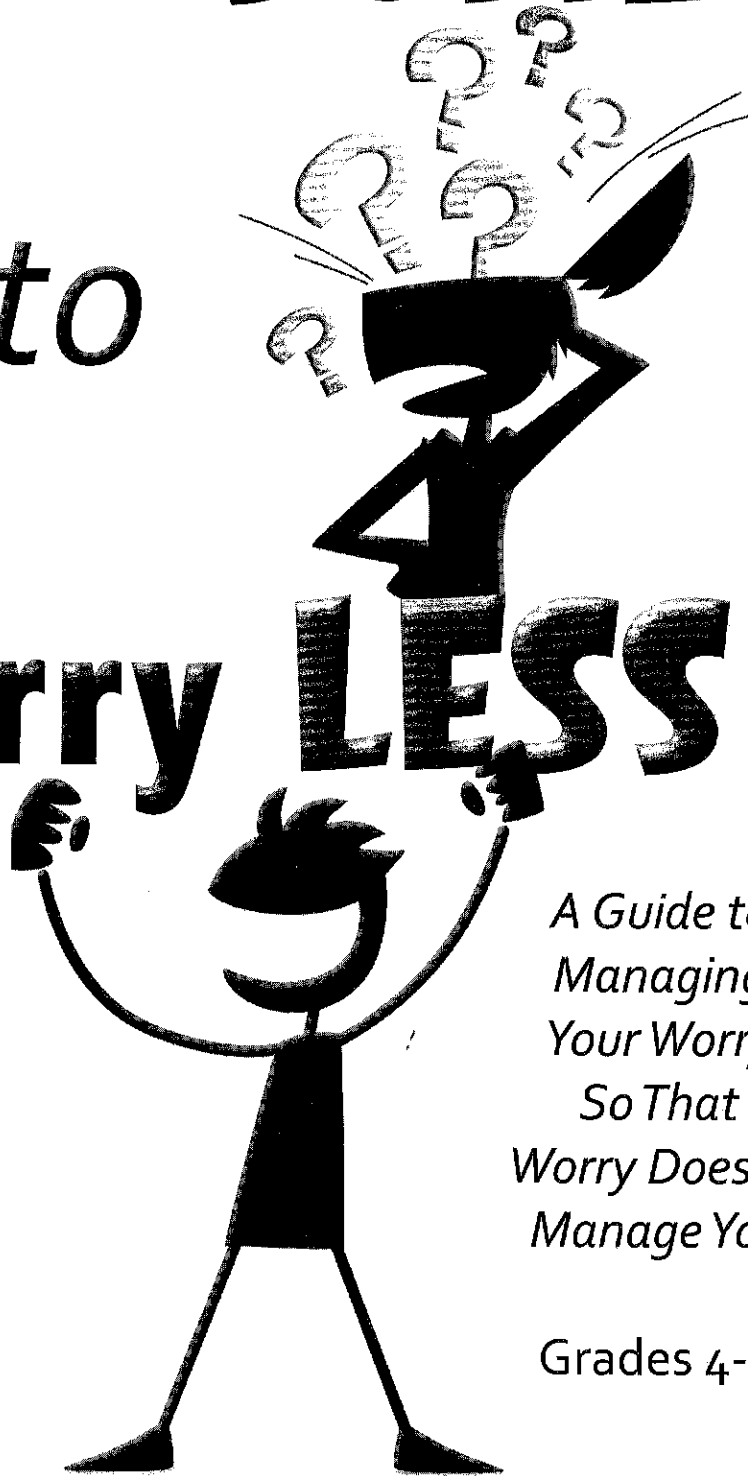


WorrisOME

to

Worry LESS



*A Guide to
Managing
Your Worry
So That
Worry Doesn't
Manage You*

Grades 4-8

By Nicole Cleveland

Dedication

"To my sweet Memo who is the Master Worrier. She passed it on to me, but I happily work at retiring that trait as I work diligently to be the master of my worries!"

WorriSOME to Worry LESS

A Guide to Managing Your Worry So That Worry Doesn't Manage You

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Introduction

WorriSOME to Worry LESS is a self-exploration booklet to help children identify and manage things in their lives that are causing stress and anxiety. All children worry at times, and some may worry more than others. This book's purpose is to provide ideas and techniques for helping children to better cope with these situations.

As children complete the activity pages, they will learn the distinction between rational and irrational fears and become empowered in their ability to work through what worries them.

This book can be used with small groups or in individual counseling or classroom guidance. Parents who are helping their child deal with worries could also benefit from using these activities and ideas. While we don't all worry about the same things, worry is universal—at some point in time, we all have experienced what it feels like to be worried. This book will help children realize that they are not alone, and that they can have some control in moving from *worrying some to worrying less*.

I believe strongly in the power of bibliotherapy. There are many wonderful children's books on the topic of worrying that can provide a sense of solace and support to children who are facing stressful situations. When a child hears and sees characters working out their problems, it allows him or her to see the possibility of improving his or her situation.

Children who learn how to manage their own worry, anxieties, and fears become adults who know how to manage worrisome situations. By learning and implementing early on the skills taught in this book, children can learn to **Worry LESS**.

ASCA Standards

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

Standard A: Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span.

A:A2 Acquire Skills for Improving Learning

A:A2.3 Use communications skills to know when and how to ask for help when needed

PERSONAL/SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Standard A: Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.

PS:A1 Acquire Self-knowledge

PS:A1.1 Develop positive attitudes toward self as a unique and worthy person

PS:A1.2 Identify values, attitudes and beliefs

PS:A1.4 Understand change is a part of growth

PS:A1.5 Identify and express feelings

PS:A1.6 Distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior

PS:A1.8 Understand the need for self-control and how to practice it

PS:A1.10 Identify personal strengths and assets

PS:A1.11 Identify and discuss changing personal and social roles

PS:A2 Acquire Interpersonal Skills

PS:A2.1 Recognize that everyone has rights and responsibilities

PS:A2.3 Recognize, accept, respect and appreciate individual differences

PS:A2.6 Use effective communications skills

PS:A2.7 Know that communication involves speaking, listening and nonverbal behavior

Standard B: Students will make decisions, set goals and take necessary action to achieve goals.

PS:B1 Self-knowledge Application

PS:B1.1 Use a decision-making and problem-solving model

PS:B1.2 Understand consequences of decisions and choices

PS:B1.3 Identify alternative solutions to a problem

PS:B1.4 Develop effective coping skills for dealing with problems

PS:B1.5 Demonstrate when, where and how to seek help for solving problems and making decisions

PS:B1.9 Identify long- and short-term goals

PS:B1.10 Identify alternative ways of achieving goals

PS:B1.11 Use persistence and perseverance in acquiring knowledge and skills

PS:B1.12 Develop an action plan to set and achieve realistic goals

Standard C: Students will understand safety and survival skills.

PS:C1 Acquire Personal Safety Skills

PS:C1.6 Identify resource people in the school and community, and know how to seek their help

PS:C1.7 Apply effective problem-solving and decision-making skills to make safe and healthy choices

PS:C1.10 Learn techniques for managing stress and conflict

PS:C1.11 Learn coping skills for managing life events



How to Use *WorriSOME to Worry LESS*

Before printing/reproducing copies of the self-exploration booklet, read each page and select those pages that are appropriate for the age level and concerns of your students. Then print/copy the chosen pages for each child and staple the pages into a booklet for each participant. See the last page of this book for more information about using the included CD.

Distribute a *WorriSOME to Worry LESS* booklet, a pencil, and crayons or markers to each child.

As the children complete the booklet, allow time for them to discuss and reflect on the ideas presented. Let the children decide if they wish to share their responses with you or the group. I have found that in my 20+ years of working as an educator and counselor, children find comfort and relief in knowing they are not alone in their struggles. One of the best ways of knowing they are not alone comes through the sharing process, but only when, and if, children are ready.

