

Rock Bottom Resilience

Mission Impossible

Spatial Requirements: Classroom with moderate space or gym/outdoor space required

Activity Type: Movement/group

Grades: 3-12

Group Size: 2 or more (even number)

Time: 15 minutes

Introduction: In an actual rock bottom moment, it can feel like there are no options or solutions at first. This activity connects students with these types of feelings, and also demonstrates that there are solutions to the problem when we allow ourselves to think outside the box. Note that if you are using the WhyTry Program, this activity, titled “Rope Handcuffs,” is also used to illustrate the Motivation Formula unit.

Materials:

- 1 3-foot length of rope per student

Activity:

Demonstrate the following with two people in front of the group:

Pair two people up and have a person tie the rope around the wrists of his/her partner so that each wrist is connected to the rope. There should be a length of rope between the wrists. (See pictures.)

Now tie the rope around one wrist of the second person. Before tying the rope on the second wrist, take the loose end of the rope and put it between the wrists of his/her partner and around the partner’s rope, and tie it to the wrist of the second person. Each person will then be linked together by the rope. (See pictures.)

Once everyone is connected to a partner by the rope, give the following instructions: “Your challenge is to disconnect from your partner without untying the rope or slipping the rope off your wrist.” Let them work on the challenge for four or five minutes. When the frustration level is high and they want to give up, challenge them to “think outside the box” and come up with another way to face the challenge. One hint might be: “The answer has more to do with what you do with the rope than it has to do with you climbing through the rope.” A second hint might be: “Under the rope and around the wrist.” A third hint might be, “A key goes through a...” If the teams still cannot figure it out, you as the facilitator might go up to one of the pairs and show them how. Once they know the solution, have them teach the other pairs one at a time. Continue the process until each pair that learns the solution goes individually to the next pair and shows them how. Continue until everyone learns the solution.

Solution:

One of the partners will take the loop of the rope between his/her wrists and slip it under the rope of the wrist of his/her partner, being careful not to twist it in the process. (This is important!) With the loop of the rope that is under his/her partner’s hand, move it over the hand of the partner to the opposite side of his/her partner’s hand. You are now disconnected. (See pictures.)

Processing the Experience:

- What made this a hard challenge?
- Did you ever feel like this activity was impossible?
- Did some of you give up? Why?
- In a rock bottom moment, does a solution ever seem impossible?
- How did you eventually solve this challenge?
- Was the solution easier than you expected?

- How can having resilience help us see options that we didn't know existed?
- How does this activity relate to Rock Bottom Resilience?

