

Name: _____ Class: _____

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Wounded Puppies

A Social Intelligence Workbook for Kids

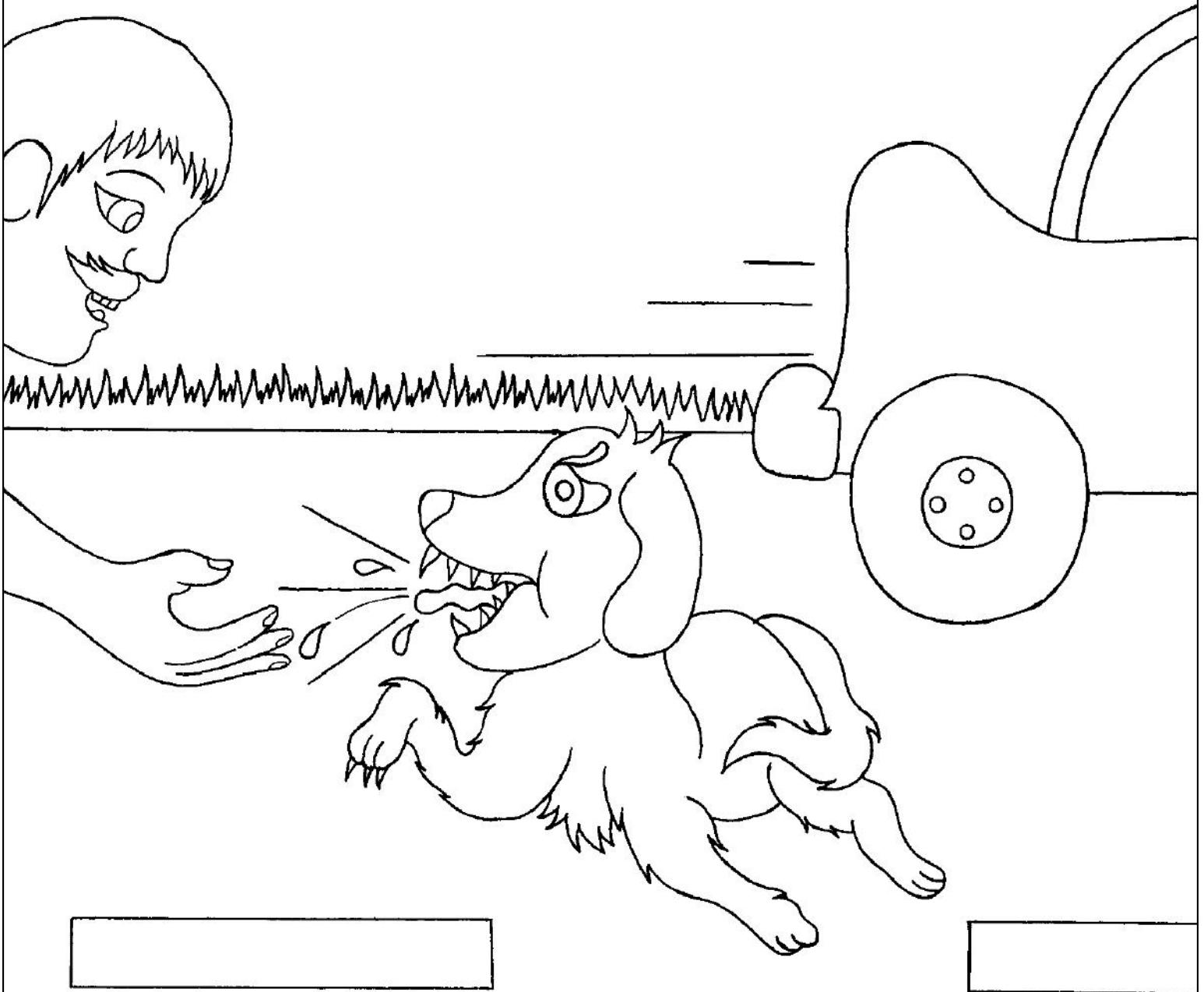


This puppy is normally a pretty happy puppy. And because he is a happy puppy, he is also a friendly puppy. When he comes upon people, he is eager to meet them. If you met this puppy, he might wag his tail and want you to pet him. He might lick your face to give you doggy kisses and show you all kinds of affection.



