



## THE PECKING ORDER PROBLEM

Teddy invites diverse ethnic groups of local birds to attend a meeting. Small birds and large birds, songbirds and birds of prey. Goldfinch, Sparrow, Blue Jay, Cardinal, Wren, Woodpecker, Raven, Owl, Eagle and Goose crowd into Teddy's meeting room.

Teddy addresses the group of ten, "I appreciate your flying to this meeting. Each one of you is an important participant."

"I appreciate the opportunity," Woodpecker tweets.

"Grateful for your invitation," Blue Jay says.

"Thanks!" Sparrow says.

"Our meeting today is to discuss the **pecking order**," Teddy announces. "Who benefits from it? Who does it harm? How did it originate?"

"He definitely benefits," Sparrow says bitterly pointing to Blue Jay.

"And her too!" Goldfinch says points at Cardinal. "You always push us away from our food."

"Yeah, the bird feeder is a free restaurant for everyone."

"So, if it's for everyone, then that includes me," Blue Jay responds. "Anyway I'm stronger than all of you."

"I'm blacker!" Raven states.

Cardinal says. "I'm brighter than anyone, so I should get first dibs.

"I'm bigger than any of you," Woodpecker says. "So I should be first."

Eagle silently eyes everyone to proclaim his dominance.

"I want to read you the dictionary definition of pecking order," Teddy says. "An informal [social system](#) in which some [people](#) or [groups know](#) they are more or less [important](#) than [others](#)."

"Yes, that's the way it is," Cardinal says proudly. "Bigger has always been better."

"I'm definitely most important since I travel more widely," Goose announces.

"But it's not a fair system," small Wren speaks up. "Why should I be pushed aside because I'm small?"

"Where did this pecking order start anyway?"

Teddy continues reading, "Basic pattern of social organization within a flock of poultry (hens) in which each bird pecks another lower in the scale without fear of retaliation and submits to pecking by one of higher rank."

"So it was those domesticated birds, those chickens," Sparrow says. "Probably copying people around them."

"How can we change pecking order to equal turn taking?"

"No one is better than anyone else. No one is more important."

"Line up in order of when you get there."

"Equality. Sharing. Community. One for all and all for one."

"I'm willing to give up being the biggest, so the smallest won't resent me."

"I'll be glad to give up being the smallest because I'm as good as anyone else."

Teddy responds to this discussion. "This is good! We are hearing different points-of-view." He writes on the white board.

"Who agrees that pecking order is a problem?"  
Teddy asks.

All ten listeners nod yes, their beaks rising and falling.

Teddy continues, "Good! Who agrees that equal turn taking is one solution?"

"I do!" is repeated ten times.

"Do you agree that we need to share natural resources, giving and taking?"

Ten responses, "Yes, I do!"

"Do you agree that community building can help erase the pecking order?"

"Yes!"

"Good! Now we each have to do our part in these solutions." Teddy concludes. "It won't be easy, but with determination we can do it."

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Solution</b>
Unfair pecking order	-equal turn taking -share natural resources, give & take -community building



**How can I replace pecking order with equality? Can I take turns equally so no one is more important than anyone else? How can I share natural resources so that there is an equal give and take? How can I help to build a community with my circle?**

Note: Pecking order is also called *dominance hierarchy*. Dominance might be determined by size, gender, wealth, social status, education, profession.