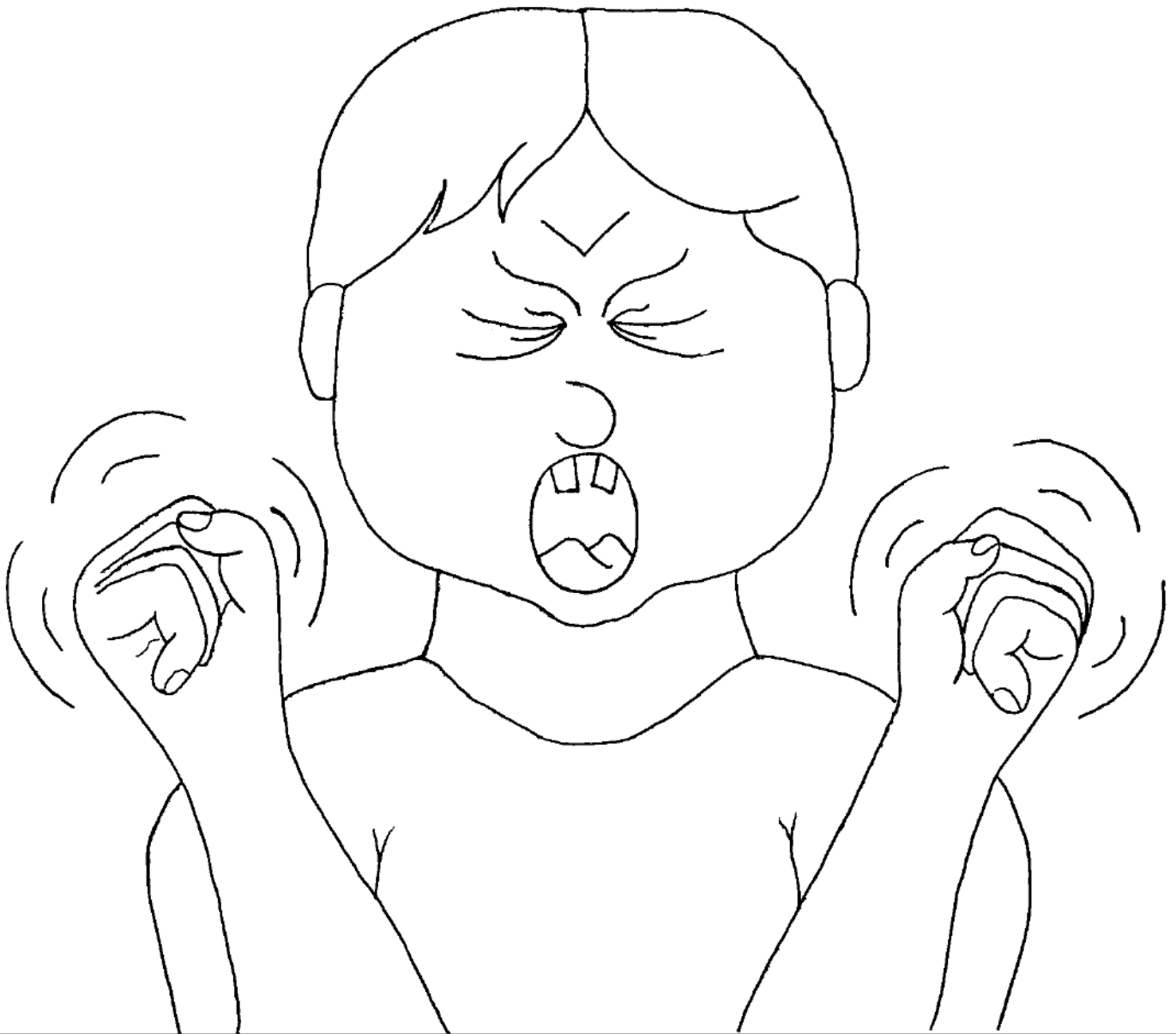


That's Not Fair



That's not fair! Have you ever said something like this? I'm sure you have . . . maybe once, or twice, or ten gazillion times. Everyone has times in life when they encounter something that doesn't seem fair, and we don't like it. We all want to be treated equally and fairly. So when it feels like this isn't happening, our brain throws a little tantrum and urges us to put up a protest.



Fairness is a wonderful thing, and we should all try to treat others equally. Parents, teachers, and other adults usually do their best to make sure that children get an equal amount of everything. They try to be fair in everything they do.

Of course, sometimes children don't see what they receive as fair or equal. Which is why you've said, "That's not fair!" perhaps once, or twice, or ten gazillion times.

