

A book series for children
How to understand your emotions: **ANGER**

The Storm



Edyta Zarębska
Magdalena Pytel

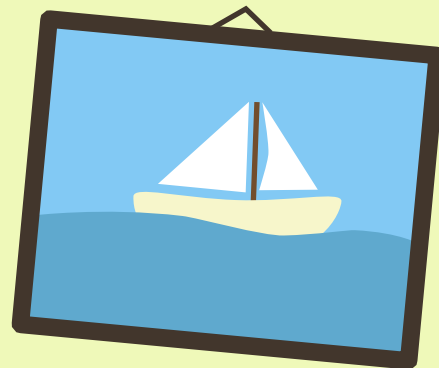
Story + exercises

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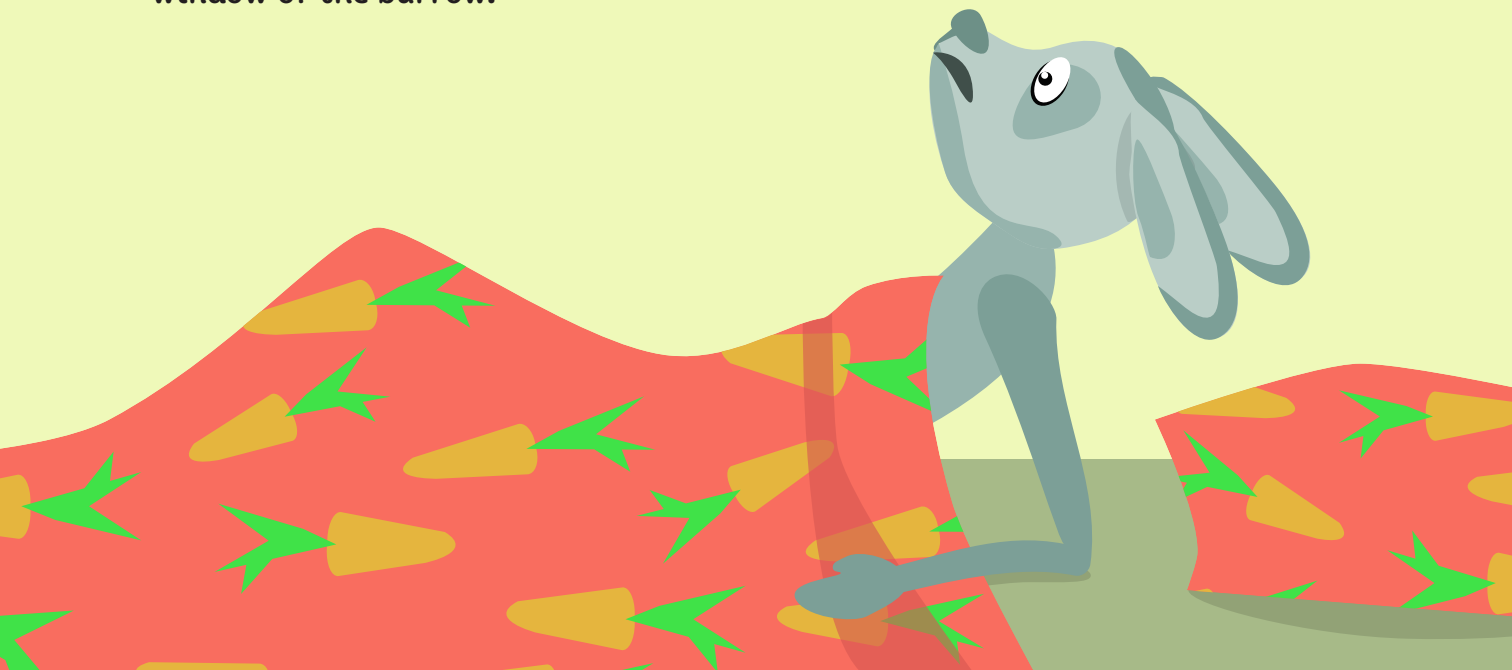
Author: Edyta Zarębska




The Storm

It was a long-awaited day. Whiskers rubbed his sleepy eyes and moved his nose playfully, as usual. Today, he and his grandfather were to take a trip around the bay in a real sailboat, because Grandpa was a real captain. Whiskers was excited and happy, as his grandfather had promised that he could sit at the helm under his watchful eye.