Pre- and Post-Test
WorriSOME to Worry LESS

Name _____ Date _____

WORD BANK

sensible worries	Support System	mantra	deep breathing
1 st step to worrying less	Bad grades	Nightmares	
“What if” situations	irrational	visualization	

1. The people who can help you when you are in need are called your _____
_____.
2. Picturing something as if it is right in front of you is an example of _____
_____.
3. An illogical worry that doesn't make sense is called _____
_____.
4. A phrase or word that you repeat over and over to yourself to help you calm down is called a _____.
5. _____ are an example of an irrational worry.
6. Rational worries are also called _____.
7. _____ are an example of a rational worry.
8. Slowly inhaling through the nose followed by a long slow exhale through the mouth is an example of _____.
9. Figuring out what is causing your worry is your _____
_____.
10. _____ describe what *could* happen.

WorriSOME

to

Worry LESS



Name: _____

**"Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrow,
it only saps today of its joy."**

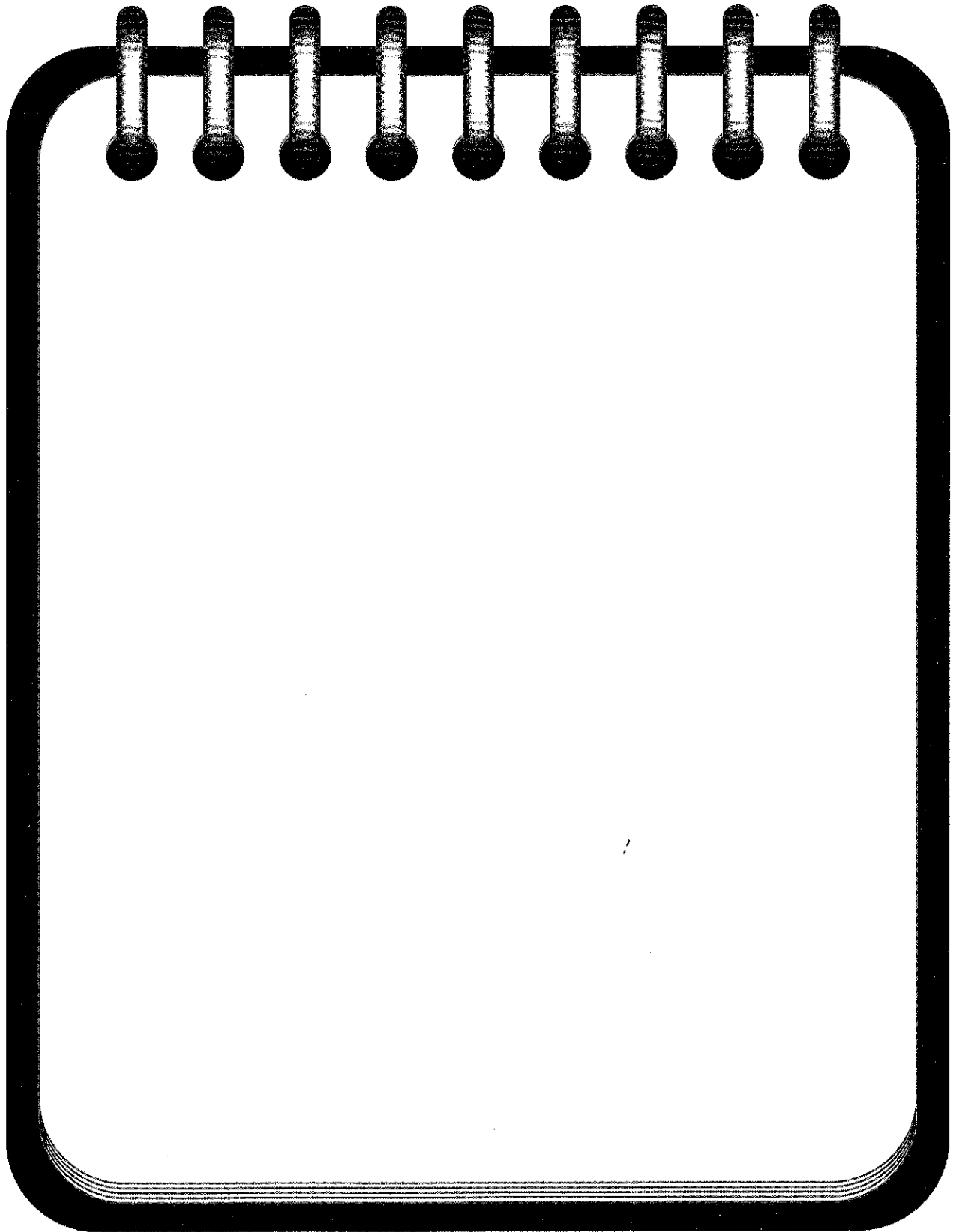
~ Leo Buscaglia

What do you think this quote means?

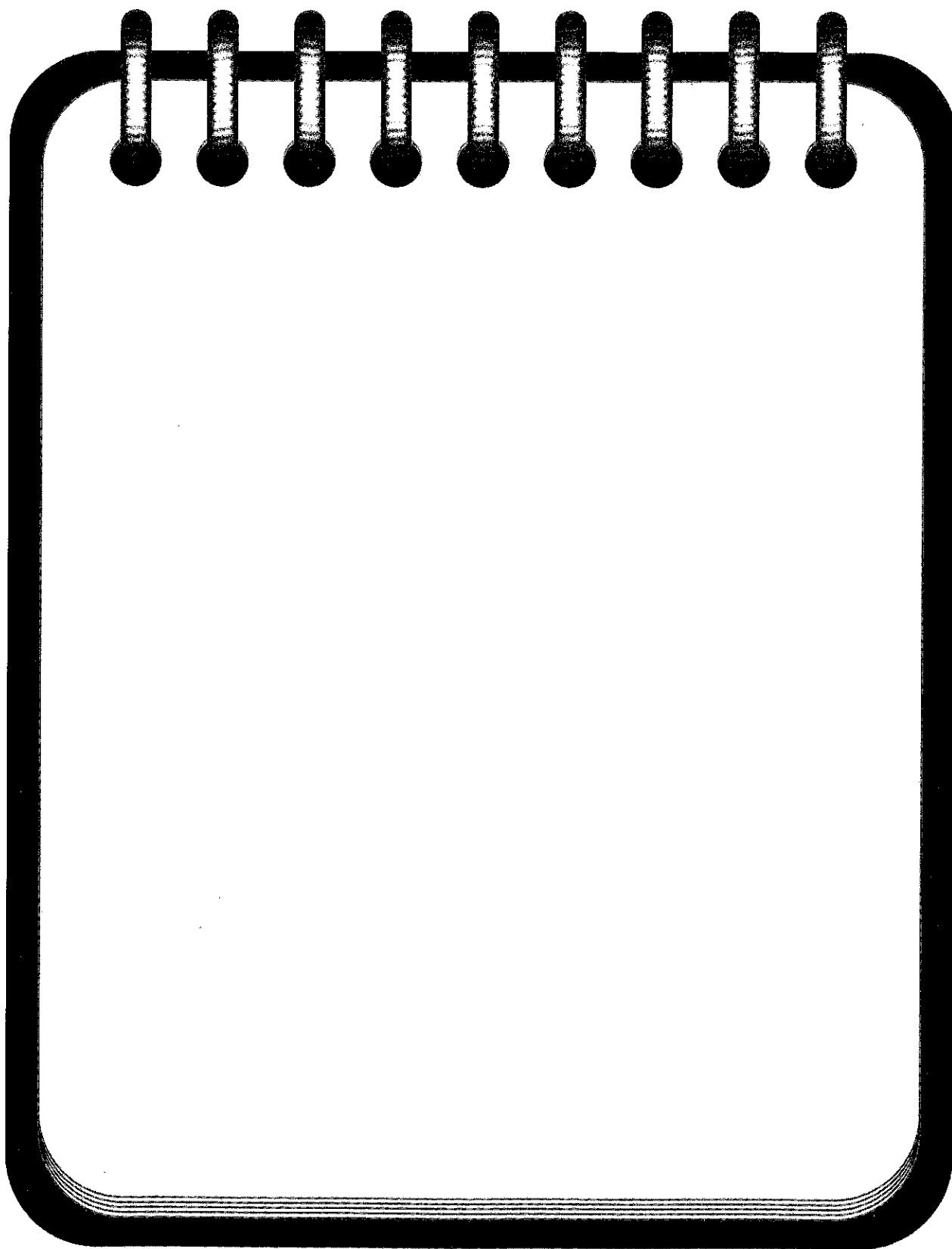
Have you ever let something that was worrying you stop you from enjoying what is happening at that moment?

