

BIG DEAL!

Boguś Janiszewski



zaczytani.org



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DEAL!

This publication was created as part of an educational programme run by the Zaczytani.org Foundation and Prologis company.

Together, we support the UN's Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 4:



'Big Deal!' is a fairy tale for children aged 7–9, designed to help them learn how to build relationships with their peers and identify their emotions. The aim of the publication is to show children that they do not always have to do everything on their own – even the most difficult tasks become easier when we work together.

In addition to the fairy tale itself, the publication also contains substantive content for parents and teachers which facilitates work with the text and suggests practical ways to talk to children about how to move from isolation to cooperation.

The book which we are delighted to present to you was created in collaboration with:

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Download free audiobook
of the 'Big Deal!' fairy tale.

BIG DEAL!

We hear more and more often that children spend too much time in front of screens and don't get enough exercise. But when I talk to teachers and psychologists, one word keeps coming up – **loneliness**. In classrooms full of pupils, it is becoming increasingly difficult to truly be together. Children feel lonely not because they have no one around them, but because no one hears them.

This fairy tale was born out of such silence, out of the need to remind us that 'together' does not mean 'next to each other' but 'with each other'.

It is a story about a world where everyone wants to do something well on their own. But one day it turns out that even in a gift warehouse, nothing can be wrapped without someone's help.

It is a story about courage, listening and asking for help. About the fact that cooperation is not a duty, but a relationship. In a world where we really listen to each other, even the biggest gift is easier to wrap.

It is with great joy that we present this story to you. May it remind you that together we can always achieve more.

Agnieszka Machnicka
President of Zaczytani.org Foundation

Dear Readers,

Imagine a winter evening. Lights twinkle outside the window, laughter fills the house, and the smell of gingerbread wafts through the air. It is at moments like these that we feel most strongly that the magic of Holiday Season lies in being together.

That is why at Prologis we have decided to give you something more than just a gift – a story entitled ‘Big Deal!’. It is a fairy tale of cooperation that reminds us that loneliness disappears when kindness and joint action appear.

We know how powerful cooperation can be. Thanks to it, just 107 people in our team manage as many as 5 million square meters of warehouses in Central Europe. As in logistics, so in life – only together can we achieve truly great things.

This book was created in cooperation with the Zaczytani.org Foundation with which we have collaborated on many initiatives. Today, we are giving this publication to you in the hope that you will pass it on – to your loved ones, friends, your children’s schools, and social media.

Let this fairy tale be our shared Christmas gift – full of goodness, warmth and faith that together we can do anything.

With best wishes for a warm and joyful Holiday Season,
Prologis team

Far, far away from here, almost as far as you can go – beyond seven snowdrifts and one very stubborn windstorm – lies an elf town. Smoke that smells of gingerbread rises from the chimneys, the aurora twinkles and winks like lights on a Holiday tree, and the snow crunches like a crusty bun.

The elf town, whose name is a closely guarded secret, is beautiful at any time of year. But it becomes the most beautiful and magical when the Holiday Season approaches. For us humans, the Holiday Season is a time of joy and hope, and also... waiting for presents. Meanwhile, for the elves, it's a period of hard work. So hard that sometimes their hats slip over their eyes from exhaustion.

After all, they have to order millions of toys and other gifts, receive them in warehouses, count the wheels, buttons, screws, and ribbons, sort them: teddy bears with teddy bears, blocks with blocks, games with games, books with books – and then they have to wrap them so that each gift looks picture-perfect. And they have to get it all done before The Boss arrives.

‘Ho, ho, ho, ho! Have my elves prepared the gifts yet?’

Disappointed children? No way. Carts speed, ribbons fly, and letters with wishes arrive faster than snowflakes. So please, do not write them at the last minute, because it causes the elves



a lot of trouble. In this pre-Holiday Season chaos and frenzy, everything has to run like clockwork. Because let's face it: who would want to receive a Holiday present... after the Holiday? That is why when something isn't on time, The Boss frowns and starts to grumble under his breath, 'Ho, ho, ho, ho! What a story!'

Mistakes? Oh no, no mistakes! Never! Although... once, a long time ago (elves don't like being reminded of this), a serious blunder happened. A certain Annie, a sports enthusiast with an allergy to animal hair, got... a puppy. And a certain Chris, instead of his dreamed-of pet, found roller skates under the Holiday tree, and in the wrong size, too. Do you understand what happened? Elf Ambrose later explained that it was all because of a cold. Apparently, his nose was so runny that the orders got stuck together. Yeah, right! 'Oh dear!' the elves exclaimed, apologised, fixed everything, and promised that there would never be any more mistakes. Never! Although, just between you and me, if someone sneezes three times in the warehouse again, who knows what will end up under the Holiday tree?

However, strict rules have been in place since then. Simple and effective:

- There are two stamps on each address.
- Each parcel is checked by two pairs of eyes ('Are you sure this is for this person?').
- The colour of the ribbon must match the category of the gift (green for games, red for soft toys and teddy bears, gold for books).
- And finally, the parcel number is read aloud and the inspector writes: 'Checked!'.

When it comes to checking and controlling, the elf girl Tonya Tape-Measure is the best. No detail escapes her. That's how elves work: carefully, together, and with heart. Thanks to this, every gift goes where it should. Exactly where it should.



But when the time comes to collect the parcels, the elves sometimes lose their temper. And then, even in the most harmonious and best-coordinated team, things can get a little tense. Well, when there's a lot of work to do, even among elves, there can be minor tensions, petty arguments, squabbles, and sometimes even, um, more serious scandals.

'Where's the super-strong tape? Anyone? Anything?'

'I can give you some. But in exchange for scissors!'

'Who used up all the heart-patterned paper?! Hey, come on, that's too much!'

'Then take the checked paper. Check is also a Holiday pattern.'

'Checked is what your underwear can be. Give it back!'

'No, I won't!'

When the sleigh with presents disappears over the horizon and the bells fall silent, the elves can finally breathe a sigh of relief. They make themselves some tea with orange, sit down by the fireplace, reach for their cards, and play their beloved rummy.

If anyone thinks they only work in December and then laze around, they should come take a look here in the spring. This is the time for tidying up the warehouses, reviewing ribbons, testing boxes, and planning deliveries. The elves spend long months preparing for the grand finale. The Holiday Season is like a shining star on top of the Holiday tree. That's when everything shines brightest.

*

'Wow, it's huge!' Katy Pacifier tilted her head back and looked up at the giant.

'Well... Yeah. It's a real monster...' Tonya Tape-Measure, Katy's friend, opened her mouth in surprise. 'What is it anyway?'

'What do you mean? A teddy bear!' explained Olaf Wisenheimer in a tone so indifferent, as if a giant teddy bear was the most normal thing in the world.

