them here!

Narrator: And with that, he helped himself, not just once or twice.... Soon they were over.... When Suresh's mummy found the empty tin, she asked him:

Mother: Suresh, have you eaten the biscuits I kept here?

Suresh: No! No! I never took any!

Mother: A.. ah.... Then who finished them?

Suresh: Not me, I swear.

Mother: Are you sure? You liar! Now, you will have to tell me the truth.

Narrator: And with that, she gave him a good spanking. Suresh blew his top off.. He yelled:

Suresh: I'm not going to listen to you any more. I'll run away from home, I'll not come back here I'm telling you. I'm going. I'm going I don't like you. I hate you! I hate you!

Narrator: In a rage and very angry he ran away from his home. He left the village and went to the jungle. He sat on a rock and kept yelling.

Suresh: I hate you! I hate you! I hate you! I hate you!

Narrator: And then, he heard a voice telling him: "I hate you! I hate you! I hate you! I hate you!" Suresh got startled. He muttered to himself:

Suresh: Eh-! What's that? Who says to me, "I hate you1. I hate you! I have you!?"

I never knew that someone hates me! Hates me? It can't be! Yes, hates me!

Narrator: He couldn't believe his ears. Frightened to death he ran home to his mother.

Suresh: Mummy, you know, someone hates me? I heard him telling me: "I hate Lou! I hate you!" Mum, I am scared now.

Mother: Someone hating you? Where, Suresh? Where did you go?

Suresh: Come with me. I'll show you.

Narrator: Suresh took his Mum to the forest where he heard someone telling him: "I hate you. I hate you"! Then, he said to his mother:

Suresh: See... here this stone. I sat here and I heard some one telling me: "I hate you! I hate you! I hate you!"

Mother: Okay, Mum said: "Quiet now: listen to what I say and do exactly what I tell you. Now take a deep breath and shout: "I love you! I love you!"

Narrator: Full of fear Suresh faintly shouted. "I love you" "I love...you..." Mother said: Suresh dear, louder, and louder. Finally Suresh filled his lungs to full capacity and yelled:

Suresh: I love you! I love you! I love you!

Narrator: And the voice bounced back: **I Love You! I Love You! I Love You!** When the voice was still audible, mummy remarked:

Mother: And now, Suresh dear, what do you hear.....? Who is there – a friend or an enemy?

Points for Personal Reflection and Discussion

The group members will share and discuss their reflections on the points below:

1. Why when Suresh shouted "I Hate You!", he heard someone telling him "I hate you", and when he shouted "I Love You!", someone shouted "I loved you?"
2. Can we apply the law of the echo also to the area of human relationships? How? Why?
3. Does the way others relate to us show something of the way we relate to them? How? Why?.
4. To what extent? Give instances.
5. Can we change the way – for better or for worse – others deal with us? How? Give instances.
6. Can we make others treat us in the way we would like to be treated? How? To what extent?
7. Have you ever tried? Have you any instances to share with us?

8. Frankly speaking, have we a right to complain about the way others treat us? Why?
9. Find as many applications of this story as you can for our daily living.

Thoughts and Ideas for an Input

- People around us act as mirrors and walls that give us back reflections and echoes of our attitudes towards them.
- If we show ourselves friendly to people, people as a whole will show friendly to us.
- If we smile, listen to people, help people, people as a whole will smile at us, listen to us and help us
- By becoming aware of the attitudes others have towards us, we shall discover the attitudes we have towards them
- In order to know our physical features, we need a mirror to reflect them to us. In order to hear the tone of our voice we require a wall to echo it. Likewise, in order to know the way we relate to others, we need them to act as mirrors and walls.
- In human relations, the laws of the echoes and reflections are forever at work.
- The sounds and the images we project to others will always bounce back to us as echoes and reflections.
- The words and attitudes others display toward us, as they relate to us, are always similar in kind and intensity to the words and attitudes we display towards them.
- So, we better watch out! If we are unkind to others, they will be unkind to us; if we do not forgive, we shall not be forgiven; if we abuse, we shall be abused; if we neglect others, they will neglect us!

Important clarification.

Note that we are talking in general terms, not of individual cases.

It is a fact that however loving we may show ourselves to all, a few people will not love us. But one thing is certain: if we love all people, most people will love us! If we are friendly towards all, we shall have many friends to enjoy.

Persons who find people in general unfriendly, uncooperative, unforgiving etc. should better look at themselves and find out what's going on within them. They may discover that there is a lot they should change.

PROCESSING THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON ATTITUDES

Discovering your attitudes towards others.

A study and analysis of your replies to the questionnaire.

