

Situation that triggered my anxiety



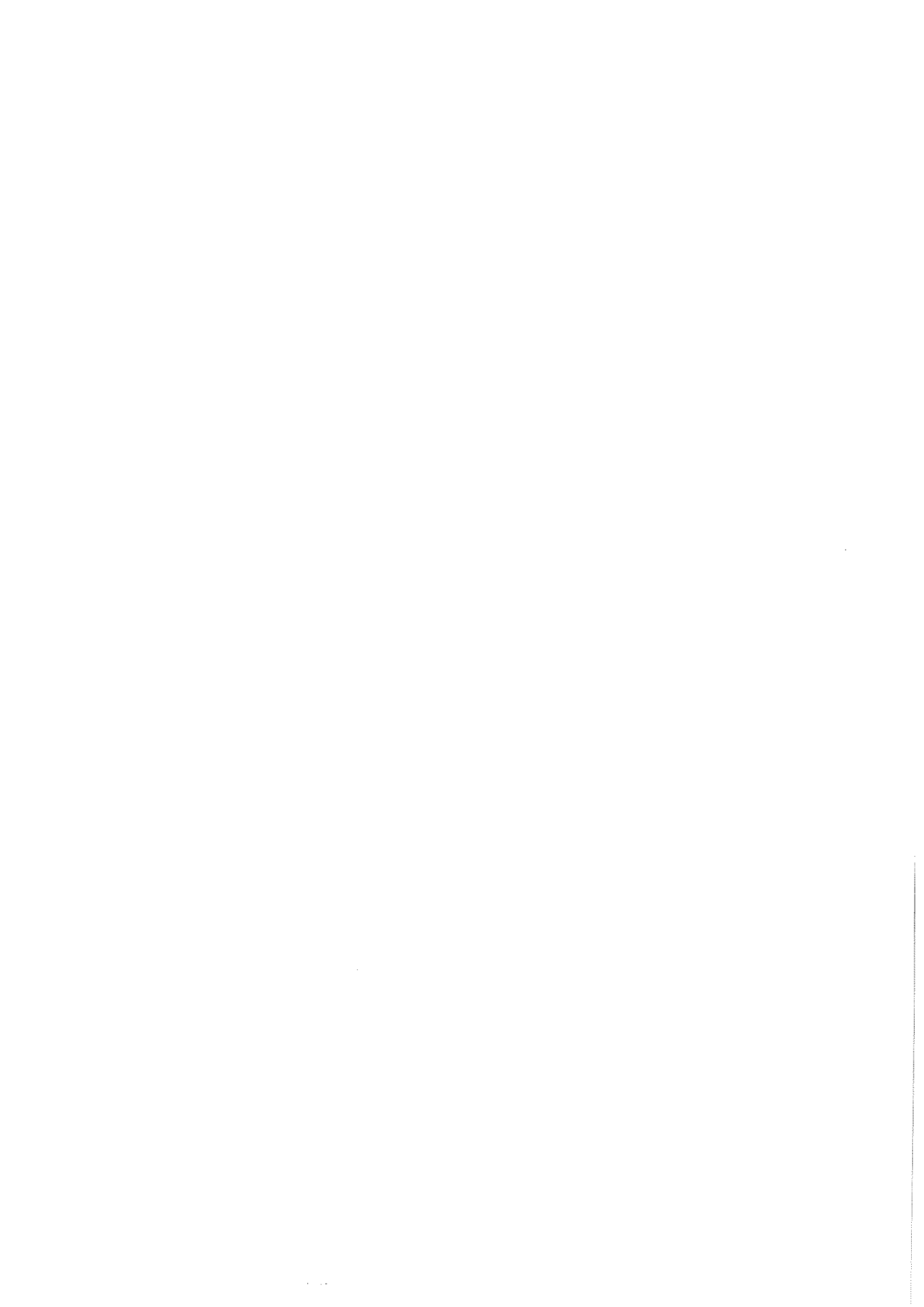
On a scale of 0-10, how severe was the anxiety? Write the number in the shape to the left.



What I Did



What I Could Have Done to Cope/Better Alternatives

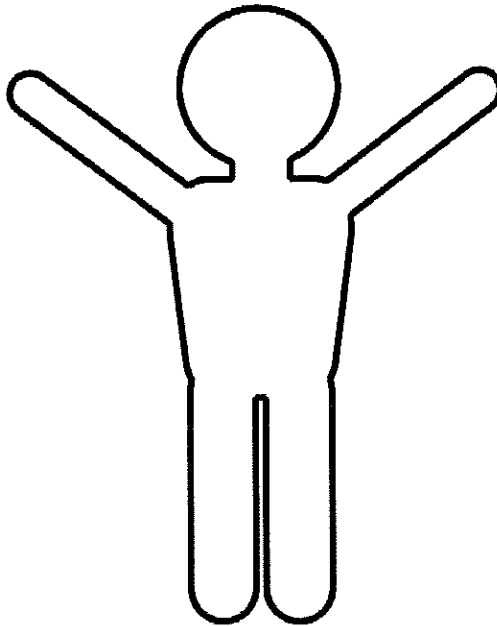


My Fears

What are some things
that make you feel
nervous or scared?

What do you think about when you are nervous or scared?

How does your body feel when you are nervous or scared? Color the areas
where you can sense these feelings.



What's something you can do to feel better next time you are afraid?



Relaxation Techniques

When a person is confronted with anxiety, their body undergoes several changes and enters a special state called the *fight-or-flight response*. The body prepares to either fight or flee the perceived danger.

During the fight-or-flight response it's common to experience a "blank" mind, increased heart rate, sweating, tense muscles, and more. Unfortunately, these bodily responses do little good when it comes to protecting us from modern sources of anxiety.

Using a variety of skills, you can end the fight-or-flight response before the symptoms become too extreme. These skills *will* require practice to work effectively, so don't wait until the last minute to try them out!

Deep Breathing

It's natural to take long, deep breaths, when relaxed. However, during the fight-or-flight response, breathing becomes rapid and shallow. Deep breathing reverses that, and sends messages to the brain to begin calming the body. Practice will make your body respond more efficiently to deep breathing in the future.

Breathe in slowly. Count in your head and make sure the inward breath lasts at least 5 seconds. Pay attention to the feeling of the air filling your lungs.

Hold your breath for 5 to 10 seconds (again, keep count). You don't want to feel uncomfortable, but it should last quite a bit longer than an ordinary breath.

Breathe out very slowly for 5 to 10 seconds (count!). Pretend like you're breathing through a straw to slow yourself down. Try using a real straw to practice.

Repeat the breathing process until you feel calm.

Imagery

Think about some of your favorite and least favorite places. If you think about the place hard enough—if you really try to think about what it's like—you may begin to have feelings you associate with that location. Our brain has the ability to create emotional reactions based entirely off of our thoughts. The imagery technique uses this to its advantage.

Make sure you're somewhere quiet without too much noise or distraction. You'll need a few minutes to just spend quietly, in your mind.

Think of a place that's calming for you. Some examples are the beach, hiking on a mountain, relaxing at home with a friend, or playing with a pet.

Relaxation Techniques

Paint a picture of the calming place in your mind. Don't just think of the place briefly—imagine every little detail. Go through each of your senses and imagine what you would experience in your relaxing place. Here's an example using a beach:

- a. Sight: The sun is high in the sky and you're surrounded by white sand. There's no one else around. The water is a greenish-blue and waves are calmly rolling in from the ocean.
- b. Sound: You can hear the deep pounding and splashing of the waves. There are seagulls somewhere in the background.
- c. Touch: The sun is warm on your back, but a breeze cools you down just enough. You can feel sand moving between your toes.
- d. Taste: You have a glass of lemonade that's sweet, tart, and refreshing.
- e. Smell: You can smell the fresh ocean air, full of salt and calming aromas.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

During the fight-or-flight response, the tension in our muscles increases. This can lead to a feeling of stiffness, or even back and neck pain. Progressive muscle relaxation teaches us to become more aware of this tension so we can better identify and address stress.

