

(4) A Hole in the Fence

In a small village, lived a boy and his parents. He was an only child. He likes to do things his own way. His parents were very troubled with it. Every time the little boy got angry or hurt, he used harsh words. His parents taught him to use kind words but he just liked to say things his own way. All the neighbors were fed up. Nobody wanted to be around him.

Friends at school stayed away from the boy, too. The teacher was very concerned. She talked to him about his bad temper. She tried to give him some advice but nothing worked. Finally, the boy's father came up with a smart idea.

The father gave his son a hammer and a bag of nails and said, "every time you get angry, hammer a nail in the fence." After taking over the bag of nails and a hammer, the boy was excited. He thought hammering nails was a fun thing to do. The first day, he hammered thirty nails! The second day, he hammered twenty nails. The third day, he hammered only ten nails. "Hammering these nails is very tiring," he thought, "Would it be easier if I just control my anger?"

The boy thought of an idea. He started to hold his nose tight as soon as he felt angry. Then he let go of his nose and took a deep breath. It was difficult in the beginning, but slowly he learned how to do it smoothly. Soon, the boy was hammering less and less nails. His father smiled to himself when he observed what had happened.

Then came a day, the boy hammered no nails in the fence. Several days went by and he still did not hammer any more nails. The father called the boy to sit down in front of him. He then gave the boy a new task. "Now, every time you control your anger, pull a nail out of the fence."

The boy set about to pulling nails out. He managed to get most of the nails out of the fence. Only a few remained, no matter how hard he tried, he simply could not pull those nails out. The boy told his father about the nails he could not pull out.

“What do you see?” the father asked his son. “A hole,” the boy eagerly replied, “I see a hole in the fence.”

“Now do you see what anger does?” The boy did not understand what his father was saying. So the father continued, “Think of the nails as your temper and the fence as people. Now you see that the nails can be pulled out. But it will leave a hole in the fence forever. Some of the nails can’t even be pulled out. You can fix the fence, but it will always have those scars. Similarly, with people you can apologize, but the wounds will still be there.”

“Words can do more damage than anything else. You won’t be able to see the wounds, but they will be there. Use your words to spread warmth and build relationships,” said the father. At last, the boy realized where he had been wrong. He has learned from his mistakes and decided not to repeat them.