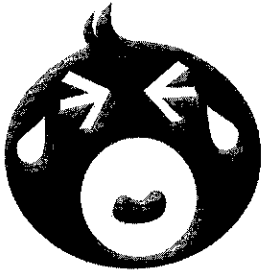


Draw or write a description of a situation that causes you to worry at home or at school.

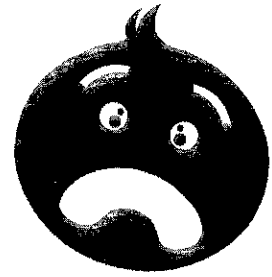


Draw or write a description of how you look when you are worried.





The Feelings of Worry



When we are worried,
we can experience
many different feelings.

Read each word below and think about times when you were worried.

How did you feel?

Circle each of the feelings you had. If you had other feelings that are not listed,
write them under *Other Feelings I Experienced*.

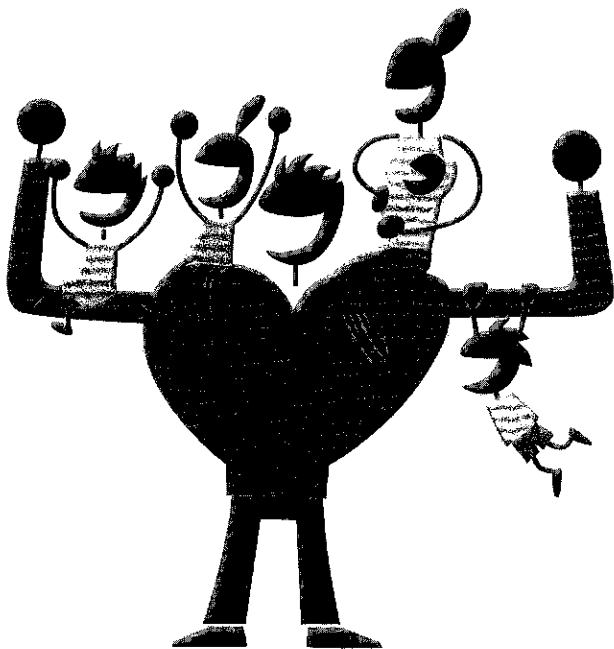
Scared Frustrated Upset

Anxious Sad Helpless

Nervous Angry Hopeless



Other Feelings I Experienced:



My Support System

Think about the
people you know.
Who can help you when
you are feeling worried,
anxious, or stressed?

These are people you trust, people who will listen to you, people you want to talk with, and people who care about you.

These people are your *Support System*.

Look at the list below and check off those people whom you believe would be part of your support system. You may write their names in the box. Add any other people that are not mentioned.

PARENTS

BROTHER/SISTER

GRANDPARENTS

OTHER FAMILY MEMBER

TEACHER

COUNSELOR

COACH

FRIEND

OTHER PEOPLE WHO COULD BE MY SUPPORT SYSTEM

Rational Worries

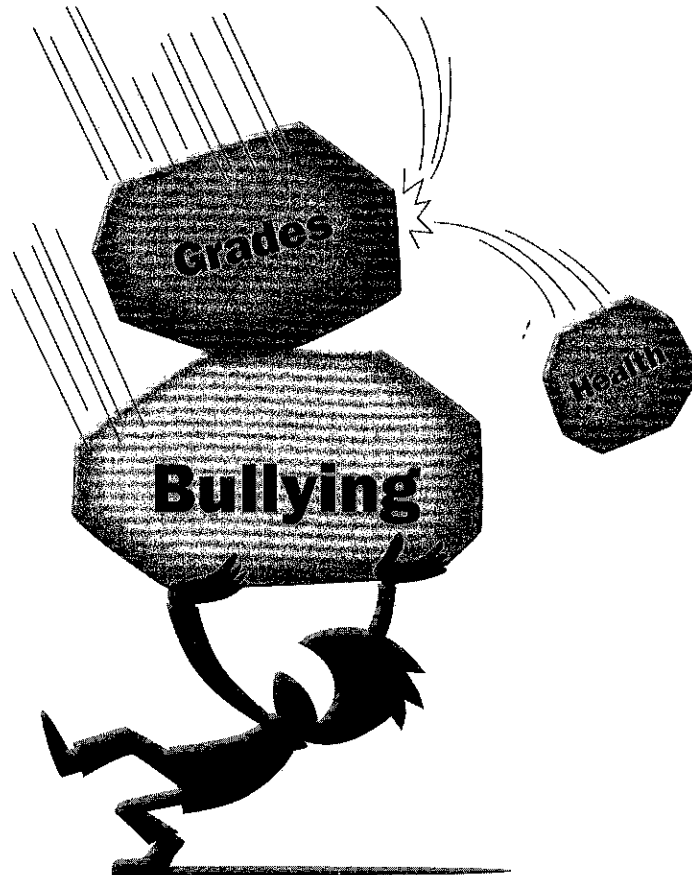
Sometimes there is a good reason to worry.

If this is the case, then feeling worried is
sensible.

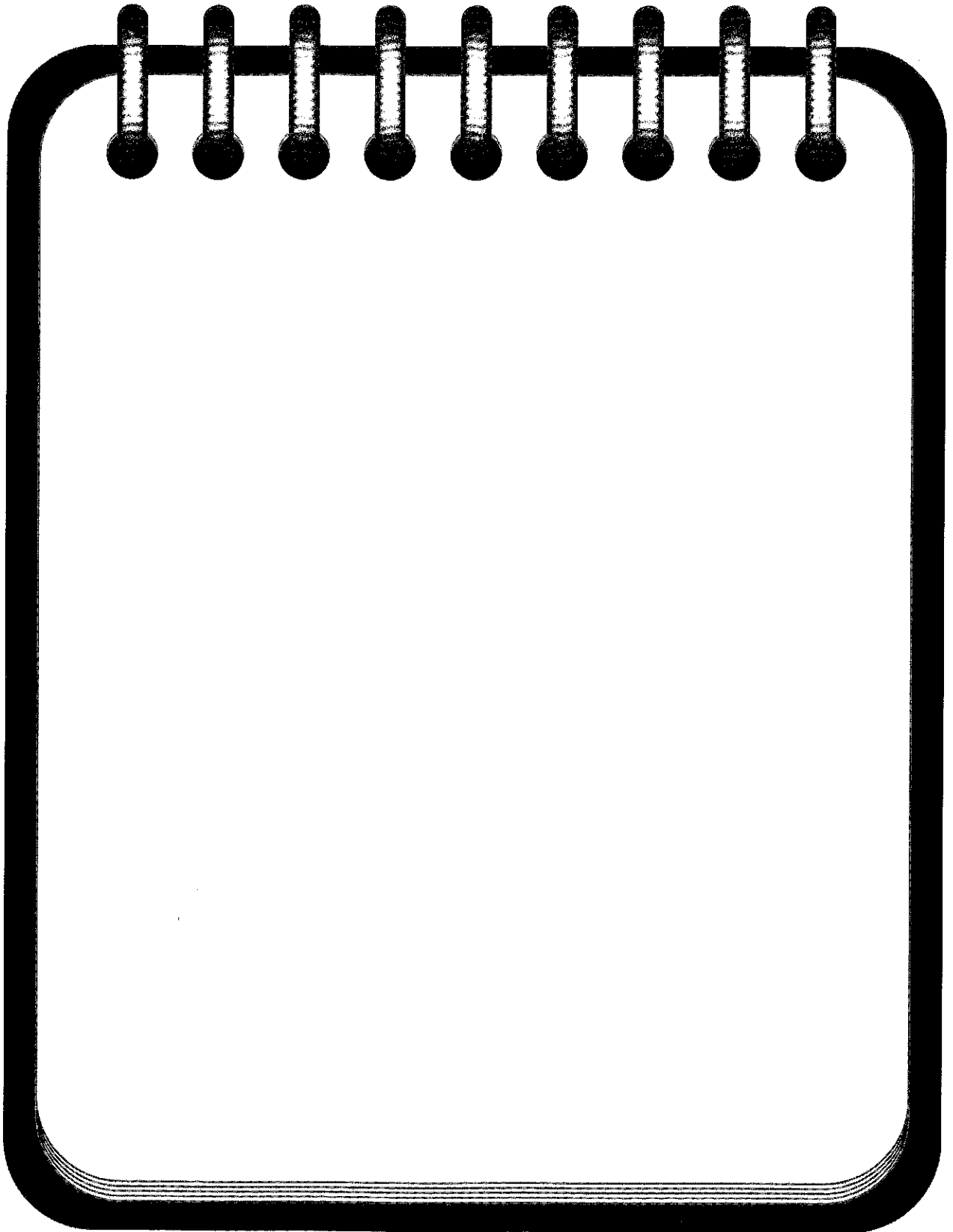
When you are stressed, fearful, or anxious
for a good reason your worries are
rational.