Find a private and quiet location. You should sit or lie down somewhere comfortable.

The idea of this technique is to intentionally tense each muscle, and then to release the tension. Let's practice with your feet.

- a. Tense the muscles in your toes by curling them into your foot. Notice how it feels when your foot is tense. Hold the tension for 5 seconds.
- b. Release the tension from your toes. Let them relax. Notice how your toes feel differently after you release the tension.
- c. Tense the muscles all throughout your calf. Hold it for 5 seconds. Notice how the feeling of tension in your leg feels.
- d. Release the tension from your calf, and notice how the feeling of relaxation differs.

Follow this pattern of tensing and releasing tension all throughout your body. After you finish with your feet and legs, move up through your torso, arms, hands, neck, and head.

Mindfulness Exercises for Children

Build a Stress Ball



If you're feeling brave, and are prepared to clean up a mess, provide the children with balloons, flour, and funnels to build their own stress balls (you may want to double-layer the balloons). Some other filling options include rice, small beads, or the leftover dots from punched paper. Once the kids have built their own stress balls, try using them with *The Feeling Exercise*.

The Body Squeezing Exercise



Have the children sit or lie down in a comfortable position, and ask them to squeeze and relax each of the muscles in their body one-by-one. They should hold each squeeze for about five seconds. After releasing the squeeze, ask the kids to pay attention to how it feels when they relax. Children understand this exercise better if you help them visualize how they can squeeze a particular muscle using imagery, such as the following:

1. Curl your toes tight like you are picking up a pencil with your feet.
2. Tense your legs by pretending like you are standing on your tippy-toes, trying to look over a fence.
3. Suck in your stomach as if you are trying to slide through a narrow opening.
4. Make fists with your hands and pretend like you are trying to squeeze all of the juice out of an orange.
5. Pretend like a bug landed on your nose, and you're trying to get it off without using your hands. Try to scrunch your face and move your jaw to make it fly away!

The Five Senses Exercise



Take the children outside if the weather is nice, and have them lie silently in the grass. Begin to call out each of the five senses in turn (sight, smell, sound, taste, touch), and ask the children to notice everything they can with that particular sense, until you call out the next one. This exercise can also work well on walks, and in a number of other situations.

Mindfulness Exercises for Children

The Feeling Exercise



Collect a number of interesting objects such as feathers, putty, stones, or anything else that might be interesting to hold. Give each child an object, and ask them to spend a minute just noticing what it feels like in their hand. They can feel the texture, if their object is hard or soft, and the shape. Afterwards, ask the children to describe what they felt. With bigger groups, pair children off to take turns completing the exercise together.

The Seeing Game



Ask the children to spend one minute silently looking around the room. Their goal is to find things in the room that they've never noticed. Maybe there are some big things like a poster or a picture, or just little details like cracks in the ceiling or an interesting pattern on the door. After the minute is up ask the kids to share the most interesting new things they noticed.

Ocean Breathing



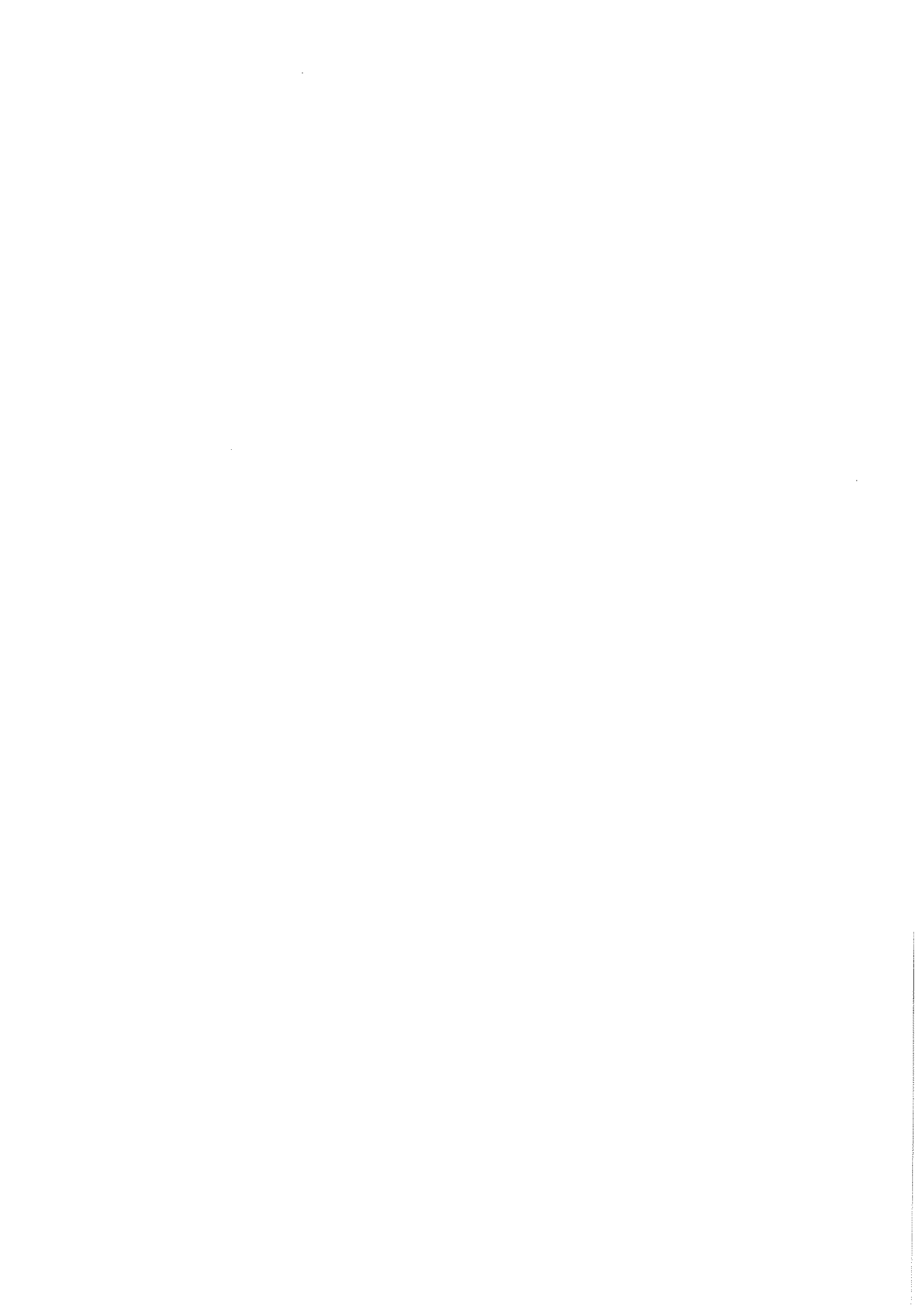
Have the children sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Ask everyone to slowly breathe in through their nose, and then out through their pursed lips (as if they are blowing through a straw). Point out that the slow and steady breathing sounds like ocean waves, gently crashing on shore. Let the children continue breathing and making the ocean sound for one to two minutes.

The Power of Listening



Ring a bell, a wind chime, or anything else that creates a long trailing sound. Ask each child to listen, and silently raise their hand when they can no longer hear the sound. After the ringing ends, ask the children to continue listening to any other sounds they can hear for the next minute. When the minute ends, go around the room asking everyone to tell you what sounds they heard.

