

You are about to engage in "bibliotherapy" with your child. Here are some hints that worked for me with my child.

- 1) The first thing you should do with your Children's Behavior Book is read it yourself. Whether you'll be reading the book to your child or whether your child will be reading it him/herself, your familiarity with the material helps with the process.
- 2) The proper way to introduce the book to your child is as a gift from you to your child, which is what it is. It is **ESSENTIAL** that you not introduce the book as having some special message for your child.

Chances are your child isn't any happier with the behavior you're trying to correct than you are. For the story to properly resonate with your child, your child needs to identify with the character in the book ON HIS OR HER OWN.

- 3) Introduce the book as a special kind of picture book, one in which ***your child makes the pictures!!!*** That should be an exciting notion. Show your child the "Illustrated By" page, where they'll be able to write their name.
- 4) The first time the book is read, your child's interest may wane since there are not yet any pictures to engage him/her. Remind your child to picture the story in his/her head so he/she can draw it later..
- 5) If you are doing the reading, your job is to read with enthusiasm and wonder. Read with a sense of "Wow! Can you believe this?"
- 6) Once you finish reading, you can ask your child now or later whether and when they want to illustrate the book. ***Illustrating the book is not an assignment. It should be done when the child feels like doing it, and I do not recommend doing it all at once.*** Remember, you want your child coming back to the book again and again because REPETITION IS THE KEY TO LEARNING.
- 7) If your child identifies with the character, he/she will be excited about illustrating and open to more readings of the story, or will even suggest it. This is what you want. REPETITION IS THE KEY TO LEARNING.
- 8) Of course, some children push the book aside. This can happen if they sense their parent's agenda, or if the subject matter is just too sore a subject right now. ***This is a time to back off but not give up.*** Keep the book handy and visible. Your child might come back to it on his/her own, or they might be more receptive at some later date when you suggest it.
- 9) If your child is receptive, every time s(he) sits down to illustrate the book is another repetition of the story's message. If (s)he is not yet old enough to read the text, then you'll be able to read them the text for each page and discuss how to illustrate it. Your child's desire to read the book or have it read to them will now likely increase still further, due to their own pride in their contribution. Your job is to tell them how impressed you are with their wonderful illustrations.
- 10) When your child wants to stop drawing, be fine with it. This shouldn't be work.
- 11) Your only job is to make sure the book doesn't get lost or overly damaged. When your child has free time, make illustrating the "Children's Behavior Book" one of the options. When your child wants to be read to, make reading the book one of the options.
- 12) If the book is working you're likely to see mild to impressive changes in behavior quickly, hopefully improving still further with time. You're also likely to hear the themes of the book become part of your child's dialogue. My child often notes commonality between the events of her life and those in the story. If you start to hear your child referencing the book or the character, you can bet it's working. Your child is learning.

The Time
Balooga Forgot
Other People's
Feelings

Written by Steve Barancik, ©2006

Illustrated by

Once there was a little girl named Balooga, and she was the most popular girl in her class. Every day, there were always kids who wanted to play with her after school.

Balooga was a very good sharer. When another girl came home with her to play, Balooga always asked her what **she** wanted to play. Balooga was also a very good payer-attentioner. If the other kid seemed like she wasn't having the best time, Balooga would ask if anything was wrong, or try to figure out what Balooga could do to help.

Balooga's best friend was Matinga. She and Matinga could play for hours, sometimes without either of them getting upset even once.

But one day Balooga wasn't feeling very good. She'd had the sniffles all night and didn't sleep very well. She was feeling kind of coldy and hurty and sleepy and whiny when Matinga came over.

On this day, Balooga definitely felt like playing Slides and Puddles. Matinga wanted to play Go Fish. Matinga said, "How about we play Go Fish first, since it's really a short game, and then we play Slides and Puddles?"

Usually, Balooga would have said, "Sure!" Or "Of course!" Or "That sounds perfect!" But today, Balooga didn't feel like saying those things. She just said, "No."

So Matinga gave in. She was a very good sharer, and a pretty good payer-attentioner herself, and just like Balooga, she liked getting along much better than not getting along. So she said, "Okay, we'll play Slides and Puddles once, and **then** we'll play Go Fish."

So the two girls played Slides and Puddles once, and Balooga won, and now it was time to play Go Fish. But Balooga said, "How about we play Slides and Puddles *just once more?*" Because she really didn't feel like playing Go Fish. And Matinga said, "But **I** really don't feel like playing Slides and Puddles." So Balooga said, "Well, I'll let you win."

So the two girls played Slides and Puddles again, and you know what? Balooga won.

"You said you were going to let me win," said Matinga.

"Well, I kind of forgot," said Balooga. But you know, she didn't *really* forget. She just hadn't felt like letting Matinga win.

Matinga sighed. Then she said, "Okay, now it's time to play Go Fish." But Balooga still didn't feel like playing Go Fish. Matinga said, "Let's put away Slides and Puddles." Balooga said, "**You** put it away."

Matinga sighed again. Her friend was being kind of difficult today. But she put away Slides and Puddles. Now it was finally time to play Go Fish.