Some examples of rational worries might be ...

- Worrying about how you are doing at school with grades or behavior.
- Worrying about the health and well being of someone you care about who is ill.
- Worrying about parents who are not getting along and are fighting.
- Worrying about someone who is being mean or bullying you.
- Worrying about friendships with which you are having trouble.



Draw or write about a time you experienced
a rational worry at school or at home.



Think about the worry you mentioned on the last page.

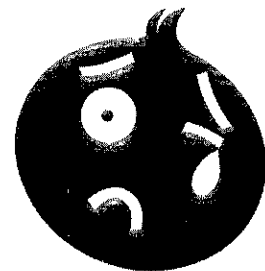
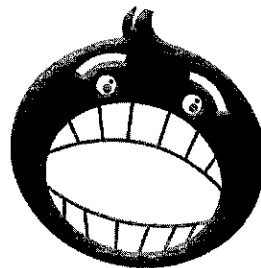
Look at the feeling words below. Circle those that tell how your rational worry made you feel. If you had other feelings that are not listed, write them under **Other Feelings I Had**.

Scared Frustrated Upset

Anxious Sad Helpless

Nervous Angry Hopeless

Other Feelings I Had:



Getting Help

Sometimes it is important to get help when you are feeling worried.

Have you ever had someone help you when you were worrying?

Yes No

If you checked "yes," look at the choices below and check the person that helped you. Then write the name of the person in the box under your choice.

If you checked "no," look at the choices below and circle the person you believe *could* help you when you are worried. Then write the name of the person in the box below your checked choice.

PARENT

COUNSELOR

FRIEND

TEACHER

COACH

MYSELF

OTHER FAMILY MEMBER

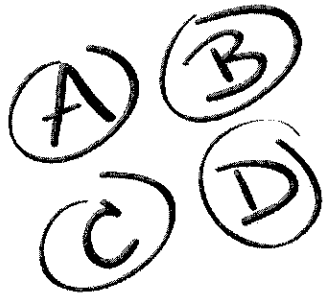
SOMEONE ELSE

How did or how do you think this person could help you?

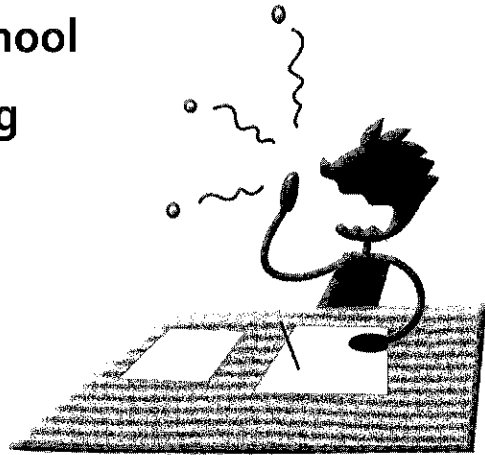
Are you still worried about the situation you experienced? Why or why not?

Worries I Can Control

Below is a list of situations that may cause you to worry. You might have control over some of these situations, others are beyond your control. Circle those situations in which you could control your worrying.



- My grades
- My behavior at school
- Parents fighting
- Nightmares
- Strangers
- Test taking
- Mean people
- Scary movies



Getting in trouble at home

Getting in trouble at school

Doing well in sports, dance, gymnastics, etc.

Look at the situations you circled. Select the one that, although it may worry you most, you believe you can control. Then complete the sentences below.

The situation that worries me the most is _____

The reason it worries me the most is _____

Two people who could help me manage this worry are:

_____ & _____

Think about the worry you chose on the last page.

Circle the words that describe how you would feel if the situation did not worry you. If you would have other feelings that are not listed, write them under ***Other Feelings I Would Have.***

Happy

Relieved

Relaxed

Calm

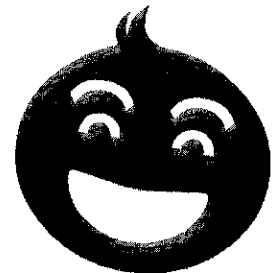
Peaceful



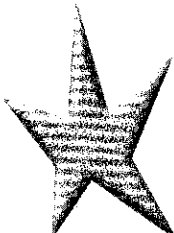
Encouraged

Other Feelings I Would Have:





Draw a picture of yourself worry-free.





When you have someone you trust
to help you when you feel worried,
and a plan for dealing with the worry,
you can begin to **WORRY LESS!**



We cannot control other people.
But we can control what
we do to help ourselves
and who we choose to help us
when something worries us.



Ways to Help Worry Less

Decide what it is that is causing you to worry.

Decide who can help you when you are worried.
A parent, friend, teacher, counselor, coach, sibling?

Decide if this is a situation that you can control.



Make a list of three things you could do to help yourself handle this worry.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

Take three, slow, deep breaths. Breathe in through your nose and exhale through your mouth. As you breathe, picture yourself doing the three things you listed above to help your worrisome thought become less of a worry.

Close your eyes. Visualize yourself doing the thing that would help this worry lessen or go away.

Putting the Plan Into Practice

Practice putting a plan into action by using the example below.



WORRY ←

I will not get good grades in school.

PLAN ↻

Decide if I have control over this worry.

- ➔ I am the one who chooses to study and do my schoolwork, so I am in control.
- ➔ Talk to my teacher and my parents about why I am worried. See how they can help me.
- ➔ Three things I can do to overcome my worrying:
 1. Think about what I am doing in subjects in which I receive good grades.
 2. Use those same strategies with subjects in which I have difficulty.
 3. Listen to directions, study, come prepared, and ask for help when I am confused.
- ➔ Then take deep breaths and visualize myself doing all three things listed and identify if any one of those things was more helpful than the others.

“What If” Worries

People who worry a lot often begin to focus on:

What if ...

My plan fails?

I end up with a bad grade?

I get in trouble at school?

My parents fight?



Describe your biggest “What if” worry.

