

## **TO SAVE OR NOT TO SAVE ONE'S SKIN**

### **THAT'S THE QUESTION!**

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#### **Intent of this Fable..**

- ✓ *In our daily living all of us are faced with difficulties, opposition and conflicts. We may feel threatened, attacked, trapped.*
- ✓ *On such occasions, people opt for different 'strategies' to face those difficulties. Some strategies are good, others are dishonest, some are fair,, some are constructive, and others are destructive.*
- ✓ *In the fable, we exemplify some of those strategies through the behavior of different animals, like , **The Elephant, The Tiger, The Deer, The Snake, The Tortoise .The Dog , The Chameleon.***

## **THE FABLE.**

**Narrator:** Many, many years ago the animals in the forest lived friendly and peacefully. On an unhappy day, a man came to the forest with some strange instrument in his hands and killed a deer. Next day, another man appeared and killed a tiger. From that time on, men killed, enslaved and caged now one, then another of the forest dwellers.

To protect themselves from the menace of men, the animals called for a meeting to discuss how better to defend themselves from man's cruelty. Because of his size and imposing appearance the Elephant spoke first, then the others animals spoke in turns:

**The Elephant said:** "My, dear friends, my tactic is to scare men. When I see them, I run towards them flapping my ears, showing my formidable tusks and crushing under my feet everything on my way"

**Then The Tiger spoke:** "I believe that the best defense is offence. My strategy is to attack! Before man knows what's happening. I am on him with lightning swiftness, my paws and my jaws do the rest."

**Next The Deer remarked::** "Well, my way is running away. My security rests in my speed. You know, I practice a lot of jogging. Whenever faced or seen by men. I run like the wind. Soon, I am out of their sight."

**then, The Snake said::** "I hate man! My method is cunning. I lie quiet and unseen in the grass. I do not mind to wait for hours on end. When I see a man approaching, my heart craves for revenge. No sooner he is close enough, I spring up and instantly I bite him with my poisonous fangs. O! What joy I experience to see him dying writhing in agony."

**The Tortoise was next:** "My method is very simple. I withdraw. I have built for myself a very thick and strong protective shell which I always carry on my back. Whenever I see man, I go inside it. Once there, I see nothing, I hear nothing, I fear nothing!"

**Smilingly The Dog said:** "My friends bear up with me. Facts are facts. We have to accept that men are superior to us. They are a great threat to us. Let's not fool ourselves. Why do you want to fight men, or to scare them? or to run away from them? Or to destroy them?"

There is no use of all these tricks! For our skin sake, for our peace of mind, let us submit to men; let us become their allies and friends! I, for one, have decided to allow myself to be domesticated by them, to stay in their homes and serve them. It's worth losing one's freedom to secure shelter, food and peace of mind. Let us be practical my friends."

**Lastly The Chameleon,** proudly and full of complacency upbraided them all: "You fools! Why do you want to fight, or run away, or kill, or withdraw from, or to scare, or to serve men? You need nothing of the sort! My method is the best. I just keep changing colors according to convenience. I change the color of my skin any moment, any lime, any place. I always put on the color that suits me best. I do not care what color I take. I couldn't care less for my identity and my looks. The all important thing is to save my skin!"

## **Appendix**

### **Strategies Adopted by Different Animals When Under Attack**

1. **The elephant:** Force or show of force, noise intimidation, threats...
2. **The tiger:** Frontal attacks, violence, mindless cruelty, destruction, aggression, assault....
3. **The deer:** Running away, keeping off, avoidance, cowardice, shyness, hiding, timidity, avoiding confrontation, escapism,
4. **The snake:** Crookedness, slyness, revengefulness, backbiting.....
5. **The tortoise:** Withdrawal, false security, cutting oneself off from reality, Day-dreaming, escapism, psychosis....
6. **The dog:** Compliance, subservience, blind obedience, a yes -man, submissiveness Obliging, surrendering, currying favor, giving up the fight, giving up one's freedom, Looking for security above all,.
7. **The chameleon:** Opportunism, lack of principles, lack of values, turned-coat,. Inconsistency, party politics.....

## **Which Strategy Would Be The Best.?**

It is not possible to apply a uniform strategy to deal with all situations.

- Each situation may demand a different strategy yet whatever strategy one may take **Should be assertive, constructive, dignified, human, and rational.**

The two essential elements in any good strategy are: **assertiveness** and **self-esteem**.

- We mean by **assertiveness** the will always to have one's rights respected, while at the same time respecting the rights of others.
- We mean by **self-esteem** the will never to do anything that would lower one's worth and dignity.