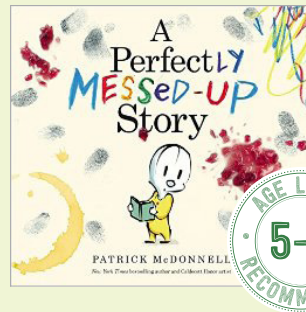


A Perfectly Messed-Up Story

by Patrick McDonnell

Objectives

Growth Mindset
Do Your Best
Never Give Up
Determination
Perseverance
Perfectionist
Overcoming Obstacles



Little Louie is trying to tell his story but it keeps getting messed up. He badly wants it to be perfect but things keep happening to the pages of his book like a jelly drop and a peanut butter smear. After several tantrums, he finally stops and takes a deep breath and realizes that everything doesn't have to be perfect for it to be good. This story can help your students accept the fact that life gets messy-it's not perfect but you must work through it and go on.

Note to teachers: If your students are not familiar with Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset, we encourage you to first use NED's How to Grow a Brain introductory lesson to build background.

Key Vocabulary

Merrily: in a happy, cheerful way
Stain: a spot or mark, discoloured by a different object
Respect: valued or admired, to take care of something because it is important
Inspire: encourage you to do something important or good, influence
Ruined: destroyed,
Perfect: without mistakes or errors

Tricky Phrasing

Know in your heart: totally believe it
Arg: sound of frustration

Before Reading: Discussion Starters

1. What does it mean if something is perfect?
Answers will vary. Without flaws, without mistakes, exactly as planned
2. Can a person be perfect?
Answers will vary. Refer back to their definitions from question 1.
3. What do you do when you want something perfect and it doesn't come out that way?
Answers will vary. Try again, give up, angry, sad, frustrated, determined, etc. Record a large list of emotion words for later discussion

After Reading: Discussion Starters

1. How was Louis feeling in the beginning of the story? How do you know (look for clues in the text/illustration) Why did he feel that way?
He was happy-smile on face, skipping merrily along, singing tra-la-la-la. He was happy to tell his story because he knew (in his heart) that the story was going to be perfect.

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2. List the obstacles that Louie faced in the story. Why were they challenges to him?

Jelly stain, peanut butter blob, fingerprints, orange juice splatters, crayon scribbles. He had a plan to read the story and these distractions kept ruining his plan. He didn't think we would keep reading the book if there were messes on the pages.

3. What was Louie feeling as he faced each obstacle?

Answers will vary as students describe his escalating frustration. Add to your word list of emotions: Proud, Confident, Content, Happy, Joyful, Shocked, Surprised, Alarmed, Curious, Angry, Disturbed, Frustrated, Mad, Out-of-control, Pleading, Begging, Determined, Distraught, Give up, Depressed, Sad, Don't care, Persistent, Hopeful,

4. Why was Louie upset about the book pages being messed up?

He was upset that they didn't show respect for books. He thought books were important because they teach and inspire.

5. Discuss Louie's mindset throughout the story. When did he have a fixed mindset? When did he have a growth mindset? What did he learn when he had a growth mindset?

First... When Louie first encountered the stains and plops of food and fingerprints on his book – he never gave up – he felt frustrated that someone would mess up his story but he wanted to get on with his story so he started over again. This is what someone with a growth mindset would do.

Then... The second time he encountered the crayon marks – he became a little more upset and gave up. He said "Stop, forget it, it's all over." He was thinking with a fixed mindset who doesn't know what to do when it's hard or seems impossible to keep going. Note that he changed his emotions from mad to sad as he gave up.

Last... Then he realized that even though it wasn't perfect – it was fine. He changed his thinking back to a growth mindset and got up and started again.

6. How was Louie like NED?

He was determined to finish this and nothing was going to stop him. He remembered the N in NED's name means Never Give Up,

Writing Prompt

 PRINTABLE:
Now I Can

Now I Can

Use the printable to trace and fill in this sentence: "I could not _____ until I _____."
Example: I could not spell elephant until I wrote it over and over again.

I didn't give up when I

Everyone has had to do something that was hard. Having a "never give up" attitude is so important. Just like Louie had to work hard to overcome obstacles in the story, you do too. Write about a time that you had to work hard and not give up to accomplish something.

