

THE RHINO SUIT

STORY TIME KIT

6 ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOU LET ALL OF LIFE IN



HOST A STORY TIME AT YOUR LIBRARY, BOOKSTORE, OR ORGANIZATION—OR TRY THESE ACTIVITIES AT HOME.

From author-illustrator Colter Jackson comes a story about a little girl who feels everything deeply. What happens when she tries to hide from the difficult feelings in life? *The Rhino Suit* is about moving from fear to courageousness, from brokenness to wholeness, and from feeling shut down to letting all of life in.



A note to my extra-sensitive friends out there:

Are you someone who feels things deeply? It can make life hard sometimes, and it's easy to get overwhelmed by all those feelings—but feeling deeply also makes life beautiful. I am the girl from this story, and for a long time, I didn't know that feeling so much was a gift.

People would tell me to “toughen up” or “get a thicker skin” or “tune it out,” but I didn't know how to do those things. And guess what? Those are not the best ways of handling hard feelings. When you shut out the hard things, you shut out the lovely things too. It's better to be openhearted.

My hope is that you will see that the way you are is perfect and beautiful and very special. It takes a finely tuned person to sense when someone nearby might be hurting or need a friend. It takes paying attention to see that the Earth might need us to help protect her. It takes someone like you to see that there are things we can do to make the world better.

We don't need rhino suits after all. We just need to see that being a deeply feeling person is a wonderful thing to be. And it helps to have a few tricks up our sleeves for when the feelings get to be too much.

In this kit, you will find a printable poster, a build-your-own nature collection kit, empathy stickers, and other activities to help you manage all the feelings that life can throw at us. Finding moments of peace and connecting to nature can help you get back out there and get to living with an open heart.

Love, your friend,

Colter Jackson





Take a walk
in nature.



Doodle.



Have a warm drink.



Write a letter
to someone you love.



Sit outside
and try to feel
the wind.



Get yourself into some water.



Listen to birds
singing.

give A CAT
OR A dog
A nice pet.



Walk barefoot
on some grass.

BUILD-YOUR-OWN NATURE COLLECTION KIT

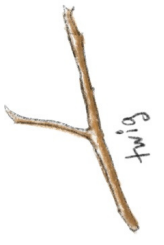
Connecting to nature is a big part of managing all the feelings that life can throw at us. This nature collection kit is an easy way to direct your attention onto the tiny little gifts nature gives us.

For this activity, you'll need:

- Standard egg carton (fits a dozen, or 12, eggs)
- Print out of the next page
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- The great outdoors! That includes your yard, your favorite park, or a playground

1. Print out the template on the next page. There are two in case you are doing this as a group or with a friend.
2. Cut it to fit into a standard egg carton, and glue or tape it to the inside of the lid.
3. Start collecting the bits of nature in the grid. It might take you an hour or a month. Do it at your own pace.
4. Keep your nature collection in your room, and revisit it anytime you want to return to the calm that nature brings.





twig



dandelion



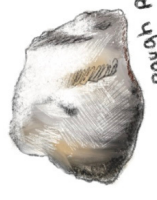
clover



blades of grass



evergreen branch



smooth rock



feather



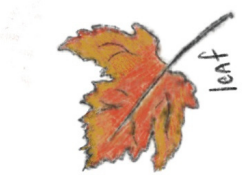
moss



pinecone



smooth rock



leaf



acorn

my nature collection

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leaf



pinecone



acorn



smooth rock



moss



smooth rock



blades of grass



dandelion

my nature collection



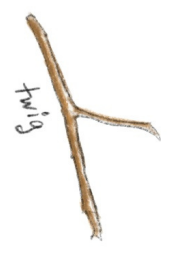
feather



evergreen branch



clover



twig

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STICKERS FOR THE BIG HEARTED

Some days we all need a little reminder that we're loved and appreciated. These stickers are like tiny hugs you can give out whenever it's needed. Print out the stickers on the following page, and keep them close at hand to give out to friends and family when they need a message of encouragement. You can also stick them in places that you'll see regularly to give you a little boost throughout your day.

If you have printable 8.5" x 11" sticker paper, you can print the following page and (ta-da!) you have stickers. You can also print on regular paper or card stock and hand them out as tiny cards.



stickers for the big hearted



CREATE YOUR WORRY STONE



Worry stones have been used by different cultures for centuries. The Ancient Greeks, Tibetans, and Native American tribes all found a sense of peace when taking a moment to touch their worry stone and let their worries go.¹

Traditionally a worry stone is a stone that's been made smooth by the running water of a river, with a small dip on one side the size of your thumb. But for this activity you can use any stone that fits comfortably in your hand.

1. Walk around outside for a few minutes and search for a stone that feels good in your hand, or if you have a rock collection, sort through to find your favorite rock for this activity.
2. Once you have your stone, keep it somewhere safe where you can easily find it: your bedside table, your desk, or even your pockets (although don't let it find its way into the washing machine!).
3. Whenever you feel a moment of fear or uncertainty, take a moment to touch your worry stone. Turn it over in your hand. Feel its texture, shape, the edges, and the bumps.
4. While holding your stone, think or whisper the fear or worry you have. You can even hold it up to your lips, hands clasped around it, like you are whispering a secret.
5. Close your eyes, and take three deep breaths, imagining that with each inhale the worry is floating up and away from your body and with each exhale it is being absorbed into your worry stone like a sponge soaking up water.
6. Open your eyes and smile. Your worries can be kept safely away in your worry stone.

