

MODULE V: LEARNING TO BE FRIENDS FOR LIFE

"Could we but learn from whence his sorrows grow,
We would as willingly give cure as know"
(I.i.152-153.)

The friends and family members of Romeo and Juliet loved, cared about and, at times, were greatly concerned for the young lovers. However, like many of us, they did not always know what they could do to help.

Throughout the preceding four modules we explored how listening more carefully, being honest, sharing feelings and taking appropriate action could have made a critical difference in the lives of the Capulets and the Montagues and how these same actions can make a difference in each of our lives.

In this, the final module, we will explore how these concepts can be applied to help us to become Friends For Life.

LISTEN Let your friend tell you of his situation and feelings. Don't give advice or feel obliged to find quick solutions. LISTEN and try to imagine how you would feel in his place.

BE HONEST If your friend's words or actions scare you, tell her. If you're worried or don't know what to do, say so. Don't be a cheerful phony.

SHARE FEELINGS At times everyone feels sad, hurt or hopeless. You know what that's like--share your feelings. Let your friend know he's not alone.

GET HELP If you keep this secret you may lose your friend. Perhaps you and your friend can think of a helpful adult she would talk to. If not, talk to someone yourself--a parent, teacher, minister, counselor or Crisis Center staff person--and find out what to do next.

LEARNING TO BE FRIENDS TO OUR FRIENDS
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We have discussed in Module II the importance of communication in relationships. Yet one of the most difficult tasks of friendship is to know when listening, being honest and sharing feelings are not enough. Sometimes we must take another step--we must get help. Shakespeare shows us this when young Balthazar, Romeo's loyal servant and friend, although extremely worried about Romeo's reaction to the news of Juliet's death, is unable to take that next step. He does tell Romeo of his concern, but he does not get help to stop the action he fears Romeo will take.

NOTES to the teacherSuggestions (a)

Balthazar tells Romeo that only Juliet's body has died, her spirit still lives. He also lets Romeo know that he recognizes what a blow the news is to him.

Balthazar was honest with Romeo and expressed his fear that Romeo would kill himself. Unable to dissuade Romeo from ordering him away, Balthazar could have gone immediately for help.

Suggestions (b)

He voices his defiance (and perhaps anger) at fate: "Then I defy you stars!" (V.i.24). He calls for horses in order to return immediately to Verona, though such a return means death if he is caught. He also asks Balthazar for paper and ink.

Suggestions (c)

Balthazar recognizes that Romeo's "looks are pale and wild and to import/Some misadventure" (V.i.27-28). He advises patience, but he obeys Romeo's request to leave.

Suggestions (d)

See (b) above. Romeo chooses to risk death. He calls for paper, in order to write a final note to his father.

Romeo gives Balthazar the note for his father and asks that it be delivered "early in the morning" (V.iii.23-25). Romeo tells Balthazar not to interfere (V.iii.27).

Suggestions (f)

Romeo makes up a thinly-veiled "reassuring" story (V.iii.28-32). Romeo makes Balthazar promise on his "life" to obey (V.iii.25). Romeo tells Balthazar that this is the way to show his friendship.

Suggestions (g)

For Balthazar, as for most of us, it is difficult not to prove friendship.

SUGGESTIONS for students

1. Read or enact V.i.12-23 and V.i.22-44.

a. Balthazar breaks the news of Juliet's death as gently and sympathetically to Romeo as he can (V.i.17-33). What consolation and advice does Balthazar offer Romeo to help him accept Juliet's death?

b. What else could Balthazar have done had he had the opportunity to learn to be a Friend For Life?

b. How does Romeo react to the news?

c. Why is Balthazar alarmed by Romeo's reaction? What does he advise and what does he do?

d. What warning signs could have told Balthazar that Romeo needed further help?

e. What instructions does Romeo give Balthazar at the tomb?

f. What does Romeo say to Balthazar in order to persuade him to obey?

g. Which of Romeo's actions/statements, in f. above, do you think is the most effective in stopping

Balthazar is swayed by Romeo's demand that he promise to obey Romeo as a way to show his friendship. He does not negotiate an alternative and "prove" his friendship by disobeying a demand he thinks is wrong, doing instead what he thinks is right and necessary.

