

HEALING THE PLANET THROUGH CHILDREN KNOWING THEMSELVES:

Teach Children About Their Inner World Resources

by Janai 'Grandma Boom' Mestrovich

“Every time you make fun of my nose I feel tight knots in my stomach and it hurts.” The first grade boy was alive with expression as he exclaimed this body awareness. I had just finished explaining that we always feel an emotional feeling plus a body sensation when we think a thought. Immediately, the boy sitting behind him that was being spoken to quipped, “Oh yeah! Well, that is where I feel hurt in MY stomach every time you call me a name!”

And then the magic happened. Both boys looked at each other with wide eyes. They had connected not just through honesty and internal awareness, but through pain which led to compassion. They started talking about how they both felt the same way in the same place from agitating each other.

Unfortunately, this was the last day of the school year. The boys had been arch enemies all year long, causing problems for the teacher and the entire class. Suddenly, they were talking and befriending one another. The teacher voiced she wish she had invited me the first day of school instead of the last day. She knew undoubtedly that her year would have been much less stressful and more productive.

Empowering children to “Know Thyself” with their own internal resources is the greatest gift that can be given to them for self-help, self-awareness, self-control, self-confidence and self-responsibili-

ty. Teach children these skills and wipe out the tendency to blame others for how they feel, self-victimization, and the loss of self-worth. Give them these skills and they begin to feel empowered as a vital part of the family unit, classroom and community member.

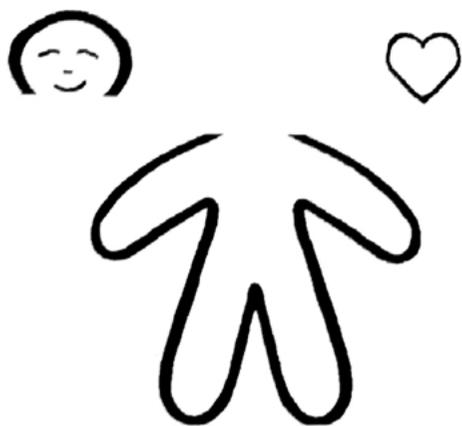
“Know Thyself” is a profundity made explicit in all major world religions and philosophies. Yet there is no specific guidebook on how to do that, let alone teach children at a young age how to tap and manage their powerful inner world resources.

When I was a child I had zero clue where thoughts came from. It seemed they dropped into my head from the sky. There was no indication in my environment that anyone had control over their thoughts, let alone me. Reaction to any and everything was the norm. I could not control my reactions in thoughts, emotions or actions save for being threatened to not perform certain actions like kicking my brother under the table when he kicked me first. The world was made of reactions and their ripples.

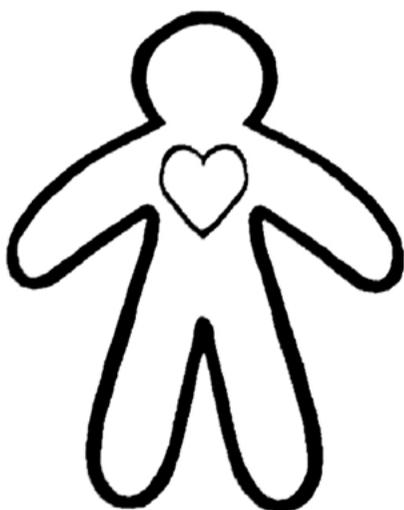
Some of the following excerpts are from “The Superkid Power Guidebook” (available on Amazon) that is nothing short of a treasure chest of 52 concepts for adults to use with young children to empower them with their own resources anytime, anywhere.

Week 10 MIND/BODY/EMOTIONS

How I Would Look If My Mind, Body And Emotional Feelings Didn't Work Together



How I Look With My Mind, Body And Emotional Feelings Working Together



MIND, BODY, FEELINGS are ALLIES AND FRIENDS

WHY THIS CONCEPT IS IMPORTANT

The hip bone's connected to the leg bone; the leg bone's connected to the knee bone. The mind, body and emotional feelings are all connected together. “Know thyself” begins here. Children are at a great advantage to manage themselves regardless of circumstances once they begin learning their mind, body and emotions are all working together. It has been scientifically validated through techniques such as biofeedback that there is a corresponding change physiologically for every mental/emotional change and vice versa. Having a SOLID internal

frame of reference makes for a healthier, happier, confident life.

