

Peace

Grades 6-8

Segment Summary:

Their parents' divorces upset Katherine Yarberry and Tony Peaks. Now they rely on writing, meditation and sports to maintain the peace and control in their lives.

Katherine Yarberry's parents divorced when she was 7 years old. Before that time, all she can remember is the fighting that never seemed to stop and the feeling in her stomach when all of her stability seemed to drop out from under her. At first, she blamed herself, but then she realized that her parents' fighting was beyond her control. Now when Katherine needs to gain control of her life and find the inner peace that she craves, she writes, does yoga and meditates. These activities help her cope with the friction that still exists between her parents. Looking back on her experience, Katherine admits that she wouldn't change a thing about her childhood and the experiences that have made her who she is today.

Like Katherine, Tony Peaks' parents also divorced, but he was only 3 when it happened. Even though he was very small and could do nothing to stop the yelling and arguing, he does remember the sad feelings that accompanied the breakup of his family. To cope with his feelings, he decided to throw himself into sports in order to make his parents proud. His success in sports, which includes an Athlete of the Year trophy, has helped him gain a sense of power and control over his life. His parents have also gained control over their fighting, which has helped Tony find relief. He now understands that his parents' problems are theirs to solve and that he can only focus on trying to do the best that he can to maintain the peace in his own life.

Discussion Questions:

1. What characteristics do Katherine Yarberry and Tony Peaks possess?
2. How do the fighting and arguing between parents affect children? How does this conflict affect teens?
3. What does it mean to have inner peace? What has to happen for external peace to exist?
4. How was Katherine's and Tony's inner peace disturbed? How did they handle this disruption?
5. Can you remember a time when you realized you could not control things going on around you? How did it make you feel inside?
6. How can you maintain your inner peace if everything around you is out of control?
7. What can you do to increase your inner peace on a daily basis?
8. If you are able to maintain your inner peace and self-control, does it matter what conflicts are going on around you at school, at home, in your community and in the world at large? Why or why not?

Vocabulary Words and Definitions:

Accommodation (n.)

Definition: the act of accepting a person's opinions or needs and trying to do what he or she wants to avoid a disagreement, especially when that person's opinions or needs differ from one's own

Context: Because she wants to please others, Allyson uses accommodation when solving her problems.

Compromise (v.)

Definition: to end an argument by making an agreement in which everyone involved makes sacrifices and accepts less than what he or she wanted at first

Context: Gerard and Helena compromise by splitting the list of chores evenly.

Collaboration (n.)

Definition: the act of working together with another person or group to achieve something

Context: With collaboration, the teens were able to finish the project quicker than working individually.

Conflict (n.)

Definition: a state of disagreement or argument between people, groups, countries, etc.

Context: The conflict between the two sisters started because Irene read Opal's diary.

Inner peace (n.)

Definition: the internal feeling of being calm, happy and not worried

Context: Ameila was able to find inner peace after she learned how to let go of her anger.

Meditate (v.)

Definition: to empty one's mind of thoughts and feelings in order to relax completely

Context: Joaquin meditates to clear his mind and relax his body when he feels stress.

Peace (n.)

Definition: a situation in which there is no conflict, dispute or discord between countries or people

Context: Open communication between parents and children fosters peace in the home.

Resolve (v.)

Definition: to find a satisfactory way of dealing with a problem or difficulty; to settle

Context: The only way to resolve the problem is for Maria to admit she made a mistake.

Self-mutilation (n.)

Definition: the injuring of one's body (by cutting, bruising or branding) to deal with tough internal feelings

Context: Calliope made cuts on her arm, using this form of self-mutilation as a way to escape her pain.

Stability (n.)

Definition: the condition of being strong, steady and not changing

Context: The stability of his home life was shattered when his parents divorced.

Stress reduction (n.)

Definition: the act of lowering the level of anxiety and worry a person feels

Context: Listening to the soothing sounds of the ocean is Tom's favorite method of stress reduction.

Support group (n.)

Definition: a group of people who help someone resolve a problem or deal with a difficult time in life

Context: Simone's parents and sister were her support group during her recovery from alcohol abuse.

Turning point (n.)

Definition: the time when an important change starts, especially one that improves the situation

Context: The turning point in Adam's reckless behavior occurred when he was suspended for cheating.

Source: *Longman Advanced American Dictionary*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited. 2000.

