

Avoiding Conflict: Week 1

Month: Sept.

Week #: 4

Day: c. Wed. Time: 30 min.

Active Listening: Hot Harry Play

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Objectives/Aims

The students will: be able to respond to someone's anger using the skill of active listening (paraphrasing someone's feelings and thoughts)

Materials

none

Illustration

Harry, on the right, seems to be very angry with his friend Number 7... His friend is pointing towards the envelope on the table. I wonder what it is?

Background

When someone verbally attacks us, our natural tendency is to defend ourselves by responding in kind. A useful way to avoid a conflict and even heal the situation is to use a technique called 'active listening.' In essence, active listening is when you listen carefully to the other person's words and acknowledge that person's feelings. Then, you try to state what you heard or observed using your own words (paraphrasing). Finally, you make sure that you heard and



understood them correctly by listening and watching for their reaction to your paraphrasing.

Group Activity

1. Explain to the students that you are going to present a play where 'Hot Harry' is 'hot under the collar' (very, very angry).

3. Ask for volunteers to be Hot Harry and his friend.

4. Instruct the actors that they will be 'people puppets' and that they need to repeat whatever you tell them to say. They should also ad-lib appropriate gestures and actions. You can show them an example if necessary.

5. Tell the students that this is going to be a two act play. They need to watch and listen carefully to see which act is better.

Act 1:

Hot Harry [stomps up to friend and is very angry]: You jerk! Here I am your best friend, and you didn't even invite me to your party!

Friend [reacting with anger, pushes Harry]: I'm a jerk? You're so stupid you didn't even open the envelope I gave you!

[The two friends end up wrestling on the ground.]

Act 2:

Hot Harry [stomps up to friend and is very angry] You jerk! Here I am your best friend, and you didn't even invite me to your party!

Friend [remaining calm] I see you're really angry and hurt. You think I didn't invite you to my party because I don't like you anymore.

Hot Harry [beginning to calm down] Yes...

Friend I do like you and I did invite you. Didn't you open the envelope I gave you?

Hot Harry [looking sheepish] Oops, no. I lost it... I'm sorry I called you a jerk.

Friend [putting his arm around Hot Harry's shoulders] That's okay, you can come over to my house tonight and have some leftover cake and ice cream.

Group Discussion Questions

1. Who liked which act better and why?

A: The 2nd one, because they remained friends; they didn't have a fight, etc.

2. Can losing your temper cause a conflict?

A: Yes, and it can make a bad situation worse; it doesn't heal the situation.

3. How did the friend help Hot Harry to cool down?

A: By using active listening.

4. Do you think the friend was a strong person? Why?

A: Yes, because she remained calm and didn't get drawn into the conflict. She kept their wits about her and used active listening.

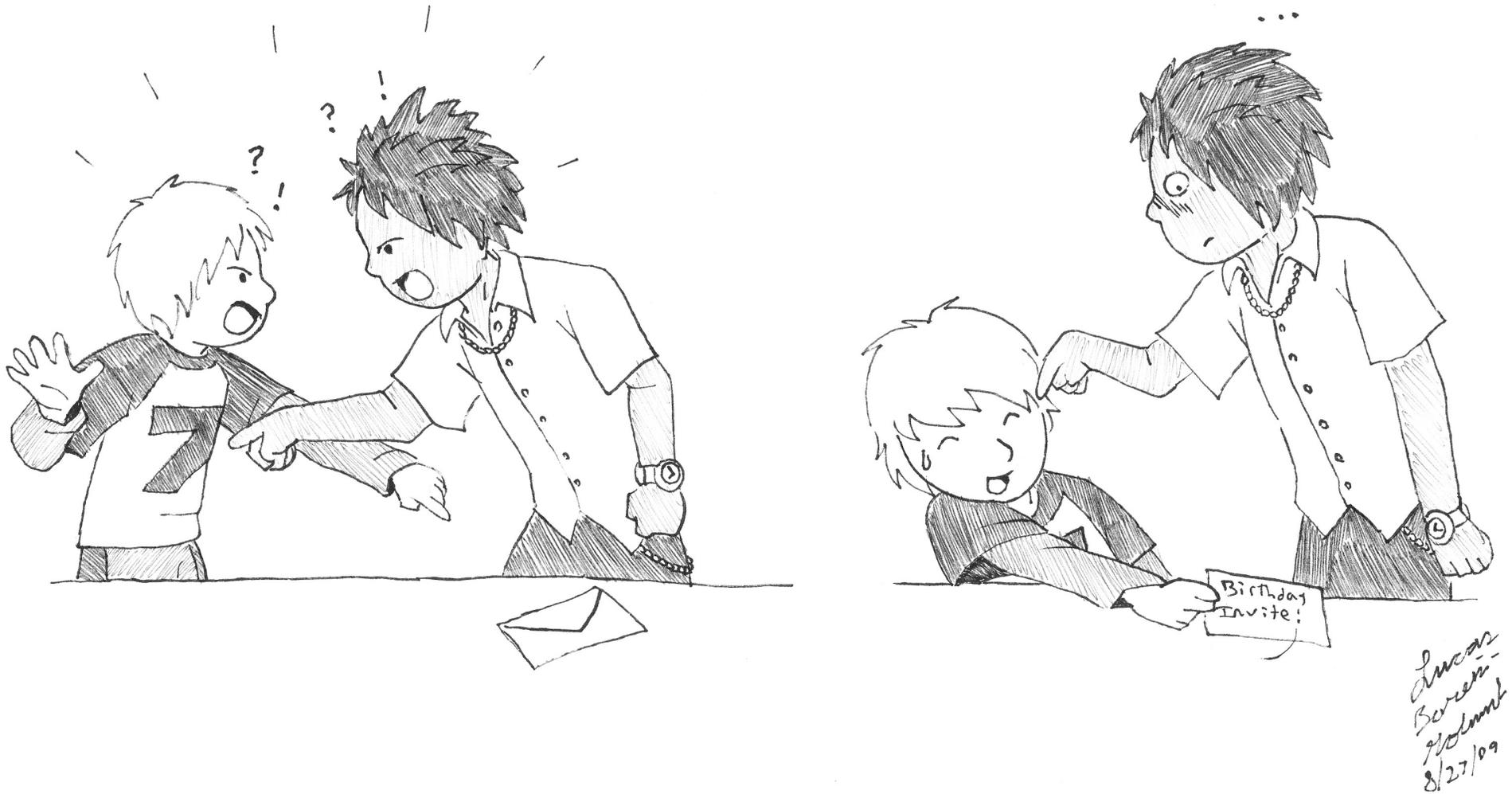
5. Would you want Hot Harry's friend as a friend? Why?

A: Yes, because she is a good listener who acknowledges my feelings and listens to what I say.

Variations/Extensions

Conclusion

Say, "When someone verbally attacks us, our natural tendency is to defend ourselves by responding in kind. A useful way to avoid a conflict and even heal the situation is to use a technique called 'active listening.'"



**Harry, on the right, seems to be very angry with his friend...
His friend is pointing towards the envelope on the table. I wonder what it is?**