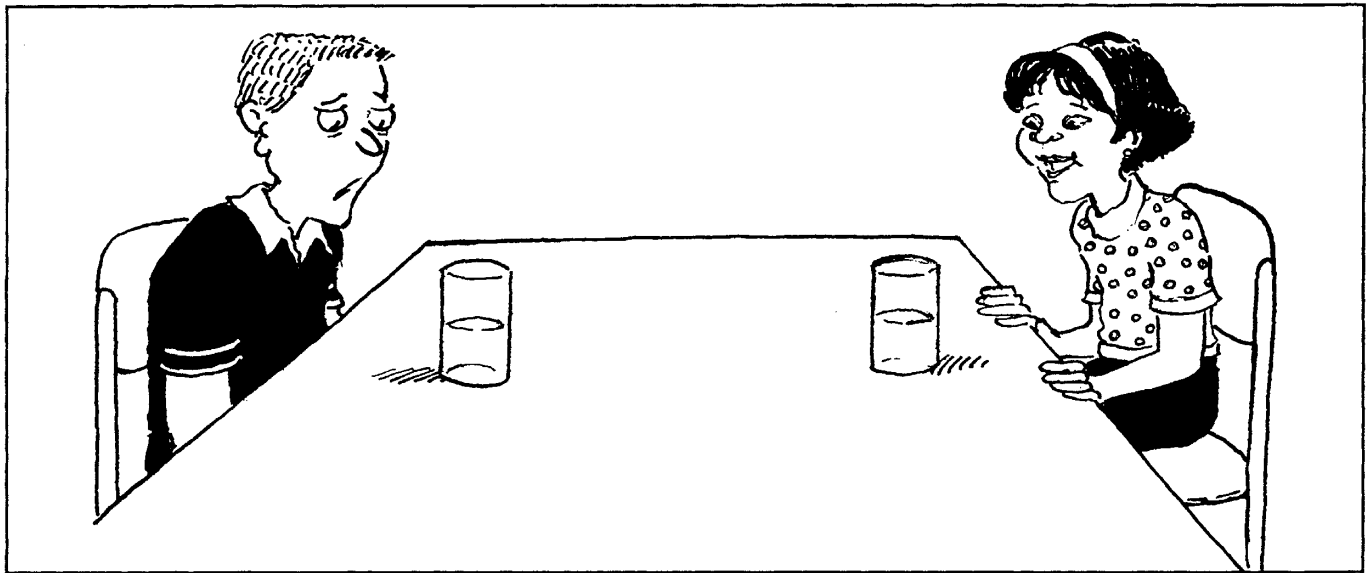


# COPING SKILL 2:

## ADJUST YOUR ATTITUDE

**C**oping Skill #1 involved working with your feelings. Coping Skill #2 involves working with your brain. Our brains are what we use to think, and the way that we think affects the way we feel.

There is an old story that grown-ups like to tell about two people and a glass of water. This story helps us to understand how what we think affects what we feel. The story goes something like this:



*One day two friends went for a walk. It was a hot day, the sun was shining, and the friends walked for quite a while. When they were almost home, they were feeling very thirsty. They were looking forward to having something to drink.*

*When they got home, they found that all there was to drink was a half glass of water for each of them. When the first friend saw her half glass of water, a big smile appeared on her face, and she said, "Oh, good! My glass of water is half full!" When the second friend saw his half glass of water, he frowned and said, "Oh, no! My glass of water is half empty!"*

# ADJUST YOUR ATTITUDE

**Objective:** To give children a chance to actively think about the connection between thoughts and feelings.

Both friends had exactly the same amount of water—a half glass. But one friend was happy, and one friend was sad. Do you know why they felt different? Write your answer here:

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The friends felt differently about the amount of water because they were thinking about it in different ways. What might the happy friend have been thinking? Write your answer here:

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What might the sad friend have been thinking? Write your answer here:

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Sometimes it may seem that we don't have any control over our feelings; they seem to just "come over us." Or, we may think that someone or something can make us feel one way or another. We say things like, "That story made me cry," or "He makes me so mad."

