

A book series for teens

How to understand your emotions: ANGER

The Snail

Mountain




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Story + exercises

DKMS 
POKONAJMY NOWOTWORY KRWI



DZIECIAKI
CHOJRAKI



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The Snail Mountain

As the silver globe that cradles the ocean's waters slowly tilted towards the west, an orange orb emerged from behind the horizon in the east. Everything that seemed only a shadow a moment ago began to take colour and shape. Here, every morning, the sun began its spectacle, revealing volcanic mountains and smoky geysers against the pink sky. Timidly illuminating the rocky terraces where the guardians of this magical world, like waking statues, spread their huge wings. They flexed their scaly skin, and with every little movement showed their power and beauty.

Dragons – for this is who we are speaking of – greeted the new day with a symphony of sounds, a mixture of cheers, yawns, thumping of tails and stretching of numb wings.

One of them was Darko, a teenage dragon who didn't quite know yet what he wanted to do in life. At first he wanted to fly as high, as far and as fast as possible, but for some reason nature gave him slightly smaller wings than the other dragons. Nevertheless, Darko could fly, not the highest,



not the farthest... but he could – all he had to do was take off with a run-up. Then he wanted to reach the top of the highest mountain in the volcanic world, so that after climbing it, he could soar above the other dragons, if only for a moment.

But when he met Nila, the kindest dragoness under the moon and sun, he only wanted to be with her, especially since Nila didn't mind his small wings and big dreams. They were inseparable, and Darko increasingly got the impression that with her he was reaching better heights, as if she was giving him wings.

One particular day promised to be a bit different for Darko, who full of excitement and positive thoughts, was getting ready to meet Nila. Today they were going to explore new, undiscovered corners of the volcanic world, and he loved the unknown.

They met on one of the deserted dragon terraces from where there was an amazing view of hot springs shrouded in steam that formed a band of clouds against the pink sky.

“Let's go!” cried Nila and pulled Darko up as she took flight.

It was an amazing flight, as every now and then a different landscape appeared before their eyes, from volcanic craters to sand dunes and the boundless ocean.



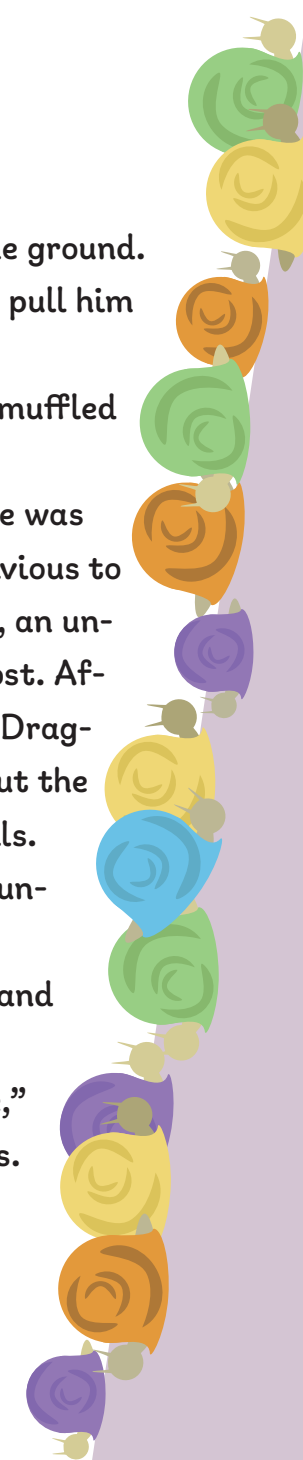
Suddenly, a strong gust of wind started pulling Darko to the ground. He was losing control of his flight, and his wings, too small to pull him up, didn't help. He was falling...

“Nilaa!” he cried, but heard no answer, the swish of the air muffled all other sounds, and darkness appeared.

When he woke up, he was lying at the bottom of a chasm. He was surrounded by rock walls and snails walking up and down, oblivious to his presence. The sky above him was now a tiny, distant speck, an unreachable point, the only window into a world he felt he had lost. After a long time, he saw Nila in the sky, in a panic, followed by Dragon Mother and other dragons. Nila tried to fly down to him, but the chasm was so narrow that she could barely fit between its walls.

