PROJECT #3

CAPTURE THE FEELING

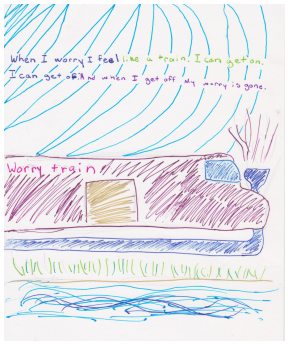
For this project, you will need:

A journal or paper

Pencils, colored pencils, and markers

(optional) Paint and/or collaging materials

Three or more objects to use for the warm-up worry brainstorm (see step 1): rubberband, ball of string, balloon, tape, glue, or other objects of your own choosing



Sometimes it's so hard to explain how you feel — especially to someone who has never felt that way before.

One way to share how you feel is to use your creative brain to compare the feeling to something else, like rocks in your stomach, or bees in your head.

A lot of artists and writers use these kinds of comparisons (metaphors) to express their feelings — which is not only healing for them, but it's healing for the rest of us, too. By sharing their art and writing, they are helping the rest of us to feel just a little less alone in our own feelings.

You can give that gift to others too, just by sharing how you feel.

Step 1 of 10

Here's a fun warm-up to try. If you're in a group, divide up into pairs. Hand out your objects from the supplies list — the string, the tape, the balloon, etc.

Working together with your partner, try to think up ways that worry is like your object. You can also do this project with other feelings, like sadness or stress.

After a few minutes, go around the circle and have each pair share their ideas.

Step 2 of 10

Now that you've had some practice, think about what worry, sadness, or stress feels like to you. Do you feel it in your body? In your head? All over?

In your journal, try comparing the feeling to:

1. An object or thing (is it like an alarm clock? A yo-yo? A speeding train?)

2. An animal (Is it like a monkey? A bear? A boa constrictor?)

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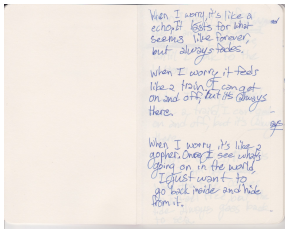
3. The weather (Is it like storm clouds? A tornado? A hurricane?)

4. A sound (Does it sound like a bear roaring in your brain? An elephant stomping? Plates breaking?)

5. A place or situation (trapped in a box… stuck on a merry-go-round…)



Step 3 of 10

Now, using your list as inspiration, write at least 3 metaphors (comparisons).

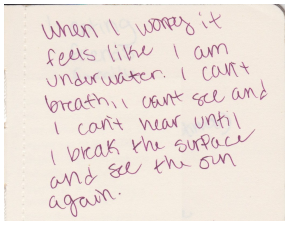
Here are a few examples.

When I worry it feels like my head is full of bees.

Sadness feels like walking in a desert all by myself.

Stress is like an alarm clock I can't turn off.

Keep writing down ideas until you come to the one that feels just right — the one that makes you say, "Yes! That's exactly what it feels like!"



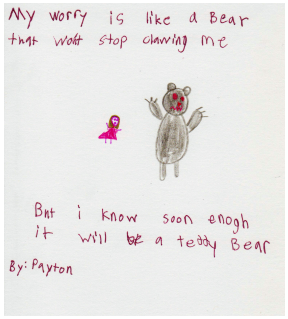
Step 4 of 10

On a new page in your journal, write down your favorite metaphor from your list.

See if you can add a few more details to really capture the feeling.

For example, if worry feels like my head is full of bees, I could write:

The bees fly around inside my head. The buzzing gets louder and louder. It's like the longer they're trapped inside, the angrier they get.



Step 5 of 10

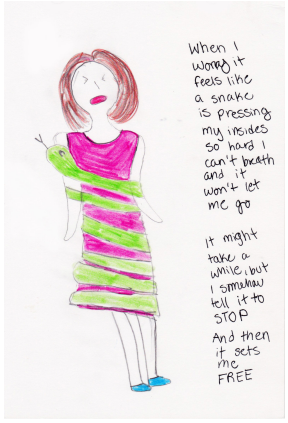
At the end of your list of details, write a little advice to yourself. What can you remember in that moment to help you get through it? See if you can make your advice relate to your comparison.

For example, if I'm writing about bees trapped in my head, I could say:

But I know the bees will eventually fly free.

Or if sadness is like walking alone through a desert, your advice to yourself might be:

But I know I'll eventually find my way home.



Step 6 of 10

Okay, it's now time to illustrate your metaphor. First, think about what materials you enjoy working with — colored pencils? Pens? Paint? Or maybe you'd rather clip pictures out of a magazine to make a collage.

Somewhere on your illustration (large or small, or even on the back) write down your metaphor. Include as many details as you want, and be sure to end with your advice to yourself.

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Step 7 of 10

It can also be fun to make a Styrofoam print of your illustration. This short video will walk you through the steps.

Step 8 of 10

When you're all finished with the project, here's a nice relaxation exercise you can try.

Whether you're doing this exercise on your own or in a Fearless Group, it's a good idea to read through the instructions all the way before you begin…

Step 9 of 10

Get yourself into a comfortable position, standing up or lying down. When you are comfortable, relax your body and close your eyes.

Imagine the feeling you just described in this project — the feeling you get when you are worried, sad, or stressed. Imagine you are holding that feeling inside your stomach.

Now, with all your might, squeeze your entire body around the feeling — squeeze your stomach, your arms, your legs, your chest and neck, your face, every muscle you have. Keep squeezing… and squeezing…

Now let the feeling go — release all of your muscles until you are completely relaxed.

Breathe gently for five seconds, and on the count of five, squeeze all of your muscles again. 1, 2, 3, 4, and…

Squeeze. Keep squeezing for five seconds and on the count of five, relax your muscles again. 1, 2, 3, 4, and…

Relax.

Repeat these instructions two more times and end with one minute of relaxed breathing.

Step 10 of 10

If you liked the way that felt, try it again sometime. Or visit our More Resources page to find other relaxation exercises to try.

Want to add your work to our gallery? We would love that.

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