"I don't want to play Go Fish," whined Balooga.

"But you promised," said Matinga.

"Go Fish is stupid," said Balooga.

"No, it's not," said Matinga. Her feelings were really starting to get hurt.

"I want to play Slides and Puddles," said Balooga. **"I want to play Slides and Puddles. I WANT TO PLAY SLIDES AND PUDDLES!"**

"No!" said Matinga. Her daddy had taught her to share and be nice, but he'd also taught her that sometimes you have to stand up for yourself.

Well, you know what Balooga did? She just started crying. "I want to play Slides and Puddles. I **never** want to play stupid Go Fish."

Matinga came over to try to comfort her best friend. She patted her on the back. "Go Fish isn't stupid," she said. "It's fun."

"It's stupid!" screamed Balooga. Yes, now she was screaming. "**Stupid, stupid, stupid!!!!**"

Well, you know what Matinga did. She gave in. She didn't like crying, and she definitely didn't like screaming. The two girls played Slides and Puddles the rest of the afternoon, and Matinga let Balooga win **every** time, because she worried that if she didn't, Balooga might start crying and screaming again.

Balooga had a very good time, but she didn't even think to pay attention to whether Matinga was having a good time. Do **you** think Matinga was having a good time?

The next day, Balooga was feeling better. She asked Matinga if she wanted to play after school, but Matinga said she had another play date. "That's okay," said Balooga, and she found another kid who wanted to play after school, because everyone always wanted to play with Balooga. They all thought she was fun to play with.

So another girl came over to play after school. And Balooga felt like playing Slides and Puddles again, because she had such a good time yesterday when she won every time. But the other girl saw Balooga had a necklace-making kit. She wanted to bead necklaces.

Now, usually Balooga would have said, "Sure!" And it just so happened that Balooga **wasn't** coldy and hurty and sleepy and whiny today. But Balooga's big brain remembered how she'd gotten her way yesterday when she **did** feel all those things.

"I want to play Slides and Puddles. I don't want to bead stupid necklaces."

"But they aren't stupid," said the other girl. "They're beautiful. Look." She showed Balooga the picture on the box.

"Stupid, stupid, stupid!" screamed Balooga. She slapped the necklace box out of the other girl's hands, and the beads went flying all over the room.

"Now look what you've done," said the other girl.

"**You** pick them up," said Balooga. "I'll go get Slides and Puddles."

So the two girls played Slides and Puddles all afternoon. When the other little girl won a game, Baloo pitched such a fit that the other girl let her win every game after that.

Well, you know what started happening in the days after this. A few more kids played with Balooga, but she kept acting the same crying, whiny way because it always seemed to get her what she wanted. But while she *seemed* to be getting better at getting what she wanted, she was getting a lot **worse** at noticing what other kids wanted.

Pretty soon, **no** other kids wanted to play with Balooga. It didn't matter how many she asked, none of them said yes. They were all too polite though to tell her **why** they didn't want to play with her.

One day, Balooga came home from school alone. Her mother found her weeping in her bedroom. "What's wrong, my baby?" her mother asked.

"None of my friends wants to play with me anymore," cried Balooga.

"Why do you think that is?" asked her mommy.

"I don't know," wept Balooga.

Her mommy said, "I'll tell you what I think." Her mommy told her that she'd noticed a change in Balooga. She noticed that Balooga was insisting on getting her way with her friends, and that Balooga didn't even seem to care what her friends wanted, and that she didn't seem even to notice that they weren't having fun when they were with her.

"I want to show you something," said Balooga's mommy.

They drove to Balooga's favorite park. "When we get there," said Balooga's mommy, "we're not going to play. We're just going to watch."

When they got to the park, Balooga's mommy said, "Look." There were some bigger kids playing together on the monkey bars. One of them wasn't tall enough to reach. The other big kids lifted him up so he could.

"Now look over there," said Balooga's mommy, pointing at the sandbox. Two toddlers were playing side by side. One of them wanted to use a shovel that the other toddler wasn't even using. When the toddler without the shovel tried to borrow it, the other kid just grabbed it back from him and started using it himself. The toddler with no shovel ran back to his mommy, crying.

"That's so sad," said Balooga.

"The only *real* way for people to have fun **together** is to cooperate and compromise," said her mommy. "Babies aren't old enough to know how to. Are you old enough, Balooga?" asked mommy.

Balooga knew that she was. The next day, she asked Matinga if she would come over to play after school. "I don't *think* so," said Matinga.

"Well, what would you want to play?" asked Balooga.

"The thing I'd really like to do is play dress-up," said Matinga. "But you only have one princess dress. And we both like to be princesses."

"Do you know what?" said Balooga. "I'm really kind of tired of being a princess. It would be okay with me if you were the princess the **whole** time, and I could be something else."

"Really?" said Matinga.

"Really," said Balooga, and she meant it, even though she never got tired of being a princess.

So Matinga came over, and Balooga let her be the princess the **whole** time even though Matinga offered to let Balooga have the princess costume after awhile. And the next day at school, Matinga told the other kids that Balooga was back to being nice again, and Balooga went back to having just about as many play dates as any little girl could hope for.

The End