The thing I worry about most is _____

I worry about this because _____

“What If” Scenarios

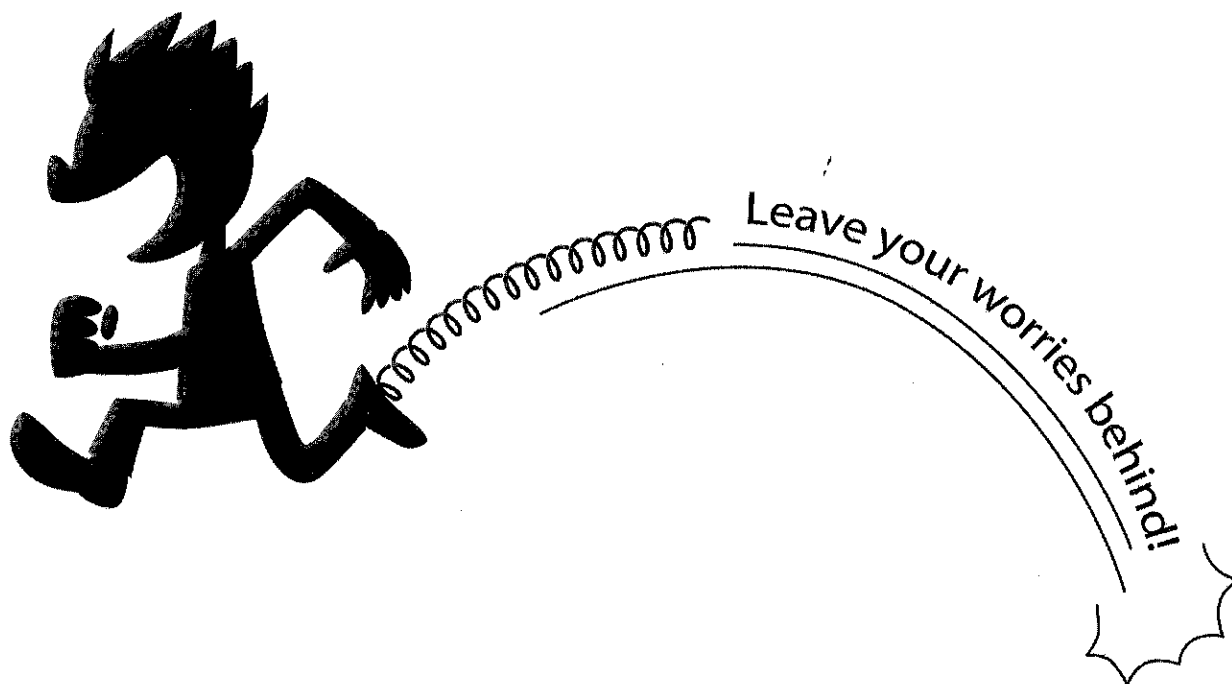
It can be very helpful to visualize “what if” situations. Read each of the following situations. The plans you read can provide you with some invaluable suggestions.

You get a bad grade or in trouble at school.

What is the worst thing that could happen? You might be grounded. Your parents or teachers could be disappointed. At the end of the day, when it is all said and done, would your parents still love you? Does your teacher still want you to learn? When you find a way to face the worst “what if” scenario, then have a plan for how to deal with it, you gain control over the situation. This is very helpful in moving from a worrisome state to a worry less one.

My parents are fighting.

You can’t control other people. So it is best to have a plan to help yourself in situations in which you have no control. Find a quiet spot to go to where you can read, listen to music, watch TV, or play games. Perhaps you might go out to your backyard, ride your bike, or shoot hoops. Doing something you enjoy and envisioning things that make you feel good can help when you are in an uncontrollable situation. Remind yourself that while your parents might not be getting along, they both love and care about you. This can be a comforting thought, and help ease your worrying.



My Biggest Worry

What do you worry about the most?

What is the worst thing you think could happen as a result of this worry?

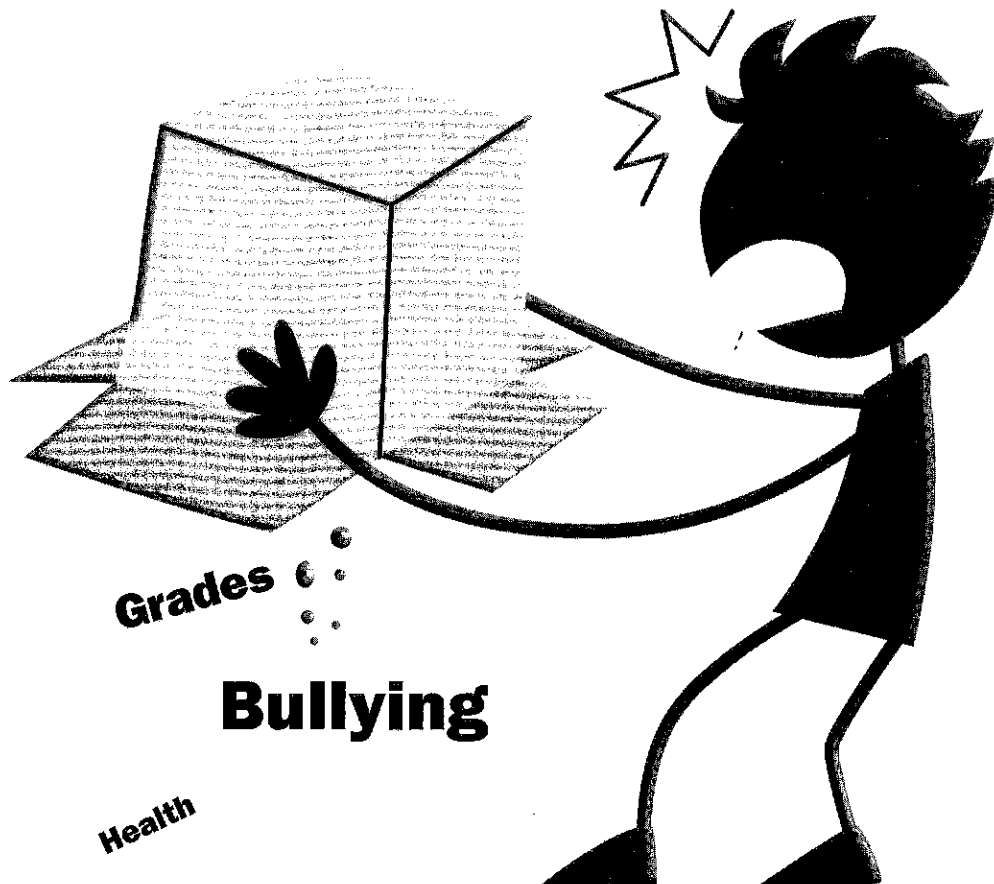
If the worst thing were to happen, who could you turn to for support?

How could you handle the situation? What is your plan?

Rational Worries

Rational worries
please just go away!
You weigh heavily on me
and I don't want you to stay.

Rational worries,
of you I have control!
I'll breathe deeply, make a plan,
and calm my worried soul!

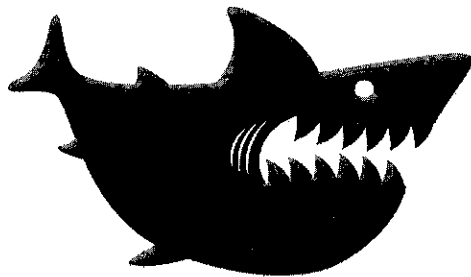


Irrational Worries

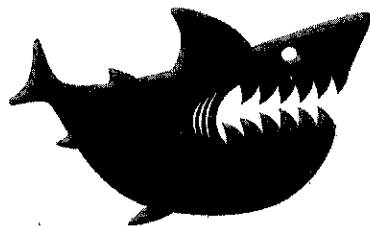
Irrational worries are illogical worries. Irrational worries are illogical because they are unproductive and pointless and we sometimes feel that they are beyond our control. However, knowing they are irrational is helpful, because it prevents us from spinning our wheels. Where a plan is useful for dealing with worries you can control, a mantra can be helpful when dealing with irrational fears.

Some examples of irrational fears are...

