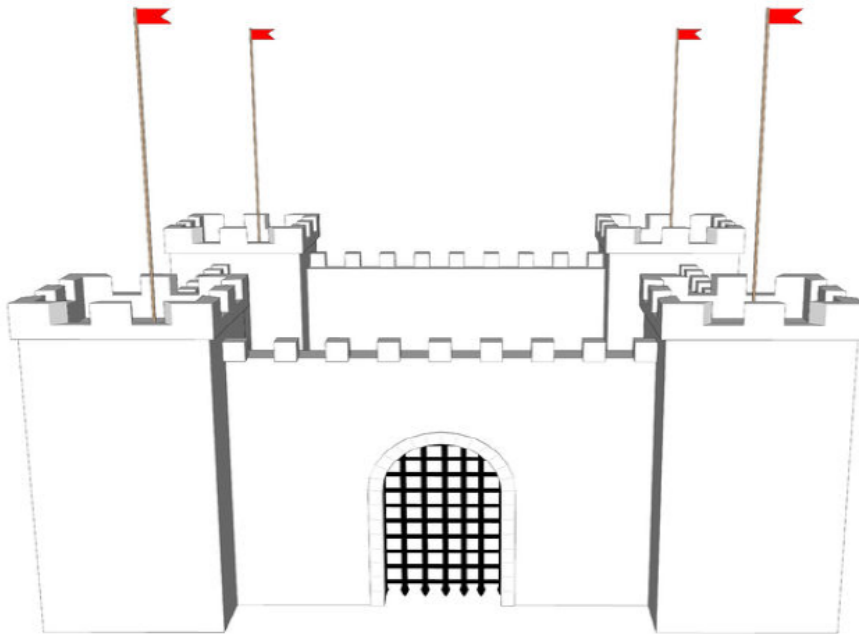


Black and White Kingdom

A Cosmos Grow Adventure



Knowledge and understanding about yourself and others can be obtained but it may require a different way of “looking” at life. Seeing life as it is in reality, without fear or prejudices, will take time and effort.

You may be willing to give up old ways of thinking so that you can deal with life more effectively.

Or, you may reject the opportunity to obtain this understanding because of the confusion and fear it may cause you.

This story is about just such an opportunity.

Ask yourself, “What would I have done if I had lived in the **Black and White Kingdom?**”

Black and White Kingdom Lesson Plan

A. Main Focus:

One of the significant life issues that seems hard to explain is “back sliding” or falling into old bad habits. We work really hard to lose weight, make better grades, avoid dysfunctional relationships and then for no apparent reason, start doing all the things we know are foolish and destructive. This story will give insights into why this should be expected. As humans we are not designed to make good rational choices and stick with them. So rather becoming angry or disappointed when it occurs, accept that it has occurred and then think, “Now what should I do to get back on the right track”.

B. The Main Concepts:

The Coping Skills series of stories emphasizes our ability to choose. We can choose what we tell ourselves about a person or situation. In so doing, we choose our feelings about that person or situation and our behavior toward that person or situation.

This ability to choose is not about "free will" but about selecting our most appropriate "self-messages". If the self-messages we select are based on the realities of a situation and if we follow through with appropriate emotions and effective behaviors, the outcomes will usually be in our best self-interest.

But that is not the typical human condition. Our typical self-messages are fraught with misunderstandings, prejudices, overgeneralization, exaggerations and falsehoods. The emotions that are generated by these "typical" self-messages are frequently inappropriate, overly intense and negative. Our behaviors that result from these "typical" self-messages are usually ineffective, and self-destructive.

With that being said, wouldn't everyone agree that "seeing" life as it really is and having rational self-messages is a desirable goal? As you may be able to guess...this is an incorrect assumption as is illustrated in the story of The Black and White Kingdom.

In our story, Cosmos tells of a Kingdom in which everything is black or white. You can judge its "goodness" by its color. "If a fruit is white it is ripe, but if it is black, it is not ripe. If a person is your friend, he is black, but if he does anything to harm you, or lies to you, or disagrees with you, he will change to white and you know that he is no longer your friend." This makes all decisions and evaluations very easy, "Once you learn what color means what".

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

How many of you would love to have something magical happen that could make your lives better?

In this story, the decisions the people made from what fruit is ripe to who is really a friend are determined by what? Color

So as long as you knew what color meant what, did you really have to think very much or make many decisions?

If a fruit was white it was? good to eat

The same was true of people. If their color was black, they were? your friend

So anything that one of these friends told you would be the what? Truth

If they were white, they were not your friend and everything they told you would be an untruth.

Some of you may already see a problem with such as system.

Let's pretend we live in "K" town. So everyone in this class who has a "K" name will make good grades, live in the nicest houses, drive the best cars and so on. How many of you would like to live in "K" town? (Hopefully only those with K names)

The point of the story is that many of us feel comfortable when we think we are in a black and white kingdom. If you don't like a teacher, then when you make a poor grade it is okay to blame...Who? (The teacher)

If you don't make the ball team it is okay to blame...Who? (The coach)

If a classmate tells you that you are being rude and ugly to another student and you live in this black and white kingdom, with whom will you get angry? (The student telling you that you are being rude)

With these answers, can you see why living in a black and white kingdom is appealing?

Since you can blame all those others...the teacher, the coach, and the other student... who do you never have to blame for your poor grades, not making the team, being disliked by other students? (Yourself)

What are some possible problems with never accepting your own blame or responsibility?

The point of the story is if you make yourself look at life and others as they really are, you will ultimately have a happier and better life. But this is hard to do and frequently makes us uncomfortable because we have to make difficult choices and accept responsibility.

Those of you in this class who are willing to do this will do well and the rest of you will turn in you magic glasses and live in the Black and White Kingdom.

Cosmos points out that many of us have a "Black and White Kingdom", between our ears. What does he mean?

When we see things in terms of black and white thinking, we see things as all one way or all another. We are not willing to take the time to evaluate individual differences.

It makes life easier right? "All green vegetables are nasty" but is that correct or is it very limiting? If I believe that all green vegetables are nasty, then I will be unwilling to try anything that is green in color just based on the color.

Although a refusal to eat any green vegetables will hardly ruin your life, beliefs such as "all teachers (police, bosses) are mean" can cause you serious life difficulties.

I hope that you will do as the King and a few of the others and accept and use your Magic Glasses.

The King did not believe the Peddler's explanation that the glasses would make the King smarter. But when he did the "apple test," the King realized that he should not make assumptions about all food.

He realized that there is a lot more variation than he had thought

Your Magic Glasses is your ability to get rid of your assumptions and prejudices and see life as it is in reality.

Just because you made a poor grade today does not mean that you are stupid or that the teacher hates you, or that you will never be able to learn the subject. The poor grade only means that you made a poor grade on that test (maybe because you did not prepare enough) and does not predict future grades or say anything about how the teacher feels about you or your ability to learn the subject.

If you still have not guessed, your Magic Glasses is your Good Thinking. With Good Thinking replacing Stinky Thinking, you will be able to "see" life as it really is, be happier, make better decisions, and be the type of person others want to have as a friend.