

talk
to
me!

LET'S TALK EMPOWERMENT. LET'S TALK ENGLISH

Moments

7. The Last Leaf by O. Henry

1. Summary

Sue and Johnsy are two young artists who share an apartment. In autumn, Johnsy gets pneumonia. She becomes very weak and is convinced that she is going to die.

An old ivy creeper grows along a brick wall opposite their window. One by one, it sheds its leaves. And then there is only one left. Johnsy tells Sue that when the last leaf falls, she will die. The doctor visits them and tells Sue that Johnsy has lost the will to live.

Sue goes to visit Mr. Behrman, their neighbour who is also an artist and tells him about Johnsy. The next morning, they wake up to a windy day, but the single leaf on the ivy is still there. Johnsy recovers. But Sue tells her that Mr. Behrman died in his sleep. He had fallen sick painting a leaf on the brick wall on a wet windy night, after the last leaf had fallen.

Watch what people with depression want you to know. Click on the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQr1G1OOEEQ>

2. Vocabulary

1. **Autumn** - a season, also known as fall, before winter when leaves fall off the trees
During the **autumn** season in countries with cold climates, the leaves turn red and yellow in colour and then fall off.
2. **Shared** – use or occupy with another person
Last night, friends paid us a surprise visit and we **shared** our meal with them.
3. **Storey** – level or floor of a building
Rina lived on the fourth storey of the building.
4. **Pneumonia** – illness caused by infection in the lungs
Elderly people who get **pneumonia** struggle to recover.

5. **Gazing** – to stare at something or somebody
We spent the nights **gazing** at the starry sky during the summer.
6. **Condition** – the state that someone or something is in
We decided to get the table repaired as it was in a very poor **condition**.
7. **Interest** – the feeling of wanting to know or learn
She looked around the museum with great interest.
8. **Respond** – to give an answer / reply
At the interview, I was able to **respond** immediately because I was well prepared.
9. **Drawing-board** – a drawing board, usually made of wood on which artists or architects keep their paper and draw
Asif was drawing a picture on the **drawing-board** of the vase of flowers in front of him.
10. **Whistled** – to make a sound by breathing air out through a small hole made by your lips
She was so happy that she **whistled** a merry tune while cooking.
11. **Whisper** – to talk softly close to another person
At movies and concerts we do not even **whisper**, because we do not want to disturb others.
12. **Anxiously** – worried and nervous
We all waited **anxiously** for results of the examination.
13. **Creeper** – a plant that climbs the side of a structure, like a wall, giving out roots
Ivy is a **creeper** that grows on the walls of old stone and brick houses.
14. **Shedding** – dropping
The tree was **shedding** its leaves and was almost bare.
15. **Finality** – being finished, so cannot be changed
The **finality** of the umpire's decision made the batsman immediately leave the cricket field.
16. **Nonsense** – something silly or stupid
She was talking **nonsense** and so we did not listen to her.

17. **Confident** – being certain of your abilities, or having trust in people, plans, or the future
I am **confident** that we will win the match against Pakistan.
18. **Peacefully** – calmly, in a way that does not involve violence
My mother was sleeping so **peacefully** that I did not have the heart to wake her up.
19. **Miner** – a person who works in a mine, where minerals and coal are dug out of the earth
The coal **miner's** face and hands were black from the coal dust.
20. **Model** – something that can be copied because it is a very good example
Our school is a **model** school and a lot of other schools are trying to follow our teaching methods.
21. **Masterpiece** – a work of art such as a painting, film or book that is made with great skill
We went to the museum to admire the **masterpieces** by our famous artists.
22. **Convinced** – certain
I am **convinced** that I will be able to complete the work by the end of the day.
23. **High temperature** – fever during which the body heats up
The child has a cold and cough and is also running a **high temperature**.
24. **Complained** – to say that something is wrong or not satisfactory
I have **complained** to the Principal about your bad behaviour.
25. **Tiptoed** – walked on toes with the heels of foot lifted off the ground so as to walk softly
We all **tiptoed** into the room as the baby was sleeping in the cot there.
26. **Peeped** – to secretly look at something for a short time, usually through a hole
I **peeped** into the room to see whether the children were studying.
27. **Feeble** – weak, not having enough strength
After the illness I was so **feeble** that I could barely walk.
28. **Nervous** – worried and anxious
I was very **nervous** when the teacher said that the Principal would like to meet me.

29. **Reluctantly** – not willing to do something and therefore slow to do it
Shobha **reluctantly** handed over her note book to the teacher.
30. **Fierce** – physically strong and frightening
The lion gave a **fierce** growl and we all shivered with fright.
31. **Energetically** – to do things with vigour
At the walkathon all the participants were walking **energetically**.
32. **Clinging** – staying close and attached
The child was **clinging** to her mother in fright.
33. **Cooperated** – to work or act together for a particular purpose; to be helpful by doing what someone asks you to do
We all **cooperated** with our mother and did our share of the housework.
34. **Depressed** – unhappy and without hope
She became very **depressed** when she learnt of the death of her favourite pet dog.
35. **Gloomy** – not expecting anything good in a situation
The outlook for our economy is very **gloomy** at present.
36. **Examining** – to look at or consider a thing or person carefully in order to find out something about them
She was **examining** the painting carefully in order to find out if it was genuine.
37. **Janitor** – North American term meaning caretaker of a building
In the United States of America and Canada, the **janitor** provides cleaning and maintenance services to buildings like schools, offices and residential buildings.
38. **Shivering** – shaking slightly because of being cold, ill or frightened
The whole family came into the warm house **shivering** with cold.
39. **Wondered** – asked yourself questions or wanted to know about something
I have often **wondered** how she could clean the house in just one hour.
40. **Flutter** – to make movements up and down or from side to side or to cause something to do this
The colourful flags were all **fluttering** in the breeze

3. Questions

1. What is Johnsy's illness? What can cure her, the medicine or the willingness to live?
2. Do you think the feeling of depression Johnsy has is common among teenagers?
3. Behrman has a dream. What is it? Does it come true?
4. What is Behrman's masterpiece? What makes Sue say so?

4. Talk About it

Have you ever felt depressed and rejected? How did you overcome such feelings? Share your experience with your classmates.

5. Suggested Reading

- 'The Gift of the Magi' by O. Henry
- 'Dusk' by Saki (H.H. Munro)
- *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul on Tough Stuff*: Compiled and edited by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Kimberly Kirberger