

PROCRUSTES

Intent of the Story

- ✓ *To treat others according to what they are, not according to our ideologies and expectations.*
- ✓ *To be ourselves and let others be themselves.*
- ✓ *Respect others idiosyncrasies and characteristics.*
- ✓ *Accept persons as they are.*

The Story

High on the mountains in the country of Attica in Old Greece, there lived a strange man. His name was Procrustes. He used to lie in ambush in one of those high mountain passes so common on that hilly region.

There, he made a "living" by robbing incautious travelers of all their belongings. He made his "trade" lighter and interesting by adding some queer "Fun" to his "Work".

"Thus, he fabricated for himself an iron bed that would fit exactly to his dimension. Whenever an innocent "customer" fell into his hands, after plundering him of all he had, he made him lie on his bed. If by chance, his prey fitted exactly into his bed, Procrustes was exceedingly happy; so much so, that he refunded to his victim all he had robbed him, and let him go unharmed.

But woe to the poor "customer" who would not fit exactly into his bed! If he happened to be too short, mercilessly, he stretched him to the point of dismembering him until he made him fit exactly into his iron couch. Then Procrustes let him go in pain, lightened, of course, of all his goods.

If the "customer" happened to be too tall, Procrustes, with gusto cut him to size as much as required, until he fitted into his bed and let him bleed to death. This sort of `sport made Procrustes feel very great! (*A Greek Legend*)

Questions for Reflection

1. Explain the meaning of the story for real life?
2. What type of persons does Procrustes signify?
3. What does the Procrustean bed signify??
4. Who are in life the unwary travelers fallen into the Procrutes hands?
5. In what way should we deal with any person we come into contact with?
6. Have you ever met in real life Procrustes- like - persons? What did they do to you? How did you feel? Share with us.
7. Is there, by chance, a little Procrustes within you? Think and examine your heart
8. How could Parents, Teachers, and Superiors. Politicians, Priests and those in charge of others kill the "little Procrustes nesting in their hearts?"

Explain and Discuss the Following Sentences,

- We have to let people be themselves,
- Each person is his own measure.
- We have the right to be ourselves and the duty to let others be themselves.
- We cannot force people to live up to our expectations.
- By forcing our expectations on others we harm them, even we destroy them.
- We cannot measure others according to our standards, ideologies, and beliefs.
- We have to be sympathetic, understanding and accepting.
- There is beauty in variety and diversity,
- By demanding "uniformity" we cripple; torture and destroy people.
- Parents, teachers and those in charge of others should treat those under their care not as numbers but as individuals
- Each man is bound to follow his conscience. We cannot judge others.
- We have to accept the fact that there are many ways to reach the same goal.
- Ideologies - political, cultural, religious - more often than not - are Procrustean beds!
- After creating each one of us, God broke the mold.
- Every person is unique and irreplaceable.
- There will never be another you.
- Without you our world would be different
- Each person is an original master piece, not a copy.
- Don't try to be different, be yourself.
- All of us are complementary, not opposite.
- There is a mini Procrustes in every man's heart.
- Be and let be.