Activity: You've Got Style

Objectives:

Students will be able to

- Identify major conflict-management styles
- Recognize personal conflict-management styles
- Discuss conflict and its effects
- Analyze visual media to discover evidence of conflict management
- Label conflict-management styles found in media

Materials:

- Pens, pencils
- Paper
- Chalkboard or overhead projector
- **You've Got Style** worksheet
- **Conflict in the Media** worksheet

Procedure:

1. Begin by asking your students to define conflict in their own words. What images come to mind when they think of conflict? Poll your students' attitudes about conflict by reading aloud the following statements:

- People should ignore conflict as long as possible before they try to resolve it.
- Conflict is always bad and should be avoided.
- Conflict is a natural and unavoidable part of every relationship.
- When two people are in conflict, it means something is wrong with their relationship.
- Conflict can help relationships grow stronger.
- Moods and feelings have nothing to do with the way people handle conflict.

Note: Students should raise their hands to indicate agreement or disagreement. They should also be prepared to defend their answers. *This poll could be administered online using a survey website.

2. Explain that conflict itself is not negative, but most people have never been taught how to resolve conflict without creating bad feelings. If handled effectively, a conflict can end in a win-win manner with everyone being satisfied and all parties understanding and respecting each other.
3. Pass out the **You've Got Style** worksheet and discuss the six major styles for handling conflict. Everyone uses one of these six styles at some point or another, and identifying your personal conflict-management style will help you handle conflict situations in the future. Discuss this fact with your students. Ask students to identify the style they use most frequently and write it on their worksheets. They will also explain their choices on their worksheets.

Note: Consider revealing your own personal conflict-management style to your students and giving examples of conflicts you've tried to resolve using that style. Share the outcome of the conflict, and tell the students what you would do differently if faced with that situation again.

4. Assign students to complete the ***Conflict in the Media*** worksheet by finding examples of conflict on television or in movies. The students will find one example for each of the six major conflict-management styles. They will document the following items for each example:
 - Source of the example (name of the television show or movie)
 - Description of the conflict
 - Reasons why the example illustrates the particular style

5. Ask for volunteers to share their findings, allow students to share in small groups or collect the worksheets.

You've Got Style

Name: _____

Directions: Read the descriptions of each of the major conflict-management styles. Then decide which style you normally use and explain why you use it.

Accommodation: Those who use this style usually put other people's needs before their own and give in to other people's demands, even when they are unreasonable. Accommodators will do anything to avoid a disagreement. They prefer to give in rather than to fight for their position. This often means the accommodating person has to do extra work or take on more responsibility.

Avoidance: Many people ignore or deny a problem, thinking it will go away. These people don't tell other people what they need or want in the situation, and they are not interested in helping others meet their needs. They may pull away from the people and issues that caused the conflict, or they may act like nothing is wrong.

Blame: Blamers accuse other people of creating all the problems in the relationship. People who use this style see their solution as the only solution. If you don't see things their way, it's because you're doing something wrong. Blaming is unfair, and it leads to angry feelings in an opponent. Communication and creative thinking stop when people start blaming each other.

Collaboration: Collaborators work as a team to make sure every person's wants are fully met. These people spend a lot of time discussing what each person wants and finding creative ways to solve the problem. Often the solution is something none of them had considered before they came together to discuss it.

Compromise: When people compromise, they are willing to give and take with others. Each person gets some of what he or she wants. Compromise is often used because it doesn't take much time, and everyone leaves the situation somewhat satisfied. But be careful. When compromising, some people will push to get more of what they want and leave you with less than what you want.

Force: Forceful people want to "win" the conflict at any cost. Force can involve threatening others, name-calling, bullying and becoming physically violent. Force is generally not an effective conflict-resolution style because it's one-sided. Others never get a chance to present their sides of the story. They do what the forceful person wants because they are afraid or because they have no choice.

Which of these conflict-management styles best illustrates the way you manage conflicts? Explain.

Conflict in the Media

Name: _____

Directions: Find an example of each of the following conflict-management styles on television or in movies. Describe the situation and explain why it is an example of that particular style. Use the descriptions on the ***You've Got Style*** worksheet to help you.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Accommodation</u></p> <p>Source:</p> <p>Description:</p> <p>Explanation:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Avoidance</u></p> <p>Source:</p> <p>Description:</p> <p>Explanation:</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Blame</u></p> <p>Source:</p> <p>Description:</p> <p>Explanation:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Collaboration</u></p> <p>Source:</p> <p>Description:</p> <p>Explanation:</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Compromise</u></p> <p>Source:</p> <p>Description:</p> <p>Explanation:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Force</u></p> <p>Source:</p> <p>Description:</p> <p>Explanation:</p>