But it wasn't. Because it was a GIANT TEDDY BEAR. With a belly so big that even two elves holding hands couldn't wrap their arms around and embrace it. Its paws were like logs, and its head was so huge that it almost reached the ceiling. Its nose shone like a large light bulb, and its eyes – two glass lakes – seemed to look at everyone with a silent question, 'So what are you going to do now?'.

'By reindeer's foot!' muttered Toffee Toddle, examining the soft toy from all sides. 'It looks like a wardrobe wrapped in fur. Someone has really gone overboard here.'

'Nah,' said Remy Sparkle, who seemed unfazed by anything, grimacing. 'It's just a toy. Every child has the right to dream.'

'Sure,' agreed Toffee. 'But even dreams have to be reasonable. This is the work of trolls or gremlins.' He shuddered at the mention of trolls.

'But this is a special dream,' explained Tonya. 'Anyway, see for yourselves.'

With that, she reached for a large, thick binder with letters from children. She found the right tab.

'Letter number one...' she began solemnly. 'I would very much like a teddy bear. The biggest teddy bear in the world...' '



‘Sent three years ago,’ Toffee peered over Tonya’s shoulder. ‘Interesting.’

‘Letter number five,’ the elf girl continued, pointing to each word with her fingertip.

‘Last year I asked for a huge teddy bear, but I didn’t get one. I still dream about it.’ ‘Letter number nine: “I’ve been waiting for my teddy bear for two years now. Will the teddy bear be big enough for me to hide inside it?”

‘Letter number fourteen...’ Tonya’s voice trembled slightly. ‘I don’t want anything else. Just a teddy bear. The biggest, biggest one in the world...’

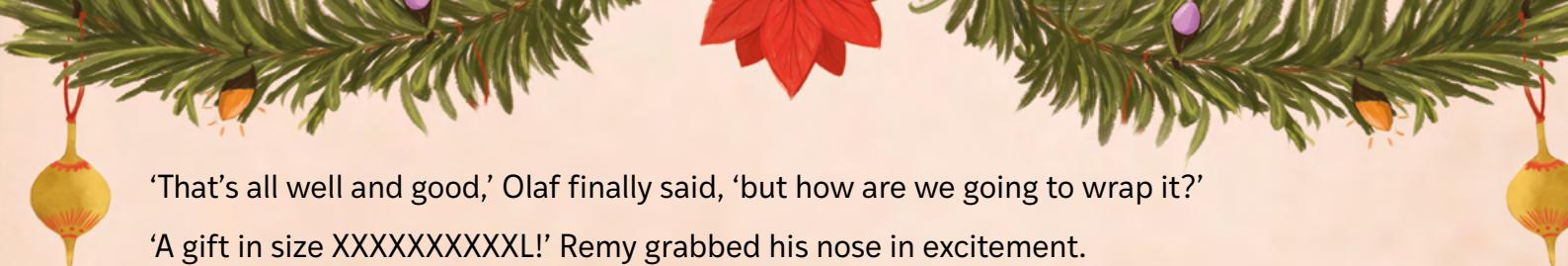
The elf girl closed the binder and looked at the rest.

‘Stubborn kid,’ Olaf muttered.

‘Why stubborn?’ Tonya snapped. ‘I was moved.’

Silence fell. Everyone looked at the giant teddy bear, which seemed to be smiling. And then the elves felt the power of that dream. Because if any child in the world misses something very, very much, they are ready to do anything, even stand on their heads, to make that dream come true.





‘That’s all well and good,’ Olaf finally said, ‘but how are we going to wrap it?’

‘A gift in size XXXXXXXXXXXX!’ Remy grabbed his nose in excitement.

The elves looked at the teddy bear inquisitively. And the teddy bear looked at the elves inquisitively. At least, that’s how it seemed to them.

‘Paper and lots of ribbon?’ Katy suggested uncertainly.

‘Lots of ribbon?’ repeated Tonya and rolled her eyes. ‘About two kilometres, I’d say!’

‘What about bubble wrap?’ wondered Remy aloud. ‘Yes!’ he jumped up. ‘Bubble wrap is good for everything!’

Without waiting for the others to respond, he ran to the warehouse. A moment later, he returned carrying a huge roll of bubble wrap. It was so big that he tripped over his own feet and fell straight onto it. The roll rolled away, wrapping him up tightly like a crêpe.

‘Help me...’ he groaned from inside it.

‘Remy, we’re supposed to pack the teddy bear, not you,’ Tonya burst out laughing.

‘How about a cardboard box?’ suggested Toffee, ignoring Crêpe a’la Remy.

‘A cardboard box?!’ snorted Remy, sticking his head out of the roll. ‘Probably the one someone used to pack an elephant in!’

And he started fooling around:

‘Excuse me, does anyone have an unwanted elephant box? No? No one? What a pity! How about a whale box? Just make sure it’s not wet!’

But the elves weren’t in the mood to goof around. Time was running out, and they still didn’t know how to wrap this enormous present.

‘Okay, I have an idea,’ Olaf said suddenly.

‘Great!’ Tonya rejoiced. ‘How can we help?’

‘Preferably not at all,’ Olaf cut her off. ‘I’d rather do it myself.’

‘Yourself?’ Katy was surprised. ‘Why yourself? After all, it’s better to do things together.’

‘Maybe it is, but not this time.’ Olaf pointed at Remy, who was trying to stop being a crêpe.

‘You’ll just make a mess. The Boss is coming in the morning. I don’t want to take any chances.’

‘But Olaf...’ Katy began.

‘What’s the issue with wrapping a present?’ Olaf shrugged. ‘Big deal!’

The elves looked at each other, offended and a little embarrassed. After this, none of them said anything. And then they all left. Olaf was left alone with the teddy bear, confident that he was the only one who could handle the task.

*

For a long time, the door was locked tight. The sulky elves circled nearby, pretending not to be interested. But in reality, their curiosity was piqued. Every now and then, one of them would stop at the door. When you put your ear to it, you could hear strange noises: shuffle-shuffle, creak-creak, rhythmic banging, and even sh-sh-sh or something like sawing. From time to

time, there was a dull thump-thump, as if someone were hammering a nail into... well, into what? The elves exchanged glances, growing more and more nervous.

'What's he up to?' muttered Tonya, twirling the tape measure she never parted with.

'Probably building himself a hut,' replied Remy sarcastically. 'Since he's so selfish.'

Finally, the door creaked and slowly opened. Olaf stood in the doorway, his hands in work gloves, sweaty but with a victorious expression on his face.

'Come in,' he said and gestured towards the interior.

The elves rushed inside and froze in amazement. The teddy bear was not there. Or rather... it was, but hidden. In the middle of the warehouse stood a huge box wrapped in shiny paper with pink hearts.

'A wooden chest?' Toffee was surprised, tapping it carefully. 'Not bad work.'

'I would have thought of that too, if it weren't for the foil,' Remy snorted jealously.

Olaf just smiled to himself, as if to say, 'Well, who was right?'.

