Squirrel Rejects His Bushy Tail

© 2001 by Debbie Dunn; inspired by a Native American tale about Coyote

8 Actors: **Squirrel** **Hawk** **Squirrel's Eyes** **Squirrel's Ears** **Squirrel's Legs** **Possum** **Squirrel's Nose** **Squirrel's Tail**

2 or more Narrators: **Guys or Girls**

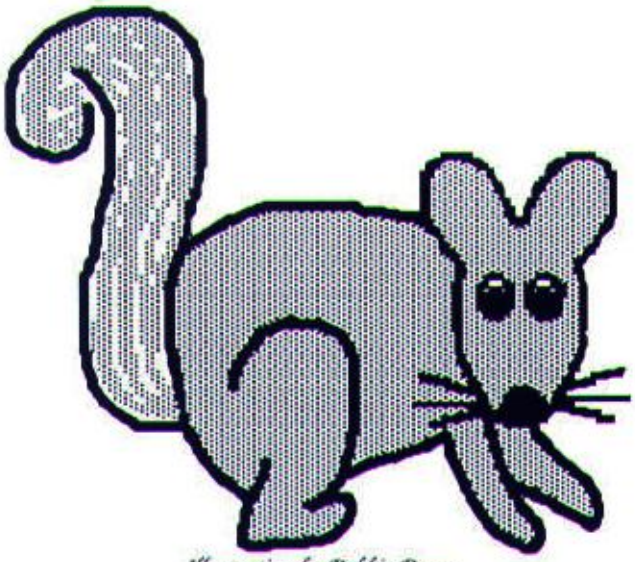


Illustration by Debbie Dunn

Narrator ❶: This role-play about Squirrel was inspired by a Native American story about a Coyote. It's called, "Squirrel Rejects His Bushy Tail."

Narrator ❷: Squirrel loved to brag! He felt he had a lot to brag about.

SQUIRREL: Yuppers! That's me! I'm Squirrel, and I've got loads to brag about! That's because I'm the best at just about everything!

Narrator ❶: Like we said, Squirrel loved to brag!

Narrator ❷: To Cat and to anyone else who would listen, he would brag:

SQUIRREL: I can climb a tree faster than any cat!

Narrator ❶: Cat would turn her back and pretend to be occupied in cleaning her paws.

Narrator ❷: To Bird and anyone else who would listen, he would brag:

SQUIRREL: I can leap from tree to tree almost as if I'm a Bird.

Narrator ❶: Bird would flutter her wings and fly away in a huff.

Narrator ❷: To Groundhog and anyone else who would listen, Squirrel would brag:

SQUIRREL: I can store food for winter better than any Groundhog.

Narrator ❶: Groundhog would turn his back and amble away.

Narrator ❷: To Rabbit, Squirrel would brag:

SQUIRREL: I can run really, really fast, faster than any rabbit.

Narrator ❶: Rabbit would wiggle her Nose and proceed to chew on a piece of grass.

Passive	Aggressive	Assertive
• Ignore or Avoid	• Yell	• Sincere Apologies
• Hide Feelings	• Hit	• Responsible Reporting
• Whine	• Push	• Compromise
• Fake Crying	• Threats	• Talk It Out
• Give In To Be Nice	• Fights	• WIN-WIN Outcomes
• Gossip or Rumors	• Loud Denials	• Active Listening
• Ignore A Conflict	• Stomp Around	• Respecting
• Quiet Denials	• Slam Doors	• Understand Others
• Make Faces	• Loud Put-Downs	• Manners
• Roll Eyes	• Break or Destroy	• I Messages
• Quiet Put-Downs		• Firmly Set Boundaries
• Tattle or Snitch		• Acting On Morals
• Attitude Thing		• Self-Mentor

Narrator ❷: Which response to conflict did Cat, Bird, Groundhog, and Rabbit display: AGGRESSIVE, ASSERTIVE, or PASSIVE? Audience, please respond.

© 2001 by Debbie Dunn; inspired by a Native American tale about Coyote

Narrator ❶: Cat turned her back and pretended not to be listening. Bird fluttered her wings and flew away in a huff.

