

One Kind Act a Day Book Discussion Guide: Your Pal Fred





YOUR PAL FRED BOOK DISCUSSION GUIDE

If you would like a colorful, approachable, and helpful tool to teach kindness in your classroom then Your Pal Fred is a great option. Here is our five-star review on this kind tale:

In a Mad-Max Lite apocalyptic world two scavengers accidentally wake up a robot Fred, a children's toy from a long-lost era with the purpose of being a friend. Fred's undying positivity and unconditional kindness are a needed infusion in a world where hostility is the norm and people think you have to be mean to survive.

A lot of children's books can be heavy-handed in their message, but "My Pal Fred" is able to sneak profound messages of kindness into a humorous and colorful story. While Fred travels, he shares kindness in his actions and words. Often rewarding others with a sticker and changing how they viewed themselves and others. Things aren't always easy for Fred, but he is able to make big changes as he encourages people to be kind.

Michael Rex's dedication at the beginning of the book says, "To my father, who was, above all, kind." You can see the lessons this stellar dad taught his son permeate this entertaining and uplifting book.



Assignment: Read Chapters 1 and 2

Discussion Prompts:

1. What is the setting for this book? What is the world like and how do people feel about each other?
2. When Fred wakes up he calls himself a “pal” and the two brothers, Plug and Pug, don’t understand. How would you explain to someone what a “pal” is?
3. Plug and Pug don’t seem to get along very well, even though they are brothers. Do you have any siblings? Is it sometimes difficult to get along with your siblings or others who are close to you? Stop for a minute and think about why these people are important to you and how you can grow closer to them. Share your thoughts with the group.
4. Plug and Pug don’t trust each other to share very well, but, using conflict resolution skills, Fred comes up with a good solution. Why does this work well? Which would you rather do, cut the loaf or pick the first piece, why?
5. To reward Plug and Pug for getting along Fred gives them each a sticker. How does that little act of kindness make them feel? You can’t print stickers out of your fingers, but you have the power to do something similar. You have words that you can use to give complements.



Assignment: Read chapters 3 and 4

Discussion Prompts

1. How do the people in these chapters view each other?
 - a. Mostly as tools for conflict and obstacles.
2. Pug notices Wormy using his brother's wrench to escape. How does he react to this? What would have happened if, instead of fighting, they worked together like Fred suggested?
3. On his mission to make friends, Fred meets a lot of naysayers, or people who think his goals are pointless. On page 46 Wormy says something unkind to Fred, but how does Fred respond?
 - a. In the world around us there can be a lot of negativity that can weigh us down. Ask yourself, what makes a duck float versus other birds when they fall in the water? Some birds when they fall in water get soaking wet feathers and sink, so how do ducks stay afloat? Ducks have special oil in their feathers that makes them waterproof, so water just rolls right off their body, protecting them and keeping them dry. Sometimes in life we need to be like a duck with the negativity around us, and just let it roll off our "feathers" kind of like how Fred is. He is confident in who he is and doesn't let the naysayers get him down.
4. On page 53 you see Fred draw his first "Be Kind" heart. What is a message you would want to spread all over the world?



Assignment: Read Chapters 5 and 6

Discussion Prompts

1. Fred meets Junkboy in these chapters. How does their first interaction go? What does Fred do to turn it around?
 - a. What does it do for a person to have someone believe in them and see the good in them?
2. On page 78 Junkboy says, “Its hard out here in the dunes. It’s what everyone does, kid. You steal and you rob, and you bonk people. I don’t like doing it, but it’s how I survive”.
 - a. Do you ever feel like the world we live in doesn’t allow for kindness? That people have to hurt and be mean to get ahead and survive?
 - b. Could Fred be right? Is there a better way for our world to be?



Assignment: Read Chapters 7 and 8

Discussion Prompts

1. In this chapter Fred meets Yummy the Robot who asks for help. When was the last time you needed help from someone? How did that turn out?
2. Fred and Yummy have lots of differences but Fred still helps him. Can we help people that are different than us? What about animals, plants, and nature? What are some ways we can look past differences and just see something to help?
3. On page 88 Wormy tries to convince Fred to leave Yummy saying, “It didn’t do anything for you...You have to take care of yourself and only yourself! No one else matters!” What is Fred’s response to that?
 - a. Why do you think Wormy has the viewpoint? What would you say to someone who is talking to you like that?
4. When Fred helps others, does he ask for or expect a reward? What does “kindness doesn’t keep score mean to you?
5. What kind of tribute would you bring to Lord Bonkers?