Suddenly, the tip of his little nose started to move, something was wrong. The smell of dampness was in the air, and tapping could be heard outside the window of the burrow.



A pink bucket is shown at the bottom left, partially filled with blue rainwater. Numerous blue raindrops are falling from the top of the page, some hitting the bucket and others falling around it. The background is white with scattered blue raindrops.

He jumped out of bed, hopping, as befits a rabbit, and then he felt it.


“Owww,” he groaned. His right leg was hurting almost as much as when he had broken it. That could only mean one thing... it was raining outside. Because whenever it rained, his paw made its presence known in just such a way. And he wasn’t wrong, because when he reached the window, it turned out that indeed it was raining... Single, heavy drops were hitting the tin sill, and Grandma’s metal bucket standing outside was filled to the brim with rainwater.

“It just had to go and rain today,” he snapped. He felt anger and grief building up inside, both feelings were so strong that Whiskers could not tell which he felt more. He clenched his fists and at the same time, feeling pressure in his throat, angrily stomped his foot. Unfortunately, that was his right, aching paw, which he had forgotten about for a while.

“Owww,” he groaned and curled up. It got very hot in his tummy. This heat was first located in the paw, but very quickly moved to the tummy and was now travelling upwards. A moment later, his cheeks and long ears were burning.



The little rabbit was not sure what was going on. Then, outside the window, he saw Lucky and Suzy. His rabbit siblings, both wearing Wellingtons, were jumping over the biggest puddles. This was too much for Whiskers. Not only would there be no sailboat trip, but he couldn’t even join Lucky and Suzy because of his sore paw. He wanted to cry, felt powerless and very disappointed. On top of that, the heat that was still in his little body did not want to subside at all. On the contrary, it was getting stronger and stronger. A moment later, the heat was joined by thoughts that made Whiskers feel even worse. He thought of spending the whole day in the burrow, and as his paw was increasingly bothering him, he was almost certain that he would have to stay in bed.



All these thoughts made him unable to stand, he clenched his fists and with all his strength hit the shelf on which a porcelain piggy bank for dried carrots stood. In an instant, the piggy bank fell to the floor and broke into small pieces.

The sound was so loud that it could be heard throughout the burrow, and after a while, Grandpa appeared in Whiskers' room.

"I understand how you feel," he said good-naturedly, seeing the broken piggy bank and his grandson's red cheeks. "You're disappointed because the rain spoiled our plans, on top of which you smashed the piggy bank." Tears came to Whiskers' eyes, but he didn't want to cry for anything in the world.

"We can go sailing another time," said grandfather calmly.

"So you don't know how I feel grandpa," replied Whiskers. "Because you are not sorry that we will not sail today, you said yourself that we can do it some other time. But for me, any other day will just be another day. I wanted to go sailing today, it was important to me!" Whiskers was angry. But after a moment, he felt sorry that he had shouted at Grandpa like that.

"I just wanted to say that I understand your anger," replied Grandpa. "I also feel it sometimes."

"Really?" Whiskers asked, puzzled, because Grandpa never got angry.

"Really, although I have a way to deal with it," smiled Grandpa.

"What way?" the little rabbit asked curiously and at that moment he felt as if his anger had eased a bit.

"I'll show you something in a moment," Grandpa said, then left the room.

When he returned, he was carrying a large chest.

