



**FROM WORRY
TO WINNING**

**Tools to Help Kids
Reclaim Their Superpowers
and Beat Anxiety**



A MESSAGE FOR KIDS



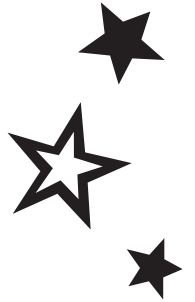
Whether you believe it or not, you have superpowers.

It would be cool if those superpowers made it possible to fly or see through walls, but the kind of superpowers you have are the ones inside your head.

These superpowers help you erase worry from your brain and that's really important because worry can stop you from doing what you need and want to do.

HERE IS WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW ABOUT WORRY:

- ★ Worry is totally normal and everyone does it.
- ★ Sometimes worry grows and grows until all you are doing is worrying.
- ★ Your superpowers can help you defeat worry as soon as you see it.



The next few pages will help you find the superpowers that are already inside you.



Know When Worry Is Sneaking Up On You

Before you can blast worry from your brain, you have to know it's there. Worry is very sneaky so you have to pay attention to what it feels like in your body.

HERE IS AN EXAMPLE:

When Harley feels worried, she also feels a rumble in her stomach. Sometimes she gets a headache. Her hands might get cold and her heart beats faster.

What does it feel like when you worry? Think about a time when you were worried about something and share what that feels like with your grown-up. If you don't remember, it's okay. The next time you feel worried, you can share about it then.

Below are some starter questions that might help.

1. Do you worry when you have a big test at school? Describe what that worry feels like.

2. Do you worry if you had an argument with your friend? Describe what that worry feels like.

3. Do you worry about something at home? Describe what that feels like.

4. Use this line to write about any kind of worry you want to.

5. Now ask your grownup what worry feels like in their body and write their answer below.

CONGRATULATIONS!

You've learned your first Superpower Trick: Recognizing Worry In Your Body. That's a big deal. Now when you start to feel worry sneaking up, you can pull out your next superpower trick.



Name Your Worry

Worry can be like a bully because when it visits, it takes over everything. Harley was tired of her worry calling the shots, so she named her worry Oliver. By giving her worry a name, it made the worry less scary, and gave Harley back her superpower.

HERE IS AN EXAMPLE:

Now when Harley feels worry, she says, "Hey Oliver, I see you. I have stuff to do so you're gonna have to leave." Sometimes she brushes Oliver off her shoulder or shakes her body until Oliver falls out.



What would you name your worry?

Use this space to draw a picture of what your worry looks like in your mind. Ask a grownup to name their own worry and draw a picture, too.

CONGRATULATIONS!

You've just discovered your second Superpower trick! Naming Your Worry. Now when worry starts moving in, you can call it out by name and brush it off your body.



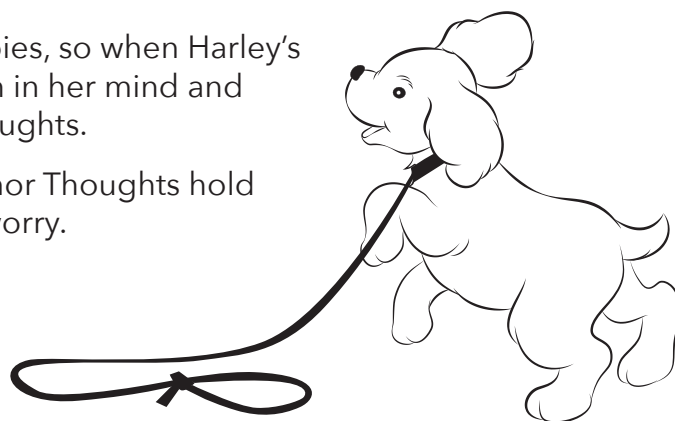
Tug the Leash

When Harley went to her therapist, she was told that changing the channel on her worry would help, like you change channels on a TV. But Harley wasn't sure what would be on the next channel in her mind, so she came up with another idea.

Harley has a puppy and when her puppy starts to wander, she gives the leash a gentle tug to pull him back to safety.

Thoughts are sometimes like wandering puppies, so when Harley's thoughts start to wander she tugs on the leash in her mind and repeats special thoughts she calls Anchor Thoughts.

