

Name: _____

QUESTIONS FOR
DISCUSSION

1. In the opening of the program, Mike is in trouble because of how he handled the situation with Samara and David. What could he have done differently?
2. If Eliza were a friend of yours, what might you do to help her deal with her anxiety about speaking in front of groups?
3. Describe the reptilian brain. When people respond out of their reptilian brain, how do they act? (Note: *The Reptilian Brain* fact sheet elaborates on the reptilian brain.)
4. What is an emotional trigger? What are some things that are triggers for you? (Note: A pause in the program poses this question.)
5. What is a cue? What are some of your own cues? (Note: A pause in the program poses this question.)
6. The program points out: "What bugs you may not bother someone else, and what sends someone else up the wall may be just fine with you!" Discuss this statement.
7. The "fight-or-flight" response can lead us to respond inappropriately to emotional distress. What might be some circumstances in which fighting or running away would be appropriate responses?
8. Comment on the calming-down strategies mentioned in the program. Which ones do you think would be effective, and why? Have you ever used any of them? If you wish, share what happened.
9. What is a calming, positive mental image for you? (Note: A pause in the program poses this question.)
10. Comment on the situation with Mike as the waiter and Eliza as the customer. Would you say the customer was bullying the waiter? Can you think of any other positive ways the waiter could have responded?
11. In the dance practice situation, suppose Molly had persisted in refusing to try Eliza's idea. What might have happened?
12. Mike points out that Eliza's tone in talking to Molly was reasonable and friendly. Discuss how tone of voice and body language affect communication.
13. In the candy drive situation, why do you think David initially agreed to check off names, even though he knew it would be hard for him?
14. Comment on the replay of David's situation. What is different? What does he do that is effective?

The Answer Key to this activity appears on the next page.

**QUESTIONS FOR
DISCUSSION****Answer Key**

- 1.** In the opening of the program, Mike is in trouble because of how he handled the situation with Samara and David. What could he have done differently?

Answers will vary. They may include the following:
He could have walked away to cool off.
He could have asked one or both of them what was going on.
He could have taken deep breaths or counted to help him stay calm.
- 2.** If Eliza were a friend of yours, what might you do to help her deal with her anxiety about speaking in front of groups?

Answers will vary. They may include the following:
Help Eliza practice her presentation before she has to give it.
Plan to present a smiling, positive face Eliza can look at during her presentation.
- 3.** Describe the reptilian brain. When people respond out of their reptilian brain, how do they act? (Note: *The Reptilian Brain* fact sheet elaborates on the reptilian brain.)

The reptilian brain is the innermost of three layers of the human brain, located near the base of the skull. It is the most primitive part of the brain, governing autonomic functions like heartbeat and breathing as well as instinctual self-protective behaviors like the fight-or-flight response. When people respond out of their reptilian brain, the higher thinking areas of the brain are not involved. This causes people to feel incapable of rational thought, and to act and think irrationally. Essentially, people in reptilian mode feel as if they have lost their minds.
- 4.** What is an emotional trigger? What are some things that are triggers for you? (Note: A pause in the program poses this question.)

A trigger is something that sets off a strong emotional reaction. A trigger “pushes your buttons” and makes you “see red.” Personal triggers will vary.
- 5.** What is a cue? What are some of your own cues?

A cue is a sign or symptom that an individual exhibits when his or her emotions have been triggered. Examples of cues that let us know our buttons have been pushed include blushing, shaking, muscle tension, dry mouth, tight throat, inability to think of something or remember something. Personal cues will vary.
- 6.** The program points out: “What bugs you may not bother someone else, and what sends someone else up the wall may be just fine with you!” Discuss this statement.

Students can discuss this question in pairs, in small groups, or as a class. Pairs and small groups can report out to the whole group after their discussion has concluded.

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Points to bring out in the discussion include:

the importance of empathy, or the ability to see another person's point of view even when it is different from your own

why it is a good idea to speak up when something bothers you

examples of de-escalating, non-threatening ways to speak up

- 7.** The “fight-or-flight” response can lead us to respond inappropriately to emotional distress. What might be some circumstances in which fighting or running away would be appropriate responses?

Answers will vary. For both fighting and fleeing, answers may include examples of evading danger and self-defense. For flight, students may mention the idea of fleeing when we ourselves are in danger of losing control and hurting someone else.

- 8.** Comment on the calming-down strategies mentioned in the program. Which ones do you think would be effective, and why? Have you ever used any of them? If you wish, share what happened.

Answers will vary. Try to bring out a range of examples. If students are reluctant to answer, sharing examples from your own experience may help them open up.

- 9.** What is a calming, positive mental image for you?

Answers will vary. Try to bring out a range of examples. If students are reluctant to answer, sharing an example of a calming image that works for you may help them open up.

- 10.** Comment on the situation with Mike as the waiter and Eliza as the customer. Would you say the customer was bullying the waiter? Can you think of any other positive ways the waiter could have responded?

Answers will vary. Regarding bullying, points may include:

There is a power difference. The customer automatically has more power than the server, who is expected to defer; so she was using her power in a way that suggests bullying.

Intentionality is unclear. The customer may or may not have been aware of the effects of her behavior; and if she was unaware, some might say she was not bullying. Repetitiveness is not established. It is unclear whether the customer behaved like this with this or other servers in the past.

Regarding other possible positive responses, points may include:

- using humor*
- asking a manager for help*
- asking to trade tables with another server*
- taking a short break*

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- 11.** In the dance practice situation, suppose Molly had persisted in refusing to try Eliza's idea. What might have happened?

Answers will vary and may include the following:

Eliza might have continued to insist, leading to a standoff.

A fight, physical or verbal, might have occurred.

Eliza might have sought help from another student or an adult.

Eliza might have quit the activity.

The third member of the group might have stood up for Eliza.

- 12.** Mike points out that Eliza's tone in talking to Molly was reasonable and friendly. Discuss how tone of voice and body language affect communication.

Answers will vary. Students can demonstrate saying the same things differently, varying tone of voice and body language to show how they change meaning.

- 13.** In the candy drive situation, why do you think David initially agreed to check off names, even though he knew it would be hard for him?

Answers will vary but will probably emphasize that David might have been embarrassed to admit the task was hard for him.

- 14.** Comment on the replay of David's situation. What is different? What does he do that is effective?

In the replay, David is open, up-front, and matter-of-fact about the difficulty he has in performing tasks that involve lining up things on a page. He is unapologetic and appears to be unembarrassed.