

## WORKING THINGS OUT

### “Shakeups and Showdowns: Working Things Out”

#### Understanding Solving Problems from Your Child’s Point of View:

In “Shakeups and Showdowns: Working Things Out,” Spike and Bubba cannot agree on the color to paint the clubhouse sign. Trouble arises! The “case” goes to trial and judge Quigley shows the kids how to work things out. And elsewhere in the Village, Danny and Lemon experience some sibling rivalry over personal space and personal property.

Because of their age and level of cognitive development, young children are self-centered. This does not mean that they have a moral problem, which makes them more selfish or sinful than older people. Most young children just perceive other people and things to have meaning only in relation to themselves. As a result, their understanding is limited to their own experience, and they are often unable to truly perceive the needs and wishes of others.

Compromise involves reaching a decision that midway between two different things or combining the qualities of two different things. An adjustment is made between the people who disagree. Here are some things to consider in teaching your child about solving problems.



**3 & 4 year-olds** will need help to reach a middle ground. Because of their developmental level, very young children perceive other people and things to have meaning only in relationship to themselves. They are truly unable to perceive the needs and desires of others. For them, there would not naturally be a midway point in a conflict. In problem situations, it will help for parents to avoid asking lots of questions. Instead, parents should make helpful statements about what they observe or what other people need. Parents can lead their children toward compromise in small steps and try to create situations where each person “wins” something as a result of the problem solutions.



**5 & 6 year-olds** can begin to play well with other children but are becoming increasingly self-assertive, which can inhibit problem solving. Children need to feel safe and secure that their own needs will be met, before they can imagine giving way to another child’s needs and wants. Parents can encourage development of problem solving skills by sharing out loud about their own process of reaching a compromise. Talk through situations aloud in front of your children. Help youngsters see that not every choice is necessarily a critical decision. Many problems actually relate to individual preference.



**7 & 9 year-olds** are increasingly imaginative. They can be useful in problem solving, because these children can be encouraged to imagine wildly creative solutions and compromises. Parents can continue to model good problem solving skills by encouraging youngsters to find alternatives. Mr. Quigley helped with this in the video story.

**Step 1:** Define the problem about which a decision needs to be made.

**Step 2:** Collect information and brainstorm many possible actions and decisions.

**Step 3:** Identify the consequences of each possible decision.

**Step 4:** Make and implement the decision.

**Step 5:** Evaluate the results.

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#### Follow Up Activities for You and Your Child

During the video, you may want to occasionally stop it and ask your children: “What do you think you would do (or feel or say) in this story?” Then, watch how the program ends. After the program, you may want to try these activities:

- 1 Encourage development of problem solving skills by allowing children to express their emotions, even if they seem negative. Sing the song, “If You’re Happy and You Know It, Clap Your Hands,” and change the emotion occasionally. Find other ways to express other emotions: frown, laugh, turn around, jump, swing your arms, and so forth.
- 2 Encouraging children to “find another way” is one technique to learn about compromise. What are some other ways for Bubba and Spike to decide to paint the clubhouse sign? (For example, they could paint the background yellow and the letters blue, or the background blue and the letters yellow, or they could blend yellow and blue to make green, or they could paint two signs.)
- 3 Have a family meeting where you talk about the importance of solving problems in peaceful ways. Consider one of these problems and generate some possible solutions.
  - You and your friends are jumping rope. Suddenly, two friends near the end of the line start fighting.
  - Your teacher is showing a film at school. You can’t see very well because the students in front of you are so big.
  - You and your sister or brother both want to ride in the front seat of the car.
- 4 At breakfast each Saturday, make it a habit for each family member to say one good thing about each of the other family members.
- 5 Learn and sing together one of the songs from “Shakeups and Showdowns: Working Things Out.”



#### Supplemental Materials for You and Your Child

Additional resources and can be found at: [www.quigleysvillage.net](http://www.quigleysvillage.net)