Intrigued, Tonya approached the structure and took out her famous tape measure. She pulled it out and hooked it onto the top of the chest. Then she slid the metal strip down to the floor. She looked at the tape measure and muttered something to herself. Then she went over to the exit door, measured something again, and muttered. The elves kept their eyes on her.

'Great job,' Tonya praised with a strange smile on her face. 'But how are you going to get that package through the door? Because, to my eye, it's at least twelve centimetres too big.' She pointed to the tape measure.

Everyone looked at Olaf. The elf's face fell, but only for a moment. After a moment, he adjusted his gloves and announced casually,









'Huh, big deal! I'll sprinkle it with magic glitter. The package will shrink, and then I'll put it outside the door. And after an elfish quarter hour, the teddy bear will return to its normal size. Problem solved.'

Olaf smiled, clearly pleased with himself, then trotted over to the storeroom where all the materials and tools were kept.

'Magic glitter... Has anyone seen magic glitter?' The elf rummaged through the shelves in search of a glitter box.

'Olaf...' Toffee said quietly.

'I've got it!' The delighted elf held a small, beautifully carved box in his hand. He gently opened it, looked inside, and his eyes widened.

The box was empty!

'By the Boss's beard! Someone stole the magic glitter!' Olaf shouted, glaring at his friends.

'Olaf...' Toffee repeated. 'That glitter has been gone for a hundred and twenty years.'

'We don't work like that anymore, remember?' Tonya chimed in. 'Now we do things normally. Work plan, list, logistics...' she counted on her fingers.

'And cooperation,' added Katy.

Olaf looked like a light bulb that had been switched off.

'All right...' said Remy, looking at the huge package. 'Let's find a solution quickly. Maybe a smaller teddy bear?'

'No,' protested Tonya. 'The child wanted exactly this one. The teddy bear must be delivered.'

'How about unpacking it, taking it outside, and then repacking it?' suggested Remy.

'Unrealistic,' Toffee shook his head. 'We won't make it in time.'

'Holiday Season can't be postponed,' added Remy.

'See?!" Olaf exploded. 'You're saying it can't be done. Everything is on my shoulders! You're just getting in the way!'

The situation became very unpleasant. The atmosphere became so thick that you could cut it with scissors like a ribbon. Because elves can endure a lot, but they really dislike injustice.

After a while, they all went about their business. Olaf was left alone – with a package bigger than the door and a ticking clock counting down the time until dawn. And dawn meant one thing: the arrival of The Boss.

*

Olaf sat at the kitchen table and stared at his mug of hot tea, as if hoping to find the solution in it. He sighed heavily and stirred with his spoon so hard that he looked as if he wanted to make a hole through it.

'I had to do it myself...' he muttered under his breath. 'No one understands me... And in the morning there'll be a scandal of the century!'

He took a big sip and grimaced terribly.

'Yuck! Ugh!' He spat into the sink and snorted. 'What kind of poison is this?!"

It turned out that instead of sugar, he had put a teaspoon of salt in his cup. The tea tasted like soup.

‘Who’s groaning and panting like that?’ someone suddenly asked behind him.

Gustav the Mindful stood in the doorway – an old elf with a grey beard, wearing a white shirt and waistcoat that no one else had worn for a hundred years. Gustav was retired, but when the Holiday Season rush began, he always visited the town. He would drop in as if by chance, as if just for a cup of tea...

‘Huh...’ Olaf sighed. He was getting more and more depressed. ‘I wanted to do something important. But everything is falling apart. Like this salt in my tea.’

And he told the old elf the whole story. About the big teddy bear, about the boy waiting for him, about the idea for a big wooden chest. And about the fact that the huge box wouldn’t fit through the door. He just didn’t mention that he had done everything himself.

The old elf came closer. He poured himself a cup of tea, sweetened it (with real, proper sugar), sat down at the kitchen table and looked at Olaf from above the rising steam.

‘You see... sometimes the parcel grows very quickly. And then good intentions are not enough.’

Olaf stared gloomily ahead.

‘You mean I did everything wrong?’

‘Not wrong, but maybe too much on your own.’ Gustav took a sip of tea and added, ‘Listen to the old elf. Once, I wanted to prove that I could do it. I wrapped thirty presents. Each one was beautiful, shiny, fragrant. Except... I put the same card in all of them. With the words: “For Zoe”’

‘Thirty Zoes?!’ Olaf jumped up in his chair. ‘What a disaster!’

‘Exactly.’ Gustav snorted. ‘Zoe would have been happy, but what about the other children? It would have been a disaster! I would never have been able to fix it myself, even if I stood on my head. The team saved me. They repackaged, rewrote, and redid everything. The Boss didn’t suspect a thing.’

The old elf looked straight at Olaf and tapped his finger on the table.

‘You did a great thing too. Maybe even too great. But you lost something more important than glitter and paper.’

‘What was that?’ Olaf turned pale.

‘Your team,’ replied Gustav. ‘And without a team... Well, dear Olaf, even a reindeer can’t pull a sleigh on its own.’

*

The elves sat with gloomy faces in front of the warehouse, huddled against the wall like offended sparrows. They were looking up at the sky. Stars were falling as if someone



were sprinkling semolina from heaven. The night was exceptionally beautiful – a sure sign that The Boss would soon arrive for the presents. Almost everything was ready. The parcels were stacked in piles, and the ribbons glistened in the light of the aurora. Only one was missing.

Olaf appeared in the doorway. He raised his head, cleared his throat, and began in his usual style, 'Well, well... Why are you sitting there like gnomes at a birthday party?' He wanted to be funny, but it didn't quite work out.

The elves looked at him sideways. They were still sulky and angry. Olaf looked at his friends again and tried a different approach,

'I know, I messed up. I'm sorry. And... and... please help me. Because I can't do it on my own.'

The elves didn't even blink. That's just how they are – once they take offence, it's hard for them to let it go. But after a moment, Katy spoke up:

'Come on, stop sulking. This is our shared task. We've always managed together. And we'll manage now, too.' She smiled as only she could. 'Let's go.'

The elves slowly got up and followed Katy to the warehouse. There, they stared at the huge package as if it were an unsolvable puzzle.

Suddenly, Remy, who was playing with the lid of an empty glitter box, jumped up.

'Hey, I've got it!' he shouted. 'If we can't make the parcel smaller, let's make the door bigger!'

'What?!" Tonya gasped in surprise.

'Just lift the warehouse!'

'How?' asked Katy.

'Well...' Remy ran out of ideas. 'That's all I can think of for now.'

'Sure,' said Toffee. 'We'll take long poles. I'll shout "heave-ho!", you'll lift the warehouse a little, and put a peg under it. Then "heave-ho!" again and another peg. If we need more hands, we'll ask our mates from the other warehouse.'



The elves looked at each other in disbelief. Only after a moment did they realise that it really could work. All the tension evaporated from them like steam from a kettle. They all hugged each other warmly and high-fived each other. Olaf jumped so high with joy that he caught his hat on the chandelier. The hat stayed up, Olaf fell, and everyone burst out laughing. No problem, the hat could be retrieved later. It was time to get to work.