“Owww,” he groaned, feeling a severe pain in his back. The uncontrolled flight and rubbing against the rocks while falling caused him to lose a lot of scales. He felt a burning sensation and incredible pain.

“It's good that you are in one piece, well almost in one piece,” whispered Nila, applying petals of a fiery flower to his wounds. But it didn't seem to help Darko, and every touch caused even more pain. He felt himself getting more and more angry.



He wasn't sure if he was angry at Nila for touching him, or at the pain, or at the mere fact that he was here, and because his wings were too small, he wouldn't be able to fly high enough to get out of this place on his own.



"Now everyone will pay attention to my tiny wings," he groaned quietly.

"What did you say?" asked Nila, applying a petal to another wound.

"Nothing," he hissed angrily, and immediately felt terrible as Nila moved away.

"Are you in pain?"

"I am and I want to be left alone!" shouted Darko.

"All right," she replied.

Only as he watched his friend fly away did he realize that he didn't want this at all, that he didn't know what was happening to him. In fact, he wanted her to be with him. And preferably... that he wouldn't be there at all or at least that he could fly away with her.

But he was left alone, as he had wished. The other dragons left too.

Suddenly he heard:

"I want to be left alone, left alone, left alone!"

It echoed off the rocks, it was him, his voice, which now seemed even more hostile to him.



"Who am I?" he groaned in despair, leaning over a small puddle next to him. But the reflection he saw in it looked just like him.

"Who am I, am I, am I...?" it echoed.

"Stop it!" Darko shouted angrily. "Nila is not coming back," he groaned and burst into tears.

"She's not coming back, coming back, coming back," the voice echoed.

Darko felt great sadness, he felt sorry for Nila, because he had never yelled at her before, this feeling hurt more than the wounds on his back, because he did not know what was going on with her now. He wanted so much to see her again.

Then he heard the flapping of wings. He looked up hopefully; it was Dragon Mother, who had brought him food. He was happy, but also disappointed, because it wasn't her he was waiting for.

"We'll get you out of here," she said quietly.

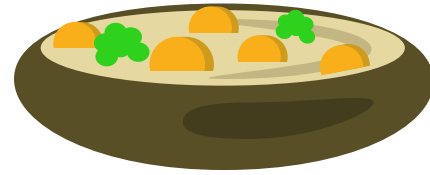
"How on earth?" Darko asked.

"Earth, earth," the echo replied.

"I don't know yet," she whispered.

Darko felt angry again, and tears came to his eyes. This was not the answer he expected, he wanted a solution, he wanted certainty, not hope. On top of that, Nila wasn't coming back, and anger was rising in him more and more. He flapped his wing vigorously, toppling over the bowl of soup that Dragon Mother had brought. The dragoness remained silent, only gazing at him with sad, concerned eyes.





Darko felt even worse, now he felt sorry for Dragon Mother. He imagined the effort she had put into preparing the food, and how she must have felt now, seeing it all wasted.

“I’m sorry,” he whispered.

“I know you are,” Dragon Mother said and wrapped her wings around him.

“I don’t understand what is happening to me,” he groaned miserably.

“You’re scared Darko, you’re just scared, because you don’t know how to get out, you see a way out, but you can’t reach it.”

“I don’t know what to do,” he sobbed.

“It’s difficult,” sighed Dragon Mother. „But try to think about your dreams.”

“Dreams? Now my dream is to get out of here, I have no other dreams.”

“So focus on that,” she said calmly. “And do everything to make it come true.”

Darko didn’t understand what she meant. Maybe she meant that he should eat the soup instead of letting it go to waste, because without food he wouldn’t have the strength to survive. Or, perhaps, she meant that he should let Nila bandage his wounds, since, starved and wounded, he wouldn’t be able to even try to fly away from here. If so, it meant that Dragon Mother believed in him. However, before he could ask, she flew away.



“Maybe I too should believe in myself...”

