

Street Resilience

Folding Newspaper Trick

Spatial Requirements: Regular classroom setup; little or no space required

Activity Type: Object lesson

Grades: 3-12

Group Size: 1 or more

Time: 5-10 minutes

Introduction:

This quick object lesson is a powerful reminder that while we can choose to let discrimination and disrespect tear us down, we also have a choice to use it as fuel to overcome challenges and make a difference in the world.

Materials:

- 2 identical newspaper pages, containing an inspiring story about someone who has overcome a challenge

Activity:

You will want to try this trick several times before performing it for the class (you can view a demonstration of this activity at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3OIY_-kyRpk)

Make sure both identical newspaper pages have a pressed crease down the center. Fold one of the pages into a small square.

Take the unfolded newspaper and hold it up with both hands. Concealed from the audience, hold the small folded newspaper behind the unfolded newspaper with the thumb of your right hand.

To show you are not concealing anything, display the front side of the newspaper to the audience, then turn the newspaper around by moving your hands to conceal the small folded newspaper. As you turn it around, push the small folded newspaper into your cupped left hand.

Continue to conceal the folded newspaper in one hand.

Ask students to list the ways they or others have been discriminated against or disrespected. With each response, tear the unfolded paper. When the paper has been completely ripped up, crumple it into a ball and squeeze it together until it is compact in your hand. Reveal the crumpled ball to the audience.

Explain that sometimes we allow discrimination and disrespect to tear us down, make us feel small, or force us to give up.

Close your hands and squeeze the newspaper inside, moving the intact newspaper against your palm. Conceal the crumpled-up newspaper against your palm and reveal the folded-up newspaper. Unfold it slowly to reveal the original story about the inspiring person, all the time carefully concealing the ripped version in your hand.

As you are unfolding the newspaper, explain that we have a choice when we or others experience discrimination and disrespect. We can also use it as fuel to overcome challenges and make a difference in the world.

Discuss the story on the intact newspaper page. How did the person in this article show resilience in the face of challenges?

Processing the Experience

- What stood out to you in this activity?
- What did the ripped-up paper represent?
- Have you ever felt like that ripped-up paper?
- What did the restored newspaper represent?
- How does this relate to Street Resilience?
- What can you do to make a comeback if you've been torn down by disrespect, discrimination, or mistakes?