*

Dawn was slowly spreading across the sky. The bells of the sleigh could be heard in the distance. The elves stood panting, their cheeks red, but happy.

‘Did you see The Boss’s face when he saw that package?’ Remy burst out laughing. ‘He almost fell off the sleigh!’

‘But I feel sorry for the reindeer,’ added Toffee, shaking his head.

‘They’ll manage,’ said Katy.

‘The most important thing is that the kid will finally get his teddy bear,’ added Tonya.

A moment later, everyone sat down at the table. Olaf poured tea into cups, and someone else shuffled the cards. The smell of oranges filled the air, and the fire crackled in the fireplace...

Suddenly, there was a knock at the door.

‘Urgent message!’ cried the courier wrapped in a red scarf, placing an envelope on the table.

Tonya, who was sitting closest, picked up the letter and sat up straight, as she always did when she was about to do something important. She opened it, took out the note, and began to read,

‘ “Ho, ho, ho, ho!” ’

‘It’s from the Boss,’ Katy guessed excitedly.

The elves pricked up their ears.

‘ “My dear elves! You have done a wonderful job. Therefore, I have decided to open the Department of Special, Difficult, and More Difficult Gifts. And you will take care of it. Happy Holidays!” ’

‘Your favourite Boss.’ ’

The friends looked at each other with slight concern.

‘Boss? Department? He must be joking,’ said Remy with a sour expression.

But Olaf just shrugged, adjusted his cap, and muttered with a smile,

‘Difficult and more difficult cases? With a team like ours? Big deal! Shall we finally play this rummy game? Who’s dealing?’







FAIRY TALE THERAPY - IT WORKS!

We often wonder what can help our children live a good life and how to give them the best start. However, not everyone realises that they have simple yet very effective tools at their disposal. We are talking about reading aloud to children and discussing the hardships faced by their favourite characters. For most children, this is the best way to build a close bond and, at the same time, educate them through fun and play.

FAIRY TALE THERAPY

Fairy tale therapy is an effective method of supporting child development through a three-step process that includes reading, discussion and educational play. Reading together builds bonds and understanding, satisfies emotional needs, supports the child's mental development and strengthens their self-esteem, and most importantly, helps them solve problems. Reading is where we begin the fairy tale therapy process which we invite children to participate in. In the hands of a parent or guardian, fairy tales are an excellent educational tool, because thanks to well-conducted activities, enriched with structured conversation and play, we can work with children to develop the right attitudes and skills to respond to the challenges of the modern world. During fairy tale therapy, even the youngest children can learn to identify and name their own emotions, adopt new patterns of thinking, develop their imagination and prepare themselves to take on new challenges.

WHAT FAIRY TALES DO WE USE IN FAIRY TALE THERAPY?

In fairy tale therapy, we use three types of fairy tales which differ in terms of the topics they cover, their purpose and their structure. The first two types – **psychotherapeutic** and **psychoeducational** fairy tales – are used for similar purposes, but the former usually deal with topics that require greater sensitivity and specialist knowledge. Both types are primarily designed to support the cognitive and emotional development of the child. They reduce anxiety levels, help to work through sadness or anger, boost self-confidence, and respond to the needs for acceptance, love, belonging and security. They show patterns of behaviour, and their plots clearly emphasise desirable attitudes and ways of acting – thanks to the mechanism of imitation, children can identify with the characters in the stories and adopt their behaviour patterns.

Psychotherapeutic and psychoeducational fairy tales have a specific structure, and their essential elements are: the main character, the problem, background of the story, supporting characters, and a happy ending (finding a solution to the problem). It is important that one fairy tale addresses one problem (challenge) that the child faces or may face. This is where significant differences between psychoeducational and psychotherapeutic fairy tales arise. The former may address topics such as tidying up toys in one's room, sorting rubbish, saving water, but also caution in dealing with strangers or responding to bullying among peers. Psychotherapeutic fairy tales, on the other hand, often touch on issues related to potentially traumatic experiences for a child, such as cancer, the death of a loved one or war.

The third group of therapeutic fairy tales are **relaxation fairy tales**. Their purpose is to induce a feeling of relaxation in the child, reduce tension, calm them down or soothe them. They can be used after an emotionally charged day or a difficult, stressful situation. Relaxation stories or fairy tales encourage visualisation and appeal to the child's imagination. They usually take less than 10 minutes to read and can be read during the day or in the evening before bedtime. It is important in fairy tales of this kind to emphasise auditory impressions (e.g. the sound of waves), visual impressions (e.g. rays of sunlight falling on the face) and sensory impressions (e.g. soft, damp grass under bare feet).



WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF FAIRY TALE THERAPY?

① EDUCATION

Showing children effective ways to solve problems and cope with difficult situations. Through fairy tale therapy, we teach children about themselves and the world, showing them new ways of thinking that inspire them to cope with challenges.

② SKILL TRAINING

The content of therapeutic fairy tales encourages children to take action and activate new abilities – both in the emotional sphere and in broadly understood social competences.

③ BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

This refers not only to the relationship between the child and the fairy tale therapist, but also to the relationship with oneself – acceptance, strengthening self-esteem and building faith in one's own agency and talents.

④ THERAPY

Support for a child experiencing intense anxiety, fear or sadness allows them to tame these emotions, express them and find a way to look at a difficult situation and seek a solution that is right for the child.



WHAT PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISMS ARE TRIGGERED BY FAIRY TALE THERAPY?

① IMITATION

The strongest process occurring during fairy tale therapy. By imitating the main character, the child adopts their patterns of behaviour, communication and way of thinking. The task of the parent or guardian is to point out those mechanisms of action and attitudes that will promote the child's development and support their socialisation.

② DESENSITISATION

Taming difficult emotions or situations through the story described in the fairy tale. By remaining in a safe space with a loved one, the child has the opportunity to look at the situation causing anxiety in a slightly different way thanks to the fairy tale. Repeating the story multiple times reduces the emotional impact of the stressful stimulus.

③ RATIONALISATION

Showing the child the factors that cause anxiety through the content of the fairy tale in order to help them understand the situation or state they are in. In addition, the child has the opportunity to see that they are not alone with their fears, and that the characters in the fairy tale also face various emotions, such as fear or sadness.

④ SPECIFICATION

The content of fairy tales provides children with information on how to name the emotions or emotional states they face. They allow for better insight into oneself and provide tools to describe what is happening. They enrich the child's emotional language and develop the ability to name situations in which the child may find themselves.

⑤ DEVELOPING EMPATHY

Getting to know the characters in fairy tales and experiencing their adventures with them is intended to encourage children to empathise with their emotions. There is also a mechanism of decentration at work here which is intended to encourage the development of the ability to imagine objects or situations from the point of view of the person accompanying us in conversation or sitting opposite us.