YOUR Well-beings Matters

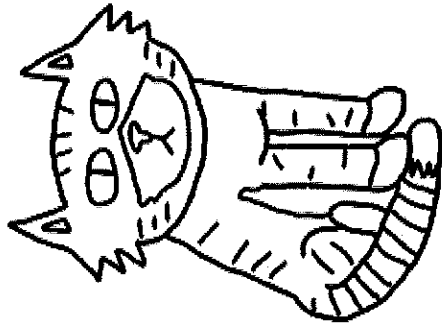
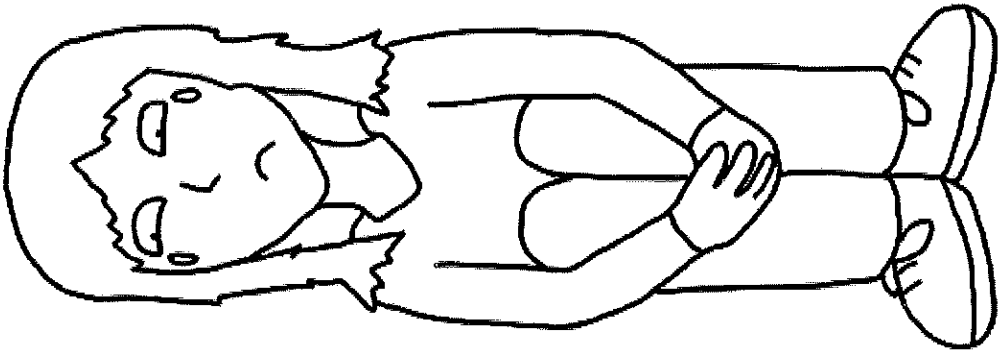
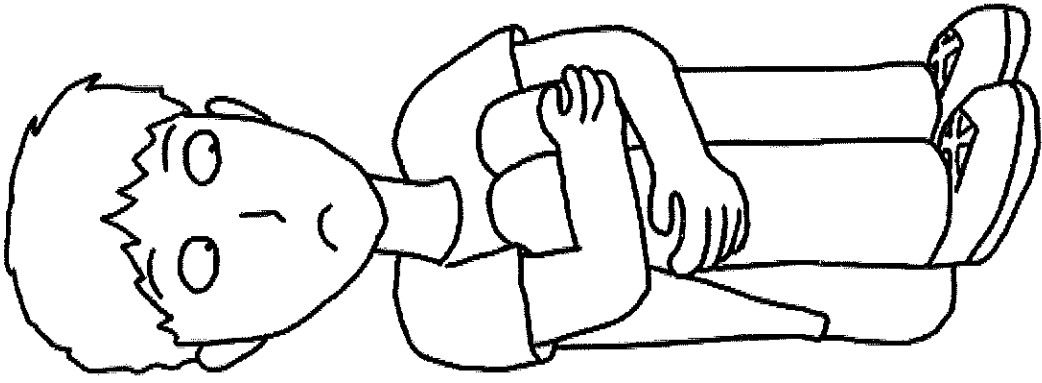