EXAMPLE: Think a sad thought and you will physically feel the sadness in parts of your body as well as emotionally experience the sadness. Feel an angry feeling and notice the tension build in your body as your thoughts fill with anger. You cannot feel happy while you are thinking jealous thoughts. You cannot think frustrating thoughts while you are experiencing inner peace in a relaxed body.

The mind, body, emotional feelings ALWAYS work together – whether or not we are aware of it. By teaching this concept you give children a great foundation for life's challenges. In return, you receive the gift of becoming more aware yourself. It is a happy Win-Win.



LEARNING POINTS AND EXERCISES FOR REINFORCEMENT

1. **Mind/Body/Emotional Awareness.** Talk about the mind/body/emotional connection yourself in a practical way. “When I was fixing supper I felt good feelings about what I was doing for the family. My thoughts were happy and my body felt energetic. I felt angry feelings when you left your dirty sox in the living room. There were tight knots and tension in my chest. My thoughts were upset with you.”
2. **Simple Questions.** Have your child talk specifically about one of the three partners. Use a leading question. “You look like you have tight knots of tension in your shoulders right now. What kind of thoughts are you having?” After reply, ask where child feels tight knots in the body. Keep trying to use these kinds of examples whenever possible.
3. **Watch Others in Non-judgmental Way.** If you and your child are together and you ask someone, “How are you?” and the person answers,



“Fine.” but looks terrible, talk about that with your child. Ask his/her opinion. Use examples in talking about person’s tone of voice, body language, eye contact, etc. “I think maybe Robert was not feeling very good. His eyes were tired and he walked slowly.”

- **Singing Reinforcement.** Create a tune to the following jingle or just recite it in a fun voice and help child to memorize it. If you march with it or have special gestures with hands, face and feet, your child will remember it easily.

Mind/Body/Feelings Jingle

My mind, my body, my feelings are friends.
They work together from beginning to end.

And that’s the way it’s always been!

- **Body Outlines.** Have child look at, color and talk about the different outlines. Be sure to post their coloring on the refrigerator or bulletin board for ongoing reinforcement.
- **Sad/Happy Experiment.** Have child close eyes and remember something sad and feel it. Point out for child to notice where it is felt in the body and how the body is breathing, what the thoughts are like. Then tell child to think of something happy. FEEL it. Notice thoughts, how the body changes breathing pattern and where it is felt in the body. Tell child to open eyes and then discuss the experience. You can join in and share your experience, too.

COMPLETE THE LEARNING CYCLE

- **Toy Usage.** Find a toy that comes apart – a doll or robot that can have its head unscrewed, arms taken off, etc. Ask child to compare it to body outlines and decide which way looks like the toy and the body outline works in the right way – being split up or having all its parts together in one unit where everything is connected. Share how important it is to remember the mind/body/emotional feelings all work together.

- **Puppet Friends.** Have one puppet talk to your child about how he's lost his 'thinking' cap and his 'feeling' shirt so he can't think or feel anymore. Jest with your child through the puppet and try to get your child to talk with the puppet about the mind and feelings being connected to the body, not located in a cap or shirt.
- **Simon Says.** Play a game similar to Simon Says only change it to My Mind Says and point out how the body does what the mind says to do. For example, "My mind says 'body jump up and down two times.'" My mind says, "body, feel angry with a tense face."
- **Process Verbally.** Share examples with your child about things you notice with your mind, body emotions AS they are happening. For example, "I keep having the thought with my mind to sit down and rest. And just look at my body! It is just dragging along and I FEEL tired. My mind got the message from my body that it is tired and I am going to listen to it and sit down right now."



- **Play Dough Feelings.** Instruct child(ren) to think a mad thought, feel it, notice where it is in the body, and let the mad feelings come out into the play dough. Talk about it. Next, breathe deeply together and think a calm thought, feel it in the body, notice how breathing changes from having mad thoughts, then let the calm feelings come out into the play dough. Compare how each art form feels and looks differently. This technique can also be used to release upset/stressed feelings in everyday situations and be used as a catalyst for discussion.



