

Howard B. Wigglebottom and the Monkey on His Back

A Tale About Telling the Truth

Suggestions for Lessons and Reflections

★HOWARD'S LIST

Howard wanted to protect his friend Ali and cover up for her. He believed it was OK to lie to help a friend, so he lied to his teacher about how the mouse got out of the cage. What do you think? Should Howard have told the teacher the truth right away or later on when no one else was listening?

Howard lied to the driver about breaking the car's headlight. The strange man looked angry and Howard felt unsafe and scared. Was it right to lie? Would it have been better to call a teacher or a grown-up right away to talk to the man? If you were Howard, what would you have done? Would you have lied too?

Why do you think Howard lied to his friend about his father being the Spider Bunny? Do you think he feared not being liked because of what his parents did or how they lived or what they looked like? How about you? Did you ever feel like lying to your friends about your family just to look good?

Howard didn't want to be last in a race so he lied about having helicopter ears. He didn't want to race just for the fun of it. Do you know anyone like that? How about you? Do you feel bad about yourself when you lose a game or a race?

Do you remember the reasons Howard lied to his mom? He didn't want to go to practice and thought his mom was going to make him go anyway, so he hid his shoes and lied about it instead of asking permission to stay home. Was it right or wrong?

Howard felt greedy about the coins he found under the chair's seat. He didn't want to share them with anyone, so he lied to his father. Did you ever do anything like that? How did you feel afterwards? Can people tell when you are lying to them? How do you feel if they call you a liar? How do you feel when people lie to you?

On page 27, his father tells him to make a list of all the people Howard needed to

apologize to for not telling the truth. If you were Howard, how many people would you put on the list? How about yourself? Do you need to make a list too?

★ BEING LIKED AND ACCEPTED

Several children were asked about the people they liked the most and to explain why. They like people who share, play fair, don't make fun of others, don't tell lies, don't take things without permission, don't tell secrets and don't tell on them. In other words, children like people they can trust. We all like to have friends and want to be liked and appreciated. It's OK to have those feelings because everybody feels this way. Do you want to be liked? Help your friends trust you by always telling them the truth and being kind to them as much as you can!

★ A LITTLE VOICE INSIDE YOUR HEAD

Howard had a little voice inside his head that told him "lying is wrong." When he chose not to pay attention to the voice, he felt bad about himself and became unhappy. He felt like he had a monkey on his back, which was weird and uncomfortable.

We all have a little voice inside our head that lets us know when we are doing something wrong. Some call it our conscience, and others our "inner teacher." Pay attention and you will be able to listen to it too. When we listen to the voice and do the right thing, we feel good about ourselves and the people we care for will like and trust us. It takes bravery and practice to be able do the right thing. It's worth it though, because it's so nice to feel good!