

# THE PORTRAIT

## Intent of the Story:

- ✓ *The importance of accepting our real self*
- ✓ *If we reject our real-self we shall never be happy and contented*
- ✓ *We come to know our real self through the mediation of others.*

## THE STORY

Mr. More, a celebrity, asked famous painter to draw his portrait. Before he would work on the canvas, the painter prepared a sketch of Mr. Moore's portrait for his approval.

It was a perfect sketch. It looked real and true. When he showed it to his customer for approval Mr. More did not like it. He found it unattractive, nearly repelling. He told the artist: "What? This is what you drew of me? I don't like it at all! I don't want this sketch. Look! You drew my legs too short. Please, draw them longer."

When the painter showed him a second sketch, he remonstrated again: "Can't you see that my arms are too long? Make them shorter!" The artist prepared another sketch, this time with longer legs and shorter arms.

When Mr. More saw a third sketch, he complained again: "Good gracious me! What sort of ears you drew! They are too small! Make them bigger."

Time and again, Mr. More went on objecting: "I do not like this pose of mine! Change it!. And, what about my complexion? Make it fairer! And now my eyes! And now my mouth! And. now my tummy!"

At last, the final sketch met with the approval of the customer. Then, Mr. More said: "Good! Now, I like my portrait.. I look so smart!"

After the portrait was finished Mr. More left the Painter's studio very happy and glad. With his beautiful painting he went home. Then, proudly, he showed his portrait to all his friends and relations. When they saw it, all burst out laughing!

They said: "What's this? Whose portrait is this? It's not a portrait but a cartoon, a caricature! Please, tell us who is the artist that painted this nonsense. It's not true. It does not show your real self. We like you much more as you are than what this painter made you to look like"

In anger and shame, Mr. More took the portrait and tore it to pieces. Then, he ran to the studio and told the painter: "Please draw my portrait again according to the first sketch you made of me. That's the one, I love most now"

## **Questions for Reflection and Discussion**

1. What was the problem with Mr. More? Why did he reject so many sketches of his portrait? Actually what or whom was he rejecting?
2. Why the final portrait he liked, looked so different from what he really was?
3. What's the difference between our "ideal self" and our "real self"?
4. Which of the two should we love most? Why?
5. What are the consequences of rejecting our real self?
6. What do we mean by "denials", "masks" "role-playing" in connection with self-rejection?
7. In the context of the story of Mr. More, explain his final words to the painter: "Please draw my portrait according to the first sketch you made of me. That's the one now, I love most."
8. What did make Mr. More change his mind to like the way he was?
9. How much do the way others see us, affect the way we see ourselves? Explain.
10. How can we help others to accept their real selves?
11. What do we mean by: positive and negative strokes? Put-downs and appreciation?

## **Explain the following sentences:**

- ✓ Never put up a show or pretend to be what you are not to win people's approval and affection.
- ✓ When dealing with others shed all masks and uniforms.
- ✓ In human relationships, honesty is the best policy
- ✓ Don't try to be different, be yourself. By being yourself, you will always be different
- ✓ If others like you good for you, if they don't worse for them.

## **Ideas for a short Talk or Input.**

- The story depicts a process from self-dislike and self-rejection to self-acceptance.
- The way others saw him and liked him, made him see himself different, and likeable.
- The acceptance he received from others helped him to accept himself. .
- People act like mirrors. We finally, see ourselves, for better or for worse, as they see us.
- Mr. More had a poor "self-image". He disliked himself.
- He disliked the first sketches the painter made, ditto, of him - what he really was – his real self.
- By rejecting his first sketches, actually, he rejected himself. He was very unhappy with himself.
- He wanted to look different. He asked the painter to change the sketches and paint him as he would like to be. – His "ideal self"
- But, his "ideal" self (what he would like to be) did not tally with his "real" self (what he actually-was)
- That's why his friends laughed at, and rejected his final painting.
- When people liked him as he was. (His real self), not as he thought he was (Imaginary self) he started liking himself.
- Actually the problem with Mr. More was in his mind. It was an imaginary problem.
- This problem in fact, affects us\_all. We think and feel about ourselves not according to what we really are but according to what we would like to be.