Activities

 PRINTABLE:
4 Thoughts

4 Thoughts Students should write or draw pictures of 4 things they could tell themselves to have a growth mindset, using the printable sheet.

Name: _____

Directions: Trace the letters and fill in the blank. Then, draw yourself and what you can do!

I could not _____

until I _____

Growth Mindset

1

2

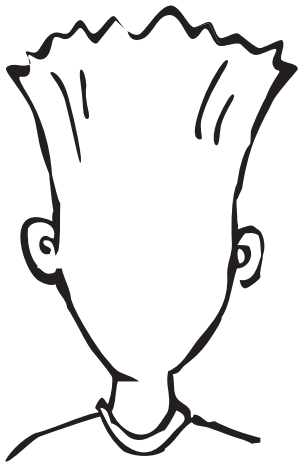
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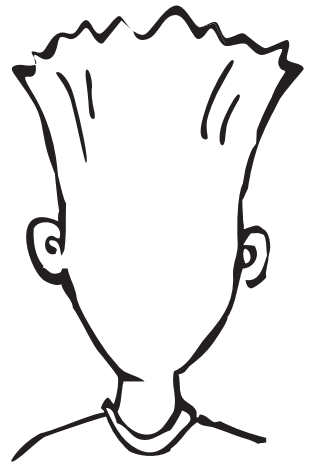
Directions: Write or draw pictures of four things
you could tell yourself to have a growth mindset!

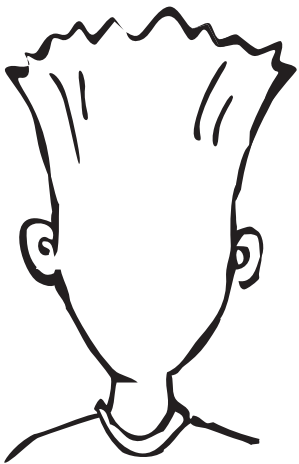
FINGERPRINTS GROW TOO

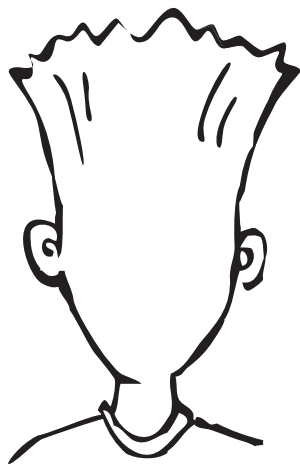
Sometimes you get discouraged
because I am so small
And always leave my fingerprints
on furniture and walls.
But every day I'm growing
I'll be grown some day
And all those tiny fingerprints
Will surely fade away
So here's a little fingerprint
Just so you can recall
Exactly how my fingers looked
When I was very small.