THE FAIRY TALE THERAPY PROCESS

STAGE I – READING

We begin the fairy tale therapy process by reading together. While reading, it is worth paying attention to:

- voice modulation;
- eye contact with the child – preferably brief, without staring at the child or completely avoiding eye contact and focusing only on the book;
- the tone of voice and pace of speech;
- showing the child the illustrations in the fairy tale;
- a relaxed position while reading, so that the child can also relax and focus on the content of the fairy tale.

STAGE II – DISCUSSION

Moving on to the second stage – discussion – we invite the child to answer a few questions about the content they have just heard.

We start with simple questions about the main character, their friends or the place where the story takes place. These are usually closed questions that require short answers – sometimes just ‘yes’ or ‘no’. For example, ‘Did the main character have a best friend?’, ‘Where did the story take place?’, ‘What was the main character’s name?’.

Next, we move on to questions related to the characters’ experiences, their feelings or ideas that came to them while trying to face the challenge presented in the story. For example, ‘What adventures did the main characters have? How did they cope with them?’, ‘How did the main character feel when she/he met new friends?’, ‘How would you feel in this situation? What would you do?’.

Searching for answers to these questions helps children develop the ability to use and organise the information they have received, and encourages them to be creative and express their opinions. Questions about the characters’ states or emotions help develop the language of emotions and create space for exploring the child’s emotional sphere.

STAGE III – EXERCISE

The third and final stage of fairy tale therapy is an exercise in which the fairy tale therapist invites the child to participate, but it is the child who largely decides what the game will look like. The fairy tale therapist provides a scenario for the exercise based on the story being read, and then – in accordance with the principles of fairy tale therapy – follows

the child, their needs, ideas and pace, smoothly weaving into the game content that the child is to remember and assimilate. The child can play alone or invite the fairy tale therapist to join in. The exercise supports the development of creativity in the child, allowing them to consolidate and use the information they have acquired. It is also a stage during which we strengthen the bond with the child built during the discussion of the fairy tale, showing them trust by supporting them in training new skills and allowing them to make independent decisions.



FAIRY TALE THERAPY - QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

HOW TO PREPARE FOR FAIRY TALE THERAPY?

Before starting fairy tale therapy, always familiarise yourself with the content of the fairy tale you want to read. This is to check it for examples it provides or patterns of behaviour consistent with what we actually want to convey to the child.

Check your energy level and emotional state which the child will unconsciously pick up on. If the fairy tale therapist is tense or sad, it will be difficult for them to support the child in their emotional states or in finding ways to reduce anxiety.

Prepare some sample questions that you can ask when discussing the story – you may not use them, as completely different questions may arise during the reading, but knowing that you are prepared will increase your sense of security and effectiveness in the fairy tale therapy process.

Prepare the tools you plan to use during the exercise – this will give you more time to play together instead of wasting it looking for the necessary props.

WHO CAN CONDUCT FAIRY TALE THERAPY?

In order to learn about the entire process and effectively use its educational functions, it is worth participating in a training dedicated to fairy tale therapy. It will allow you to learn about all the mechanisms and tools that support the entire educational process, while giving a future fairy tale therapist a sense of substantive security. This option is recommended for people who want to actively use fairy tale therapy in their daily work or childcare as a way of supporting children's development.

WHO IS FAIRY TALE THERAPY INTENDED FOR?

Fairy tale therapy is a form of education and development that belongs to a broader category known as bibliotherapy. It is intended primarily for children aged 3–10, but it is so versatile that it can also be used with slightly older children groups. In relation to

young people over the age of 15, we can talk about a bibliotherapy process in which we use slightly different texts, and the process itself follows a different pattern.

Fairy tale therapy can be conducted both individually (fairy tale therapist and one child) and in groups. The latter is used in schools, care and educational institutions, libraries and daycare centres. The difference between conducting individual and group fairy tale therapy lies primarily in the need to master the principles of working with a group and the ability to devote attention to a larger number of people at the same time.



INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY SCRIPT

OBJECTIVES:

1. Learning to recognise and name emotions – both own and those of other people – so that children can better understand themselves and their surroundings.
2. Showing that asking for help and cooperating are signs of courage, not weakness.
3. Learning to talk about emotions and needs in a way that builds bonds rather than leading to competition or hurt feelings.
4. Showing how to rebuild relationships after conflict (differences and mistakes do not end friendships, but allow us to experience them more deeply).
5. Strengthening the sense of belonging and security through the experience that together we can do more than alone.
6. Equipping parents with tools to talk about loneliness, comparisons and the power of cooperation in their child's everyday life.

Age: 7–10 years old

Duration: 45–60 minutes

Materials: sheet of paper, crayons/felt-tip pens

COURSE OF THE ACTIVITY

① Greeting the child

Greet the child and ask them what emotions they are feeling as they come to the class. You can ask supporting questions, e.g. ‘If your emotions were the weather, what kind of weather would it be?’, ‘Do you feel like a little bear or a giant bear today?’.

② Invitation to the exercise

Ask the child to draw their XXL dream – something very big or important that they would like to achieve.

③ Introduction to the topic

Talk about what is difficult when trying to do something big on your own. Who could help make such a dream come true? Is it easier to work alone or with someone else? Why?

④ Reading the fairy tale

Read the fairy tale aloud. Remember to check the child’s attention level after each scene. You can start asking closed questions about this part of the text, using the suggestions from the next point in the script.

⑤ Discussing the fairy tale

Ask a few closed and open-ended questions about the fairy tale. You can use the sample questions or come up with your own.



Sample closed questions:

- Who worked in the warehouse packing presents?
- Who did the elves work for?
- Who asked for the biggest teddy bear in the world?
- How many years did the child write letters about this?
- What was the name of the elf who was best at checking parcels?
- What did the elves have to do with the teddy bear before The Boss arrived?
- What rule was introduced to avoid mistakes?



Sample open-ended questions:

- What did the elves think when they found out they had to wrap a special gift at the last minute?
- What did Olaf think about the suggestion to wrap the gift with the help of other elves?
- How did Tonya feel when she pointed out to Olaf that the gift he had wrapped would not fit through the door?
- How did Olaf feel when he was left alone with a problem he couldn't solve?
- How do you think Gustav felt when he prepared dozens of presents for Zoe?
- How did the elves feel when Olaf wanted to do everything himself?
- How did the elves react to Olaf's apology?
- How did Olaf feel when the elves agreed to help him?
- How did the elves feel when The Boss appreciated their creative work?



Good to know!

- During individual fairy tale therapy, pay attention to whether the number of questions and the pace at which they are asked are not overwhelming for the child and do not cause a 'blackboard questioning' effect.
- Wait patiently for an answer – try not to create a situation where you ask a question and answer it yourself. In such cases, asking questions is pointless, as it sends a message to the child that you do not trust them and do not believe in their ability to find the answer on their own.
- If your child delays answering, ask them what they need to find the answer. Perhaps they will want you to read the passage from the fairy tale you are asking about again.

