WORKSHEET 3

THE STORY WITH THE HAMMER



"Man wants to hang a picture. He has a nail, but no hammer. The neighbor has one and our man decides to borrow it. But then and there a doubt occurs to him: "What if the neighbor won't let me have it? Yesterday he barely nodded when I greeted him. Perhaps he was in a hurry. But perhaps he pretended to be in a hurry because he does not like me. And why would he not like me? I have always been nice to him; he obviously imagines something. If someone wanted to borrow one of my tools, I would of course give it to him. So why doesn't he want to lend me his hammer? How can one refuse such a simple request? People like him really poison one's life. He probably even imagines that I depend on him just because he has a hammer. I'll give him a piece of my mind!" And so our man storms over to the neighbors's apartment and rings the bell. The neighbor opens, but before he can say, "Good morning," our man shouts, "And you can keep your damned hammer, you oaf!"

(Watzlawick, Paul, "The situation is hopeless, but not serious: (the pursuit of unhappiness)",(pp. 39-40), New York: Norton (1983))

EXERCISES

Discuss in a group.

1. Relate the story of the man with the hammer to the Buddhist statements about the cause of suffering.

2. Analyze the successive disturbances.

3. Where is the solution? What are the different ways to end the chain of projections?