Assignment: Read Chapters 9 and 10

Discussion Prompts:

1. In these chapters we see a lot of different reactions to kindness. It is important to always remember that the only person whose reactions we can control is ourselves. Sometimes people won't respond the way we want them to when we are kind. Let's talk about some of these.
 - a. Lord Bonkers
 - i. Fred offers to be friends with Lord Bonkers. How does Lord Bonkers respond? Have you ever tried to make friends, and it didn't work?
 - ii. Somehow Fred stays positive after rejection AND being put up a flagpole in a storm. How does he respond?
 - iii. Fred gets a second chance to talk to Lord Bonkers and he continues being kind. How does Lord Bonkers react in this second situation? How would you react to a being turned down twice by someone?
 - b. Wormy and Prisoners
 - i. Fred and Wormy reconnect and despite all of Fred's positive offers Wormy just wants to be left alone. Again, someone is rejecting Fred's kindness and friendliness. How did that make Fred feel?
 - ii. The other prisoners were watching Fred's example of kindness, how did they respond?
 - c. Sometimes when we are kind people respond back by being kind, sometimes people are mean, sometimes people reject us. What kinds of things can we control in this situation? Just our own response, which can always be kind.



Assignment: Read Chapters 11 and 12

Discussion Prompts:

1. How does Fred's conversation with Papa Mayhem go?
2. Have you ever been in a fight with someone, or been mad at someone, and had another friend ask you to let it go? How easy was it to forgive the person you were mad at? Do you think it is easy for Lord Bonkers and Papa Mayhem to become best friends? Is what Fred is asking them to do difficult?
 - a. Getting along after a fight isn't easy to do, but how do you feel when you and someone else get along again?
3. Fred meets Big Hands in the Boom Room. One of Fred's talents is that he can see potential in other's that no one has ever seen in them before. When was one time someone noticed something special about you? What was it they noticed? How did that make you feel?
 - a. Big Hands feels like she just has "big dumb hands" and isn't able to do anything nice. People only say unkind things to her. What kind of a difference does it make when Fred is able to see something good in her? How can you be a person who uplifts others like Fred?



Assignment: Read Chapter 13

Discussion Prompts:

1. Papa Mayhem finally seems to believe in the “road of nicey-niceness”. What do you think is in the peace offering?
2. In this chapter we see where Fred’s kindness and belief in others starts to pay off. Who does he run into and what was the impact of Fred’s earlier kind acts?



Assignment: Read Chapter 14

Discussion Prompts:

1. Fred finds himself in a dangerous situation but once again, due to earlier kindness, things pay off for Fred.
 - a. Why does Yummy stand up for Fred?
 - i. Pg 183 Yummy says, “No! I will not crush Fred! He is full of kindness and goodness! He helps those who are in need and asks nothing in return!”
 - ii. What kind of courage did it take for Yummy to stand up to a whole arena of screaming bullies in order to protect his pal, Fred?
 1. Hopefully we don’t have to fight evil blue robots to the death, but how can we stand up to protect others?



Assignment: Read Chapter 15

Discussion Prompts:

1. In this chapter we find out a little bit about how the world became the way it is. One thing that keeps popping up was “wars” when people don’t get along. What kind of world do you want to see in the future? What are some things you can do to help build that world?



Assignment: Read Chapters 16 and 17

Discussion Prompts:

1. Turns out both armies are there to fight, not for peace. Do you think the soldiers in this fight really care about the battle or want to fight? Who really wants to fight?
2. *Spoiler Alert* Papa Mayhem and Lord Bonkers are really long lost brothers. For years they didn't know and just hated each other. Think of all the trouble they could have saved just by talking to each other. Have you every had a misunderstanding with someone that was solved just by talking and figuring things out?
 - a. What are some ways we can have better communication with people around us?
3. High Fives
 - a. In the end everyone is reunited and high-fives. Did you know there is power in high fives and that there are scientists who study the effect of high-fives? Some scientists did research on professional basketball. They watched all the games at the start of the season and counted every high-five, fist-bump, and hug. They thought of these things as little shared celebrations and kind acts. Guess what the scientists found? At the end of the season, the teams that won the most games were the teams that gave the most high-fives. (Kraus MW, Huang C, Keltner D. Tactile communication, cooperation, and performance: an ethological study of the NBA. *Emotion*. 2010 Oct;10(5):745-9. doi: 10.1037/a0019382. PMID: 21038960.)
 - i. Give a high five to the person next to you. How does that make you feel?
 - ii. Something small and kind you can do is celebrate those around you with high-fives, there is power and makes you and others into champions.



Assignment: Read Chapters 18 and 19

Discussion Prompts:

1. All through the book Fred is trying to convince Wormy about the power in kindness. Wormy always seems to be a skeptic. How will people react to our kindness and what can we control about that?
2. In the end, how can we know that Wormy is starting to believe in the power of kindness?
3. Based on all Freds interactions in this book, how can we be better pals? How can we build a kinder, more peaceful world?
4. If you want more ideas on making friends, be sure to check out Fred's guide at the end of the book.



Look out for more kind adventures from Fred in
“Your Pal Fred: Low Power” and an upcoming third
volume as well!!!