6 Exercise: 'Map of helpers'

Ask the child to draw people who can help them achieve their dream on a piece of paper: friends, family, teachers. Have them assign one good trait to each person that will make cooperation easier. Talk about how, thanks to the diversity of character traits, everyone can contribute something valuable to a joint effort.

⑦ Conclusion – a conversation about cooperation

Encourage your child to complete the sentences: ‘Today I’ve understood that cooperation is...’, ‘When someone helps me, I feel...’, ‘When I help someone, I can see that...’.



GROUP ACTIVITY SCRIPT

OBJECTIVES:

1. Develop empathy and the ability to recognise and name emotions so that children can understand themselves and others in everyday situations and peer relationships.
2. Raising awareness that asking for help and cooperation are not signs of weakness, but of maturity and courage; showing that together we can achieve more than alone.
3. Strengthening communication skills based on respect, inspired by Marshall B. Rosenberg's *Nonviolent Communication*.
4. Teaching constructive conflict resolution and how to rebuild relationships after a dispute – showing that differences and mistakes do not have to end friendships.
5. Supporting a sense of agency, belonging and security in the group – building a sense of 'WE' that counteracts loneliness and isolation.
6. Modelling a partnership-based adult-child relationship in accordance with Jesper Juul's philosophy: the adult as a guide who cooperates rather than controls.
7. Equipping teachers with tools to talk to children about loneliness and cooperation – so that school and home become places for building bonds rather than comparisons.

AGE: children 7–10 years old

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: unlimited

DURATION: 45–60 minutes

MATERIALS: several rolls of gift wrapping paper, adhesive tape, blunt scissors, ribbons, sheets of paper, pen

COURSE OF THE ACTIVITY

① Greeting the children

Greet the group and ask the children what emotions they are feeling as they come to class. Check their energy levels. If they have trouble answering, you can ask supporting questions, such as: 'Who feels like they have the strength of ten reindeer today?', 'Who would like to curl up under a blanket and take a nap?', 'Who has the energy for Holiday Season cleaning today?', 'Who would rather drink hot chocolate and play board games?'. Suggest that children who agree with a given statement raise their hands.

② Class contract

The teacher establishes rules for good cooperation with the children.

a) I listen until the end.

This means that when someone is speaking, I give them time to finish. I do not interrupt, finish their sentences for them, or laugh while they are speaking. Listening until the end is a way of showing respect and trust. This ensures that everyone in the group feels that their voice counts.

b) I say 'I': 'I feel..., I need...'.

Speaking in the first person helps us understand our emotions and needs, and helps others hear us without feeling guilty. Instead of 'You upset me,' say, 'I feel angry when someone interrupts me because I need peace and quiet to concentrate.' This will lead to conversation instead of argument, and understanding instead of embarrassment.

c) I ask – I do not demand.

A request is not an order. A request gives the other person a choice, and that is why it builds cooperation. We do not always have to agree, but we can talk.

③ Invitation to the exercise

Prepare a large soft toy, a roll of wrapping paper, scissors and adhesive tape. Ask if any of the children can wrap the teddy bear on their own so that it looks nice. Let one or two volunteers try. Instead of a soft toy, you can suggest wrapping a school chair or another large object in the room.

Note! We designate a bench as the cutting area for working with scissors. Only one person at a time can work there.

④ Introduction to the topic

Ask the children: 'How do you feel?', 'What do you need to make this work?', 'Was it easy to wrap such a gift on your own?'. Talk about what is needed to wrap such a large gift. Is it easier to do it on your own or with someone else?

⑤ Reading the fairy tale

Read the fairy tale aloud. Remember to check the children's attention level after each scene. You can ask closed questions about this part of the text, using the suggestions from the next point in the script.

⑥ Discussing the fairy tale

Ask a few closed and open-ended questions about the fairy tale. You can use the sample questions or come up with your own.



Sample closed questions:

- Where did the elves work?
- How much time did the elves have to wrap the special gift?
- What was the special gift?
- How long did the child wait for the teddy bear?
- Who came up with the idea of wrapping the teddy bear?
- Did the other elves want to help Olaf?
- Who was in charge of checking the parcels?
- How do the elves spend their time after sending the gifts?



Sample open-ended questions:

- What did the elves think when they found out they had to pack an XXXL gift?
- How did Tonya feel when she heard how long the child had been waiting for the big teddy bear?
- How did the elves feel when Olaf refused to work with them?
- How did Tonya react when she realised that the present Olaf had wrapped would not fit through the door? How did Olaf feel then?
- How did Olaf feel when he realised that his behaviour would prevent the special present from being delivered?

- How might Olaf have felt when he finally asked for help?
- How did the elves react when they managed to put the large parcel outside the warehouse?
- What does the statement ‘And without a team... Well, dear Olaf, even a reindeer can’t pull a sleigh on its own’ mean?
- What need might Olaf have been driven by when he didn’t want to cooperate with the other elves? (e.g. he wanted to feel important, noticed, appreciated)
- What need did Tonya have when she offered to help Olaf instead of getting angry with him? (e.g. the need for peace, relationships, cooperation, the common good)
- What needs did the elves satisfy when they managed to wrap the present together? (e.g. a sense of community, joy, meaning, being needed)

Note! It is worth mentioning that we all behave like Olaf sometimes – when we want someone to notice us or when we need peace and quiet and do something on our own. This is normal. Cooperation begins when we are able to talk about it.



GOOD TO KNOW!

- When discussing fairy tales, create space for each child to speak so that they have a chance to answer the question asked.
- If several children want to answer the same question, determine the order of responses. If there is one simple answer, ask the group who volunteered first and decide together who will answer. This way, you show the children that you trust them and invite them to make decisions, giving them the opportunity to co-create the situation.
- If a situation arises where one of the children is less interested in the fairy tale and tries to distract the others, stop. Ask in a supportive way what the child needs to focus, what you can do for them. Point out that you really want them to participate in the activity because they are just as important as all the other children in the group and it will be very valuable for you to hear their opinion after reading the fairy tale.
- Encourage them to look for answers and support them by reminding them of the fairy tale’s content. Do not force them to answer. Fairy tale therapy is a process that aims to open children up to acquiring new skills and expanding their self-awareness and knowledge through education, rather than making them feel guilty for not knowing or being able to do something.

⑥ Exercise: 'Wrapping a giant teddy bear'

Divide the children into groups of several people and inform them that they will be wrapping giant presents together. Think together about what roles are needed for such a task (e.g. someone to cut the adhesive tape, someone to hold the paper, someone to wrap, someone to stick the tape). Ask the children to divide these roles among themselves in their groups. Then give them wrapping paper, scissors and adhesive tape. Ask each group to choose a piece of furniture in the classroom to try to wrap. During the task, it is a good idea to pause and ask: 'Is anyone not being heard? Who needs support?'. When a conflict arises in the group, we introduce a corrective path. We ask questions: 'What happened?' → 'How did you feel/what did you need?' → 'What are your wishes for the future?'

