



ACTIVITY: 'DIMINISHING RETURNS'

TIME: 10–15 minutes
SIZE: Large groups
SPACE: Sports hall, outdoors
RESOURCES: Two buckets, tokens

The aim is to place students in a situation where achieving a simple goal becomes increasingly difficult.

The result should be fruitful discussion about how your Sense of Purpose can change, and how it can become even more important as situations become more demanding.

NB: This is a good warm-up activity to expend excess energy before commencing thoughtful discussion about Sense of Purpose.

1. Define the playing area: one end is the Miser's Yard. Place a bucket there containing 8–12 tokens (preferably not balls which can roll); these are the Miser's money. At the other end is the 'Home' of the players, where you place the other bucket. Somewhere halfway between the two buckets is a 'safe' line.
2. Choose one student to play the Miser. His/her task is to protect the money.
3. The other students are Home players; their task is to get their hands on the Miser's money and get it 'Home' to their bucket.
4. The 'safe' line defines the Miser's Yard from the Home Yard. If Home players are tagged by the Miser in the Miser's yard, they become Misers, too.
5. The winner is either the Miser team, which will have tagged all the players, or the Home side, which must have succeeded in retrieving all the Miser's money.



DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

- Note up-front that neither thievery nor miserliness are particularly admirable traits, and this is just a game to prompt discussion.
- Did everybody's goal seem clear at the start of the game? How did things change for you as the game progressed? Particularly, how did the game change for 1) the Miser once he/she got help, and 2) for Home players if they were tagged and suddenly had a completely different task?
- What did Home players think and feel when they were tagged? Did any self-critical or negative thoughts persist once they got underway as Misers? Why/why not?
- Sometimes we have plans and goals that we want to achieve but have to rethink things because circumstances change. Maybe we don't get as good a mark as we hoped, or we become ill, or something good happens such as meeting someone inspiring who opens the doors to new opportunities. Why is flexible thinking important to a healthy Sense of Purpose?
- It is healthy and sensible to be open to change when it comes to goals and Sense of Purpose. Life is uncertain, and full of change and possibilities. Brainstorm some circumstances when flexible thinking can complement Sense of Purpose (e.g. if you had an accident and could no longer do the same things physically you once could).