

Shhh . . . No Noise, Please!

Kind hearts are the gardens;
Kind thoughts are the roots;
Kind words are the flowers;
Kind deeds are the fruits.

—English Proverb

Objective: To recognize the importance of silence.

Materials needed: Note cards and pens.

Procedure: Ask each mentee to write down what they would be if they were

- a piece of fruit.
- a historical figure.
- a household object.
- a cartoon character.
- any other off-the-wall category you can think of.

Return to the circle. Go around the circle and ask each mentee what choice he or she made for a piece of fruit. Continue through the list of choices. This is a warm-up activity, and the next activity will require restraint.

This activity is called "Solemn and Silent." Explain that this exercise takes self-control. Pair mentees back to back. On the count of three, everyone must face their partner, look each other in the eyes, and then try to remain solemn and serious. No speaking! The first to smile or laugh must sit down. All who remain standing then take a new partner and the activity continues until only one person has not smiled or laughed. (Second round of playing can involve two teams competing to outlast each other.) If in the end there is a pair who

are keeping straight faces, the rest of the group can act as hecklers to disrupt them.

Closure questions:

- How did you react when someone smiled or laughed? Were you the initiator of the smile or laugh?
- Are you comfortable in quiet environments? Why or why not?
- If you are in the car and no one is talking, how do you respond?
- If you ask a question and the answer is silence, what do you think?
- Does silence feel the same for all people?
- How can silence be used effectively when communicating?