Balthazar from getting help? Why?

Suggestions (h)

Romeo gives Balthazar a gift, wishes him a prosperous life and says goodbye.

h. What final action does Romeo take in parting from Balthazar?

Suggestions (i)

Worried, Balthazar decides to hide and see what happens.

i. What does Balthazar do?

Suggestions (j)

Summarize the experience above to show students why, as friends, they must get help immediately for their friends if this should occur.

j. Other Endings

If you were Balthazar, what signs would you recognize as signals that Romeo is contemplating suicide, and what would you do?

<p>LEARNING TO BE FRIENDS TO OURSELVES</p>
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In this section we will discuss how the four concepts listed at the beginning of this module, which can be helpful to friends, can also be helpful if applied to ourselves. For many, including Romeo and Juliet, it seems easier to extend the qualities of friendship to others than to ourselves. The compassion for human frailties, patience with moments of thoughtlessness and forgiveness for offenses that are given to others are considered generous and loving; they provide the support that can sustain friends through troubled times. Such loving responses can do the same for each of us as we learn to be friends to ourselves.

NOTES to the Teacher

Suggestions (l)

Juliet is still the loving, true and generous girl whom we have come to admire and love. She has loved and lost, but the truth and fidelity she has shown through her experience of love should not be extinguished--she is too precious to lose.

INSTRUCTIONS for the Class

1. Other Endings: The "fearful passage" of the "star-crossed lovers" ends with Juliet's death. Juliet's suicide arouses our pity and grief for no one has ever grown up so quickly, given more generously or loved more completely than "true and faithful Juliet."

Go through the play and find the qualities you love and admire in Juliet and tell her why you want her to choose life. Teach Juliet how to love and value herself as she loved and valued Romeo.

<p>LEARNING TO BE FRIENDS FOR LIFE</p>
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So often we say "if only I had known." Romeo and Juliet gives us the opportunity to see characters, time after time, act or say things that we as an audience know they would not do or say if the truth of the situation were known to them (The literary term for this structure is dramatic irony). Often, as well, we wish we could live a moment over and act with the knowledge "hindsight" has given us.

In the final exercise, we take the play beyond its closing moments, replay key scenes to review the action, apply what students have discovered through their studies of all five modules and respond as Friends For Life.

NOTES to the Teacher

Review the modules and the critical events list for the issues and examples to help students make their character and situation choices.

Examples of dramatic irony include:

1. (I.v.) Romeo and Juliet fall in love at first sight, unaware that each is the only child of their family's great enemy.
2. (II.i.) Mercutio and Benvolio joke about Romeo's love for Rosaline, after Romeo has fallen in love with Juliet.
3. (III.i.) Tybalt challenges Romeo to a duel, unaware that Romeo is now his cousin, and Mercutio, equally unaware, does not understand Romeo's refusal to fight.
4. (III.iv.) Capulet pledges Juliet in marriage to Paris.
5. (III.v.) Lady Capulet, hoping to please her daughter, describes her plans to have Romeo killed in order to revenge Tybalt's death.
6. (III.v.) The Capulets become furious with Juliet for her refusal to marry Paris.
7. (IV.i.) Paris meets Juliet at Friar Laurence's cell and talks to her about their

INSTRUCTIONS for the Class

Imagine that the Prince invites everyone to meet at "old Free-town, our common judgement place" (I.i.100). He tells them that they have lived through a play, not life. They now all have the opportunity to go back and replay the action, creating other endings for themselves, their families and friends as, FRIENDS FOR LIFE. Have each student pick a character in the play and say what he or she would do differently.

imminent wedding.

8. (V.i.) Believing that Juliet is dead,
Romeo buys poison and returns to Mantua.

9. (V.iii.) Paris thinks Romeo has come
to Juliet's tomb as an enemy.

"Go hence to have more talk
of these sad things."

(V.iii.306)