¹Regan, Sarah. "The Benefits of Worry Stones & How to Clutch Them to De-Stress," *mindbodygreen*, 2021.

PRACTICE: A SILENT SIGH

Adapted from the original practice by Irene McHenry, an educator at the Mindfulness in Education Network, and the book *Growing Up Mindful: Essential Practices to Help Children, Teens, and Families Find Balance, Calm, and Resilience* by Christopher Willard PsyD.

A sigh can mean many things—relief, exasperation, pleasure, exhaustion, even sadness. Physiologically, sighing regulates and resets our breathing rate, which goes a long way toward helping us manage our feelings.

Sighing out loud feels great and is perfect when we're alone, but for those times when we need a reset but it wouldn't be appropriate to sigh loudly, the silent sigh is the perfect thing. This practice allows us to let out excess emotion and reset our body and breath.

First, to demonstrate how it feels to let out your emotions in a sigh, try a loud regular sigh. Take a deep breath in, and then let every last bit of air out in a loud sigh. Make any noises you need on your exhale. Doesn't that feel terrific?

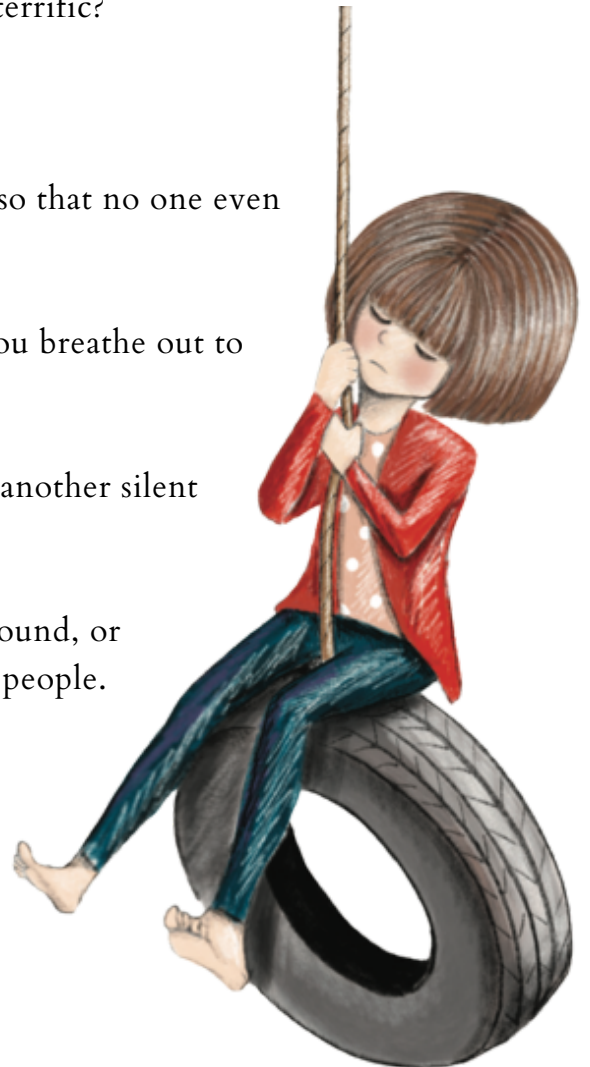
Now try a silent sigh. Take another deep breath in.

Then let out a sigh as **slowly** and **silently** as possible, so that no one even knows you are doing it.

Follow along with all the sensations in your body as you breathe out to the last bit of air in your body.

Then check in with how you feel. Decide if you need another silent sigh, or just let your breath return to normal.

Use the silent sigh at school, on the bus, on the playground, or anytime you need a moment to yourself in a crowd of people.



THE GRATITUDE JAR

A wonderful way to keep our hearts open and focus our attention on everything that is going right for us in our world and in the world at large is through practicing gratitude. Plus it's contagious: the more people practice gratitude, the more they will relax and smile. A gratitude jar is a great object to keep around the house or classroom to remind us to practice every day. You can contribute as a group, or you can keep one just for yourself.

For this activity, you'll need:

- An empty glass jar or a small box
- Scissors
- Several sheets of paper, cut into strips that are large enough to write on but small enough to fold and place in the jar or box
- Pens and pencils
- (Optional) any other decorative accents—ribbons, stickers, sequins, etc.

Idea: You can decorate the jar or box with ribbon, stickers, or other craft supplies to give it a personal touch. Notes can be written on plain paper, construction paper, or colorful origami paper for something more decorative.

1. Once you have your strips of paper and your jar, take a few minutes to reflect. What is something that you feel grateful for? It could be a big or small thing; for example, a trip, your team winning a game, time spent with a friend, how a teacher helped you, what your mom or dad made for breakfast, a song you loved, or even how pretty the sky looked when you woke up this morning.
2. Write it down on a strip of paper, fold it up, and drop it into your jar. Keep the jar, along with the paper strips and a writing tool, somewhere easy to access. You can also pick a time of day that you practice gratitude—like after dinner or before bedtime—or add notes when you feel inspired.
3. Later on, if you feel sad or unsure, reach into the jar and read a note of gratitude. If that one doesn't apply to you at that moment, put it back and try another one. Sit and reflect on that moment of gratitude, and let it spark any other feelings of warmth, love, or joy.
4. When your jar is full, have fun pulling out notes and reading them before starting over with an empty jar. You can save all your notes for later if you'd like.

COME JOIN OUR STORY TIME HOUR!

THE RHINO SUIT

A timeless story about letting all of life in.

DATE AND TIME:

LOCATION:

