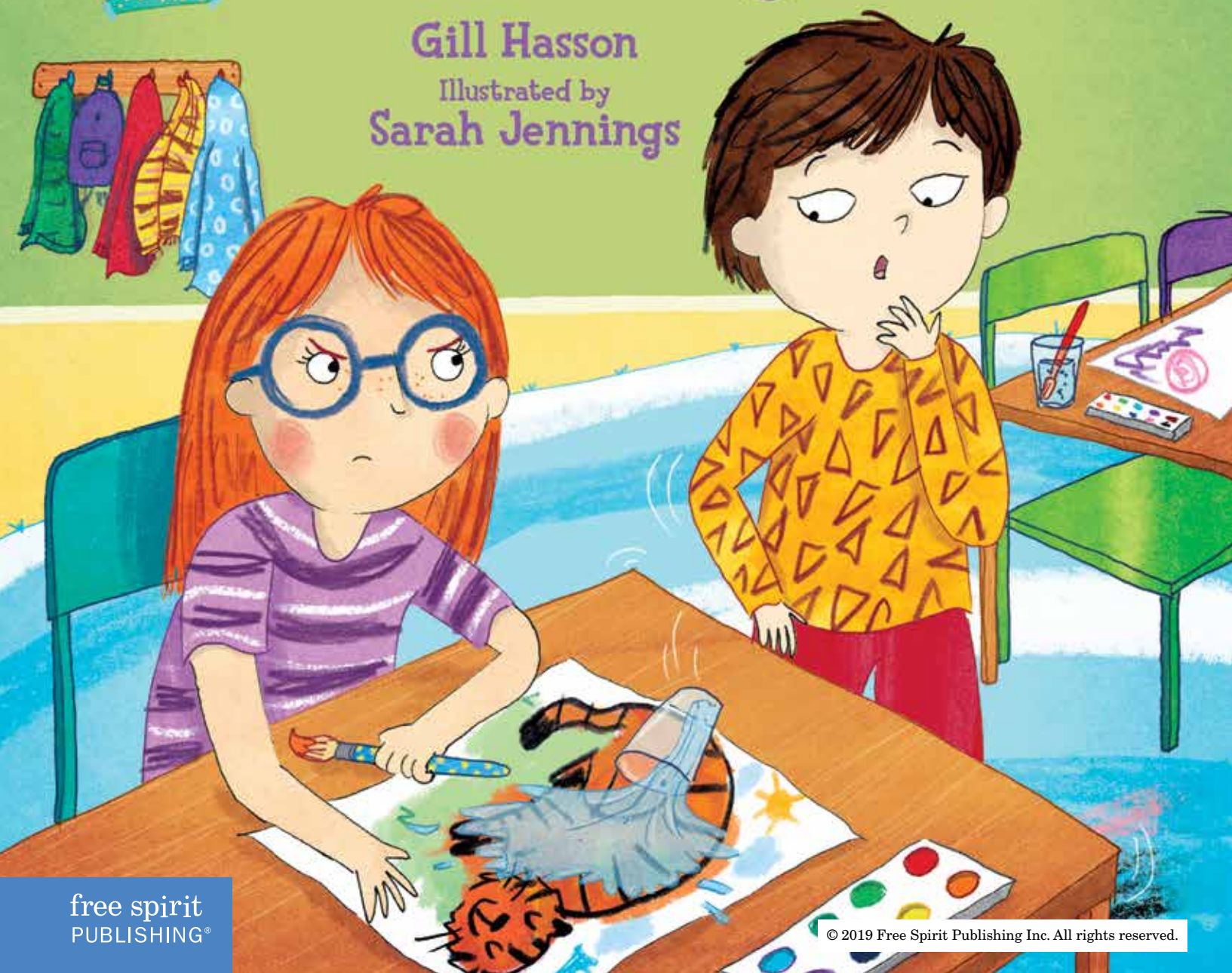


KIDS CAN COPE

Take Charge of Anger

Gill Hasson

Illustrated by
Sarah Jennings



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What is anger?

Anger happens when life isn't how you want it to be. When things go badly or don't seem fair. Or when you get blamed for something you didn't do.

Maybe you get angry when you don't get what you want or when people don't keep their promises.

When you're scared or hurt, you might get angry. You might feel angry if you lose or break something. Or you may get mad when you don't understand an idea or can't make something work.

Any of these things can lead to angry thoughts and feelings.

Sometimes your anger might start slowly and get bigger and stronger. You get more and more wound up. Other times, something happens and you feel very angry right away.

Either way, before you know it, your anger can get so big that you lose control. Then you may say or do something that makes everything worse.



Is anger bad?

Being angry isn't wrong or bad. Everyone feels angry sometimes. But anger can be a problem when it makes things worse. You might break or damage something, or get into trouble. It is also a problem if your anger hurts or scares you or other people, or if you feel angry a lot of the time.



It is important to learn to deal with your anger so you feel more in control. When you take charge of your feelings, anger can even be useful. It can help you change something that's not right or isn't fair.

I'm angry that you're being so mean. STOP IT!



Take charge of anger

Now you know that you can do things to take charge of your anger and feel calmer and happier. Here are some reminders:

- Look for your anger warning signs.
- Help yourself think more clearly. You can press the pause button and count, breathe deeply, sing a song, or find something quiet to do.
- Use up your angry energy in a safe way, such as by squeezing a pillow.
- Talk to someone you trust about how you feel.
- Solve the problem if you can, either on your own or with someone else's help.
- Make a plan to help you take charge of your anger.
- If you can't change what you're angry about, or you decide it's not a big deal after all, let it go.

If your anger feels too big to handle, ask a grown-up for help. If you don't feel you can ask anyone you know, you can call **1-800-448-3000**, text **CONNECT** to **741741**, or go to **yourlifeyourvoice.org** to talk with a counselor. This person will listen to you and give you help and advice about what to do if you're angry about something.



Activities

These drawing and writing activities can help you think about how to manage your anger. You could keep your pictures and writing with this book so that you have your own ideas about how to cope when you're feeling angry.

- Look in the mirror and make an angry face. Draw a picture of it.
- Think of a time when you were angry. Did someone say or do something to trigger your angry feelings? How did you feel? What did you say? What did you do? Draw a picture or write a story about what happened.
- What do you think your anger warning signs are? Draw a picture of what happens in your body when you're angry.
- Write a list of things you like doing that can help move your mind away from angry thoughts and make room for more helpful thoughts.
- Rosa is angry because her mom blamed her for getting chocolate on the sofa. Rosa knows it was really her brother Ben who made the mess. What do you think Rosa could do about it?
- Rafi doesn't understand his math homework. He's getting angry and upset. What ideas do you have for Rafi?
- Write out a plan to deal with something you get angry about. Draw some pictures of yourself in each part of your plan.
- Which of these problems would you try to solve? Which of them would you decide to let go because you can't change them or because they're not a big deal after all?
 - Your dad is telling you to hurry up but you can't find your coat.
 - Your friend can't come over for a sleepover because her mom says she's not allowed.
 - Your brother keeps teasing you and calling you a baby.
 - You find a hole in your favorite shirt.
 - Your friends won't let you join the game they're playing.

Notes for teachers, parents, and other adults

Missing out or being excluded, being unfairly blamed for something, or feeling anxious or scared—these are just a few of the reasons why children may get angry. It's okay to be angry and to want to put right something that's wrong or unfair. It's not easy though, to know what to do with the strong feelings that come with anger and how to avoid making things worse.

When children are angry—just like when adults get angry—they can be unreasonable and illogical. The anger has taken over the rational mind, and the ability to think in a calm, reasonable way has been temporarily switched off. Children need effective techniques and strategies to help them calm down and take control. **Take Charge of Anger** explores ways children can learn to manage their anger.

Although children can read this book by themselves, it will be more helpful for both of you to read it together. Talk with children about the sort of things that trigger their angry feelings.

Help children spot their anger warning signs, and if **you** see the early signs of anger in a child, say so. These warning signs are cues telling children that they can try strategies to manage their anger. You can help children use a range of strategies to calm down and gain control: making a plan to deal with their anger, coming up with ideas for using angry energy safely, and finding ways to turn their mind away from angry thoughts.

Some children might want to read this book all at once. Others will find it easier to manage and understand a few pages at a time. Either way, you'll find plenty to talk about with children. For example, discuss the characters in the illustrations. Ask your child questions such as: "Do you ever feel like that?" "What do you think of that idea?" "How could that work for you?"

Taking some time to think about how things have worked out after an angry episode helps children learn about themselves and what does and doesn't work for them. Praise children's honest efforts, no matter how small. This will build children's confidence that they can do things to help them cope and manage their anger. If something didn't turn out so well, talk together about what they could have done differently.

After reading the book and helping children identify strategies that could work for them, you can come back to the book often to remind yourselves of ideas and suggestions for managing anger. With time, patience, support, and encouragement from you, children will learn to manage their anger better. However, if you're concerned that their anger is frequently causing them to get out of control and is harmful to them or others, it's worth seeking more advice. Reach out to a healthcare provider, counselor, or other expert and ask for help.