Roller coasters

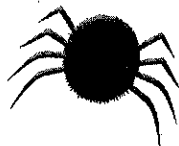


Sharks

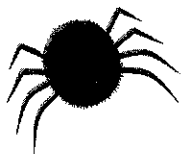


Falling

Clowns



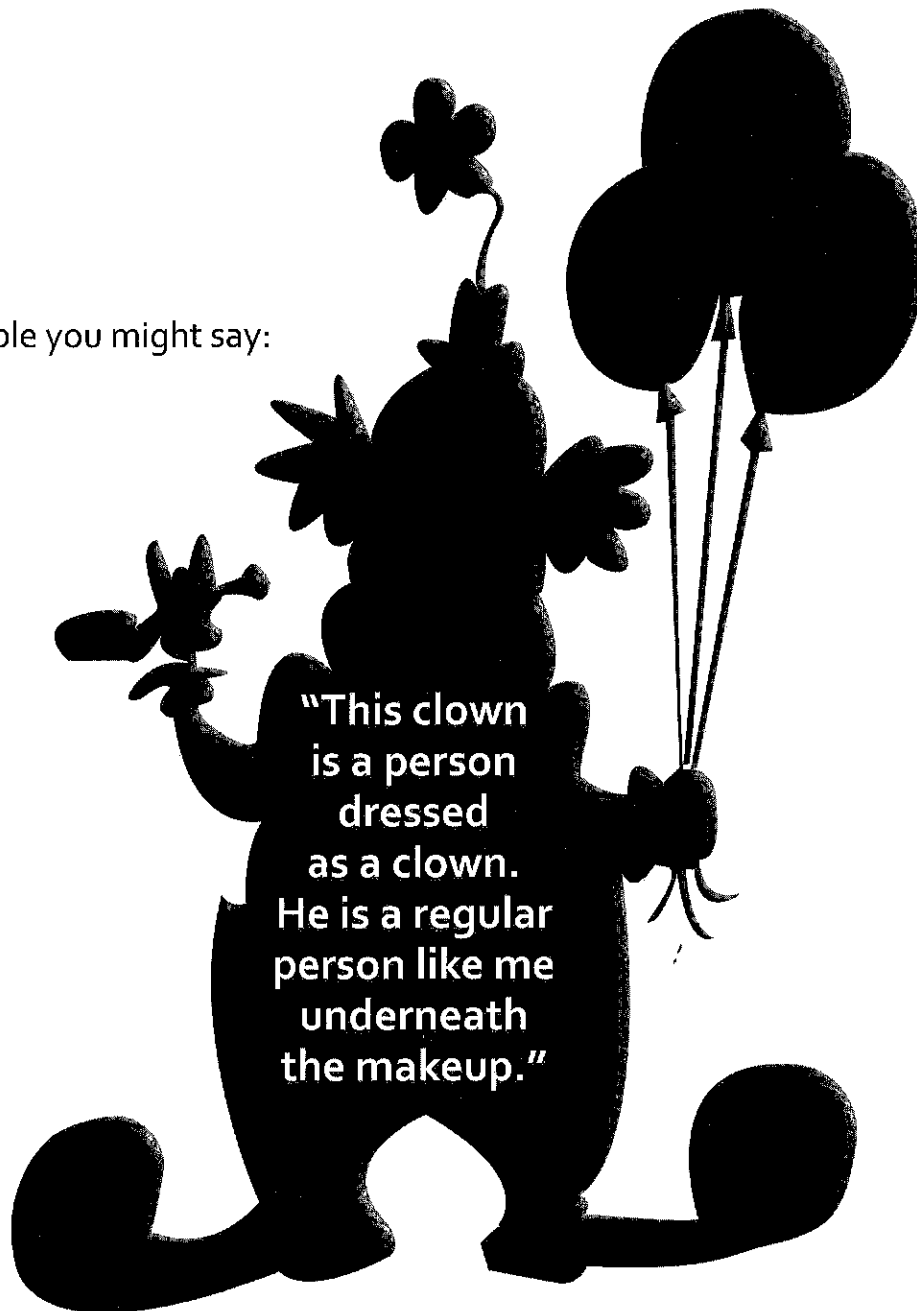
Spiders



What Can I Do?

If an irrational worry is causing you difficulty, sometimes just avoiding the situation is helpful. No one should force you to ride a roller coaster. But if you find yourself face-to-face with a clown or encounter a spider, a mantra can come in handy. A mantra is something you say to yourself to feel better.

For example you might say:



If you keep repeating this mantra over and over, it can help your mind overcome irrational thoughts.

"The greatest mistake you can make in life is continually fearing you will make one."

- Elbert Hubbard

What does this quote mean to you?

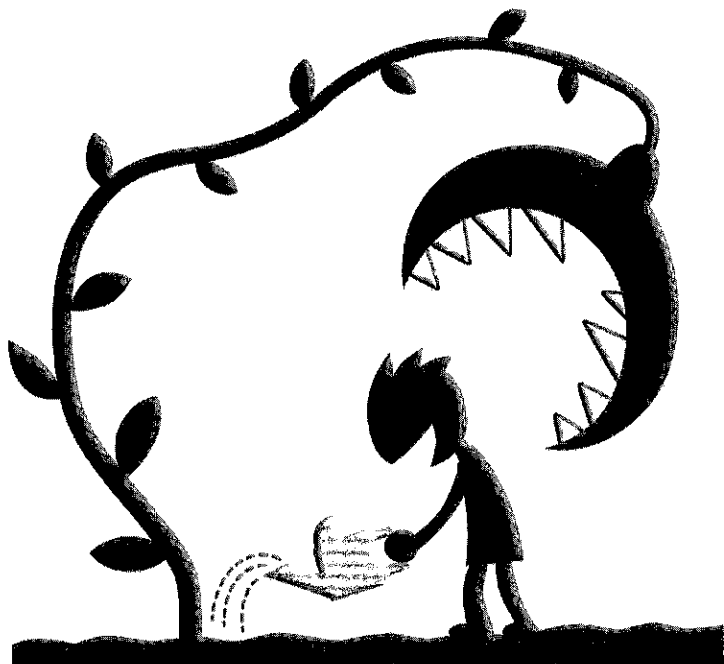
Do you have any irrational worries? _____

If so, how does it make you feel when you think about those worries?

What mantra could you say to yourself when you find yourself worrying?

Who could help you deal with this worry? _____

Sometimes you have an irrational worry over which you have no control.



How can you give something you can't control less hold over you?

- 1** Determine if what you are worried about is irrational.
- 2** What makes what you are worried about irrational?
- 3** What is your mantra? Use your mantra to calm your worrying thoughts. Repeat this simple phrase or word over and over to yourself.
- 4** Who can help you manage your worrying?
- 5** What steps can you take to minimize your worrying?



Nightmares Bad Dreams

People often believe nightmares are beyond their control. At first they can be, but there are ways to control these worrisome dreams and worry less about having them again.

When a nightmare occurs, you usually wake up scared and upset. It is difficult to forget that feeling. Often, when you go to bed the following night, you begin to worry about having that same nightmare.

Dreams usually reflect unfinished business from your life or from just that day. It is possible for a bad dream or nightmare to occur for days, months, or even longer. The reason for this is that the stressful issue that caused the nightmare isn't resolved.

If this happens to you and you want to make it stop, try these techniques ...

Visualize your "Happy Place." Make one up or think about a calm and relaxing place you've visited.

Think happy thoughts. Going to sleep thinking happy thoughts will leave you with a peaceful feeling, which is a positive way to drift off to sleep.