CHANGE

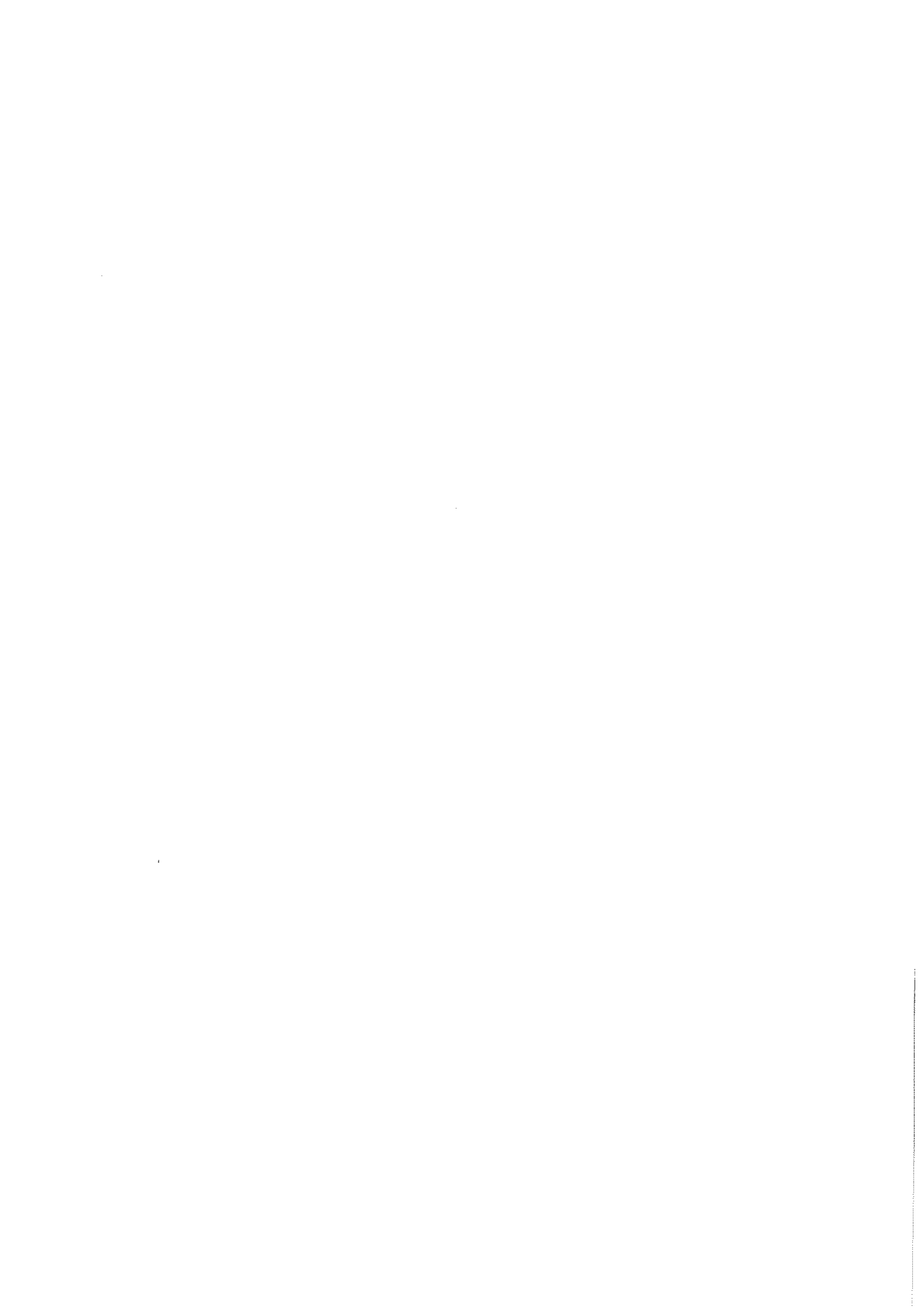
SCHOOL

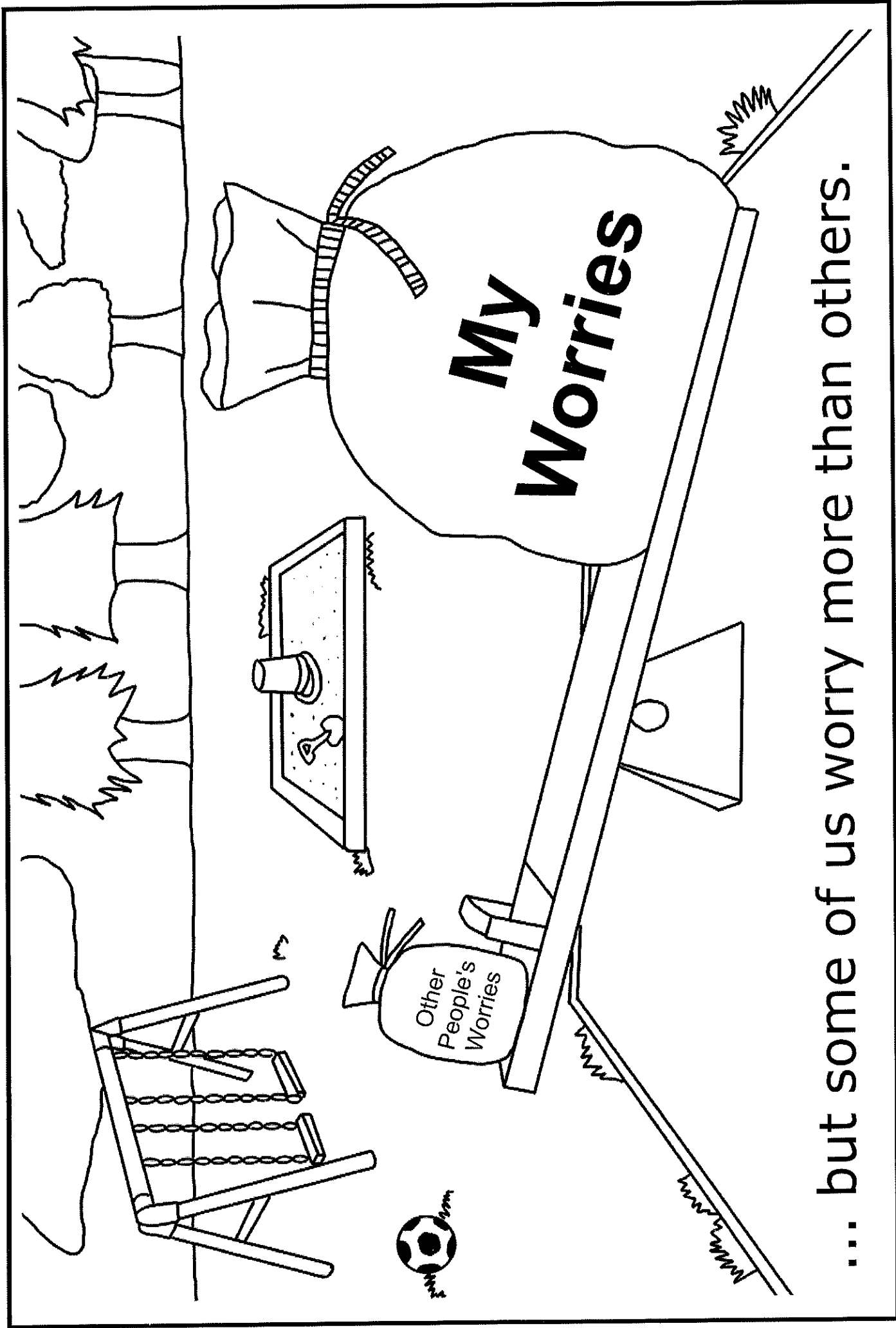
NEW
ROUTINES

BULLIES
& TEASING



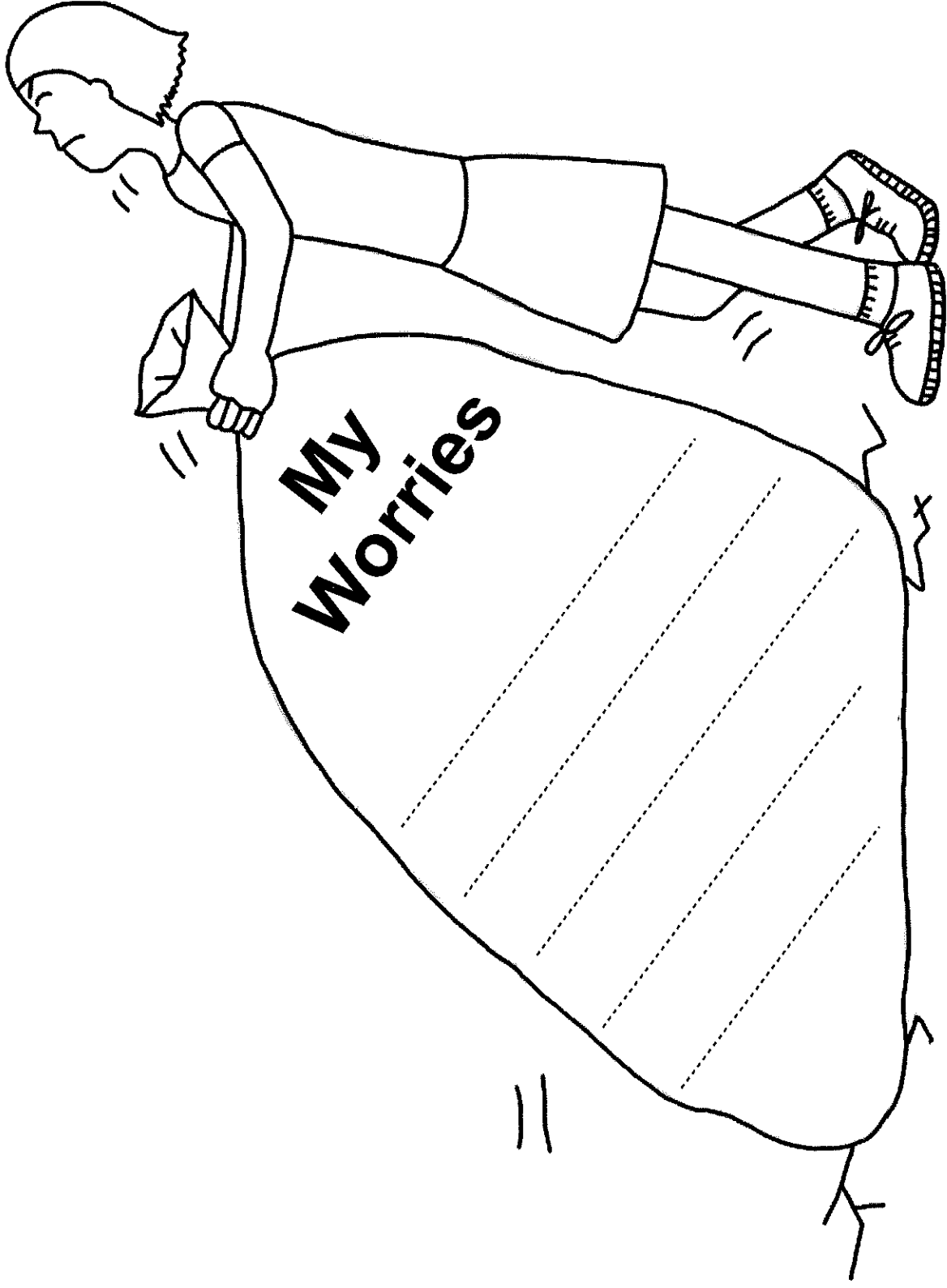
Everybody worries and gets anxious
about all kinds of different things ...