# ADJUST YOUR ATTITUDE

But when we understand the story of the glass of water, we realize that no situation or person can make us feel anything. Our feelings do not come from outside of us. They come from inside of us, and they are directly determined by what we think. That means that if we change the way we think, our feelings will change, too.

**Objective:** To give children practice in changing negative thoughts to positive thoughts.

Think about the glass of water. How could the sad friend change his thinking in order to change his feelings about how much water he had? What could he say to himself? Write your answer below:

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Now you can see that our feelings come from our thoughts. The sad friend could take care of himself and make himself feel better by changing what he was thinking. He could use his brain to help himself feel happy instead of sad.

Adjusting your attitude and deciding the best way to think about something is a coping skill. It is a way of taking care of yourself when you have a problem. It is a way of taking care of yourself on the inside.

On the next pages, you will find a number of stories about kids who need to adjust their attitudes and think in the way that will help them the most. You can help each child by: 1) Identifying what they are probably thinking; and 2) Suggesting different ways they can think about their situation.

After you finish these stories, you will be asked to think about your own experiences with adjusting your attitude. As you answer the questions, you can use what you know about adjusting your attitude to help yourself.

# ADJUST YOUR ATTITUDE

**Objective:** To give children hands-on practice in learning how feelings are affected by thoughts, and how changing our attitude can help us to feel better; and a chance to apply that knowledge to their own lives.

**S**hannon and Janelle spent the afternoon at the beach with their friends. They had a great time swimming, playing softball, and enjoying a barbeque. When their dad came to pick them up, they didn't want to leave. They asked if they could stay longer, but their dad said no; this was the time they had agreed to leave. Shannon and Janelle were mad and complained to their father the whole way home.

**Help Shannon and Janelle by:**

1) Identifying what they are probably thinking: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) Suggesting a different way they might think about the situation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**D**an looked forward to his birthday all month. His dad took him and five of his friends roller blading at the indoor rink. Afterwards they went out for pizza and then to the video arcade. Dan had a great time, until he opened his gifts. His friends had each given him a present, but none of them were what he really wanted. He had been hoping for tickets to the pro-hockey play-offs, but he didn't get them. Dan was really disappointed, and ignored his friends for the rest of the day.

**Help Dan by:**

1) Identifying what he is probably thinking: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) Suggesting a different way he might think about the situation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# ADJUST YOUR ATTITUDE

**E**lizabeth was excited to go to her last dance class. The dance instructor was going to assign parts for the annual end-of-the-year show. Elizabeth was sure she would be chosen for the lead in “Sleeping Beauty.” After all, she had been taking lessons longer than any of the other girls. But when the instructor read off the assignments, Elizabeth was shocked to hear that Marianne had been chosen for the lead. Elizabeth would have to play a supporting part. She couldn’t understand how the instructor could have done this to her. If she couldn’t play Sleeping Beauty, she didn’t want to be in the show at all.

## Help Elizabeth by:

1) Identifying what she is probably thinking: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) Suggesting a different way for her to think about the situation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**N**atalie had always gotten good grades. But then her mother went back to work full time. That meant her mom got home later, was a little crabber, and the family never ate dinner until 8 o’clock. Natalie hated coming home to an empty house after school, so she began hanging out at the park with her friends until dinner. When report cards came out, all of Natalie’s grades had dropped. They were the lowest she had ever gotten. Natalie told her mother that it wasn’t her fault, because the teachers never explained the assignments right, and sometimes they didn’t even tell her when things were due.