Something changes when a dog is hurt or otherwise feeling bad. The same puppy who is normally friendly and playful can become aggressive when wounded. They often respond by trying to keep others at a distance. If you approach him he might snarl or bite. In fact, dogs that are scared often bite the very people that are trying to rescue them.

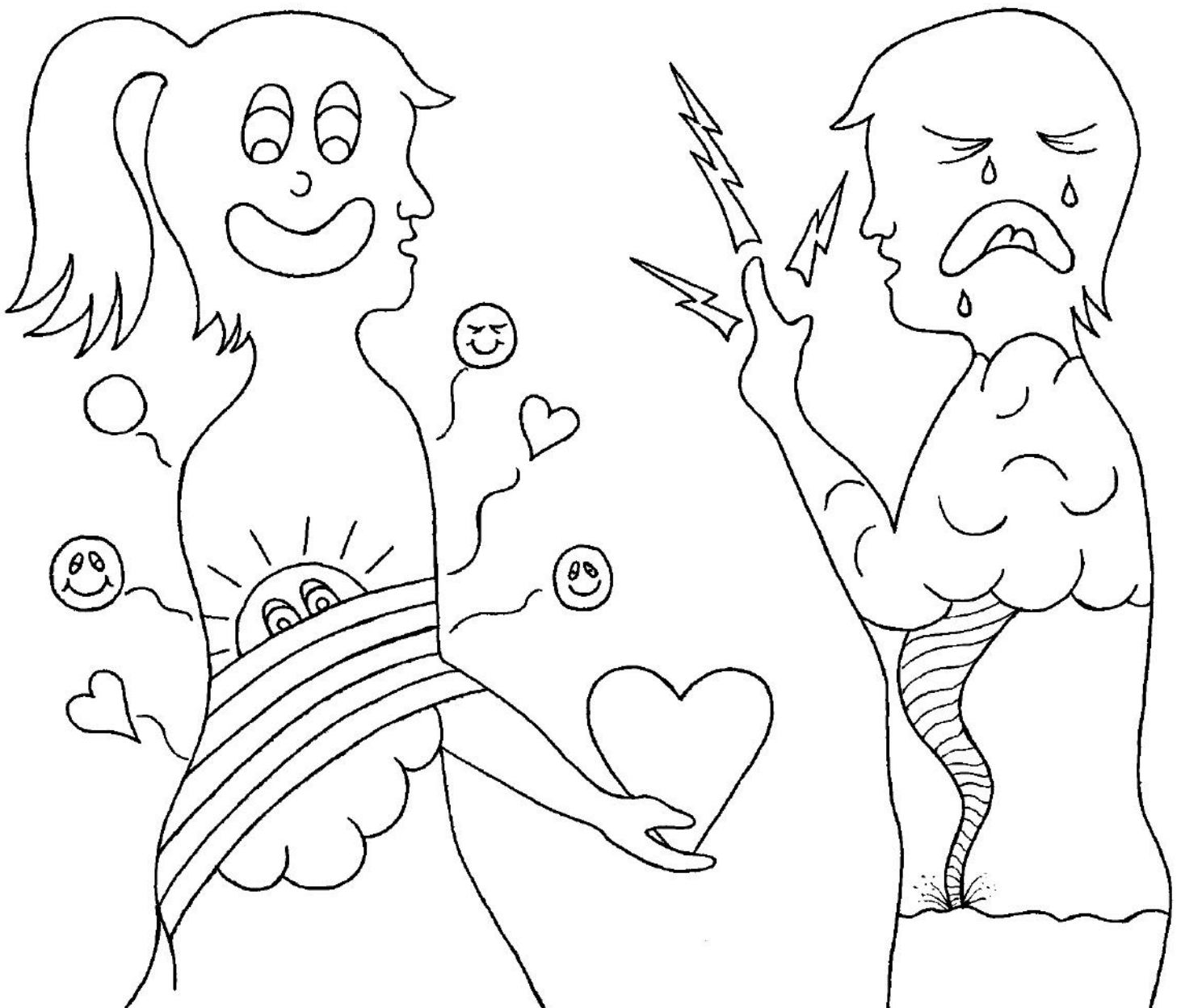
The more severe their injury, the more hostile they become.