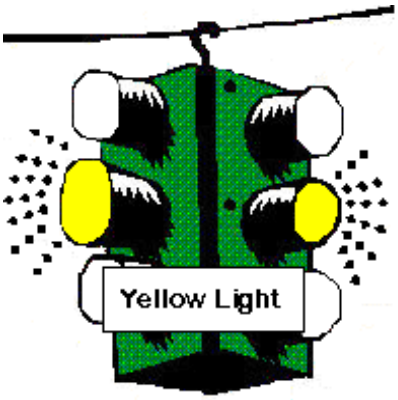
Narrator ❷: Groundhog turned his back and ambled away. Rabbit wiggled her Nose and pretended to be chewing on a piece of grass.

Narrator ❶: All four of those animals tries to ignore and avoid Squirrel. Bird even reacted with some attitude by flying away in a huff. Those were all PASSIVE things to do.

Narrator ❷: Which response to conflict is Squirrel displaying by bragging and acting like he is *all that*? Audience, please respond.

Narrator ❶: That's right! Squirrel is speaking with a lot of attitude. People and Animals who brag and act conceited are usually covering up some inner insecurities.

Narrator ❷: Bragging and being conceited are PASSIVE things to do.



Narrator ❶: Remember how we mentioned that bragging and acting like you are *all that* are usually a cover-up for some inner insecurities? Well, that is definitely the case with Squirrel.

© 2001 by Debbie Dunn; inspired by a Native American tale about Coyote

Narrator ❷: Squirrel had a big inner insecurity. There was only one thing that Squirrel never bragged about. In fact, there was one topic that Squirrel never mentioned.

Narrator ❶: He figured if he didn't talk about it, perhaps no one would notice how repulsive he thought it was.

Narrator ❷: You see, Squirrel never, ever talked about his Tail. This was because he was secretly ashamed of his long, bushy Tail. He truly thought it was ugly.

Narrator ❶: Squirrel would watch the other animals and birds and admire their wonderful-looking Tails. Squirrel would think:

SQUIRREL: The Peacock's Tail is bright and beautiful. The Rabbit's Tail is small and fluffy. The Possum's Tail is long and so useful that he can even wrap it around a branch and then hang upside down. But what good is my Tail? It's long and bushy and ugly!

Narrator ❷: Squirrel is using quiet put-downs. Which response to conflict includes quiet put-downs: AGGRESSIVE, ASSERTIVE, or PASSIVE?

Narrator ❶: That's right! Quiet Put-Downs is a PASSIVE thing to do.

Narrator ❷: One day, Squirrel was out scampering around. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Hawk streaking toward him. Hawk said:

HAWK: Yum! A tasty Squirrel for my supper! That's just the ticket! I'm gonna get you, Squirrel!

Narrator ❶: The Hawk dived toward Squirrel as fast as he could. His talons were stretched out, ready to grab him. His beak was ready to stab him.

© 2001 by Debbie Dunn; inspired by a Native American tale about Coyote

Narrator ❷: Using his quick reflexes, Squirrel took off running. Squirrel dodged this way and that way, trying to elude the Hawk's sharp talons.

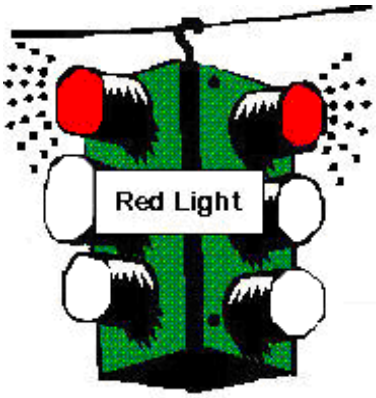
Narrator ❶: When Squirrel came to a tree, he spiraled his way up the tree, trying to avoid the Hawk's needlelike beak.

Narrator ❷: Finally, Squirrel came to a small hole. He managed to squeeze his way in, escaping from that Hawk by the tiniest of margins.

Narrator ❶: The Hawk screeched his displeasure and settled on a nearby branch to rest.

Narrator ❷: When someone uses violent actions of any type, which response to conflict is that: AGGRESSIVE, ASSERTIVE, or PASSIVE? Audience, please respond.

Narrator ❶: Violent actions and any actions that include painful physical contact and loud words and phrases are all considered to be AGGRESSIVE Responses To Conflict.



Narrator ❷: Squirrel was so proud! He looked around this small hole. He was hoping for some small animal or bird to be there so he could brag about his clever escape.

Narrator ❶: But no one was there. Squirrel was so disappointed. Finally, he decided he could at least brag to himself.