Joint evaluation (scale of 1–5)

Ask the following questions: 'Did I feel that I was being listened to?', 'Was I able to ask for help?', 'Were we able to restore our relationship when things got difficult?'.

Optional: You can turn the exercise into a timed competition – which group can wrap a large gift faster and more carefully. Remember to then evaluate together which gift was wrapped most carefully, preferably by voting. You can assign the withdrawn children the role of 'time keepers'.

Note! Remember to designate a cutting area where children with scissors will work. Also, make sure that each group has its own roll of paper – this will prevent them from running around the room with scissors.



WHEN ELVES STOP LISTENING –

a fairy tale of cooperation
that cures loneliness

 Agnieszka Machnicka

Contemporary children grow up surrounded by paradoxes. In a world full of people, it is increasingly difficult to truly be together, talk, support each other and act together. Bonds are replaced by comparisons, cooperation is replaced by competition, and conflicts are often followed by silence and withdrawal. Several phenomena contribute to this silent crisis in relationships.

Growing loneliness and isolation among children

More and more children are unable to build peer relationships. They often react by withdrawing or becoming defensive, and sometimes try to dominate. Research (by UNICEF, Empowering Children Foundation, Unaweza, OECD 2023) shows that the number of children declaring that they have no friends is growing, and loneliness and feelings of rejection appear as early as 8–10 years of age. Disrupted peer relationships – hate, verbal abuse, exclusion – have become one of the main sources of mental suffering in schools.

During break time, the school corridor is noisy. Groups of children sit against the walls, laughing and exchanging videos. Ann is standing at the end of the hall. Leaning against the radiator, phone in hand, she pretends to be looking at something. Every now and then she glances at the girls from her class. She would like to go over to them, but she doesn't know what to say. The day before, when she tried, she heard, 'We're talking about something else right now, okay?'. There was no malice in it; rather, it was haste. But that was enough for Ann to back off. Today, she doesn't want to try anymore. She is ten years old.

In her student records, she is described as 'well-behaved', 'calm' and 'self-reliant'. At home, she is seen as a 'problem-free' child. But inside, she feels invisible.

This is what modern childhood loneliness looks like – in the hustle and bustle of crowded classrooms, where it is increasingly difficult to really hear each other.

Growing individualism and competition in childhood culture

This loneliness is also fuelled by a culture of constant comparison in which results are often more important than relationships. Children increasingly function in a world of rankings and individual assessments. This weakens their ability to empathise, cooperate and care for one another.

In maths class, the teacher says, 'Great job, Oliver! Another 100%. See how you can prepare if you want to!'. Oliver smiles uncertainly. His classmate turns his notebook away so that no one can see the result. After the bell rings, Oliver hears, 'You probably know everything again, genius.' It sounds like a joke, but it hurts. At home, his mother says, 'We are proud of you. Just don't give up, son.' And Oliver doesn't give up. But more and more often, he has a stomach ache before school.

In class, children learn comparisons faster than fractions. Instead of 'Let's do it together,' they hear 'Someone was better,' and instead of 'Let's try again,' they hear 'Look how others can do it.' Competition can be motivating, as long as it is accompanied by reflection on shared responsibility, the ability to cheer each other on, share strategies and enjoy the joint effort.

Difficulties in communication and conflict resolution

Children increasingly respond to difficulties with avoidance, aggression or withdrawal. They have no experience of constructive cooperation and do not know that it is possible to disagree and still be together.

It's fourth grade on the playground: Sandy's team versus Jack's team. It started with a foul and ended with shouting: 'I'm not playing with you, you cheater!'. The ball was left behind and the children dispersed. The next day, everyone plays separately. The teacher tries to joke, 'What, the teams have broken up?'. The children shrug their shoulders. No one has shown them that it is possible to make up after an argument. You can say, 'I behaved badly,' 'Let's try again.' Parents say: 'Don't worry, play with someone else.' Then children learn that after a conflict it is better to disappear than to talk. And then they grow up believing that bonds are fragile and that a relationship ends after the first mistake.

Poor mental resilience and lack of peer support

Children are often left alone with their emotions and problems. They are unable to ask for help or contribute to finding solutions.

During a weekly class meeting, the teacher asks each child to draw something that gives them peace. Most draw a sports field, a room, a dog. Lissie draws a broken heart and a storm. The teacher approaches her and asks quietly, 'Are these your emotions?'.

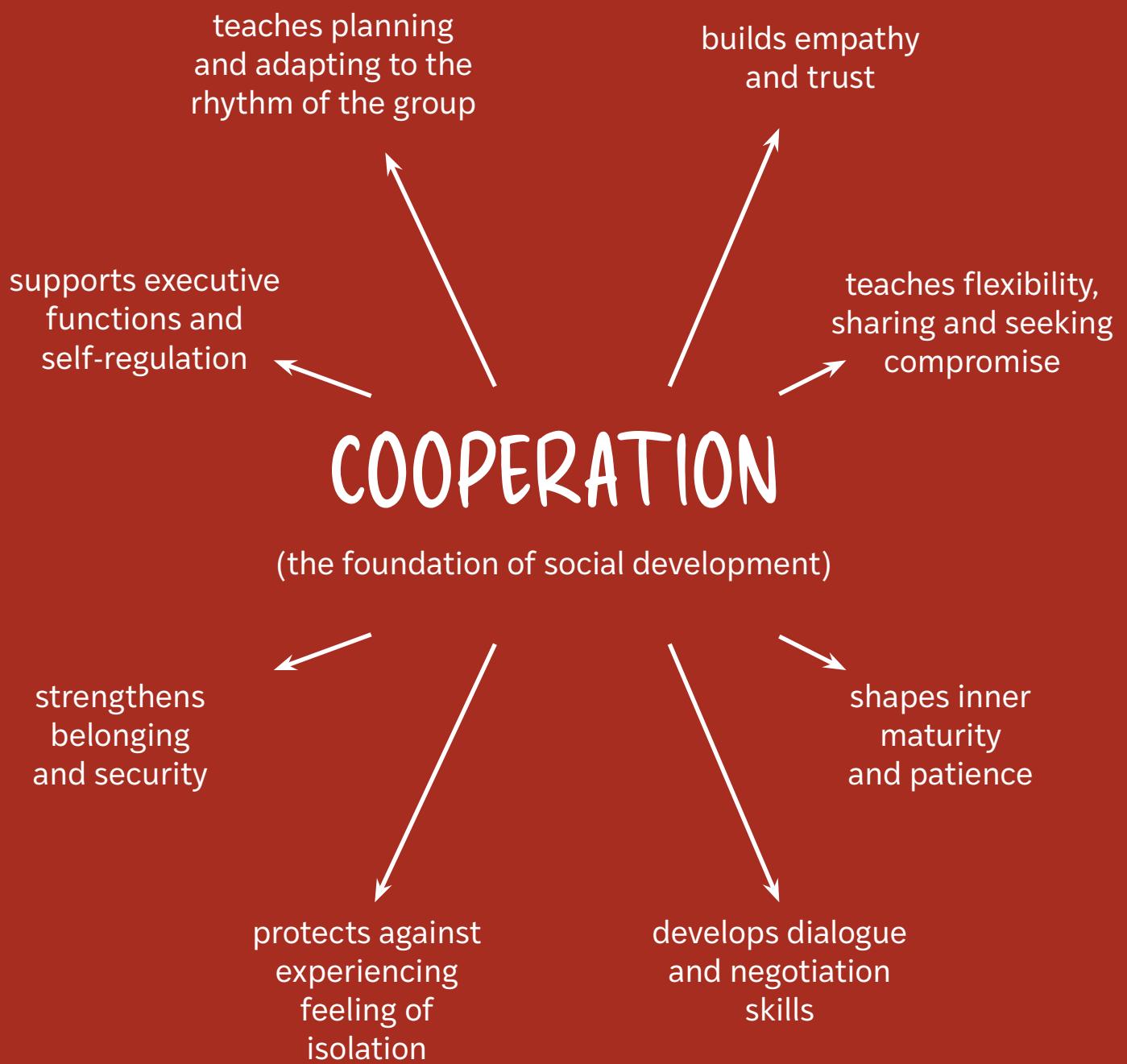
The girl nods and says nothing. She has been sitting alone for a week. She doesn't play with her friends, she stands by the window during breaks. The girls used to be a close-knit group – they laughed, recorded videos, and walked home together. But then they argued over something trivial. They created a new chat group. Without Lissie. At home, his mother says, 'Don't worry, you'll find other friends.' Lissie doesn't want others. She just wants someone to ask her why she didn't come out to the playground. No one at school asked. No one said, 'Hey, come with us.' And that's when what adults often miss began – a quiet withdrawal. Not rebellion, not anger, just a slow disappearance.