Humans are the same way. Just like a wounded puppy, how people act on the outside is directly tied to how they feel on the inside.

If someone feels bad about themselves or their situation, this will be reflected in the way they act toward others. They may become hostile, short of temper, insensitive, or rude. They may appear to be selfish or uncaring. The more hurt, wounded, or insecure someone feels, the more bitter, angry, or aggressive they can become.

The opposite is also true. If a person feels good on the inside, they are likely to be playful and friendly on the outside.



A difference between puppies and people is that people are much more complex in their behavior. People often try to hide the ways they are hurting. They may try to make up for feeling weak by acting tough. If they feel insecure, they might try to put on a big show to pretend they are perfect or powerful. If they feel bad, they might react by trying to make others feel as bad as they feel. They also tend to hold onto their hurts for a lot longer, and also think about their experiences in more complex ways.

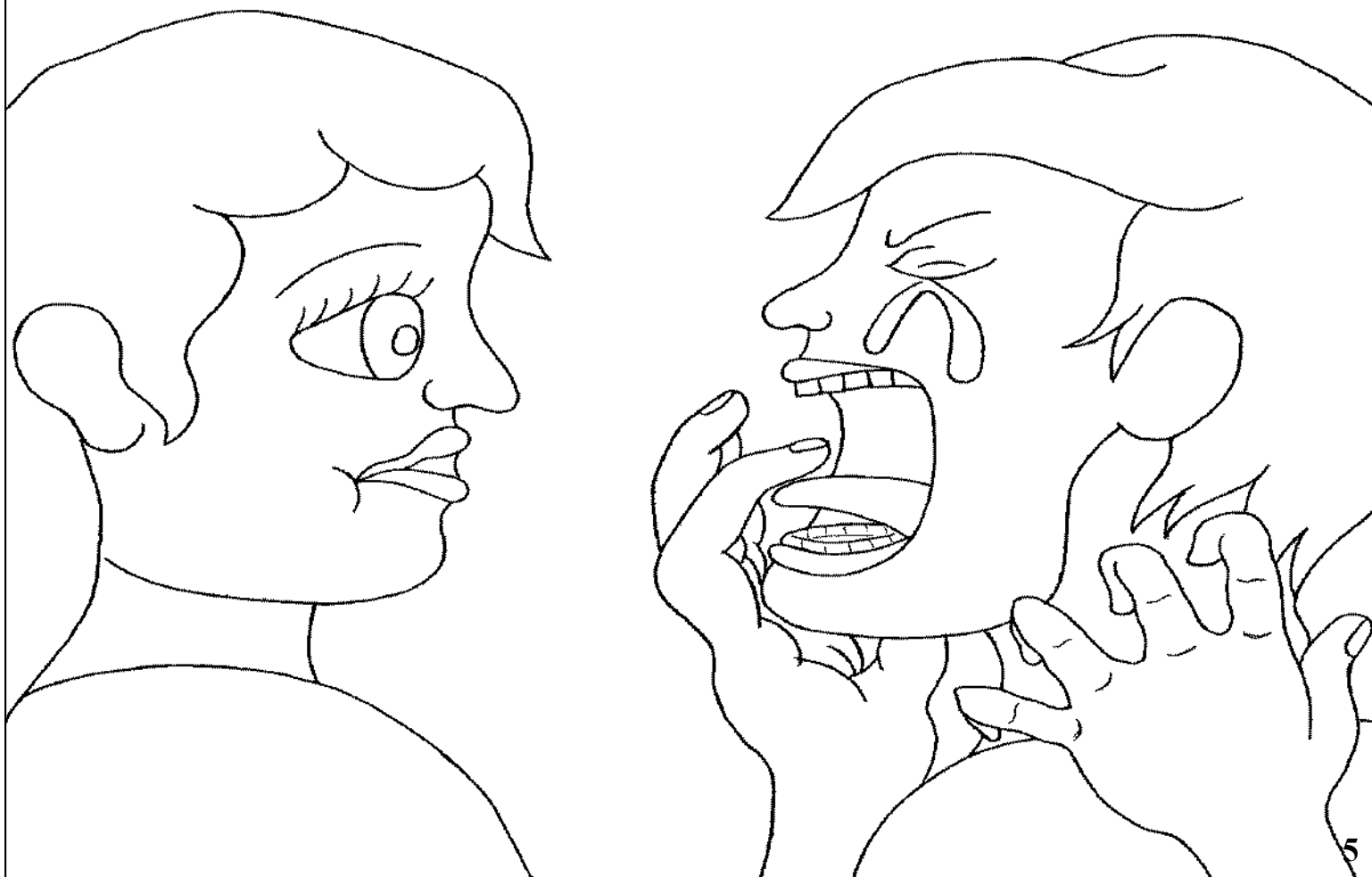
Because of this, it's often harder to see where the ugly behavior in people is coming from. But if you look long enough or search deep enough, it's always there. People don't act crummy for no reason at all. Like puppies, people are born happy and friendly. When they are not it is usually because they feel injured or insecure.

