

Howard B. Wigglebottom Listens to His Heart

Suggestions for Lessons and Reflections

1. The Heart

- There are two different meanings for the word heart. One is that the heart is a muscle that pumps blood through the whole body. The other is when people talk about their feelings and they say things like "You broke my heart," "Listen to your heart," "There is joy in your heart," "You make my heart sing," "My heart stopped," "Sweetheart," or "I love you with all my heart."
- When you are asked to follow your heart, it means to do things you really like and that make you feel good inside. Following your heart, listening to your heart, and being true to yourself mean the same thing. When you listen to your heart, you will be proud of the decisions you make and the person you are.
- In our first book, Howard B. Wigglebottom Learns to Listen, Howard learns how to listen to his teachers and parents. In this book, Howard learns how to listen to his heart, which is the same as listening to himself and doing what is right for him.
- Do you know the difference between to think and to feel? Examples of thoughts are, "He's not nice." or "He's smart." Examples of feelings are "I feel sad." or "I feel happy."
- Can you think of anyone like Howard who followed his heart even when his friends made fun of him?

2. Confiding In an Older Person

- Howard was very lucky to have a grandfather he trusted to talk about his feelings. In addition to your parents, find someone older you trust and are comfortable with to share your feelings. It may be a brother, a sister, a nice teacher, a nurse, or a doctor.

3. Self-Esteem, Inclusion, and Acceptance

- As human beings, we all have the same needs. First, we need to eat, breathe, drink, sleep, be liked, and be heard. Next, we belong to smaller groups called races. Do you know which race you belong to? One can be a mixture of different races. Races look different from one another. Then you belong to an even smaller group called family. Every family is different, and every family member is unique. You have a different age, feelings, needs, thoughts, tastes, desires, and talents. It's okay to be different. Do you know what makes you different from the rest of your family?

- As an individual person, you need to find out what you like and what makes you happy. As you meet other children, you'll find out the differences in them and how they may become your friends. There will be times when what makes your friends happy will be different from what makes you happy. It's not easy to accept that your friends may have likes and dislikes that are different from yours. It's not easy to feel different from your friends and still feel liked by everyone.
- Do things that you like, and you will have a better chance to meet friends who will accept you as you are and enjoy doing the things you like to do.
- You are good enough just as you are. It's okay to be yourself and not what others may want you to be. Remember to say to yourself everyday, "I am special." • All of us have the ability to find out what we like to do best.
- Howard got cheers and compliments for finding what he loved to do and for trying his hardest. Sometimes you will get cheers and sometimes you won't. It doesn't matter whether you get cheers or not. What's important is that you do those things you believe in and that make you feel good.
- If you do things that you don't like just to look cool to your friends, you will not feel good inside.
- It's okay not to be perfect in everything you do. As long as you don't give up and always do your best, you can feel good about yourself. And you will be proud of yourself too!

4. Trying Different Things for the Fun of It

- It's a good idea to try different things—even ones you don't like very much. Why? Because: you will find out more about what you like and your own talents. You will make good friends who like you as you are. You will feel proud and good about yourself. You will learn many different things that you will get to use all your life, even when you are a grown-up.
- Do you know of anyone like Howard who tried many different things until he found something that made his heart sing?

5. Connecting to Your Roots and Family Legacy

- In the story, Howard learns about the talents he received from his family from a really long time ago. What did it mean when Grandpa Sammy said "You, Howard, come from a long line of Wigglebottoms?"
- Often, we don't share the same talents or gifts as our parents. And that's okay. In the story, Howard does share a talent with his family. What talent does he share with other Wigglebottoms?
- Would you like to learn what gifts you may have received from your family from a long time ago? Ask someone about your family history. If you can't find out anything, learn about the history of your race. **BE PROUD OF WHO YOU ARE!!**