## Help Natalie by:

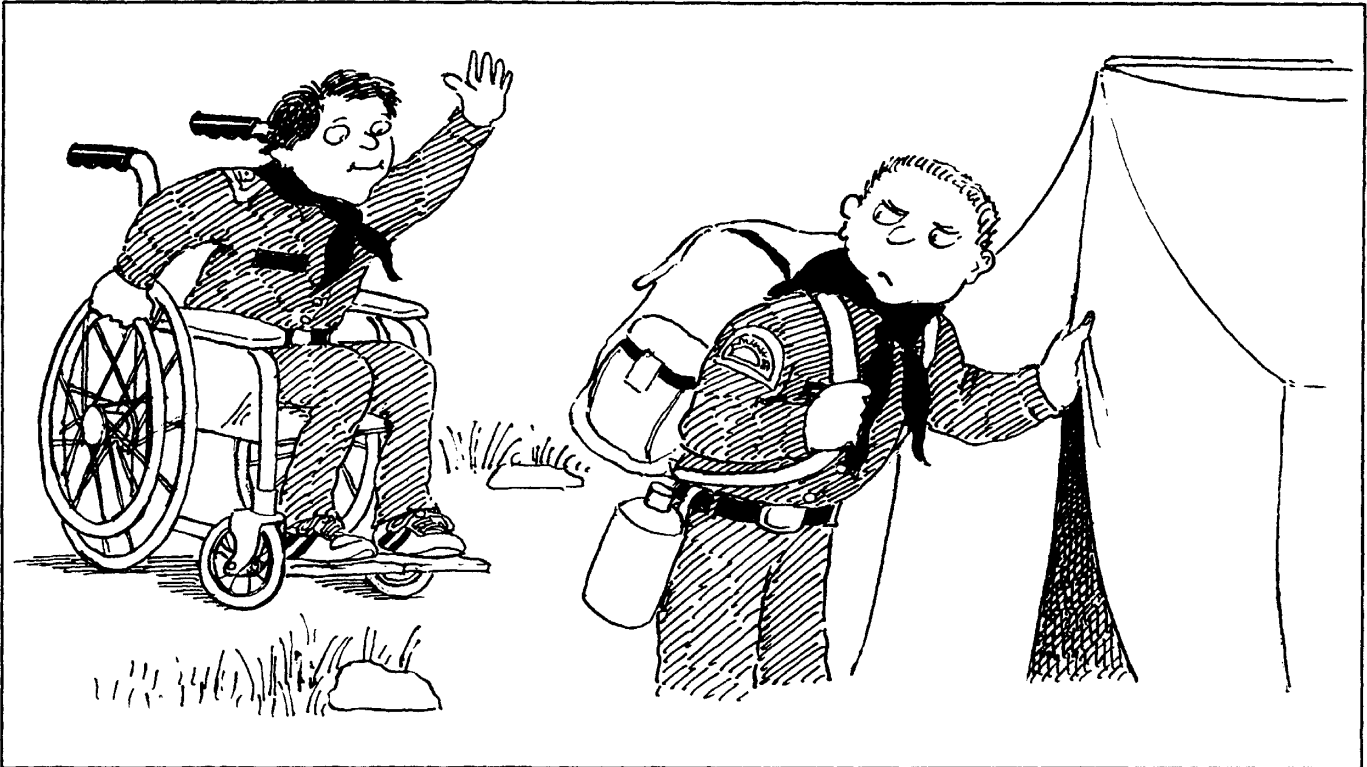
1) Identifying what she is probably thinking: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) Suggesting a different way of thinking about the situation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ADJUST YOUR ATTITUDE



**L**ogan arrived at Boy Scout camp along with about 30 boys from other troops. Since none of his friends had signed up to go to camp this year, Logan figured he would make some new friends. He hoped his tent partner would like to swim as much as he did. He wanted to win the team relay again this year. When Logan's counselor introduced him to his tent partner, Steve, Logan didn't know what to say. Steve was in a wheelchair. Logan felt very uncomfortable and very let down.