Such isolated scenes have one thing in common: a lack of shared experience, coexistence, togetherness. And this is where cooperation comes in – not as a school project, but as an everyday practice of relationships.

Cooperation – the answer to a complex problem

The answer to the modern crisis in relationships – loneliness, rivalry and the inability to be together – is cooperation. **Not as a school group assignment, but as a way of life in which 'I' meets 'you' and from this meeting 'we' is born.**

Cooperation is more than just a division of responsibilities. **It is the ability to act together despite differences, while maintaining respect for oneself and others. It is an integrated action of emotions, communication, empathy and thinking – a competence that**



allows a child not only to function in relationships, but also to create them.

A child who is able to cooperate knows how to say, 'Help me' before feeling helpless, 'Let's try something else' instead of 'I don't want to,' 'Let's do it together' instead of 'I'll do it myself.' They do not retreat into solitude, but reach out for connection. Cooperation not only teaches children how to be together; it protects them from isolation, feelings of inferiority and the belief that they have to cope on their own. It builds emotional resilience, a sense of belonging and social security. It restores meaning to the community and gives hope that school can also be a place where we learn humanity.

Cooperation – one of the most important lessons of childhood

Cooperation teaches not only how to be with others, but also how to be yourself among others.

HOW TO TEACH COOPERATION

Cooperation does not begin with the command, 'Work together,' but with a relationship – with an adult who sees, hears and respects the child. These three words encapsulate Jesper Juul's entire philosophy.

Jesper Juul – cooperation stems from relationships

Juul emphasised that the goal of parenting and upbringing was not to force

cooperation, but to create conditions for it to be voluntary. Children do not learn it from instructions, but from the experience of cooperating with adults.

Good cooperation between adults and children means:

- clear and calm boundaries set by adults,
- recognition of children's emotions and needs,
- dialogue instead of control,
- joint search for solutions instead of forcing behaviour.

It is a partnership, but not a symmetrical one – the adult bears responsibility, while the child has a say.

How to do it in practice

- authentic communication ('I can see that this is difficult for you' instead of 'Do it immediately'),
- respect for the child's autonomy,
- modelling cooperation in adult relationships,
- enabling the child to have influence and make real decisions,
- understanding that a child's refusal may be an expression of self-care rather than disobedience.

According to Juul, cooperation is not the goal of parenting, but its natural result – it occurs when the child experiences respect, boundaries and authenticity.

'We cannot teach children to cooperate if we do not cooperate with them on a daily basis.'

HOW TO TEACH COOPERATION ON A DAILY BASIS

Tips for parents

1. Be influential, set boundaries.

Let the children decide on minor issues ('Would you rather tidy up the kitchen or your room?'). Children who feel they have influence are more willing to cooperate and learn responsibility.

2. Listen before you judge.

Instead of 'You're not listening again!', say, 'What's going on? What do you need right now?'. Taking the time to stop and show curiosity about your child's emotions builds trust.

3. Show cooperation by example.

Children learn by observation. When they see you asking for help, saying thank you and listening, they will do the same.

4. Use 'I' language.

Talk about your emotions: 'I get worried when I hear shouting because I need peace and quiet.' Children learn that it is possible to talk about emotions without blaming others.

5. Create shared rituals.

Cooking, board games, cleaning – everyday shared activities teach children that together means better.

Tips for teachers

1. Create an atmosphere of safety and trust.

Instead of 'Calm down!', say, 'I can see that you're finding it difficult to concentrate. What do you need?'. Children cooperate when they feel safe, not when they are being judged.

2. Introduce cooperation into everyday decisions.

Not only in projects, but also in small things: setting rules together, voting on the topic of work, choosing class pairs.

3. Replace competition with shared responsibility.

After games or competitions, ask: 'What have we learned as a group?'. This helps to see the value of working together, not just the result.

4. Be an example of cooperation.

Say: 'Let's do it together,' 'I'll try something different too.' Admit your mistakes. Thank your students for their help. Authenticity breeds cooperation.

Cooperation is not a school skill, but a life skill for the 21st century. Children who are able to cooperate are better at relationships, resolving conflicts and building bonds based on trust in adulthood. Learning to cooperate is learning humanity – a process in which a child discovers that they lose nothing by sharing themselves.

On the contrary, they gain more meaning, strength and joy.



In the town of elves, work is in full swing from dawn to dusk – after all, someone has to prepare presents for all the children in the world!

But when it comes to wrapping the biggest teddy bear the elves have ever seen, no one knows what to do. Olaf is sure he can handle it himself.

What could go wrong? It turns out that... almost everything. And when magic fails, you have to find another way – one that only works when you can trust others and ask them for help.

The educational fairy tale 'Big Deal!' is a warm, humorous story about cooperation, responsibility and the power of teamwork. Accompanying the elves in their Christmas adventures, children learn that even the biggest challenges can be overcome when we work together, and that saying: 'I can do it myself' is not always a sign of courage.



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