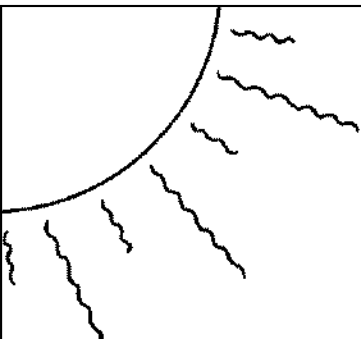


We wouldn't take it personally if a wounded puppy snapped at us because he was hurt or scared. We'd recognize that its hostile actions were a direct result of the fear, insecurity, and pain that it felt inside. We should try to remember the same about people.

When people act in hurtful ways, or when they do things that we don't like, we shouldn't take it personally. We should recognize that their hurtful deeds are not about us, it's about what's going on inside *their* head.

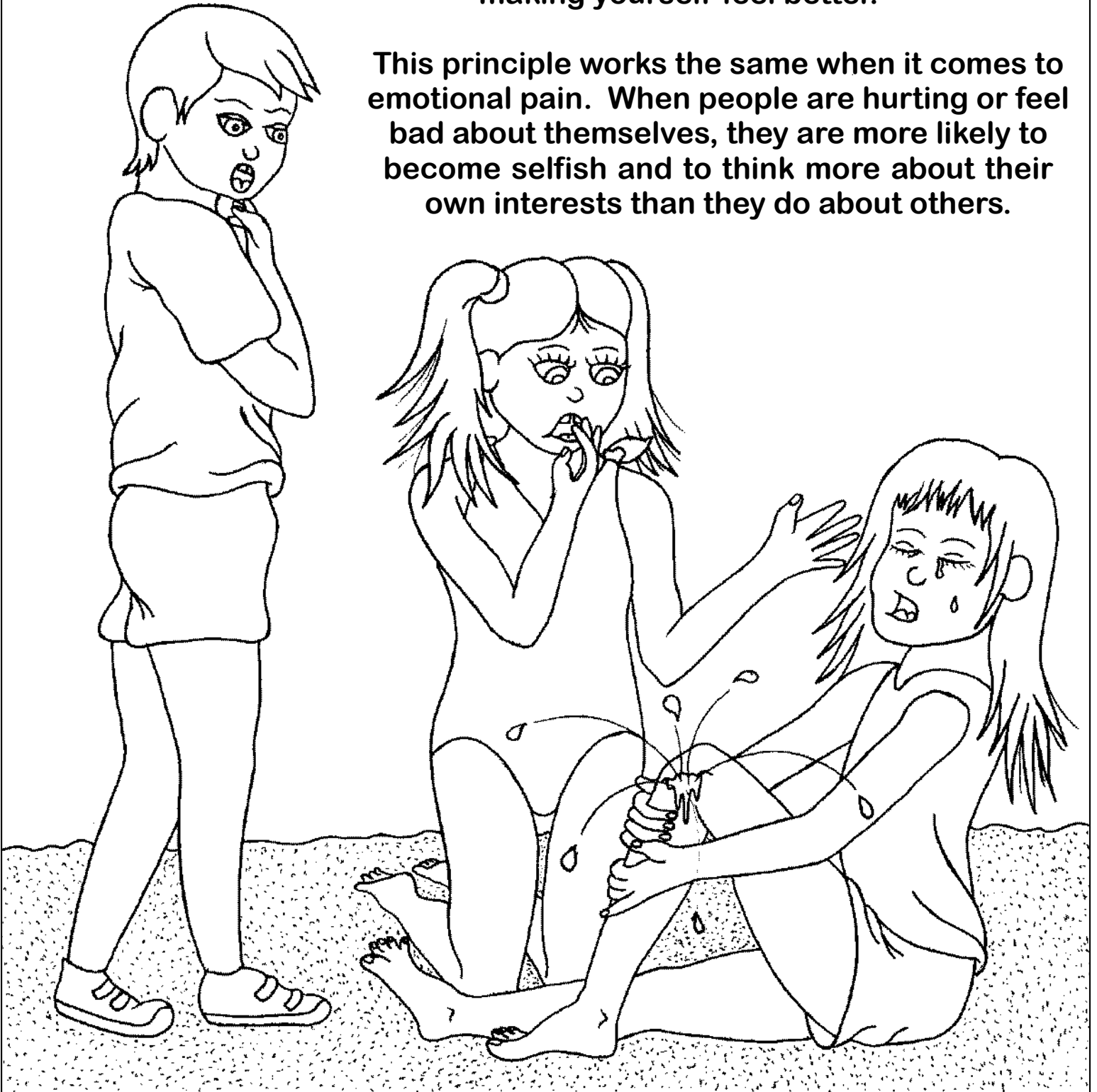
Maybe other people have done things to them that you can't see. Maybe there's something missing in their lives that causes them to act this way. Maybe they just got up on the wrong side of the bed this morning. Realize that most people, just like most puppies, want to be cheerful and liked by others. When they act in ways contrary to this, it's because somewhere along the way they've become alienated against their true nature.