© 2001 by Debbie Dunn; inspired by a Native American tale about Coyote

Narrator ❷: Squirrel bragged to his Eyes first. He said:

SQUIRREL: Eyes, I was really great! What about you? What did you do to help?

SQUIRREL'S EYES: We were the ones who saw Hawk coming. And we were the ones who helped you find this small hole.

SQUIRREL: Good job, Eyes!

Narrator ❶: What was the outcome between Squirrel's Eyes and Squirrel: LOSE-LOSE, WIN-LOSE, or WIN-WIN? Audience, please respond.

Narrator ❷: That would definitely be considered to be a WIN-WIN Outcome. Squirrel benefited because he is safe in that hole in the tree. His Eyes benefited because they are safe inside the hole in the tree right along with Squirrel.

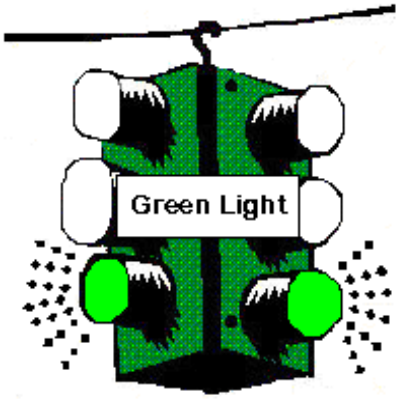
Narrator ❶: Another benefit in this situation is that Squirrel is giving a part of his body honest compliments. When you are complimentary of others, which response to conflict is that: AGGRESSIVE, ASSERTIVE, or PASSIVE?

Narrator ❷: Giving someone honest compliments and being a good sport are both ASSERTIVE things to do.

Narrator ❶: Also, being kind to yourself and giving yourself a Pep Talk is a very good form of self-mentoring. Self-Mentoring is another ASSERTIVE response to conflict.

Narrator ❷: Additionally, using manners and talking things out are two more ways to be ASSERTIVE with yourself and others.

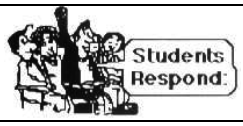
© 2001 by Debbie Dunn; inspired by a Native American tale about Coyote



ASSERTIVE

Assertive Responses To Conflict

Narrator ❶: What was the outcome between Squirrel and Hawk: LOSE-LOSE, WIN-LOSE, or WIN-WIN? Audience, please respond.

Narrator ❷: It was a WIN-LOSE Outcome between Squirrel and Hawk. Squirrel WON as he got away. Hawk LOST as he missed catching Squirrel for his supper. Squirrel is happy and Hawk is disappointed and angry.

Narrator ❶: Squirrel needed to brag some more. So this time, he talked to his Ears. He said:

SQUIRREL: Ears - Eyes and I were really clever! What did you do to help?

SQUIRREL'S EARS: We were the ones who heard Hawk coming. We heard him right behind us, so we were the ones who let you know to turn this way or that way to escape Hawk's sharp talons and his beak.

SQUIRREL: Good job, Ears!

Narrator ❷: Squirrel wasn't done bragging. He next turned to his four Legs and bragged:

SQUIRREL: Legs - Eyes, Ears, and I were really quick-witted! What did you do to help?

© 2001 by Debbie Dunn; inspired by a Native American tale about Coyote

SQUIRREL'S LEGS: We were the ones who helped you dodge this way and that way to successfully get away from Hawk.

SQUIRREL: Good job, Legs!

Narrator ❶: Squirrel just loved this bragging game he was playing. He turned to his Nose next and said:

SQUIRREL: Nose - Eyes, Ears, Legs, and I were really clever! What did you do to help?

SQUIRREL'S NOSE: I helped you sniff out the best places so as to run away from Hawk. I even helped sniff out this hole in the tree.

SQUIRREL: Good job, Nose!

Narrator ❷: Finally, Squirrel could think of no one else he could brag to. So he looked back at his Tail and kind of snapped:

SQUIRREL: All right, Tail! Eyes, Ears, Legs, Nose, and I were really fantastic! What did <u>you</u> do to help?

SQUIRREL'S TAIL: Nothing!

SQUIRREL: What do you mean, nothing?

SQUIRREL'S TAIL: I did nothing to help! In fact, if you really want to know, I tried to slow you down!

SQUIRREL'S TAIL: Yep! I tried to slow you down by getting us caught in the brambles. And if I saw that Hawk was losing sight of us, I made sure that I waved myself around so that he would be sure to find us again.