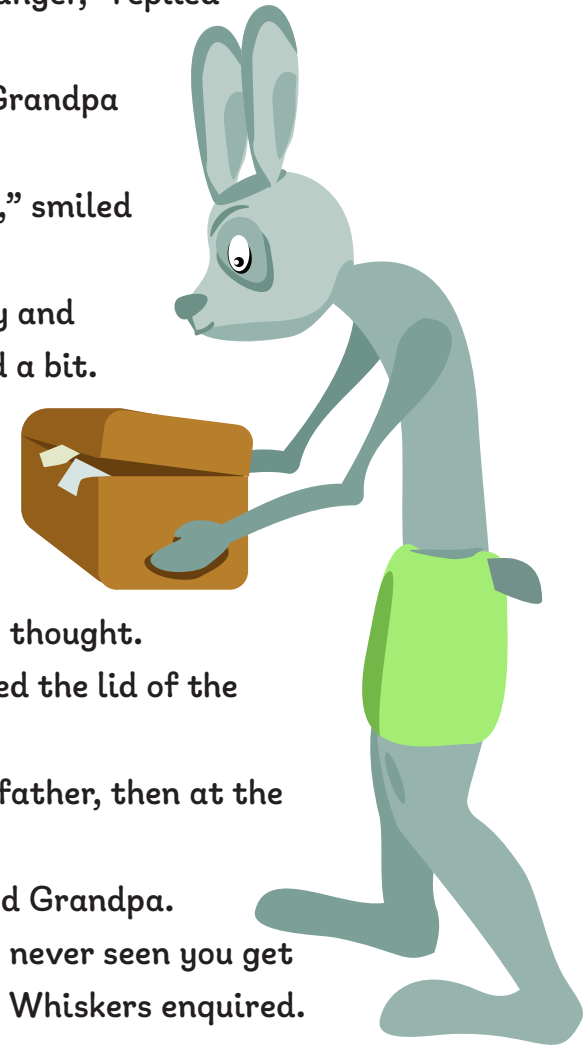
"Is it treasure?" Whiskers was thrilled at the thought.

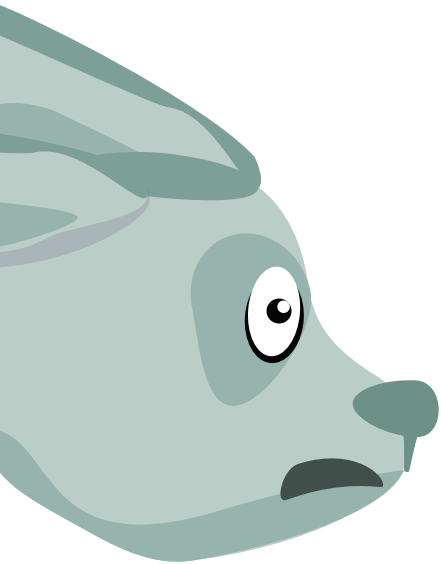
But Grandpa did not answer. Slowly, he opened the lid of the chest, its interior filled with written pages.

"What's that," Whiskers stared at his grandfather, then at the pages.

"These are letters about my anger," whispered Grandpa.

"You mean you got angry so many times? I've never seen you get angry, Grandpa. And who are these letters to?" Whiskers enquired.





“To myself,” Grandpa replied.

“You wrote to yourself?”

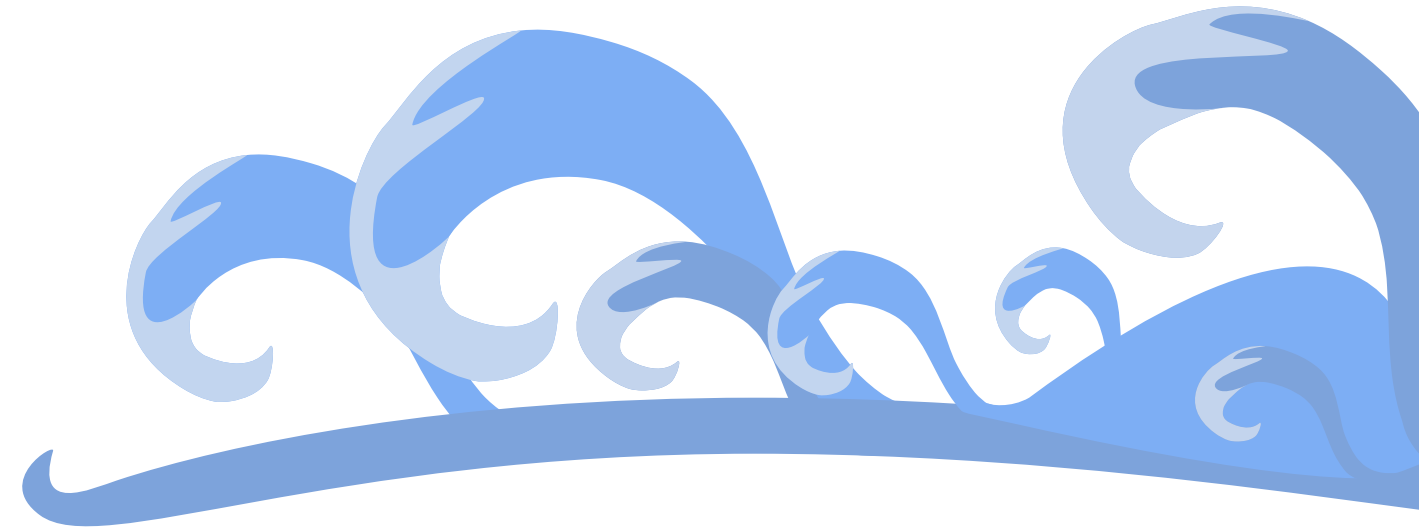
“Yes, this made me understand better why I felt angry, what caused it... Because you see, Whiskers, anger is a feeling that tells us a lot about ourselves. What we don't like, what bothers us and what spoils our mood. What is important, however, is how we deal with it. If we start shouting, throwing objects or being rude to