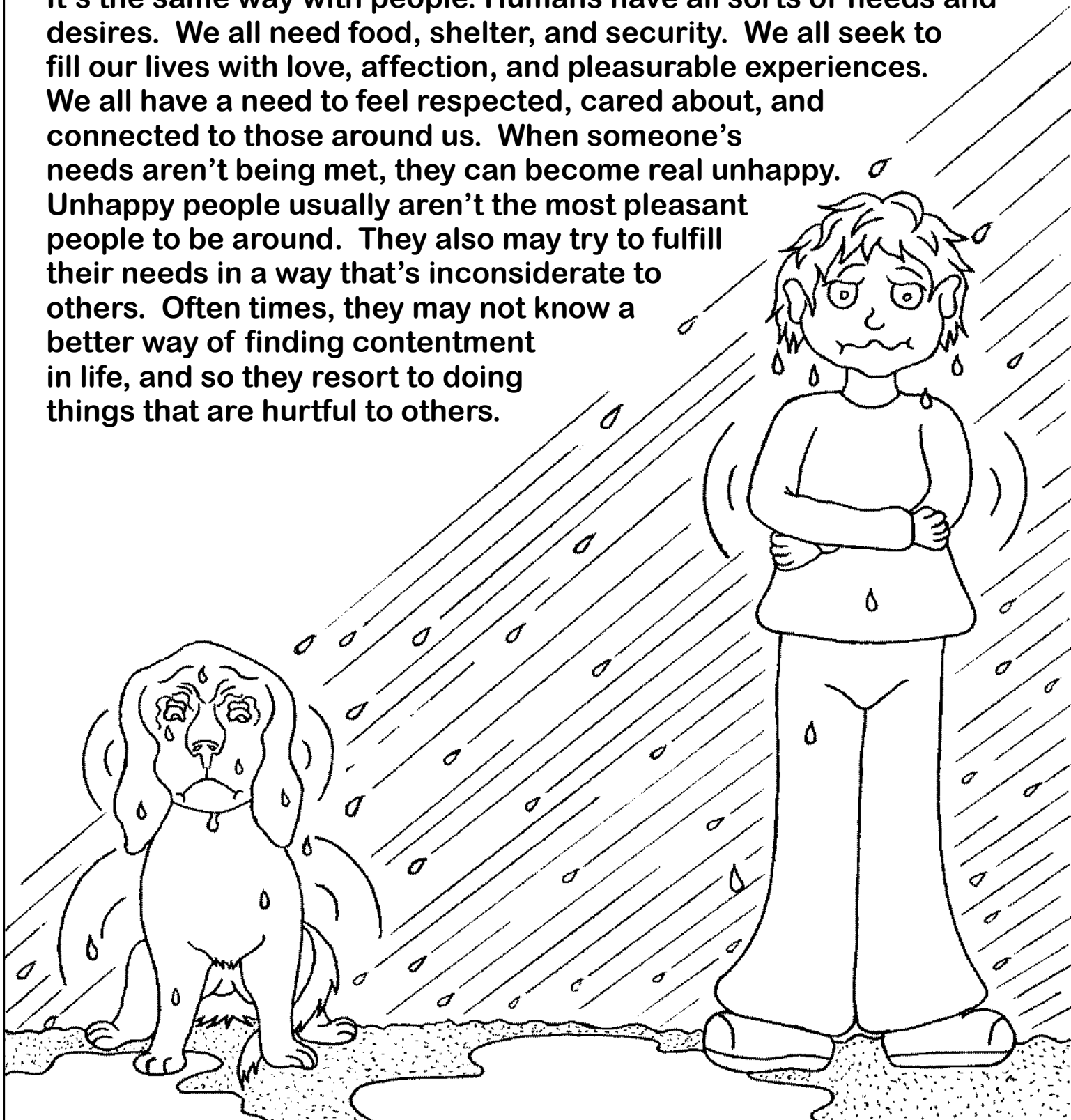
When a creature is in pain, it's hard to focus on anyone or anything else. Think about it: If you had a big cut on your leg, you wouldn't be thinking about what those around you needed. You wouldn't be interested in hearing about their concerns. All of your attention would be focused on the pain you were feeling, and everything you did would be focused on making yourself feel better.

This principle works the same when it comes to emotional pain. When people are hurting or feel bad about themselves, they are more likely to become selfish and to think more about their own interests than they do about others.



It's not just injuries that will affect a creature's behavior, it's also unfulfilled needs. We all have things we need in order to feel OK about life. If a puppy was cold, wet, scared, and unloved, he would probably be a pretty miserable puppy. Such a puppy might spend most of his time thinking about ways to improve his situation.