Instructions for the Moderator:

- This step is the most important one in the entire exercise.
- By analyzing the replies to the Questionnaire one may discover what his customary style of relating with others is.
- The Questionnaire forms should be processed in two subsequent steps:

First, **privately by Yourself.**

Secondly **in common in a Group Sharing Session**

First Step Privately *Alone by Yourself*

1. **Go through the entries in part (A) of your form and reflect on the following:**
 - All in all, how did you feel in the past about people in general? Positively or negatively?
 - Calculate your average ranking of part (A) of the Questionnaire. What is it?
2. **Go through the entries in part (B) of your form and reflect on the following**
 - All in all, how did you see yourself and feel about yourself in the past about your way of relating with others? Positively or negatively?
 - Calculate your average ranking of part (B) of the Questionnaire. What is it?
3. **Next, compare your entries in parts (A) and (B) of the questionnaire, specially the average rankings?**
 - Do your rankings and the averages of part (A) and part (B) somewhat tally?
 - Do others seem to perceive you as you perceive yourself or differently?
 - If differently, what could the reason be? Explore possibilities
4. **Reflections:**
 - Have you got any insights about the way you relate to people? What?
 - Anything you should change or improve in your way of relating with them? What?

Second Step Privately *Sharing in a Group*

Make sure that no one is compelled to share his ratings. Only Volunteers should Invite a volunteer to set the ball rolling. Other members may voluntarily follow

- Request the volunteer to read his ratings of part (A) of the questionnaire, on how he feels about people in general.
After hearing his ratings, the group members will react to him and tell him how they see him - rather positive or negative - in his experiencing people in general.
- Next the volunteer will read his ratings of part (B) of the questionnaire on how he perceives himself
Again, after hearing his ratings about himself, the group members will react to him and tell him how they see him.
- They may even try to correct his self-perception for better or for worse
- The group members in their feedback should be caring and encouraging, never hurting or discouraging
- The moderator has to be alert and see that not harm or hurt is done to anyone..

Closing Step Personal Reflection and Prayer:

- Quiet down. Relaxation and or breathing exercises will help
- Spend some time in silent prayer..
- Request the participants to ponder on these points:
 - Are my attitudes towards others satisfactory?
If so, how to improve them?
 - How are the attitudes of others towards me?
If not satisfactory, what could I change in me?

Bible Quotes suitable for this prayer reflection.

Matthew 7/1-6	Do not judge and you will not be judged.
Matthew 7/7 – 14	Do to others what you want others do to you.
Matthew 10/40-42	You will get the same rewards you give.
Luke 6/37-42	You will be treated with the same measure you treat others.

Closing Hymn: St. Francis of Assisi: “Make Me A Channel of Your Peace.”

APPENDIX Activities:

Activities are very powerful to drive home the main ideas of the exercise.
Divide the larger group into small sub-groups say 5 or 6 members each.

Role playing - The Blaming Game. Whose fault is it anyhow?

Small groups may role-play any of the cases suggested below or any others of their choice.

After each role-play, a short discussion and evaluation should be held.

1. Mrs. Fernandes, a very good and respectable lady, complains:
“All my neighbors and all the society members are most uncooperative and unhelpful. You cannot count on anyone even in an emergency.”
2. Nirmala, a teacher, complains to the principal: “All the children in my class are most unfeeling and rebellious.”
3. Rose says, “Nobody loves me at home. No one ever cares for me. I am treated like a stranger in the house”.
4. Fr. Peter, the Parish Priest, wails: “All my parishioners are most ungrateful. No one ever thanks me or shows any appreciation for all I am doing for them.”
5. John, a good foot-bailer, grumbles “All my team players are very selfish. No one ever thinks of helping others.”

The ‘Labeling Game’ :**Preparation:**

- ✓ Prepare as many big labels (Say, 4” by 8” in size) as participants.
 - ✓ Write on each label the sort of person each participant is supposed to be.
Sad Unsociable Short tempered Kind Friendly Proud.
Selfish Clownish Ready to listen. Touchy Angry Any other
 - ✓ You may prepare several labels with the same description.
- Pin a label on the back of each participant or tie it around his forehead in such a way that no one knows what his/her label is.

Game:

- ✓ For about 10 to 12 minutes ask them to move freely. They are supposed to plan a picnic, a birthday party or any other activity.
- ✓ They will meet one another, talk and discuss matters.
- ✓ Inform the group that each one has to be treated according to the label he carries.

- **Processing and Sharing:**

- After the game, all will gather together and each one will have to guess the label he carries judging by the way others treated him or related to him.
- Anyone is free to put in, his observations and comments.
- All will be invited to share their findings, insights and awareness.
- Encourage them to share the feelings they experienced while the game was on.
- Were they happy with the way others treated them? Why?

The “Friendly and Unfriendly Game”**Preparation:**

- ✓ Prepare as many small slips of paper as participants.
- ✓ On 75% of them write the following: “You are supposed to be a very friendly and sociable person. On the 25%, write: You are supposed to be a loner and unsociable person.
- ✓ Fold them and distribute them at random to the participants.
- ✓ No one should know what was written on the others’ slips.

Game:

- ✓ Ask them to move freely and relate to one another for about 10 to 15 minutes, talking about studies, sports, games, pictures or any other thing of their liking.
- ✓ They are to role-play the instructions given in the slips.

At the end of the game, all the friendly and sociable people will be happily enjoying each other’s company. All the unfriendly people will be alone by themselves, No joy, no company! It’s useless to say: “Nobody befriended me!” Rather say: “I am not a friendly person!”

Processing and Sharing:

- Ask the Participants to guess what were the instructions written on everybody’s slips
- Request them to put down in writing their observations and comments:
- Finally, ask them to share with others their findings and insights.