

Newton and the Needy Newts

A Gosmos Grow Adventure



We all like to do well and be thought of in positive terms.
We enjoy having others say nice things to us or about us.
This is very natural and perfectly okay.

But sometimes our “Likes” become “Needs”.
We no longer **want** others to like us.
They **must** like us.
We no longer **hope** that we do well on the test.
We **must** do well on the test.
We are no longer satisfied with **looking good**.
We **must** be the **best looking**.

These demands, that we **must** be this or that,
that others **must** treat us in certain ways
and that life **must** be the way we want it to be, have become needs.

Being needy in this way can cause problems as you will see with
Newton and the Needy Newts.

Newton and the Needy Newts

A. Main Focus:

Understanding that when our "likes" becomes "needs", we set ourselves up for disappointment and to be overly concerned about the opinion of others.

B. The Main Concepts:

It is typical for children to want to be liked by others. It is natural for them to want praise and recognition. We all have "wants" and "likes"; "I want to do well on the test", "I would like to be able to be the best singer in the class." But it is also typical and natural to turn these "wants" and "likes" into "needs" and "musts". "I need to do well on this test, or everyone will think I am a stupid loser." "I must be the best singer, or I will just die."

In these examples, it is easy to see how these unrealistic demands can lead to unrealistic expectations and fear of catastrophic consequences. They may find that maintaining such unrealistic demands it too difficult, and rather than just deciding to start thinking more rationally, they give up trying to succeed.

This story is designed to help the reader recognize that "neediness" can cause you to make some very bad decisions, which lead to bad consequences. By having "wants" rather than "needs", you will have a happier and ultimately more productive life. And of equal importance, you will not allow yourself to be overly influenced by others.

C. Teach the Defining Terms to The Students

D. Listen to the Flip Book Story

E. Sample Dialogue with Students after Listening to the Story

In the beginning of the story, Cosmos was describing the difference between the Newts and the Frogs. What are these differences?

The frogs are happy with themselves and each other. The Newts are very needy.

Cosmos says that he admires the frogs. Why does he admire them?

Because the frogs work really hard to get along with each other and they are nice to each other. When one frog does better than them at something they congratulate them and are happy for them.

When did Cosmos first notice Newton?

When Newton came out and was red in color and made all of the other newts start to try to turn to red. They started arguing and name calling while they tried to make themselves red like Newton.

Why did Cosmos say that it was probably a good thing that they newts were not able to turn red?

Because a red newt in a green and brown forest stands out to predators and they would become... McDonalds (a tasty quick snack).

Did Newton really turn his color to red?

No, he had rolled in the red rock dust and made it look like he did.

What were some other things that the newts competed with other newts about?

Darkest stripes, staying out in the sun all day and night to get darker stripes, but then could not go out in the field to get food to eat.

Longest tail, pulling and pulling on the tail until it usually broke off.

Because Newton was so "needy" of attention from the other Newts, what competitions did he get talked into?

Competing with the frogs for climbing, bug catching, and singing.

Did these competitions help him to get attention from the other Newts?

No, they were just making fun of him and talking him into foolish competitions that they knew he could not win.

The frogs told Newton that they did not want to compete with him anymore. Where they being mean to him?

No, they realized that he was just wanting to compete so that he could impress the other and get their attention. They tried to tell him that the other newts were just making fun of him and that they did not want to keep competing with him because he was going to get himself hurt.

Newton became so desperate for admiration and attention that he did what at the end of the story?

He decided to turn himself red again. But when he came out to get everyone's attention there was no one around. Because they were all paying attention to the predator that was nearby and they were in hiding. But Newton was a red newt on a grey rock and he became... "McDonalds".

With a quick show of hands, how many of you would rather be around others who were like the frogs rather than the newts? (Pause)

I am sure all of you know that it is harder to be like the frogs of our story than the newts. Like when someone else makes a better grade than you, it is hard to be sincere and say, "That's great congratulations" like a frog from our story. Or to not let yourself get upset if your best friend decides that today...someone else is their best friend.

Cosmos Crow knows that we are more likely to be a Newt than a frog type person. Because he tells us, "You humans are so unlucky because when you do something foolish, nothing bad happens and you keep doing it until something terrible happens. But for us animals, when we do something foolish, something bad happens right then and we stop doing the foolish stuff." Newton kept doing the foolish stuff until something terrible happened.

Cosmos wants us to learn from Newton and to stop doing things just to get attention from others, or just to be accepted by others, and he wants to challenge us to be more like the frogs.