### Help Logan by:

1) Identifying what he is probably thinking: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) Suggesting a different way of thinking about the situation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# ADJUST YOUR ATTITUDE

**D**uring spring vacation, some of Jeff's friends were going on a special school trip to the state capital. The students and teachers would stay in a hotel, tour the city, and also have free time to themselves. Jeff really wanted to go on the trip, but his parents were taking him to visit his grandfather who lived on a farm. Jeff told his mom he wanted to spend his vacation with his friends, not a bunch of farm animals.

## Help Jeff by:

1) Identifying what he is probably thinking: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) Suggesting a different way for him to think about the situation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**J**onathan was excited when he woke up on the first day of summer vacation. No more school! He was ready for fun. He and his friends planned to spend the day riding the bike trail near their houses. He grabbed a piece of toast and started out the front door, when he heard his dad call him back. His dad said that he couldn't go out until he had mowed the lawn. Jonathan was furious. The lawn would take him at least an hour! He wanted to leave now.

## Help Jonathan by:

1) Identifying what he is probably thinking: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) Suggesting a different way for him to think about the situation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# ADJUST YOUR ATTITUDE

**L**exie didn't know anyone in her new neighborhood. Her mom had encouraged her to go outside and meet some kids, but the first time she'd walked up to a group of girls, she heard them all laughing. She turned around and went right back home. She hadn't tried again. She just watched from her window while the other kids played outside. Lexie was lonely and wanted to make friends, but it didn't seem like anyone wanted to be friends with her.

## Help Lexie by:

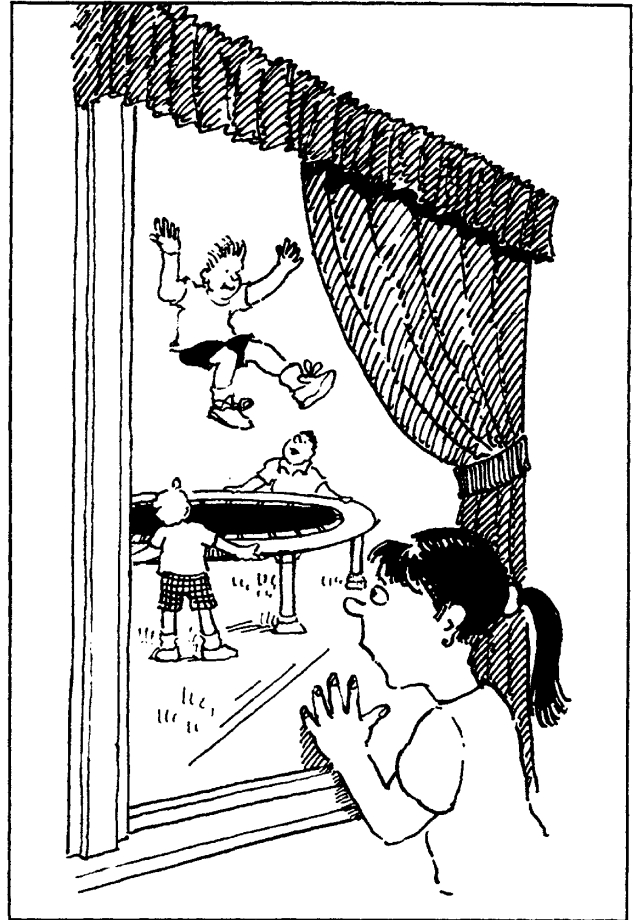
1) Identifying what she is probably thinking:

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2) Suggesting a different way for her to think about the situation: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Write about something that happened to you recently where you could have adjusted your attitude to make things better:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# ADJUST YOUR ATTITUDE

Help yourself by:

1) Identifying what you were thinking: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) Suggesting a different way you could have thought about the situation:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Now, write about something that might happen to you in the future where adjusting your attitude could help you out:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Help yourself ahead of time by:

1) Identifying what you might think when this happens: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) Suggesting a different way for you to think about the situation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**CONGRATULATIONS!** You have learned about how to adjust your attitude, and you have shown that you know how to use this Coping Skill. This is a way of taking care of yourself on the inside.

**WAY TO GO!**

