

Learning to solve problems with wisdom



Written by: Octopus parent, Mr. Thomas Chiu

Mom: "If Mommy gets captured by the Gruffalo (the monster from the cartoon) and taken into the forest, what should we do?"

Hei Hei: "I will cook a meal for the Gruffalo to eat, because if the Gruffalo is full, it won't eat Mommy! And Mommy said that after eating the meal, she can have the dishes!"

That was a conversation between the mother and Hei Hei. I greatly appreciate Hei Hei's creativity, but I am most delighted that he tries to solve the problem with wisdom, rather than immediately resorting to violence to directly eliminate the obstacle, such as beating or even "killing" the Gruffalo and then rescuing Mommy. Or finding the police to arrest the Gruffalo, and then rescuing Mommy - these would be direct methods.

What's wrong with the Gruffalo capturing Mommy because it was hungry? Does the solution have to be to eliminate it? If we let the Gruffalo eat its fill, it will naturally release Mommy! We should be able to accommodate each other's ways of living; it doesn't always have to be a life-or-death situation. I want my child to have their own stance, but at the same time, they need to learn to be tolerant of others, including their actions and even their mistakes. If we do not agree with someone's behavior, we should try to persuade them with our own words and arguments.

It is always better to solve problems with wisdom rather than resorting to various

forms of violence. There are always win-win solutions, as long as all parties make an effort to find them.



Focus on Interests, Not Positions

The author has read a famous book on negotiation techniques, titled "Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving In," which introduces five principles of "Principled Negotiation" that are very useful. One of the principles is to "Focus on Interests, Not Positions." In today's society, where there are various conflicts, if the parties involved can prioritize the public interest over their own positions, and not just oppose each other because you are on the left and I am on the right, or because of differing positions, without the need for one side to emerge victorious, then even if your position or the side you support wins, what is the cost to society? Has the public interest truly increased because your position has prevailed?