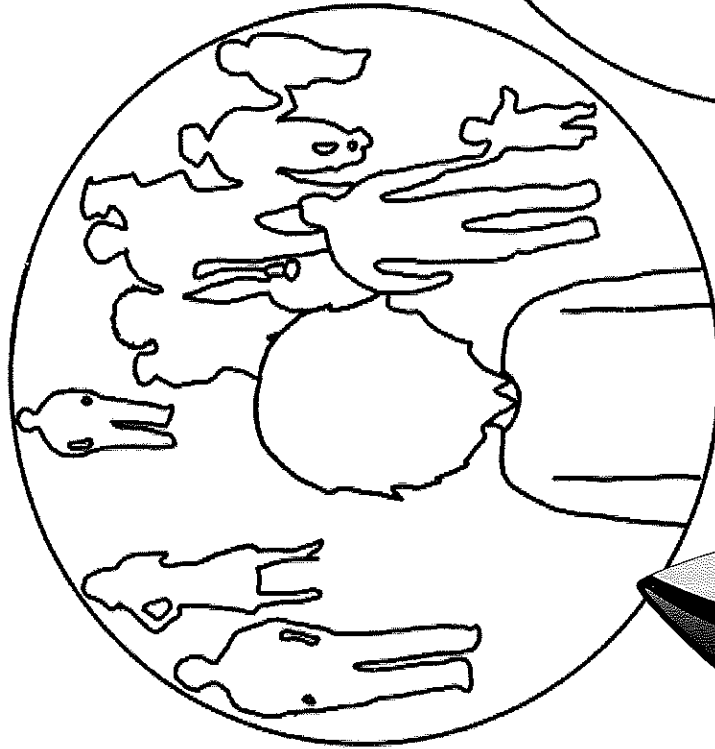
... but some of us worry more than others.





It can be exhausting, upsetting & distracting to be carrying around so many worries day after day.

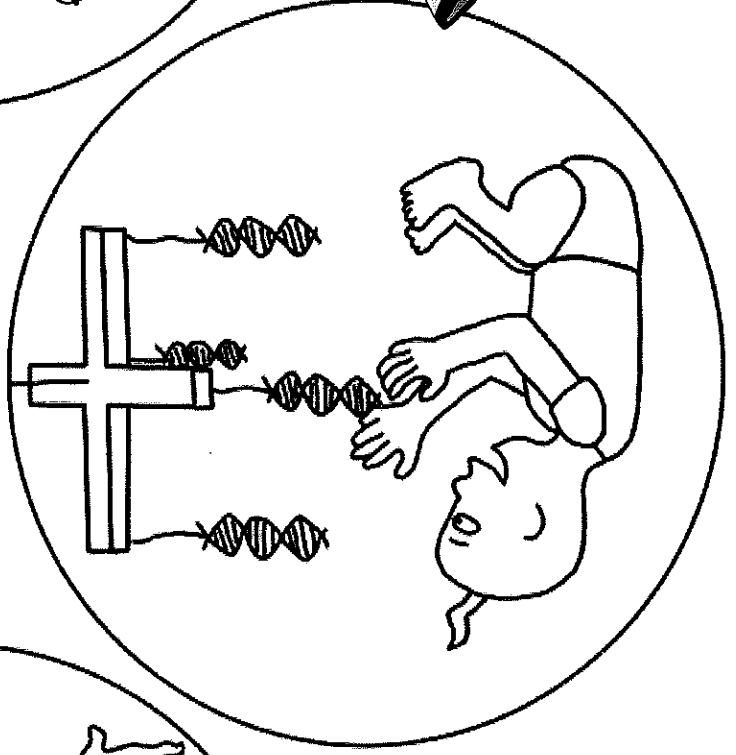
So why do some of us feel more anxious and worried than others?
What decides how we react to events, challenges and problems in our life?
Three of the main factors are shown below.