Children who are taught to know themselves develop a higher consciousness that lets them know good choices from bad choices, self-healing from self-harming, and knowing how to help themselves be happy and healthy. These are the resources that we cannot afford to waste on our planet. Children can help heal our world with these skills and awareness.

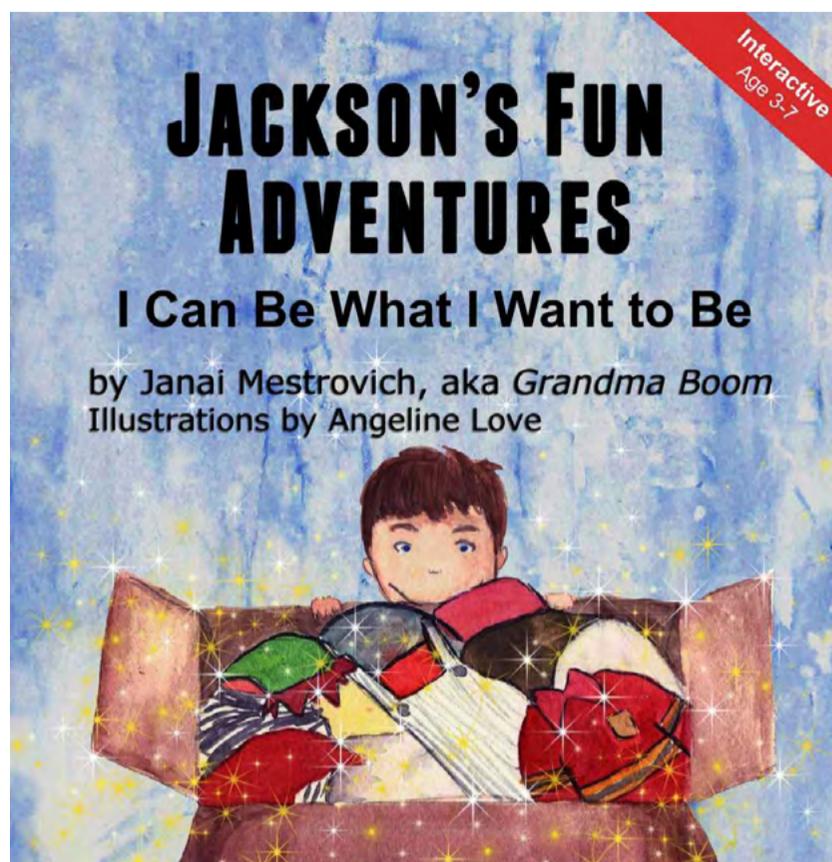
"Your work saved our child from being a trouble maker and filtered into our family to create a life that gave us more enrichment and healthy relationships than we ever could have had without the skills you gave us. Thank you for helping us to save ourselves." Teacher/parent

JACKSON'S FUN ADVENTURES

By Janai Mestrovich

This book gives children a glimpse into what it is like to use their imaginations to discover who they are and explore how they feel. The magic box with costumes is a delightful treasure chest that seems to have a life of its own. A boy finds himself inside a new costume every day, which leads him through many ways of exploring what it is like to be in different roles. In the end, he realizes that he can be whatever he wants to be in life. This book could be particularly useful in building self-esteem. It is easy to see why author, Janai Mestrovich, is so well-known for her happy and innovative approach to teaching children about themselves.

■ Reviewed by **Miriam Knight**



BEEING CALM Coloring Story Book

By Janai Mestrovich Illustrated by Rachel Moore

This combination of storybook and coloring book draws children into the adventures of a hyperactive little bee called Buzzbee, who keeps hitting his head on flowers. His sister knows he needs to learn how to be calm if he wants to keep from getting hurt and be able to have friends. As an interactive story, children are drawn into the experiences that help them feel the difference between being a tense bee and a calm bee. Self-calming proves to be entertaining and empowering. Art exercises for further reinforcement are provided at the end of the story. This book would be a helpful tool for parents and teachers to offer kids some good interactive tips. This coloring book provides a way for children to understand the concept of self-calming at their own level that is both fun and empowering.

■ Reviewed by **Miriam Knight**

