

WHOSE FAULT IS IT?

Intent of these notes:

- ✓ *How to solve conflicts*
- ✓ *Stop playing the "Blaming-game".*
- ✓ *Accept responsibility for your actions and mistakes*

TWO STORIES

Johnny and Rose

A cozy little cottage on a hill, one night, all of a sudden caught fire. A young couple, Johnny and Rose, the only dwellers therein, rushed out to save their lives from the fire.

Hardly had they come out, when a quarrel broke among them. Johnny shouted: "I have told you hundred times over not to go to bed without putting out the embers of the kitchen stove. But, stubborn like a mule, you would never listen. Look, look now what has happened. Our house is burning! Are you satisfied? Are you happy?"

"It's not my fault!," yelled Rose. "It's your fault! I have told you thousands of times not to smoke when you go to sleep. But you dog-headed, always go to bed with your cigarette but on your lips. Why do you blame me now? Can't you see that the fire began in the bedroom and not in the kitchen? It's clear. It's your fault. Only your fault!"

"Shut your mouth" Johnny screamed, "Don't blame me. I am telling you: it's your fault! Yes your fault!.... Yours, only yours."

Whilst they were quarreling and blaming each other, the fire, that at the start was small, grew bigger and bigger... then, fiercer and fiercer. Then, the cottage became an "inferno". The house went on burning. Meant while, they went on blaming each others..

Finally, before Johnny and Rose could settle their quarrel, and find out whose fault was it, their pretty, cozy, little cottage was reduced to a heap of smoldering ashes!.

Barthol and Teddy

Long ago, there were two friends, Barthol and Teddy. They were fishermen. Pooling their moneys together they bought a cute little fishing boat. Daily, they used to go out fishing. One day, their boat sprang a leak. The water slowly was flooding it..

Teddy shouted at Barthol. "Look, here! Can't you see? There is a leak. The boat is getting flooded; we are sinking...Barthol, I warned you so many times to check the boat before leaving the shore. But, you pig-headed never listened! See now what's happening. We are sinking! It's your fault!

Barthol got mad at Teddy: "No!. It's not my fault! You knew that the boat needed attention; even you had told me that, yet you did nothing about it. Why the hell are you blaming me now? It's your fault!"

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Shut up your dirty mouth" roared Teddy, "Who do you think you are shouting at me like that! And blaming me? One word more and I'll smash your head!" And with that, Teddy swung the little oar in the air like a deadly weapon.

A hand-to-hand fight ensued. There were blows, abuses, yells and curses. The little boat was dangerously swinging this side, that side. In the meantime, the boat was getting more and more flooded. At the end, all of a sudden, with a violent jerk, the little boat toppled over and sank.

Unfortunately, Barthol and Teddy could never know whose fault was it, before they would drown!.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. In what way did the persons portrayed in the story fail to settle their dispute?
2. What were the consequences of their failure?
3. When something goes wrong what's the first thing people at all levels, - personal, family, corporately, regional even international - instinctively do? Why? Give instances.
4. What are the consequences of that type of behavior?
5. Why there is so much strife, violence, hatred, bloodshed and wars within our homes, our country and in the world at large?
6. What do we mean by the "blaming game"? Is it common among all of us? Why?
7. Does the "blaming game" solve any problems, or rather makes them worse? How?
8. When a problem or conflict arises what is the thing we should never do at the start?
9. How best to begin to solve a conflict? Explain and exemplify.
10. What are the attitudes needed to solve conflicts?
11. Reflect on your past life. Tell us what did you do to resolve the conflicts you faced while dealing with others? Did it work?
12. Are there some other lessons we can learn from the stories?
13. Have you any further remarks to make?

Thoughts for Teaching or Input

- Conflicts and problems are unavoidable; they are part of human life.
- Do not try to find out whose fault it is.
- By knowing who is at fault, the problem will not be solved.
- Before you can find that out, you might be already dead like Teddy and Barthol
- When there is problem or a conflict do not play the blaming game.

- Do not blame even yourself. Accepting responsibility is healthy, blaming yourself is not.
- When there is a problem the first thing is to search for is a remedy and apply it immediately. First, put off the fire of the little cottage, or plug the leak in the boat.
- Blaming implies judging and condemning others and excusing oneself. Nobody likes to be judged and condemned.
- Any problem or conflict involves two parties. We always need two hands to clap!
- Both parties have to have a will to find a solution and a will to compromise.
- The “all-or nothing attitude” will never solve any conflicts
- Both parties searching for a solution in a conflict have to be willing to be 50% winners and 50% losers.
- Addiction to the “blaming game” prevents us from growing and living in peace with others.
- The “blaming game” makes it impossible to accept responsibly for our actions.
- It keeps us immature, infantile and emotionally crippled.
- Children blame others; truly grown persons accept responsibility for their actions
- All the world wars and deadly conflicts started by the blaming game.

The formula – a bit complex - to solve conflicts and problems is:

- Do not blame anyone, not even yourself.
- Common sense.
- A will to grow.
- Ability to compromise.
- Love for others.
- Objectivity Examine facts, not intentions.
- Take responsibility for your feelings and failures.
- Find solutions and alternatives
- Finally chose the best possible one

Explain the following statements:

- Growth begins where blaming ends.
- Solutions to conflicts are found when the blaming-game is done away.
- Blaming others turns us into violent ‘reactors, instead of being free “actors”
- We can’t change things to suit us, but we can accept them by changing our attitudes.
- The penalty for refusing to accept responsibility in conflict is war and hatred.
- Blaming is an escape from personal responsibility and a stopper to human growth.