

EFFECTIVE TEACHING APPROACH

To educate others, first, come to their level

THE WATERMELON HUNTER.

Intent of the Story

- ✓ *How to teach life habits effectively*
- ✓ *How to educate children and simple illiterate persons*
- ✓ *How to help people to help themselves.*

The Story

Once upon a time, Mr. Brown, just a visitor, entered an unknown country. All of a sudden he saw the villagers running away in horror from their fields and shouting: "Monster! Monster!" He stopped them and asked what the monster was. They replied: "A monster appeared in our fields!"

Mr. Brown went into the fields to see what that monster was, and he found that the monster was a big, huge watermelon that happened first time to grow in their fields. Mr. Brown told them not to be scared. He volunteered to free them from that monster. There and then, he went into the field holding a knife in his hands. He plucked the watermelon with his bare hands, then cut it into slices and ate it in front of their frightened eyes.

When the simple villagers saw what Brown did, they got even more scared and alarmed now, not about the water melon, but about Mr. Brown. They said: "This man is too powerful! Very soon he will cut us also into slices and eat us!" So, they entreated him to leave their land as soon as possible.

Some time later, a certain Mr. John happened to visit those villagers when a similar incident happened. Terrified, the villagers were fleeing from the village screaming: "Monster! Monster!"

Mr. John, the new visitor, sized up the situation and in order to gain the villagers' confidence, he ran away from the fields along with them saying: "Yes, it has to be a monster! It might be very dangerous!"

Soon after that, the villagers became very friendly with him. Later on, Mr. John progressively, started giving them some hints on cultivation, and on how to grow fruits

and plants. Sometime later, even how to grow watermelons, which now they cultivated in their fields and which they relish at their meals.

An adaptation of the story: "The Water-melon Hunters"

POINTS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Why did the villagers reject Mr. Brown, their first visitor?
2. Why did he fail to help the villagers get rid of their "silly" fear of water-melons?
3. Why, on the contrary, did they gladly accept Mr. John?
4. How did Mr. John manage to help the villagers to get rid of their fears? What method he used?
5. Why quite often, in the past, poor and illiterate people refused the help given them by zealous social workers and benefactors?
6. Can we brand them as "ungrateful" and "uncooperative"? Whose fault was it? What went wrong? Can you give some examples?
7. Can ingrained and deep seated fears and prejudices in people's hearts be driven away all of a sudden? Why?
8. Kindly, find some applications 'of the story of the water melon hunter for Parents and Teachers in the education of their children?
9. Can we discount "irrational" fears and "silly" ideas in small children or even in grown-ups and ridicule them? Why? What would the outcome be?
10. Is there any better way to help people – young and old - shed mistaken ideas and irrational fears? How would you tackle them?

THOUGHTS FOR AN INPUT

- While educating the simple and the illiterate and our children, we cannot be in a hurry. It is a lengthy and progressive process. There are no short-cuts.
- We have to come down to the level where they are now and slowly walk up with them to the place we would like them to reach.
- To help people to help themselves, we have to become one with them, understand their mentality, their prejudices and fears. We cannot disabuse them, all of a sudden, of their errors and mistaken views.
- We cannot discount people's perceptions and fears even if they look irrational to us. . For them their perceptions look real.
- Parents and teachers too should not discount their children's feelings and fears but accept them.
- For children their problems are always big! Don't dismiss them easily.
- When they are wrong or mistaken, do not scold them, but patiently, consistently and lovingly show them the right way
- Rather than to rescue them from their mistakes and apprehensions, patiently, we have to help them to help themselves. In the course of time, their attitudes will change
- We have no right to forcefully thrust on others what we consider "good", "true", "right" or "civilized" according to our way of thinking.
- First, we have get them to see that what we teach them is good", "true", "right" and "civilized"

- Many a zealous and well meaning social workers at the end felt disappointed when after trying to improve the condition of poor villagers and slum dwellers, they were not wanted.
- Illiterate people are not able take easily to schooling, formal education, and new technological methods of farming, hygienic habits, and strange food patterns without proper preparation.