Life isn't always fair, and once in a while we must all deal with unequal treatment. But other times *things seem more unfair than they really are* because we're looking at the situation in the wrong way.



Adults don't always know everything that happens, and so they do their best with the knowledge they have. Let's say you're having an argument with one of your classmates. He gets angry and pulls your ear while bopping you on the head, and so you push him away. But the teacher turns around and only sees you push him.

"Jimmy, no pushing," she says.

"Go sit against the wall."

"But he started it by hitting me first!"

you protest.

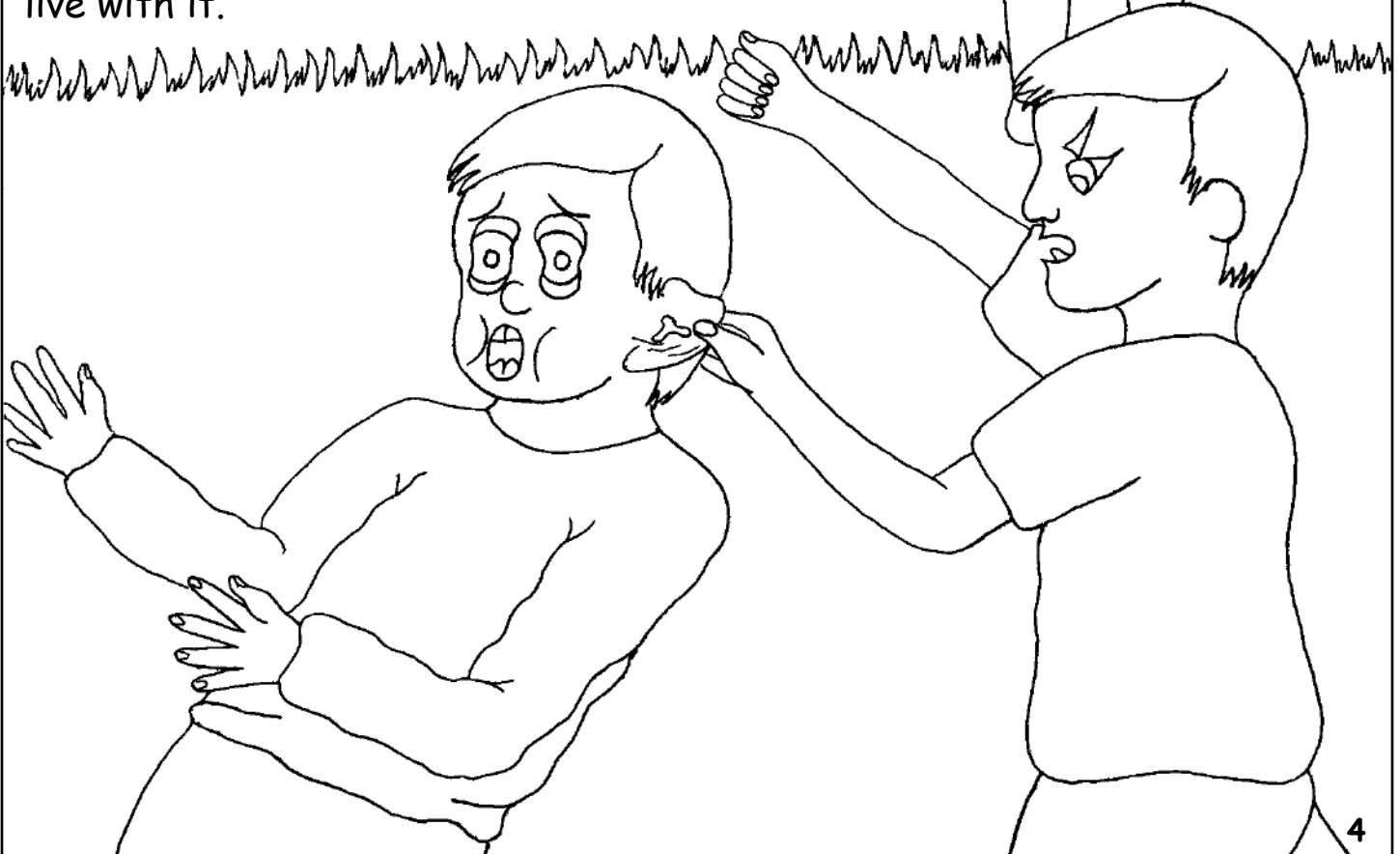
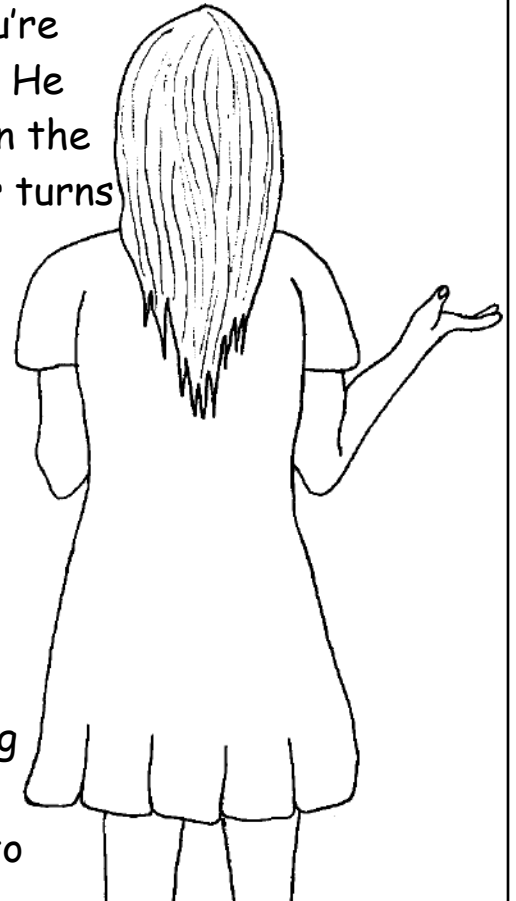
"Bobby, did you push Jimmy?" she asks

