

2019 Reader's Guide

The Rabbit Listened

by Cori Doerrfeld

October is



**CONFLICT RESOLUTION
MONTH IN COLORADO**

Listen. Talk. Work it Out.

Each year, Conflict Resolution Month in Colorado recommends a book for the community at large with the goal of spreading information and encouraging conversation on ways to manage conflicts of all types and in a variety of situations. This year's title is a picture book appealing to all ages. In this year's selection our protagonist, Taylor, experiences a disappointing event. We are invited to process through the experience with Taylor as a variety of animal companions attempt to help make the situation better.

Guiding Idea

Conflict is a natural part of our daily lives and can include disappointment, grief, and loss. Through conflict we have the opportunity to grow personally as well as through our relationships. Think about how you handle disappointments and what you experience when disappointments happen. Do you first experience an emotion such as anger? Do you withdraw quietly? Do you shut down? In this book, Taylor experiences loss and a parade of well-meaning characters try to soothe Taylor with mixed results. What strategies do you use that help solve problems and make things better for all involved?

How can you spot empathy or kindness?

- Taylor has several interactions with a variety of animals. Each animal has a certain approach to Taylor's loss. Discuss how these specific approaches worked. What might individual animals do differently to better support Taylor?
- Imagine role playing. What could Taylor say to the chicken? How did the bear make you feel? What could Taylor say to the bear? Is there an animal which pushed your buttons? What animal is the most empathetic?

What is your Conflict Style?

- How do these animals reflect different conflict styles?
- Can you identify one animal from the book that demonstrates each of the following: collaborating, competing, avoiding, accommodating, and compromising?
- Which character describes your initial approach to another person in need of emotional support? How does that work for you?

Asking for What you Need

- The book jacket has the statement, "Sometimes hugs say more than words." What does this make you think of?
- If you don't like hugs, what is a good way to respond to the other person?

Practice Active Listening

- If the rabbit only listened, why do you think Taylor was able to come up with a new amazing idea? How can listening be important?
- Practice listening deeply by following these steps: Invite a friend to share something with you. Listen without responding verbally for at least two full minutes. When they are finished talking, try reframing, summarizing, and clarifying questions for understanding. Pay close attention to how the speaker responds to your listening. Ask the person speaking how it felt to be heard in this way. Ask yourself how you responded to your friend differently when listening deeply versus trying to immediately respond or problem solve.

Gender Inclusivity

- Did you notice Taylor and the animals are not assigned a gender? How did this impact your understanding of the story, if any? How might using gender neutral language create inclusivity in your workplace, community, etc.?