“Believe, believe, believe,” the echo repeated.

From then on, Darko ate everything Dragon Mother brought him.

Still, his anger was present, and when the visiting dragons were telling him how beautiful it was outside and what they were doing, he wanted to scream. But then he began to wonder why they were doing it. Perhaps they wanted him to feel ordinary again, or at least to see in his mind’s eyes what they were talking about and for a while, to forget about his predicament. His anger subsided as he began to understand them.

He was so touched when one day Nila came and, as if nothing had ever happened, began dressing his wounds. He thought then that she had needed time.

“I thought you wouldn’t come back,” he whispered.

“I’m here, I’ve been here all the time.”

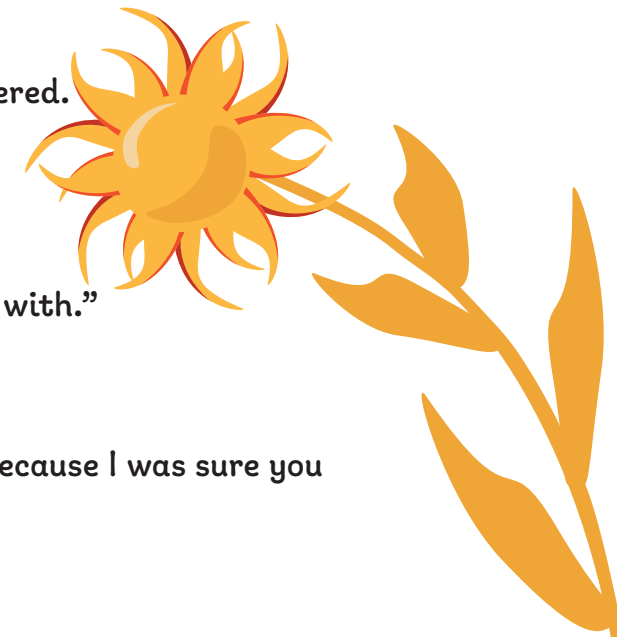
“How so?” he asked surprised.

“I was on an expedition to get the fire flower, otherwise I wouldn’t have anything to treat you with.”

“So you weren’t here.”

“I was here, in my thoughts,” Nila replied.

“I’m glad you are here. I think it’s a miracle, because I was sure you didn’t want to know me anymore.”



“Some of the best things in life are miracles disguised as second chances,” smiled Nila.

When she left, he couldn't fall asleep, the moonlight was illuminating the walls, lighting up the stones at the bottom of the chasm and the snails crawling up towards the sky. Darko wanted to be as calm as they were.

He took a few deep breaths, took another look at the crawling creatures and already knew... This place he was in could be a chasm or a mountain, and it was only up to him to decide what it would become. He'd always wanted to climb the highest mountain. Maybe this was that mountain? Maybe that's why Dragon Mother wanted him to think about his dreams, because only then do you not forget who you are. He looked up at the illuminated sky and carefully, step by step, began to climb. At times he slipped, but he persevered.

When he reached his destination it was almost dawn. A familiar landscape appeared before his eyes. The sunrise and his friends who were catching the first rays, sitting right next to the chasm-mountain. He looked at Dragon Mother and at Nila's tired eyes. Somewhere in his heart, he knew that the anger he had felt while he had been down there caused them a lot of pain. But seeing them all there, he realized that there is something beyond that, which is love. And whatever happens, it is... always there.



GAMES RELATED TO **THE SNAIL MOUNTAIN STORY**

NAME OF EMOTION: **ANGER**

1

● **“Snail education. My anger versus other people’s”** (to be done with another person)

Goal: to educate about anger

Essential materials:

- a sheet of paper (A4 size),
- pens.

Description of the game: invite the child to play the game together. We mark a dot in the centre of the sheet of paper, then ask the child to use the remaining space to place graphics/drawings symbolizing people close to them. The child can also put the initials of selected people (family, friends). When the space on the sheet is filled, we draw a spiral on the sheet with a red marker. Starting from the dot in the centre of the sheet, draw a snail that fills the entire sheet. We use the graphic created in this way to educate about anger and its expression. This illustrates how anger can hurt others (as in the story). Then we look for healthy ways to express anger.