others, it will make our loved ones feel bad. They will feel sad, they will feel anxious, and because of this, their day can also become a bad day. Anger, my dear Whiskers, is a bit like a storm.”

“A storm?” the little rabbit wasn't sure if he understood correctly.

“Yes, you heard right,” Grandpa continued. “A storm can bring a lot of damage, it can destroy sailing ships, damage a pier or harm someone who happened to be at sea. That's why it's so important to be warned that it's coming. The same is true for anger, as it is often enough to warn others that we are in a bad mood, and then there is a chance that they will give us time to let the anger pass. And you may be surprised, but a storm is also necessary.”

“Necessary?” Whiskers waited, enchanted.



“Yes, because it creates large waves that rise and thus grab oxygen, and when they fall, they oxygenate the water, so the fish in the sea can breathe, and the water is cleaner,” replied Grandpa.

“This means that anger is also needed?”

“In a way, yes. Because it tells us a lot about ourselves, about our feelings. It lets us know that something is not as we wanted it to be. And once we know what caused it, we can try to adjust.”

“It's too difficult,” replied Whiskers.

“You're right, it's not easy, but it's worth trying to find something that will make you feel better today. We could go to the beach and see the storm. In such weather there are bound to be big waves.”

“Really?” Whiskers asked happily, and Grandpa only smiled.



When they got to the beach, it turned out that Grandpa was right. The wind was blowing, and the waves were huge. For the first time that day, Whiskers was glad they didn't go sailing; he was scared to even think what would have happened if the storm had surprised them in the middle of the sea. He felt that the anger had subsided. And the sight of rough waves made him understand why there was not a single ship at sea.

Now he knew that he should let others know when he was in a bad mood, that he should focus on something positive and that he could also write letters to himself, but the most important thing is to have someone to talk to – then even the worst day can become better.



GAMES RELATED TO THE STORM STORY

NAME OF EMOTION: **ANGER**

1.

“My own storm” (to be done with another person)

Goal: to educate about anger

Essential materials:

- a cup,
- a stick or a spoon.



Description of the game: Together with the child, fill the cup with water to about half its volume, then stir the water in the cup vigorously to set it in motion. We observe what happens and provides meaning in relation to the story and the emotion of anger.

Instructions: Have you ever seen a storm? Today we will create your own storm. You decide how strong it will be. There is water in the cup, stir it, please. Do it gently at first and see what happens. Now let's try to make it stronger. See what's happening now... You see, it's the same with anger. It is sometimes weaker, like the storm at the beginning, and sometimes strong like now, when it almost pours out of the cup. See what happens when we stop stirring the water, it calms down... So do we, when we cool down, express our anger. Sometimes it can happen that we say something unpleasant because we are angry, something we didn't really mean to say at all. It's like our storm in the cup, when we stirred vigorously until the water splashed around. When that happens, we can apologize. Anger does not stay with us forever. When we make some space for it, notice it and respond to our need, do something that helps us, then it goes away.

Tip: we can also use the game to psychoeducate about other emotions.

Possible modifications: in order to make our game more interesting, we can paint the water using the colour the child associates with anger.

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2. “A Boat Called Anger” (to be done with another person or on your own)

Goal: identify anger

Essential materials:

- paper,
- crayons,
- a pen,
- a pair of scissors,
- optional decorative elements.

Description of the game: the game can be played in two versions, depending on the capabilities of the child.

