

THE BIRD AND THE WELL

Intent of the Fable

- ✓ *This fable has been prepared to exemplify the psychological game, commonly known as "POOR ME"*
- ✓ *"The Poor Me" game is a ploy to avoid personal efforts to face our problems and to hook others to come to our rescue.*
- ✓ *The pay off of the game is the concern, pity and sympathy one gets from others.*
- ✓ *The end result of the game is that the "sufferer" unawares seems to like his plight and finally becomes really helpless.*

The fable is very simple.

- ✓ *A bird falls into well. He is unhurt. He can help himself out of the well.*
- ✓ *But he does not make any efforts. He expects to be rescued by the public. When he is not rescued he begins complaining and blaming everyone.*
- ✓ *Consequently, he feels victimized, then he indulges in "self-pity" (Poor me!) and tries to attract the attention and pity of one and all.*
- ✓ *Actually he - subconsciously -- enjoys being pitied (payoff).*

The Fable

Once upon a time, a beautiful bird was soaring high in the skies. He was free and happy. One day, he fell into a broad, deep dry well. Fortunately, he was unhurt. Once at the bottom of the well, the bird did not try to help himself out of his trouble. He just sat down and expected the public to rescue him out of the well

When people did not come to his rescue, he began wailing and lamenting about his bad luck. He kept saying to himself: "Poor me! What wrong did I do that I deserved this lot? Down in this well here, I am sure to die!"

Next, he started blaming others for his misfortune: He muttered: "It's not my fault that I lay here and suffer at the bottom of this well. It is the fault of those who dug it. It is the fault of those who did not 'cover its mouth. It is the unconcern of the passersby for not rescuing me from the well. No! No! It's not my fault."

And with that, he kept shouting: "Help! Help! Heellppp! Pleeese! Get me out of here!" People outside the well kept telling the bird: "You got wings, you can fly; the well is broad, fly, help yourself out of the well"

Bewailing the bird cried out: "I can't help myself! If I fly, I'll hurt my wings. I'll surely dash against the walls of the well. It will pain. No! No! You got to rescue me out of here. It's not my fault that I am trapped down here"

People outside kept telling the bird: "Come on! Make an effort! Your wings are O.K. You are unhurt. Try to fly! Surely you can help yourself!"

But, the bird refused to try. He would not make any effort to help himself. He just kept on lamenting his bad luck and blaming others for it. He bemoaned: "Poor me!" No one cares! No one wants to help me! People are really cruel and heartless. Can't they see how much I suffer?"

With all this talk the bird attracted so much attention and cheap pity from the onlookers that without his realizing it, he began enjoying being trapped at the bottom of the well!

At last, slowly, his wings withered away. In the end he could not fly anymore. Truly, now, he could not help himself, neither could others help him to fly again and so, the bird pitied by all and pitying himself, lived hereafter a miserable existence at the bottom of the well.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

Note for the Moderator:

Ask the Participants to reply in writing to the questions below,

The answers suggested in brackets are for you, moderator, not for the Participants.

1. Why did not the bird make any effort to get out of the well? (*To avoid pains and hurts*)
2. What did he expect from the passersby? (*That they should rescue him*)
3. What did he say when the passers-by did not rescue him out of the well? (*He blamed others to justify his inaction*)
4. What did the people outside the well try to do to help him? (*They gave him courage to help him to come out of the well by himself*)
5. Can you explain the difference between "helping and rescuing?"
6. Did he listen to his helpers? Why? (**No, he didn't want to be helped, but rescued**)
7. Did the bird obtain some benefits, a "pay-off" by staying in the well? (**Yes, he became an object of the attention and pity** of all).
8. What did finally happen to the bird? (**He became crippled and really unable to help himself**).
9. Whom had he to blame for it? (**Only himself**)

THOUGHT HELPFUL FOR A MINI-INPUT

Helping Vs Rescuing

There is a world of difference between 'helping' and 'rescuing'

'Helping' means giving assistance to a person

- Who is in need,
- Who cannot help himself
- Who wants to be helped

to solve his problems

'Rescuing' means

- Helping a person who can help himself.
- Helping a person who needs help, but who does not want it.

Adverse Consequences of Rescuing Operations.

- ✓ Any rescuing operation prevents the person helped from learning and growing.
- ✓ Helping brings joy, peace and a feeling of accomplishment to the one in need.
- ✓ Rescuing on the contrary, will finally beget a feeling of inferiority and of dependency from others to the one rescued.
- ✓ By helping others, we allow others grow – by rescuing, we stifle their growth.
- ✓ By helping we enhance their self-image and boost up their ego – by rescuing we inflate our own ego. . .
- ✓ Helping implies trust in others capacity, – by rescuing distrust them.
- ✓ By helping we assert others, by rescuing we discount them.
- ✓ By helping we encourage others to stand on their own feet - by rescuing we make them dependent on us.

POINTS FOR PERSONAL INTROSPECTION.

1. Does the behavior of the bird tell you something of the way you behave when you fall into in troubles and hardships?
2. When in trouble, do you accept full responsibility for it, or blame others or the circumstances of your life?
3. Did you ever blame others for not rescuing you from your misfortunes? Give instances.
4. Do you indulge in "self-pity"? Explain. Give instances.
5. Do you play the "poor me" game? Give instances.
6. Do you try to attract people's attention and pity towards you when in trouble and difficulties? Give Instances.
7. When in a well, do you try all the means in your power to get out it by yourself?
8. In serious difficulties, when you really and truly cannot help yourself, are you humble enough to accept genuine help from others?
9. When you see others in need. all in all, are you a "helper" or a "rescuer"?

EXPLAIN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES

- It is unkindness to help others when they can help themselves.
- Do not bail others out from the consequences of their willful mistakes
- Don rescue others – even your children - from the pains of growing
- If you wish to be genuine, do not ask others to rescue you from your ungenuin actions.
- Take full responsibility for your life, more even for your sins and wrongdoings.
- Walk on your legs, not on borrowed crutches
- In your failures and falls, blame none but yourself.
- Take your life in your hands. They are yours
- Wailing and bewailing is the consolation of the weak.
- Face your problems, they will vanish. Run away from them, they will follow you.