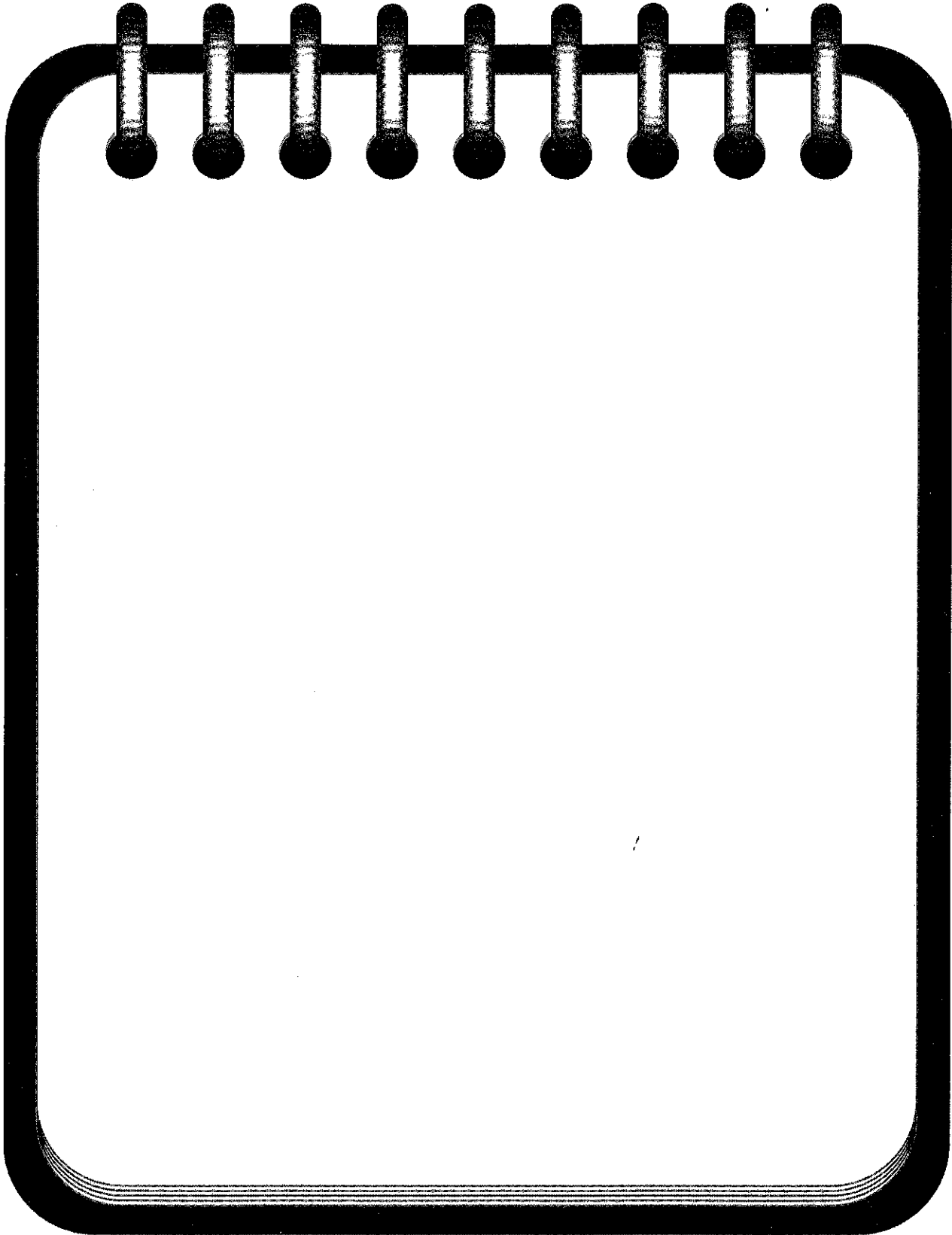
Take control of your nightmare. Suppose you dreamed you were falling. The feeling of falling was so intense that you woke up frightened. Instead of worrying about having the nightmare again, play out what happened. When you get to the part that scared you most, visualize yourself falling. But instead of crashing, you are enveloped by a giant parachute that billows out and slowly takes you downward to a calm and peaceful landing.

Talk to someone you trust about your dreams. Explain your dream and why it frightens you. Sometimes just talking about your feelings with another person can help you feel better. Just letting your feelings out can make things better.

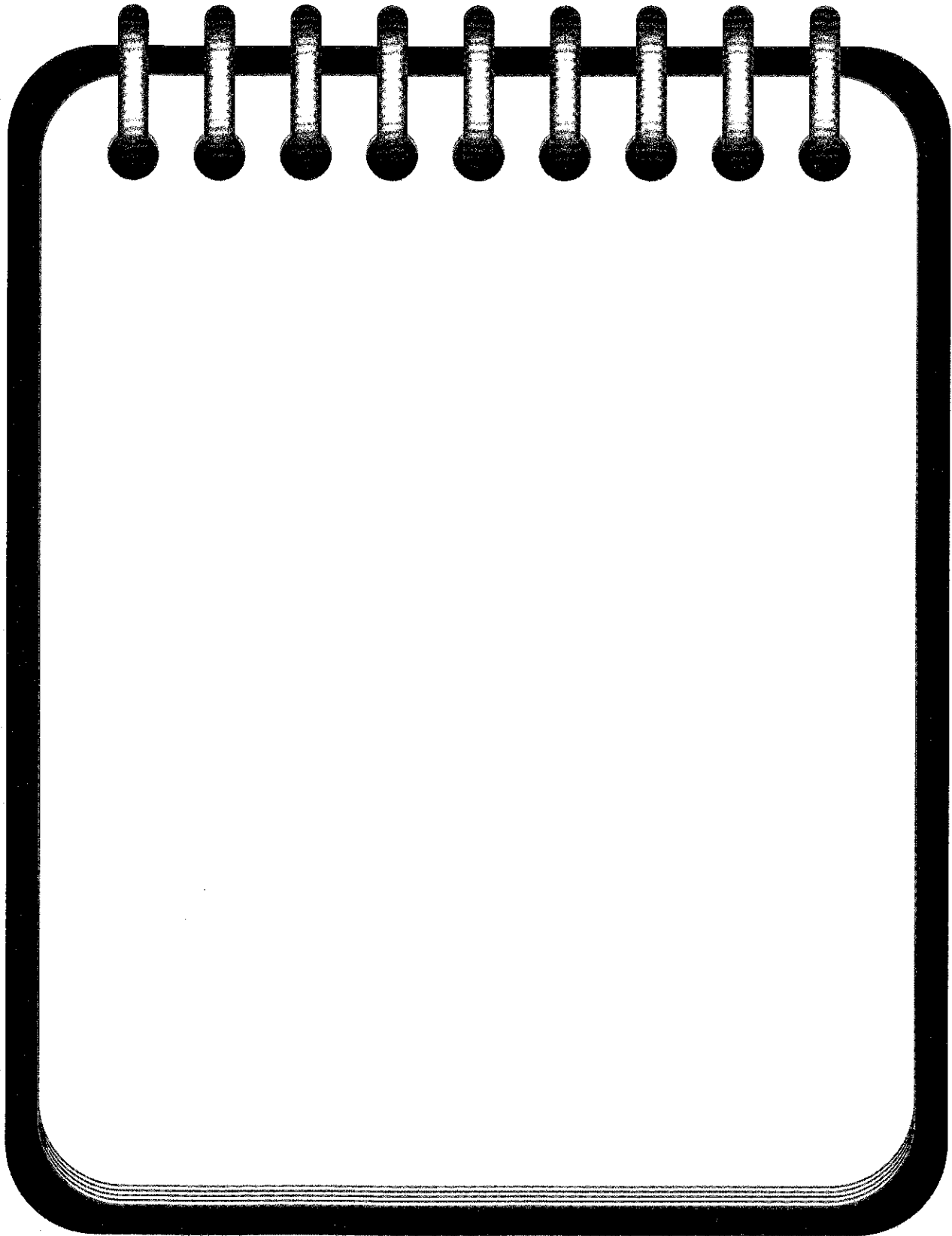
Relax. Let go of your worries and stress. Tense and relax your body starting with your toes, then legs, move to your torso, then your arms, your jaw, and finally squeeze your eyes tight then relax them. When each part of your body has felt the difference between being tense and relaxed, you can drift off to a peaceful night's sleep.

Remember: What makes your dream a nightmare is your lack of control in the situation. Take control and you take hold of the worry and fear that goes along with it.

Draw or write a description of a
bad dream or thought you have experienced.