Just like an anchor holds a boat in place, Anchor Thoughts hold your mind in place so it doesn't wander into worry.



When you "tug the leash" on your thoughts, what will your Anchor Thoughts be?

Examples: I am safe. I am courageous. I am peaceful. I love myself.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

CONGRATULATIONS!

Now that you've learned how to "tug the leash," you can use this Superpower the next time your Worry visits.



Birthday Cake

Sometimes Harley's worry catches her off guard. That makes it hard for her to use her superpowers right away. When that happens, Harley might notice that her breath gets faster and she feels her heart beating. That's okay. That happens to everyone sometimes. Even grownups. But Harley is smart and learned another superpower to use when that happens.

Imagine you have a birthday cake in front of you. It's your favorite flavor with your favorite frosting. On top of the cake are the same number of candles as your age.

YOUR JOB IS TO BLOW OUT THE CANDLES. READY?

Take a deep, deep breath, and blow out JUST ONE candle on the cake! Ready? Bloooooooooow..

Now take another deep breath and blow out another candle.

Keep blowing out each candle, one at a time, until none of them is lit anymore.



Notice how your body feels. After all that inhaling and all that blowing, you might feel more calm or even sleepy. That's why birthday cake candle blowing is a superpower when your worry bully makes your heart beat faster. Remember, keep practicing!

CONGRATULATIONS!

You've learned what you can do when your worry gets the best of you: use the Birthday Candle Superpower!



ROAR

This superpower is fun but it's a good idea to use it when you have your own space to be good and loud. It is also perfect to use when your worry won't go away. It's a way to show your worry bully who is the BOSS of your body. YOU.

HERE IS AN EXAMPLE:

When Harley worries, she takes a deep breath and R O A R S as loud as she can. Like a lion claiming her favorite patch of grass. She keeps roaring until she imagines her worry running away, because that's what worry does when you scare it away.

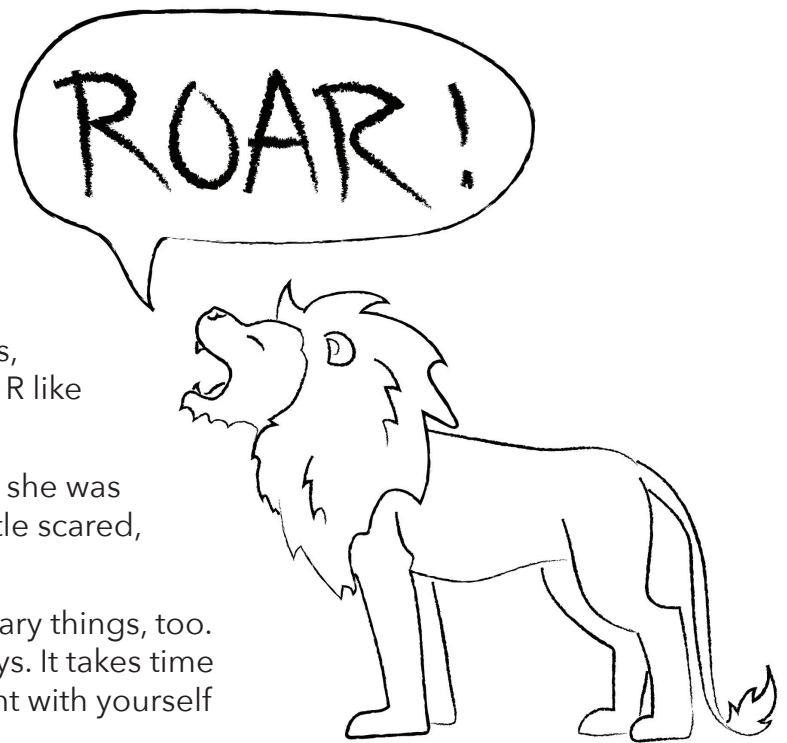
Now you try it!

R R R R R O A R R R R !!!

YOU DID IT! You learned how to use your Superpower Tricks. The next time worry comes, you can recognize it, name it, tug the leash, use your anchor thoughts, blow out the birthday candles, and R O A R like a lion.

Once Harley reclaimed her superpowers, she was ready to do the things that made her a little scared, like speaking up and trying new things.

Your superpowers will help you do the scary things, too. Just remember that you have them. Always. It takes time to learn how to use the tools, so be patient with yourself and keep practicing!