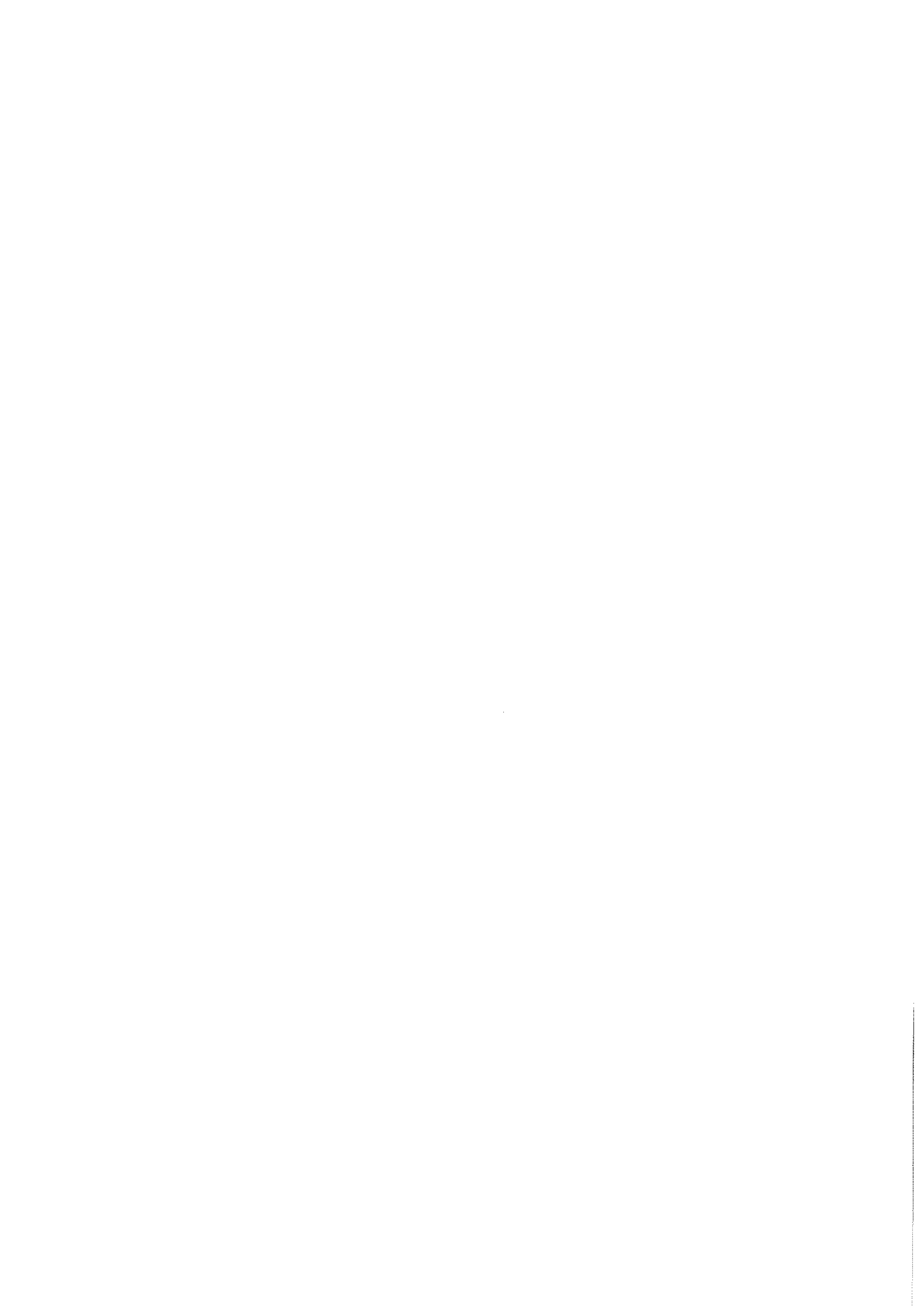
People who have influenced us



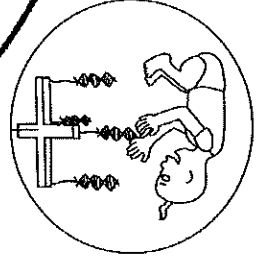
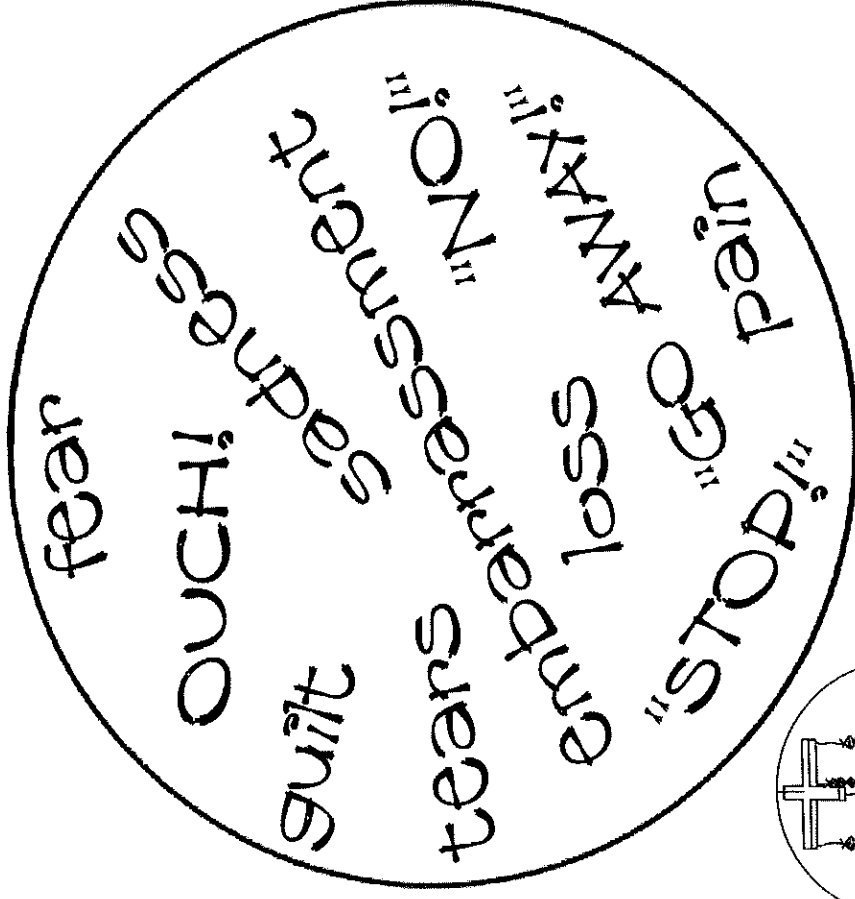
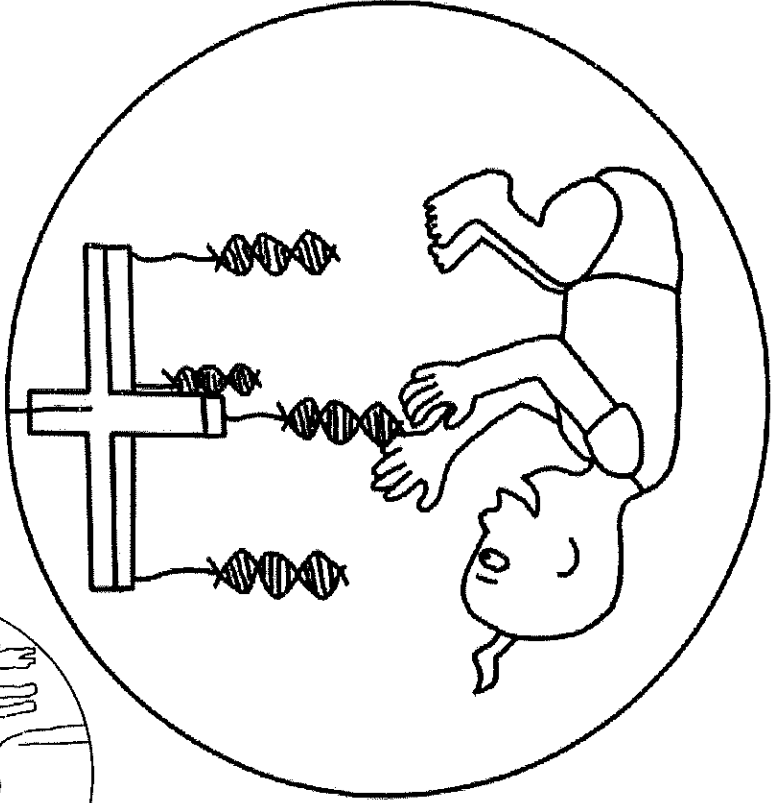
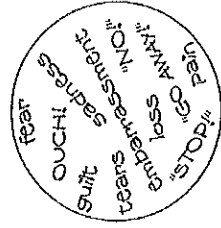
Events in our life



Our genetics



Everybody has a different mix of those 'worry ingredients'. For example, some people are anxious a lot mostly because of their genetics and not so much because of the influence of people or events. Another person may be anxious a lot mostly because of events in their life and not so much because of their genetics or the people who have influenced them.





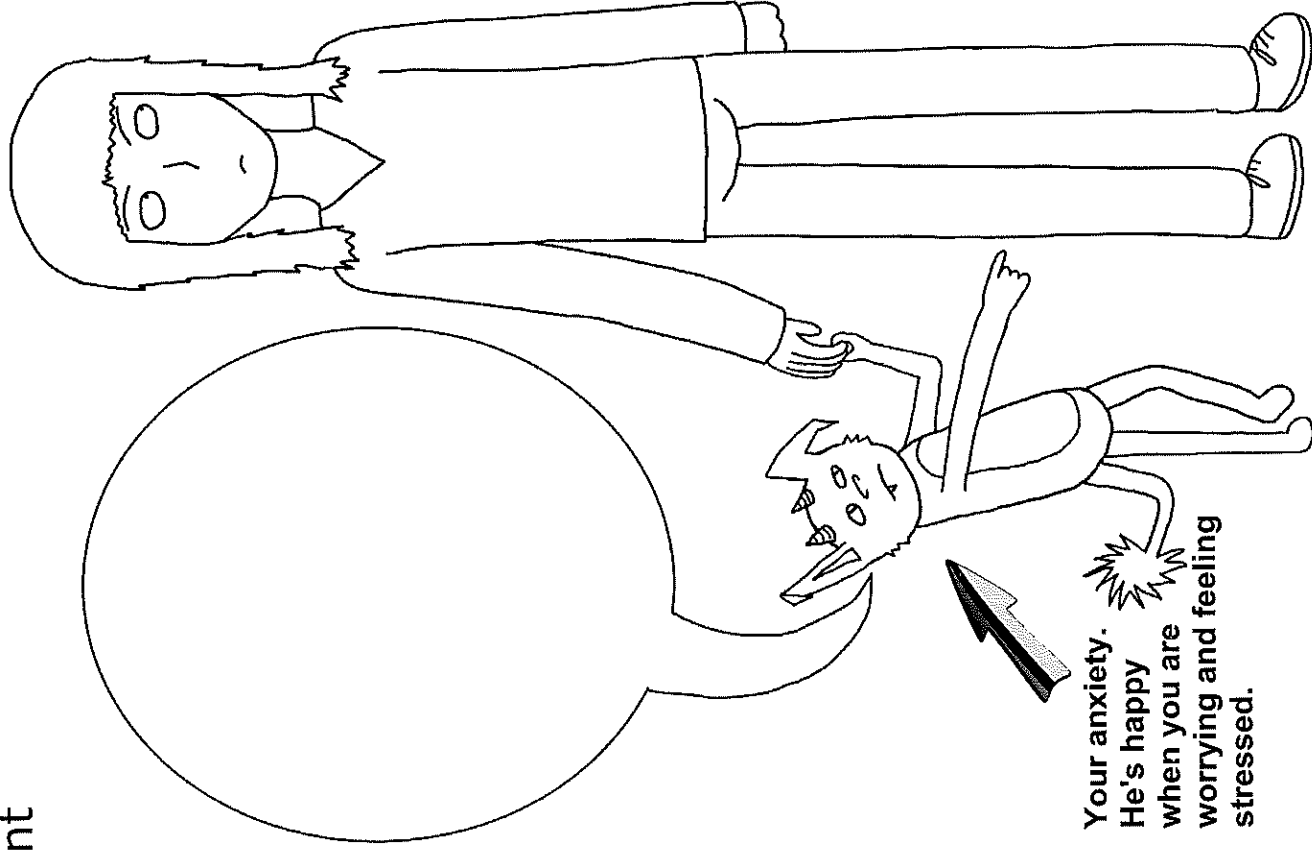
Let us now think about how to reduce the amount of control that anxiety and worry has over us.