Narrator ❶: Squirrel got very angry and felt betrayed. He snapped:

© 2001 by Debbie Dunn; inspired by a Native American tale about Coyote

SQUIRREL: Why did you do all that? How could you betray us like that?

SQUIRREL'S TAIL: Because you are always putting me down. That hurts my feelings. You say that I am ugly! You think I am repulsive! Well, just for that, I decided to get revenge on you!

Narrator ❷: Squirrel was furious! At first, he couldn't think of anything to say. Finally, he said:

SQUIRREL: Well, you are ugly! I've never liked you anyway. And now, since you did nothing to help and almost got us caught, then you do not deserve to stay in this nice, safe place with us. We are going to throw you out!

Narrator ❶: Squirrel's Tail said nothing. He only twitched a bit.

Narrator ❷: What is the outcome between Squirrel and his Tail: LOSE-LOSE, WIN-LOSE, or WIN-WIN?

Narrator ❶: Squirrel may feel it is a WIN-LOSE with his Tail being the LOSER and him being the WINNER; however, we think it is really a LOSE-LOSE. If you try to get rid of a part of you, you are really LOSING out.

Narrator ❷: Unknown to Squirrel, his Tail helps him to achieve balance as he jumps from tree to tree. His Tail also helps him to stay safely on a tree branch, when he is perched there eating acorns and other kinds of food he finds.

Narrator ❶: So Squirrel might not appreciate how his Tail looks, but that part of his body is essential to Squirrel being Squirrel. Will Squirrel realize that in time?

Narrator ❷: Squirrel took his Tail and threw it out of the safe, little hole in the tree. The Tail waved once, twice, and three times in protest.

Narrator ❶: The hungry Hawk spied the Tail. Eyes gleaming, he flew to the branch that was closest to that hole in the tree. Hawk said:

HAWK: Ah-ha! I see Squirrel's Tail waving at me. Well, I guess I'm going to get my dinner after all! Let's get a closer look.

Narrator ❷: Hawk walked up the branch, reached out his sharp talons, and snatched the Tail. Then Hawk took off flying.

Narrator ❶: Of course, Squirrel was attached to that Tail.

Narrator ❷: He now understood that he needed to take care of and appreciate all of the parts of his body, whether or not he thought them beautiful or worthwhile.

Narrator ❶: Unfortunately, that lesson came too late - for that was the end of Squirrel.

Narrator ❷: What is the outcome between Squirrel and Hawk now: LOSE-LOSE, WIN-LOSE, or WIN-WIN?

Narrator ❶: Exactly! It is a WIN-LOSE Outcome. This time, Hawk is the WINNER because he gets a Squirrel dinner and Squirrel is the LOSER as he is the one to be eaten.

Narrator ❷: Did this story make you think about a time in your own life when you felt bad about a part of yourself or a part of your life?

Narrator ❶: So that was the end of Squirrel. Or at least, Squirrel thought that was the end of him.

Narrator ❷: As Hawk flew through the air, clutching Squirrel's Tail in his sharp talons, Squirrel looked around.

Narrator ❶: He seemed to hear other animals complaining about various parts of their body too. He even seemed to hear humans doing the very same thing.

Narrator ❷: He actually thought he heard Possum saying:

POSSUM: Wow! I wish I had a big, beautiful, bushy Tail like Squirrel. My Tail is skinny and long and practically hairless.

Narrator ❶: Squirrel felt a little proud that someone thought his Tail was beautiful. He also felt ashamed for how he had treated his Tail.

Narrator ❷: Additionally, he felt surprised and a little shocked that other animals and even humans put down parts of themselves too. He thought:

SQUIRREL: That's too bad! Somebody should do something about that. But who?

Narrator ❶: Then after thinking a bit more, Squirrel thought:

SQUIRREL: I wish it could be me!

Narrator ❷: Squirrel then realized that he probably only had time to change things for himself. He decided:

SQUIRREL: Well, before I die, at least I can apologize to my Tail. My Tail didn't deserve my put-downs and the harsh treatment I have always given him. I want to make peace with my Tail. Then we all can die in peace together.

Narrator ❶: So Squirrel looked up at his Tail that was clutched in Hawk's sharp talons and he said:

© 2001 by Debbie Dunn; inspired by a Native American tale about Coyote

SQUIRREL: Uh, … Tail. Uh, …, what I mean to say is, uh, …, that I'm sorry, …, for the way I, uh, …, treated you. You really are special! I really do appreciate you. After all, you are part of me. I'm a part of you. I hope you can forgive me, …, please.

