

Howard B. Wigglebottom Learns about Courage

Suggestions for Lessons and Reflections

★ FEAR IS OUR FRIEND

The words to be scared, afraid or fearful or to have fear mean the same thing.

Do you know what it means? Fear is when something or someone makes your heart beat really fast, you feel kind of bad and ill and you want to walk away from it.

It is very normal and healthy to feel fear. Birds, animals, fish, children and grown-ups are fearful of something at one time or another.

Fear protects us from danger and helps our bodies prepare to fight or to run away. Fear is our friend!

There are two basic kinds of fear—the real and the make-believe.

- The real kind is the fear of something that can really harm us. We should listen to this fear; it is there to protect us, to make us pay attention and be very careful.

What are the things we should fear?

We should fear spiders, snakes, scorpions, cars and trucks, strange people, dogs and animals, fire, lightning, electrical outlets, knives, rough and deep waters, high places.... Can you think of anything else to add to the list?

Remember it must be something that can really harm us.

- The make-believe kind of fear is when we are afraid of something that can't really harm us, like fear of the dark, fear of the first day at school, fear of toilets, fear of loud noises... Can you think of more make-believe fears we can have?

What kind of fears did Howard have?

Howard had both kinds. Which ones were of the real kind? Can you tell?

What fears do you have?

★ YOU CAN'T BE BRAVE IF YOU DON'T FEAR

How can superheroes, soldiers, firefighters and little birds be so brave? Because they do what they need to do even when they feel scared.

People who don't feel afraid of anything can't really be brave. Remember, to be brave is to have fear and do what you need to do anyway.

Can you be brave too? Yes!

Start by making a list of the make-believe fears you have. Ask your teacher and other grown-ups at home to help you with your list. Just like everything else you want to be good at, you will need to practice.

- Notice how you will feel scared at first just by talking about it.
- Draw a picture of your fear, look at the picture several times, and then throw it away.
- Tell your self aloud what the worst thing that can happen is if you do what you are afraid of.
- Tell yourself what the best thing that can happen is if you do what you are afraid of.
- Tell your self aloud, "I am afraid but I can do it anyway," or, "I can do it," or "I am brave," several times every day for five days.
- Be patient and kind with yourself. If you are still afraid of something it means you need a little more time. Tell yourself, "It is OK to be afraid"
- Be patient and kind with other children. Don't call them bad names just because they are scared. Let them know, "It is OK to be afraid." Everyone is afraid of something one time or another.