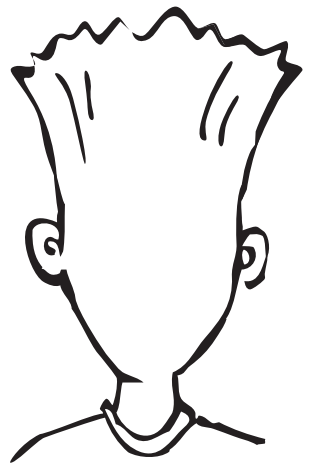


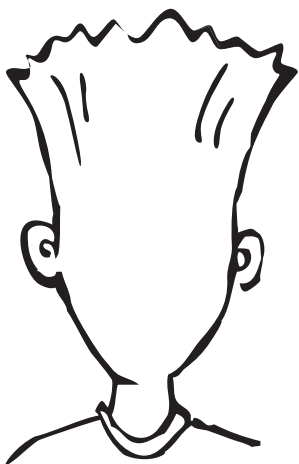


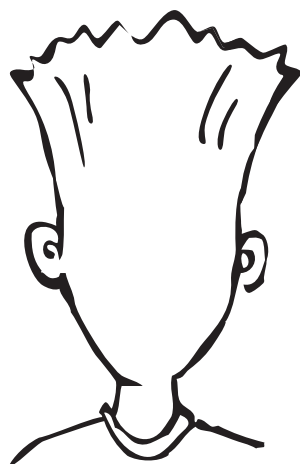


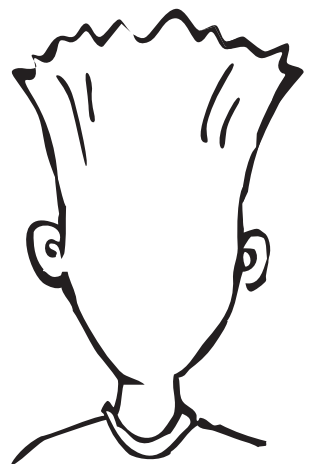


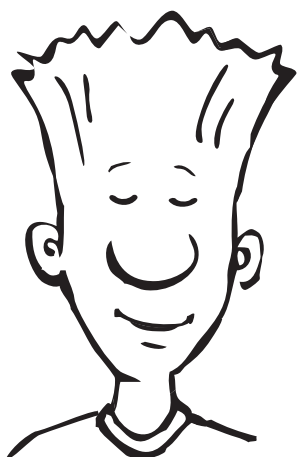
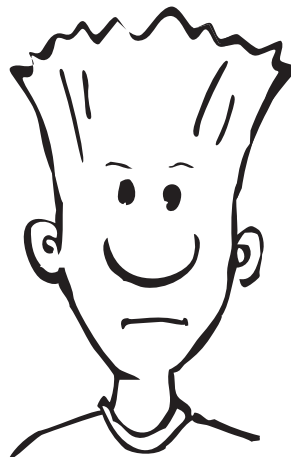
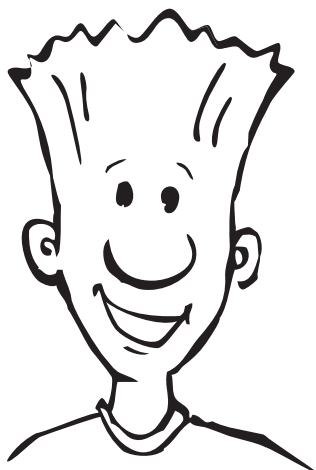
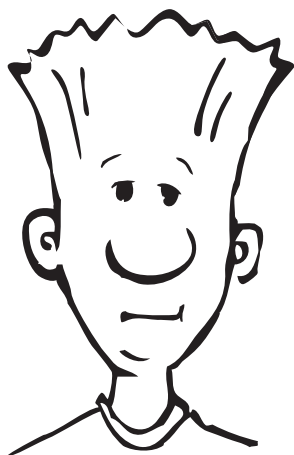
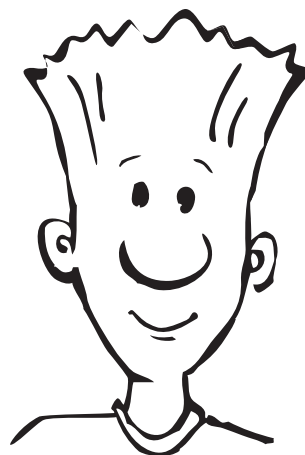
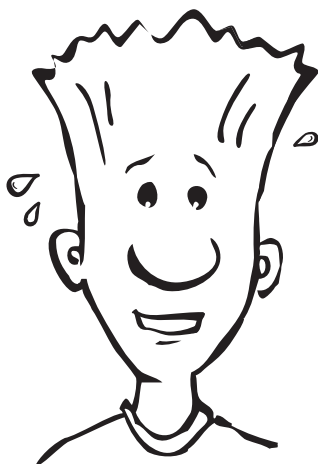
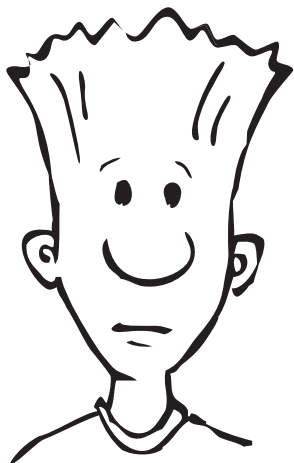












Growth Mindset Magnets

Directions: Print this page onto magnetic paper using an inkjet printer. (Avery Magnet Sheets #3270 are available at most office supply stores). Or, print on cardstock and glue magnets to the backs. These refrigerator magnets will remind kids of NED's three messages, promoting attitudes of growth. Share the second set with friends or a teacher.

