

Rational Fears vs, Irrational Fears

Class Discussion

Objectives:

The students will:

- verbalize some of their fears.
- distinguish between rational and irrational fears.

Materials:

writing materials for each student, whiteboard ; one copy of the experience sheet, "Fear Is a Monster," for each student

Procedure.

Ask the students to take a few moments to think about some fears they have. Explain that fear is an emotion that causes distress, anxiety, or a sense of dread, and that everyone is afraid of something. As an example, tell the students about one or two things that you are afraid of. Next, ask the students to write down four or five of their fears. After everyone has finished, ask volunteers to share some of their fears. Be accepting of all contributions and don't allow any put-downs or laughing as the students share.

Explain to the students that people are wise to have some fears, because they serve as protection from harm. Fears of driving too fast and taking illegal drugs are examples of rational fears. However, some fears are irrational, they provide no self-protection and serve no useful purpose. In fact these fears sometimes keep people from enjoying life fully and from doing things they would otherwise like to do. Fears of the dark and flying are examples of irrational fears.

Make two columns on the board with the headings, “Rational Fears” and “Irrational Fears.” Collect the students’ papers and, without indicating who’s paper you are reading, call out different fears. As you read each fear, have the students decide if it is rational or irrational. Record the fear in the appropriate column.

Ask for suggestions on how to deal with some of the irrational fears listed. Next, pass out the experience sheet, “Fear Is a Monster,” and give the students a few minutes to complete it.

Discussion Questions:

As a conclusion, ask these and other questions:

1. How did it feel to talk about a fear?
2. How do you feel now after sharing the fear?
3. What have you learned about yourself from thinking about or sharing fears?
4. What steps can we take to overcome fears?

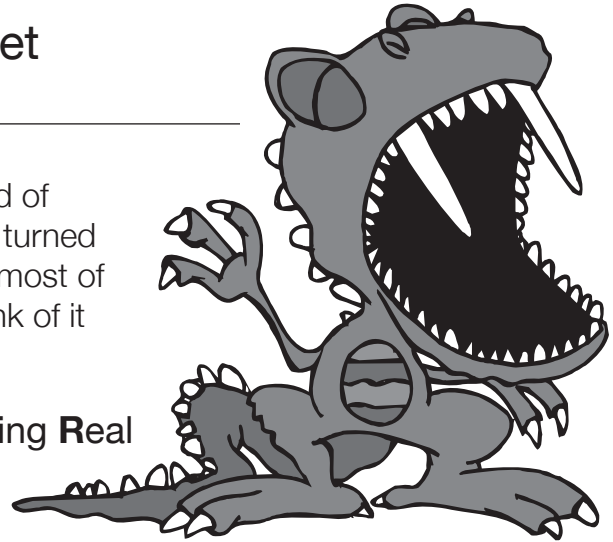
Fear Is a Monster

Experience Sheet

Think about times when you were afraid of someone or something, but everything turned out okay. Just as monsters aren't real, most of the time our fears aren't real either. Think of it this way:

FEAR = False Evidence Appearing Real

In the left-hand column, write about irrational fears you have had. In the right-hand column, describe what really happened.



My fear

What really happened

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Here are some things you can do to get over irrational fears:

1. Admit the fear to yourself.
2. Tell a trusted adult about your fear.
3. Keep a journal. Write about events or things that cause you fear.
4. Talk with your teacher or guidance counselor.



Writing in your journal, or sharing your fears with others can often help you get over irrational fears. But remember, changing your feelings takes time and patience.