"No," says Bobby.

"He's lying!" you say.

It isn't fair that only you have to sit against the wall when it was Bobby who started it all. The teacher wasn't trying to be unfair. She was doing the best she could with what she knew.

Sometimes life goes like that, and we just have to live with it.



Another problem with fairness is that we all see the world according to our own interests. Sometimes *we're the ones* looking at an incomplete picture. Because we're so focused on *what we receive* or *how others treat us*, we don't always notice when others end up with a raw deal. We don't pay attention when we get something that they don't.

If we only think about times when our friends get more than us, while ignoring the times when *we* get more than *them*, life can seem more unfair than it really is. Think of this whenever you're inclined to believe that you're getting a raw deal.



It's important to remember that fairness doesn't always mean equal. Sometimes parents may treat children a little bit differently because they know that their kids are uniquely different people. You're not exactly the same as your brother or sister or a friend down the street. And because you're different in some ways than everybody else, this means that there may be times when you're treated differently, too. This isn't done because grown-ups want to be unfair. It's because they recognize that each child is a unique person with different personalities, different ways of behaving, and different strengths and weaknesses. What works best to guide one child may not be the best for another.



There will be times in life when, for one reason or another, things don't turn out to be perfectly fair or equal. That's just the way things are. It's impossible to treat people 100% equally 100% of the time, just like it's impossible for life to always be perfect. Life is never perfectly fair or perfectly equal for anyone.

Even from birth, some people are born more beautiful than others. Some people are born smarter. Some are born to be taller, others shorter. Some people are born with more athletic ability. Some kids are born into families with more money. Others are blessed with more love. Just like no two cookies in a batch can ever turn out exactly the same, no two people can ever be perfectly equal in everything.

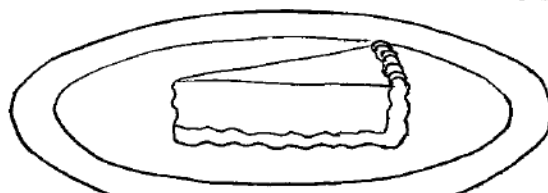


Worrying about every little thing doesn't do anyone good, especially you. Sometimes we get so worried about what others have that we forget to appreciate what we've been given. Let's say someone *does* get a bigger piece of pie than you. You can fuss and get all upset over how unfair this is. But if you do that, you probably won't even enjoy your pie, because you're too busy being upset to enjoy much of anything. Or you can decide not to make a big deal out of it and enjoy your treat. You could savor each and every bite. It's

better to have 20 bites you enjoy than 25 bites that aren't very satisfying because you're in a foul mood.

You always have a choice: You can enjoy what you have and be happy, or you can dwell on what you don't have and make yourself miserable.

This is why it's best to listen to the old advice: Be happy with what you get and don't throw a fit!



Life is never perfectly fair, and that's ok. Sometimes you get more, sometimes less, but it all tends to even out in the end. Maybe this time you end up with a small piece of cake, but then next time you'll get the biggest one. Or maybe today your friend gets to do something special that you miss out on. Next time it might be you who has all the fun.

That's the way life is: Sometimes it's our lucky day, and sometimes it's someone else's turn to shine. When we stop worrying so much about who gets what, we better enjoy the things we share together.

