

The Wall

8. *The Impossible Knot*

Spatial Requirements: Regular classroom setup: little or no space required

Activity Type: Group

Grades: K-12

Group Size: 2 or more

Time: 5 minutes

Introduction: When we have a limited view, overcoming some challenges can seem impossible. When we begin to “think outside the box” and see the big picture, however, these seemingly impossible obstacles can be overcome. This challenge will show students that seeing the big picture can reveal simple solutions to difficult problems.

Materials:

- 1 3-foot rope or string per person

Activity:

After distributing the string/rope to all the participants, ask them to grab one end of it in each hand and tie an overhand knot without letting go. After they struggle for a few minutes, show them the solution.

To solve this challenge, fold your arms and grab one end of the string/rope in one hand and the other in the free hand. Unfold your hands, holding on to the string/rope to reveal the overhand knot.

Let the participants practice until they are able to tie a knot with their string/rope.

Processing the Experience:

- What made this activity difficult?
- Did you think this activity was possible in the beginning? Why or why not?
- Was it easy once you knew the solution?
- Why do people often miss the simple solutions?
- How does a person’s limited view affect their future?
- How does a person’s perception affect his/her ability to solve a problem?
- What “seemingly” impossible tasks do you face as students? What can you do to resolve them?