Narrator ❷: When someone makes a sincere apology and tries to talk things out, which response to conflict is that: AGGRESSIVE, ASSERTIVE, or PASSIVE?

Narrator ❶: Exactly! Sincere apologies and talking things out are two forms of ASSERTIVE Responses to Conflict.

Narrator ❷: Squirrel waited to hear what Tail had to say. Tail twitched a bit. Then he twitched a lot. Hawk's flight kind of faltered with the sudden wiggling that was going on.

Narrator ❶: Suddenly, Squirrel's Eyes spotted a tree not that far down below. Tail wiggled. Squirrel wiggled. Tail wiggled even more. Squirrel wiggled even more. Then Squirrel's Ears heard Tail say:

SQUIRREL'S TAIL: On three, let's dive!

Narrator ❷: Squirrel's Legs added their wiggling to the wiggling of Tail and Squirrel. Squirrel said:

SQUIRREL: One, Two, Three, Dive!

Narrator ❶: Squirrel's whole body worked together as one. Squirrel and all the parts of his body turned into one huge wiggle.

Narrator ❷: At that moment, Hawk lost his grip on Squirrel. Squirrel went down, down, down until he and all of his body parts got really close to that tree.

Narrator ❶: Squirrel's Eyes spotted a branch. Eyes called out:

SQUIRREL'S EYES: Look, Everybody! There's a tree branch!

Narrator ❷: Squirrel's Ears listened for any danger spots there might be. Ears declared:

SQUIRREL'S EARS: Don't worry, Everybody! I'll listen for any danger spots!

Narrator ❶: Squirrel's Nose sniffed out just where Hawk was and how close or far away he was.

SQUIRREL'S NOSE: I'm sniffing for all that I'm worth. I can sniff that Hawk is at a safe distance if the rest of you can get us landed on that tree branch that Eyes saw.

Narrator ❷: Squirrel's Legs reached out to grasp the branch. Legs said:

SQUIRREL'S LEGS: I think I can do it! Yup! I'm pretty sure I can grasp that tree branch with my Legs! I think I can! I think I can! I know I can!

Narrator ❶: Squirrel's Tail shot out, working for balance so that no part of Squirrel would fall.

SQUIRREL'S TAIL: I'm working hard to make sure we get the balance that we need so that we won't fall off that tree branch once we get there.

Narrator ❷: And then suddenly, Squirrel landed safely on that tree branch.

Narrator ❶: Once again, Squirrel's Eyes spotted a hole. Eyes called out excitedly:

SQUIRREL'S EYES: A hole! A hole! I see a hole! Quick, Legs! Scamper up that branch and get us in there.

Narrator ❷: All of Squirrel worked together to scamper into that hole, just in the nick of time before Hawk had a chance to grab Squirrel's Tail again.

Narrator ❶: And this time, all of Squirrel remained safely in that hole until Hawk finally gave up and flew away with an angry screech. Hawk complained:

© 2001 by Debbie Dunn; inspired by a Native American tale about Coyote

HAWK: Drat! Drat! And double drat! I lost my dinner for the second time this day! No fair! No fair! Auuuccckkkkkkk!

Narrator ❷: Squirrel spoke to each of his body parts in turn, starting with Tail and gratefully said:

SQUIRREL: Wow, Everybody! You were spectacular! Tail, thanks to you, we're all still alive! Eyes, Ears, Nose, Legs, and I salute you!

Narrator ❶: Tail waved and twitched his modest thanks!

Narrator ❷: Do you think Squirrel ever put any part of his body down again?

Narrator ❶: No way! In fact, he went around from place to place, telling the story of his very special Tail, hoping that every animal and human would learn to love and treasure every part of themselves as being very special and important.

Narrator ❷: In fact, Squirrel told his story to me and now, I'm telling it to you. Perhaps you can tell his story to others.

Narrator ❶: So spread the good news. Loving yourself and being happy is what it's all about!

Big Part:

SQUIRREL

Medium to Small Parts:

HAWK	SQUIRREL'S TAIL	POSSUM
SQUIRREL'S EYES	SQUIRREL'S EARS	
SQUIRREL'S NOSE	SQUIRREL'S LEGS	