A good starting point is to see that anxiety and worry and panic are not part of us. They are *with* us ... but they are not part of our true happy self.

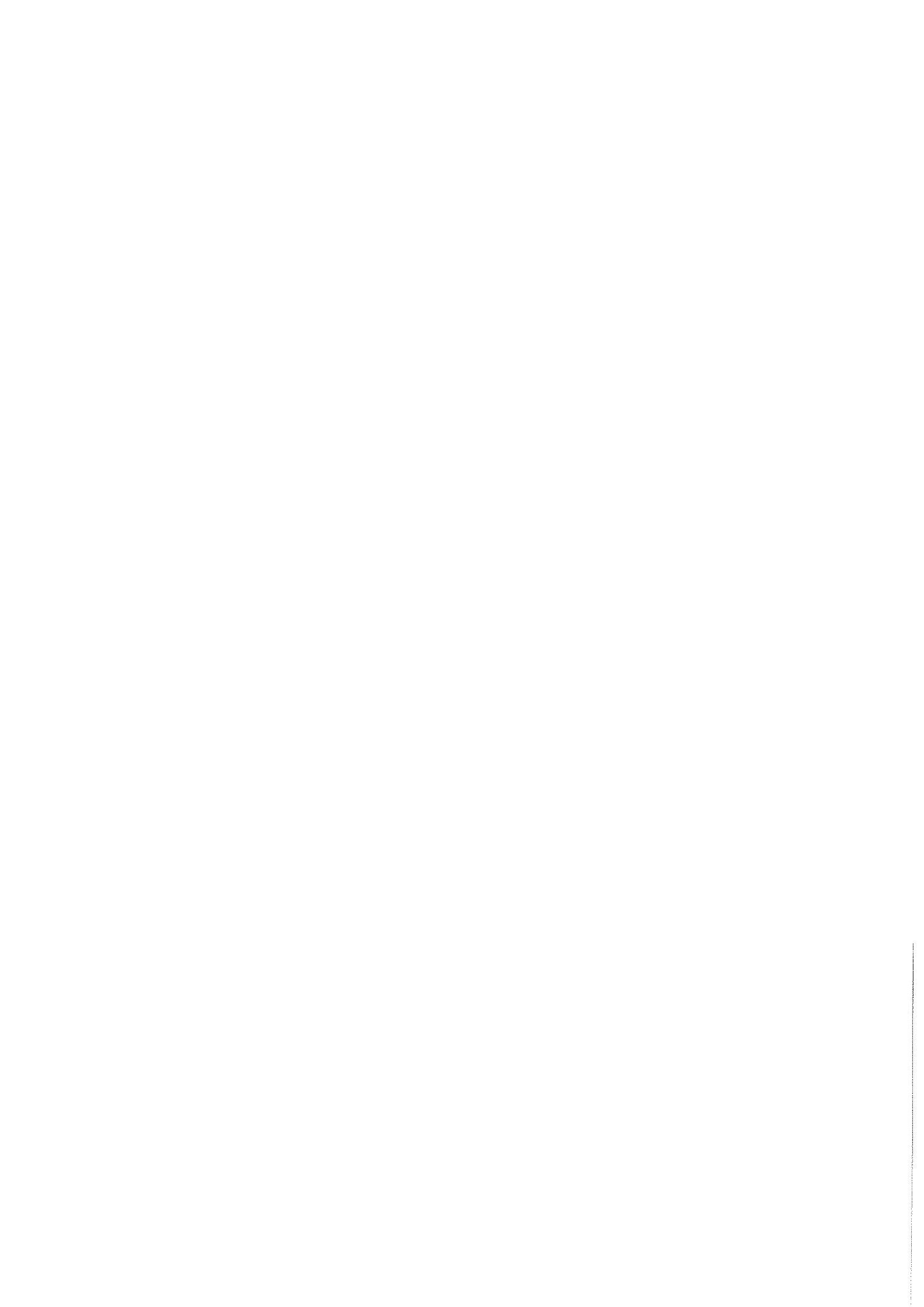
Think back to moments when you were happy and enjoying yourself without a care or a worry on your mind. In those moments you were being your true self; anxiety and worry had vanished.

Soon enough, worry returns. A bit like the weird creature in this picture. He appears to remind you about things that worry you so that you start to feel anxious and stressed.

But that's OK because we now see worry and anxiety for what it is. Temporary, fake and definitely not who we really are. So give it a name. Tell it that you see it. Tell it that you hear its boring chatter ... and also tell it that you have plans to stop it visiting.

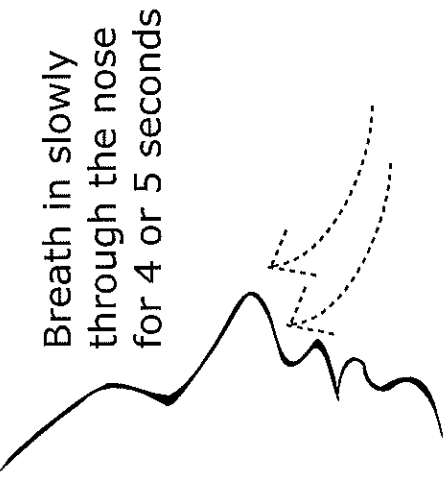
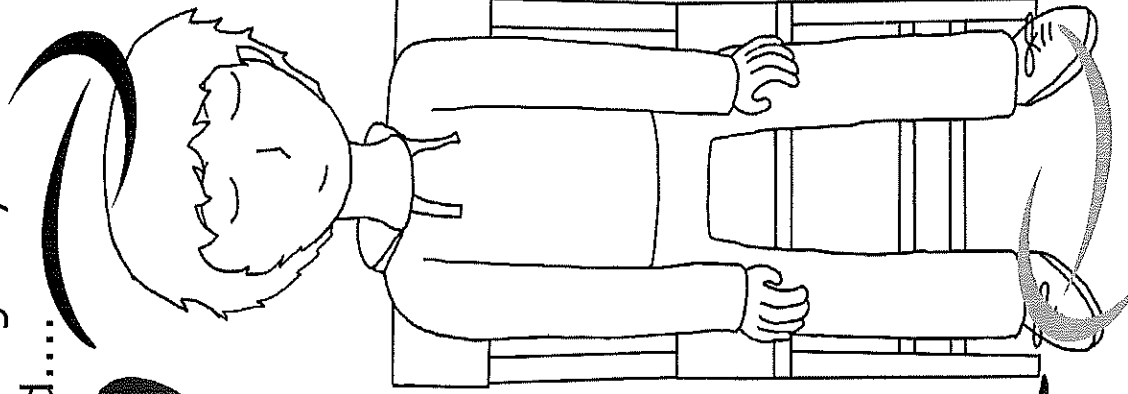


Your anxiety.
He's happy
when you are
worrying and feeling
stressed.



