

# Life Principle: COMPASSION

## The Wooden Bowl by Leo Tolstoy

A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and four-year old grandson. The man's hands trembled, his eyesight was blurred, and his step **faltered**. When the family ate together at the table, the grandfather's shaky hands and failing eyesight made eating difficult. Food spilled on the tablecloth and floor every meal.

The son and his wife became irritated with the mess so they set a small table in the corner and the grandfather ate there while the rest of the family enjoyed dinner. Since Grandfather broke a few dishes, they served him in a wooden bowl. When the family glanced in his direction, sometimes he had a tear in his eyes as he sat alone.

The four-year old watched it all in silence. One evening the father noticed his son playing with some wooden scraps and asked, "What are you making?" The boy responded, "Oh, I'm making a little bowl for you and Mama to eat your food in when I grow up." The words so struck the parents they were speechless and tears streamed down their cheeks.

That evening the husband took the Grandfather's hand and gently led him back to the family table where he ate for the remainder of his days. The father and his wife no longer cared when food was spilled or dishes broken.

[The Wooden Bowl](#) "Full Version Retold by [Leo Tolstoy](#)

[The Wooden Bowl 4:04 with Spanish Intro.](#)

"The Wooden Bowl" – printable version

[The Wooden Bowl poem](#)

[The Wooden Bowl 4:59 Modern Play](#)

Activity: Use **Venn diagram** to compare "The Wooden Bowl" with "Grandmother's Table" by the Brothers Grimm

[Wooden Bowl Choice Worksheet](#)

[Compassion Choice Worksheet](#)

[Aesop Fable Learning Strategies](#)

### Step 1: Question Focus: "Compassion"

**Question Focus Technique Resource**

-- A Cooperative Learning Strategy

### Step 2: Produce Questions.

Rules for producing questions:

1. Ask as many questions as you can.
2. Change any statements into questions.
3. Write down every question exactly as stated.
4. Do not stop to discuss, judge, or answer the questions.

### Step 3: Improve the Questions.

- 1) Identify open and closed-ended questions.
- 2) Change questions: select one question to change from open to closed-ended and one closed question to open-ended.

Example: *Closed to open*

What caused the parents to move the grandfather to a small table?

What lesson did the boy teach the parents after moving the grandfather to a small table?

[The Power of Effective Questioning](#) 5:35 min