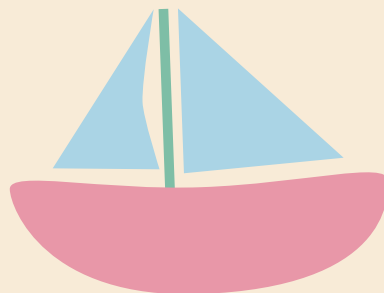
Version 1. The child draws a boat, called Anger. On this boat they put what makes them angry: “We fill the boat with what angers the child” - we can write or draw it.

Version 2. We can create a spatial boat; the child can also decorate it and write down or draw on small cards what makes them angry. The child then places it on their boat. At the end, the boat sails away – we establish a symbolic ritual.

Instructions: We’re going to make a boat today, but it won’t be an ordinary boat. It will be a boat called Anger. We will pack everything that angers you on board, and when it’s ready, it will sail out of our port.

Tip: it’s important for the child to be able to express and name what makes them angry. They may also return to issues that angered them in the past. The caregiver can make their own boat to show that they get angry too.

Possible modifications: the game can be played on paper or, if possible, a spatial model can be created during playtime.



3. “Welcome to our story, where angry Whiskers and Grandpa say hello” (role play to be done with another person)

Goal: expressing anger through play

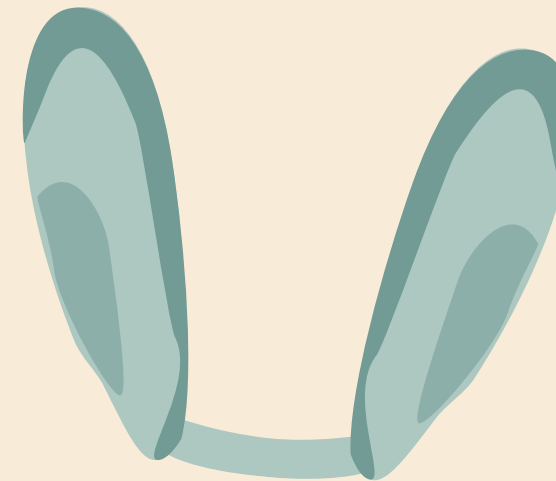
Essential materials: optionally while role-playing we can use props consistent with the role, such as a captain’s cap for Grandpa or rabbit’s ears.

Description of the game: in this game, the child play the role of Whiskers and express anger, and the task of the adult playing Grandpa is to respond to this emotion. The play can follow a scenario based on the story, but we can also make our own changes.

Instructions: Today we will create our own theatre. You will be Whiskers, and I will be Grandpa.

Tip: it’s a good idea to encourage the child’s expression of emotions and to reinforce any expressions of emotion.

Possible modifications: the game can follow a scenario based on the story, but we can also make our own changes. Older children can choose a role and be Grandpa, for example.



TIPS ON HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT ANGER:

First of all, we need to normalize, that is, to recognize anger as completely natural. In addition, we can refer to the content of the story, in which anger is a necessary emotion.

It is useful to allow the child to experience anger, encourage its expression and create a safe space for it.

In the face of illness, the child may get angry at the fact of being sick, it is worth paying attention to it and taking care of it. The child has a right to their emotions.

Educating about anger is extremely important. The story describes important aspects of anger. It is worth noting together with the child how the main character felt when he got angry and what he did, as well as what behaviours were helpful.

Anger can be problematic because of the different ways of dealing with it. When explaining appropriate and healthy ways to express anger, you can make references to the story and games, use the message, e.g.: **A healthy expression of your anger will not hurt others, and if someone gets hurt while you're angry, you can always apologize for it.**

It is worth emphasizing that we love the child, even when they get angry. Often children, especially girls, do not allow themselves to express their own anger for fear of parental disapproval. Children may also suppress anger in the face of illness, for fear of causing their caregivers even more problems, seeing how much hardship comes from the illness itself.

Modelling, i.e. when a child can observe a parent who gets angry "in a healthy way," without hurting others, but at the same time naming that they are angry is helpful in educating a child about emotions and how to deal with regulating them.

It is also important to be understanding and gentle with each other when talking about emotions. None of us is perfect, and there are no perfect conversation scenarios. It is important to recognize that they are good enough. It is extremely important for us to be emotionally available when dealing with a child, especially in such a difficult situation as a child's illness.

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Authors: Edyta Zarębska, Magdalena Pytel

Managing Editor: Katarzyna Grunt-Segień

Publishing Coordinator: Marlena Fiedorow

Translation and proofreading: Wojciech Grabek, Carolyn Trotman-Grabek

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