When we are anxious, scared or panicky our breathing changes. Instead of taking natural deep breaths we start taking small, shallow breaths which upset the natural flow of air in and out of our body and can make our anxiety or panic feel even worse. By deliberately breathing slowly and gently we remind our body how much better we feel when we are calm and relaxed....

Pause for a moment
(and smile!)



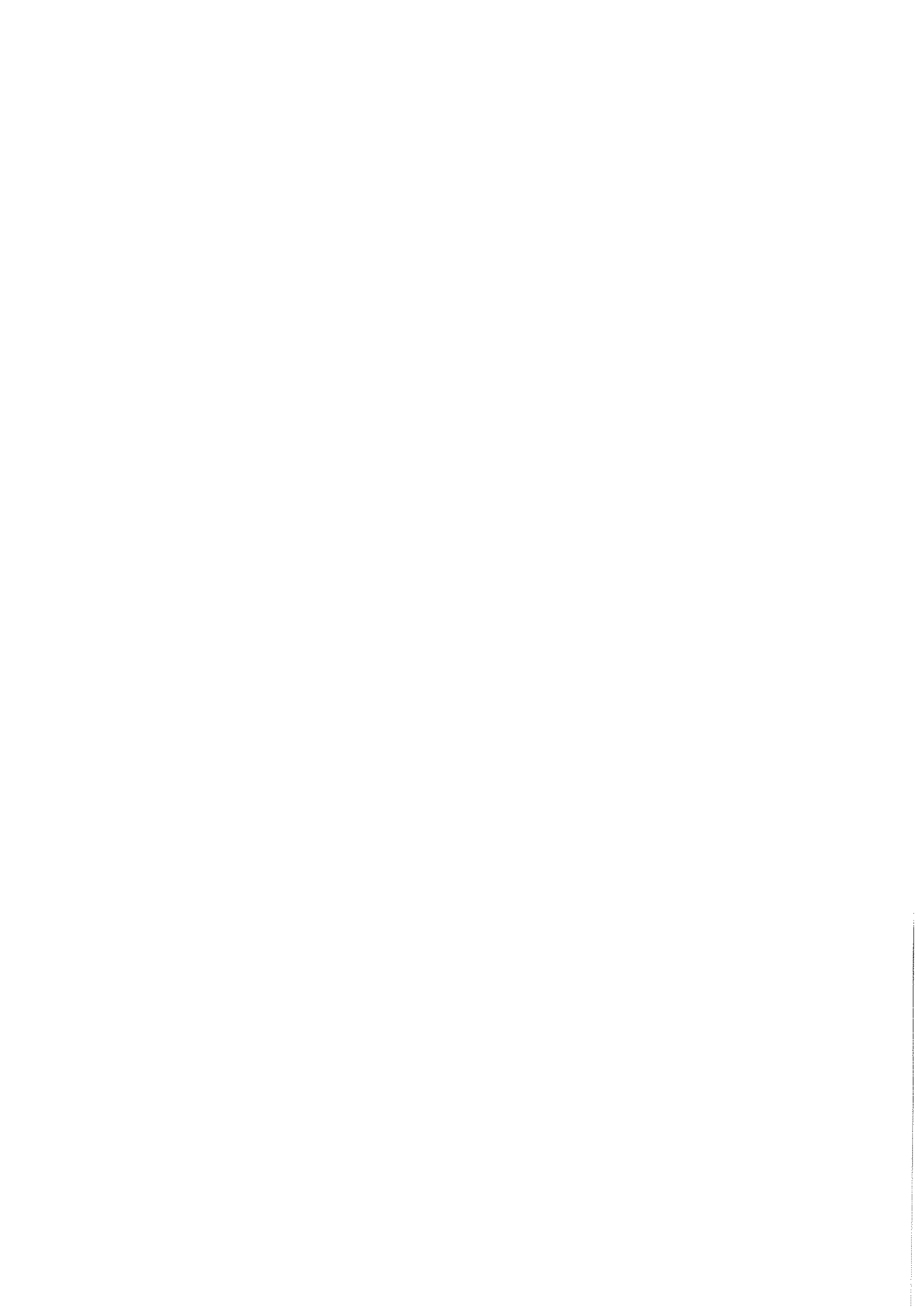
Breathe in slowly
through the nose
for 4 or 5 seconds

Breathe out slowly
through the mouth
for about 4 seconds.
Blow through pursed
lips to help slow the
breath down.

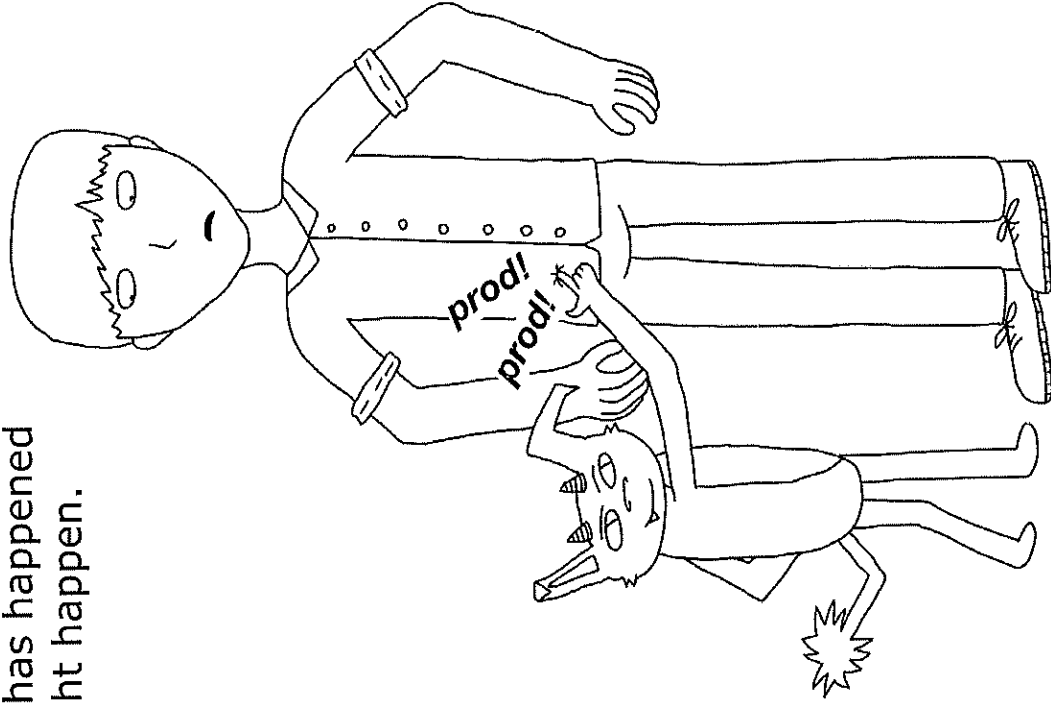


Hold your breath
for 1 or 2 seconds

FOLLOW THE ARROWS



You will notice that the annoying anxiety creature not only finds things for us to worry about but also reminds us to keep on worrying. A nervous tummy is like a constant voice or constant prodding that reminds us to feel unhappy and to keep thinking over and over about what has happened or what might happen.



We can feel better by putting our attention on real sensations in our body and ignoring the fake nervous feeling. Stand up if you can and put your hands on your tummy (where the nervous feeling is) and press gently. Close your eyes. Think about the feelings in your hands for a few moment ... tingling? pressing? warm? Next put your attention on the feeling of your feet on the ground ... tingling? pressing? heavy? can you feel your feet in your shoes or touching the ground? Keep changing your attention 2 or 3 times every minute ... hands...feet...hands...feet... be present in the moment ... relax ... feel the sensations ...