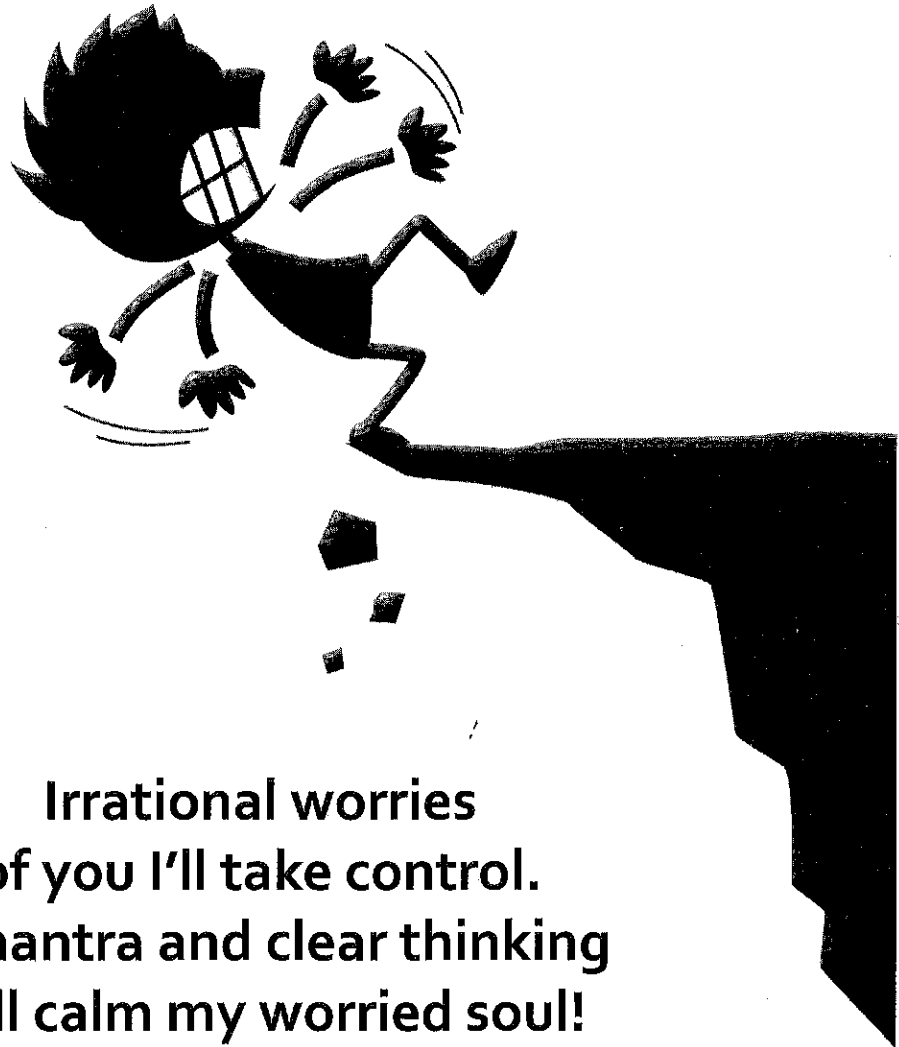


Where is your "Happy Place"?
Draw or write a description of that place below.



Irrational Worries

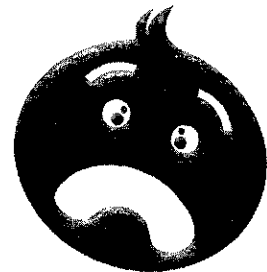
**Irrational worries
please just go away!
Your bothersome and don't make sense.
I don't want you to stay.**



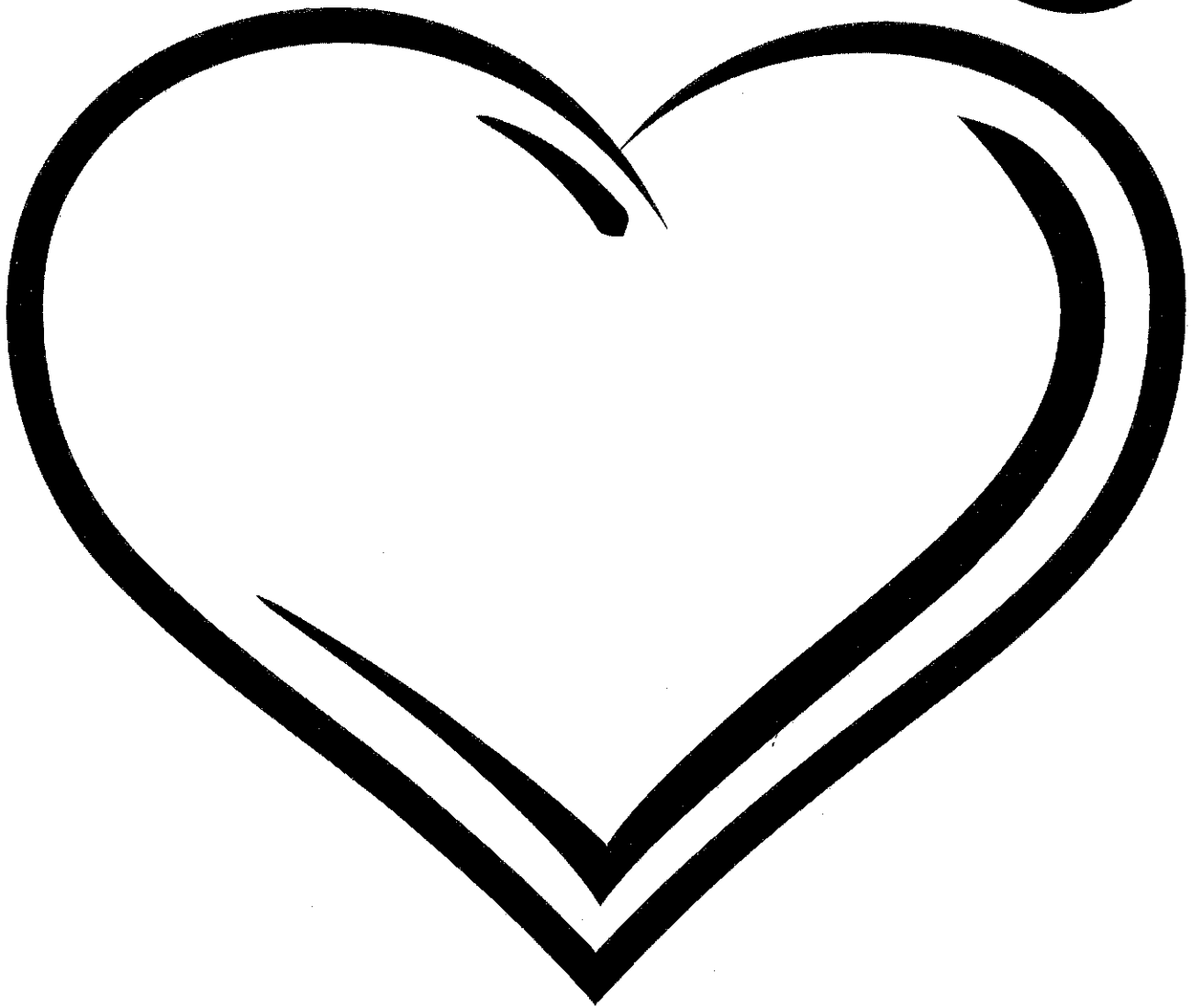
**Irrational worries
of you I'll take control.
A mantra and clear thinking
will calm my worried soul!**



In this heart, write words that describe
what your heart feels like when it is filled with worry.



In this heart, write words that describe
what your heart feels like when it is free of worry.



Look at the picture of the brain. Imagine it is your brain.
Then imagine what your brain would look like filled with worries.

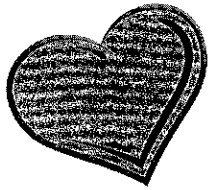
You can use colors or words to describe your thoughts.



Look at the picture of the brain. Imagine it is your brain.
Then imagine what your brain would look like if it were free of worries.

You can use colors or words to describe your thoughts.





Your **HEART** and **MIND** have room for good thoughts and feelings when they aren't filled with worries.



While we can't get rid of all of our worries, we can decide how to manage them.

Who is your support system?

My plan for handling worries I can control is _____

My plan for handling worries I can't control is _____

Remember:

When you are in control you will worry less and alleviate stress!

**“That the birds of worry and care
fly over your head,
this you cannot change,
but that they build nests in your hair,
this you can prevent.”**

~ Chinese proverb

