

CUCKOO! CUCKOO!

Intent of the story:

To realize the difference between:

- ✓ *Being real and artificial;*
- ✓ *Spontaneity and pretence.*
- ✓ *To be intimate or just friendly*
- ✓ *Being yourself, or some one else.*

The Story

Once upon a time, a little boy was strolling in the forest. All of a sudden, he heard a cuckoo's voice. . He looked up and, lo and behold, he saw a cuckoo merrily flying from branch to branch joyously cuckooing away.

Full of wonder the boy exclaimed: "Cuckoo, Cuckoo, tell me where your house is?"
The Cuckoo replied: "My house? The whole forest is my house"

The child remarked: "You know, at home we have a cuckoo in a little house on the top of grandpa's clock. He is ever inside his little house. He never flies out to the forest like you; besides, he sings only once every hour, not like you, who keep singing non stop."

The Cuckoo inquired: "You mean a cuckoo that lives inside the clock and sings the hours?" "Exactly," the boy replied, "he is very pretty, and he sings so well!" The Cuckoo shaking his head interrupted the child: "Hummmm! But he is not real!"

"What do you mean no real?" the boy inquired. Patiently, the Cuckoo explained: "He cannot fly like me, whenever he likes! He cannot move out of his little box. He has no friends. He cannot love, nor can he suffer! His singing is dull! There is no feeling in it!"

The boy remarked: "But, isn't lovely to have such a little cozy house and to sing every hour? Isn't lovely to be cared for by one and all in the house, and be fussed about? "

The Cuckoo said; "Not at all, my friend! It is not lovelier to be free than being locked in cozy house, to sing when one feels, rather than when the hours strike, to care for others, rather than to be cared for, to be loved than to be fussed!"

The little boy replied: "Oh, Cuckoo, I like you. I love you! Please, come to my house! Sing for me every hour. I'll give you a nice place to stay. I'll be your friend. You will be my friend too!"

The Cuckoo said: "I am so happy you want to be my friend. But, please, if you want to be my friend, if you love me, do not take my freedom away, allow me to be myself".

And the Cuckoo went on: "Since you love me, since you want to be my friend, from time to time I'll come to visit you and, in your garden, I'll sing for you and to tell you, that I love you too!"

And the Cuckoo added: "Be sure, my singing will be sweeter and truer than the artificial singing of your grandpa's cuckoo in the little box. Our friendship will be warm and true!" The boy asked; "You mean real?" "Exactly, my dear," the Cuckoo retorted.

Points for Reflection and Discussion

1. Point out the differences between the Cuckoo of the Grandpa's clock and the one of the forest.
2. Why did the little boy expect all the cuckoos to be like the one of his Grandpa's clock?
3. Did the boy's way of thinking tell us, or manifest something of our mentality today?
4. What is meant by being "real"?
5. Can any artificial, over-socialized and formalistic person enjoy true friendship, love and intimacy? Why?
6. Can we be "alive" in a world ruled by regimentation, fads and fashions? Why?
7. Can human beings – especially children - deprived of freedom; grow to be natural and real? Why?
8. Can a life shielded from pains, dangers and risks afford happiness and the joy to us? Why?
9. What sort of human relationships are common today in our modern society, honest or dishonest, natural or artificial? Why?
10. Can they be satisfying? Why?
11. Is it easy now-a-days to experience genuine friendship and intimacy? Why?
12. Are you happy with the way you relate to your people at home? Why? What do you find missing?
13. What are the differences between a companion and a true friend?
14. Have you ever had a true and deep friendship in your life? Explain.

Explain the words of the Cuckoo:

- It is not lovelier to be free than being locked in a cozy house, to sing when one feels, rather than when the hours strike, to care for others, rather than to be cared for, to be loved than to be fussed!"
- The Cuckoo said: I am so happy you want to be my friend. But, please, if you want to be my friend, if you love me, do not take away my freedom, allow me to be myself.
- And the Cuckoo remarked: "Be sure, my singing will be sweeter and truer than the artificial singing of your grandpa's cuckoo in the little box. Our friendship will be warmer and truer!"

➤ The boy asked: "You mean real?" "Exactly, my dear," the Cuckoo retorted.

Point's for Reflection and Discussion

- The greatest satisfaction and joy in life is being oneself.
- By living in human society, we are forced to play roles, to put on masks, to conform to silly conventions and arbitrary rules of etiquette.
- Society robs us of our 'freedom, spontaneity, and genuineness. It puts us in a "straight jacket".
- The "higher" and the more sophisticated the society we live in is, the more we are imprisoned by fads, fashions, and "phoniness". We lie to one another. We cannot say what we feel but only what others want to hear.
- Don't be one of the crowds, neither try to be different. Be yourself.
- Being yourself, you will always be different. There is no other you.
- There is a deep peace and a great 'satisfaction just by being what you are
- Being oneself means being free, genuine, unconstrained, untouched by criticisms, without regrets and resentments.
- Being different, more often than not, implies being rebellious, obstinate, slave to pride, resentments and anger