Instructions: Sometimes it happens that the anger we feel hurts others, as in the case of Darko and his loved ones. He did not want to make them uncomfortable, but his behaviour when he was very angry was difficult for those close to him.

We will create a graphic today that illustrates what can happen to anger when it builds up and we don't express it in a healthy way, and how it affects our loved ones.

In the middle of the sheet of paper we will make a dot (we will need it a little later on). Now please, write down the names/initials of your loved ones all over the sheet of paper. You can also make small drawings, symbols that you associate with a given person (for example, a cup of coffee symbolizing your favourite aunt or a doll as a sign of your sister).



Now it's my turn. With a red marker I will draw a snail, starting from the middle, from our little dot. Anger is like this snail. It may be small at first, but then it grows and develops more and more... When it gets out of control, it can affect people we love and care about. Unwillingly, we can hurt them.

What do you think can be done so that it doesn't fester so much that it takes up the entire sheet of paper? (Space for discussion).

Maybe if you talked about your feelings, they wouldn't build up so much, what else could stop our snail?

Possible modifications: graphics can be prepared on a graphics tablet or in a computer program.

2. "My Snail Mountain" (to be done on your own or with another person)

Goal: identify anger and express it

Essential materials:

- Lego bricks or other bricks that enable construction - building a mountain,
- figurines or pawns.

Description of the game: the goal of the game is for the child to build their own mountain using available materials. Then choose a figurine or a pawn and climb upwards according to this rule: moving upwards is possible when you express what was or is currently making you angry. Every answer is a step forward. We can play together with the child, telling them about our anger.

Useful phrases:

- "Lately I have been getting angry when..."
- "I usually get angry when..."



- "I feel anger at the mere thought of..."
- "What angers me most is..."
- "I would get angry if..."

Instructions: „Today we have an important challenge ahead of us, we will build a snail mountain. You can build any kind of mountain you want.

(When the mountain is ready) Now you will be able to climb your mountain. Remember how Darko did it... – slowly, taking small steps. In our game, every encounter with anger, i.e., talking about what makes you angry or has made you angry, is a step up. Remember that the most beautiful views await at the top! Let's go!

3. "The art of apologizing – a comic" (to be done on your own)

Goal: Education

Essential materials:

- sheets of paper,
- art supplies (or a graphics tablet).

Description of the game: in this game we invite the child to create comics depicting scenes in which Darko apologizes to his relatives for his behaviour when he felt strong anger.

Instructions: Anger is an emotion that brings energy like fiery lava. Sometimes this energy hurts our loved ones, yet we don't want it to. Fortunately, when this happens, we can apologize to them and assure them that they are important to us, that we love them and don't want to hurt them. You can create your own comics today, in which Darko apologizes to everyone he has hurt with his behaviour. If you would also like to apologize to someone, you can draw your own comics. Apologizing is important.

Possible modifications: the comics could be prepared on a graphics tablet or in a computer program.



TIPS ON HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT ANGER:

EDUCATION

First of all, it is worth creating space for the child to express emotions, including anger. Children are sometimes scared to express their own anger so as not to hurt or disappoint loved ones (as was the case in the story). It's worth discussing what we can do when we feel anger so as not to hurt ourselves or loved ones, e.g. share how we feel with others.

Children have a right to their emotions. In particular, they may feel anger more often in difficult situations, e.g. those related to long-term treatment.

WHAT CAN I DO?

It is a good idea to give the child a clear signal that they are accepted and loved, also when they get angry. Children fear that when they express anger, then their parents will not love them as much, "because they are not being polite." A child's anger can be difficult for a parent. It can be helpful to distance yourself, halt for a moment and try to answer the question: What is my child really trying to tell me, what does my child need?

It is worth to teach apologetic behaviour by illustrating this attitude yourself. When you feel angry and react in an inappropriate way towards the child, e.g. raise your voice or act impatiently, learn to apologize for your behaviour.



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