A MESSAGE FOR PARENTS



You probably don't need statistics from the American Psychological Association to tell you that anxiety in our kids is on the rise. You see it in your kids, hear about it from friends, or you see it in your classroom.

The reason for the increase is likely complex but ground-breaking research continues and eventually will help us find more targeted solutions. Until then, you and your kids need tools to help manage their daily worries so they don't miss out on the experiences that help them grow and learn.

The tips offered in this workbook are designed as a supplement to a support system, not as a replacement for professional care. We recommend families work together with a trained therapist and consistently practice using the tools offered here and in therapy.

The next three pages are designed with your 5-12 year old in mind and within the frame of a cognitive behavioral therapeutic approach. The more tools your child has to manage their worry, the more empowered they feel.



Work together with your child on the activities and talk about your own experiences with worry. Research finds that communicating with our children about our own emotions and how we manage them helps to build their emotional intelligence.





Getting your kids to talk about their worry is one of the most important steps in helping them manage it. A 2009 study by the American Psychological Association found that an overwhelming number of parents were not even aware of their kids' worries.

That's understandable. Busy work, school, and extra-curricular schedules means quality time together to talk about tough topics like feelings is hard to find. But if we're not aware of our kids' worries, we can't help them deal with it.

5 DO be honest with your own feelings.

Emotional awareness is a skill that's learned, but not unless we teach it to our kids. When you're worried about something that can be shared in an age-appropriate way, do that. THEN share how you're managing that worry with tools like anchor thoughts or reframing the worry into excitement. While you're at it, share the times that you're angry, sad, excited, happy, and frustrated, too, and how you manage each of those emotions. Kids need to know that feelings are normal; it's what we do with them that counts.

4 DO watch for signs.

Anxiety can look like the inability to focus, moodiness, avoidance of school, isolation, crying, and tantrums. When those behaviors become consistent, it's time to talk with your kids. If they're not ready to share their feelings, keep sharing your own. Consider gifting them a journal. Counseling can be a critical tool for kids with anxiety and therapists trained in cognitive behavioral therapeutic approaches will give you practical strategies to use as a family.



3 DO take their fears seriously.

When you're tired the last thing you want to hear about are monsters under the bed or a fight with a friend, but dismissing your child's fears by telling them "There's no such thing as monsters" or "Everything will be fine tomorrow" will not get rid of the fear and instead tells your child that his fear doesn't matter. When kids feel that way, they're less likely to open up about them in the future. Spray under the bed with special "monster spray" and be an active listener when they tell you about what's happening with their friends.



2 But DON'T feed the monster.

Children will do whatever they can to avoid what's giving them anxiety. As the adults, we have to be careful not to let them. If they learn "throw tantrum = avoid hard stuff" because we remove them from the very situation they're trying to escape, we have taught them that tantrums are a good coping mechanism. And that's a behavior they'll carry into adulthood. Starve the anxiety monster. As best you can be patient and understanding, but hold firm. Taking action in the face of their worries helps your kids feel empowered and confident. (100% exception when kids are being put in dangerous situations, as with a bully.)



1 DO let your kids make mistakes.

This one is hard because we want to protect our kids from the pain we experienced at their age. But kids who never learn to handle mistakes grow up to be adults so afraid to make them, they become paralyzed with indecision. Of course, step in when your child's safety is at stake and be a compass when they make a character blunder (i.e. create a safe atmosphere for your child, to be honest with you, and if you catch her in a lie, opt to discuss the reason behind the lie instead of a lecture). Learning to deal with emotions that follow consequences builds resilience and confidence in your child, as they see that they can handle the obstacles life will inevitably lay down before them.





PARENT RESOURCES



BOOKS FOR KIDS

[Outsmarting Worry](#)

[Wemberly Worried](#)

[The Worry Glasses](#)

[Hey Warrior](#) (Australia)

BOOKS FOR ADULTS

[Anxiety Relief for Kids](#)

[Helping Your Anxious Child](#)

WEBSITES

[WorryWiseKids.org](#)

[Child Mind Institute](#)

[Peaceful Parent](#)

TED TALKS

[Rethinking Anxiety: Dawn Hueber](#)

[Breaking the Anxiety Cycle: Steven Zanella](#)