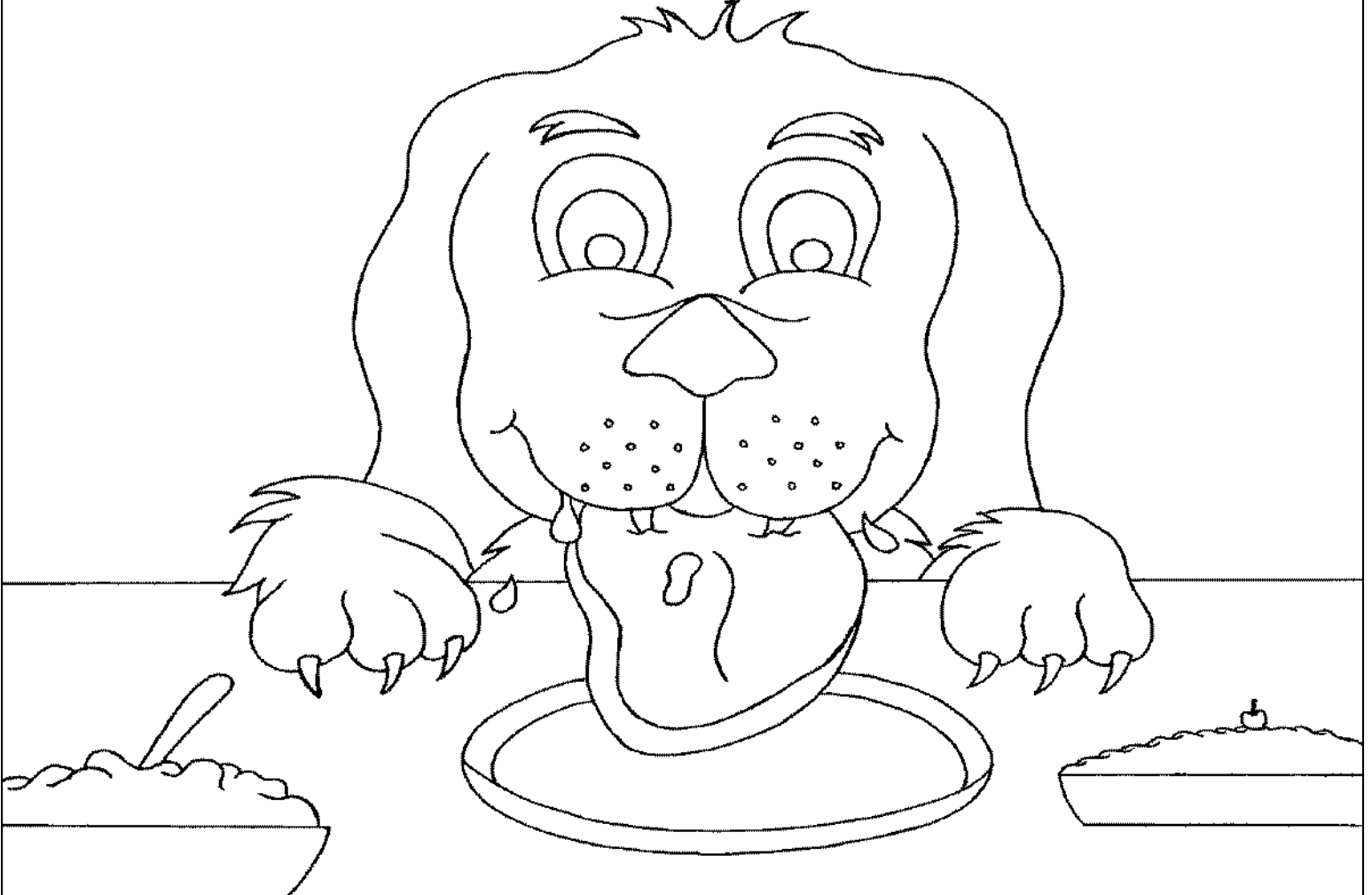
It's the same way with people. Humans have all sorts of needs and desires. We all need food, shelter, and security. We all seek to fill our lives with love, affection, and pleasurable experiences. We all have a need to feel respected, cared about, and connected to those around us. When someone's needs aren't being met, they can become real unhappy. Unhappy people usually aren't the most pleasant people to be around. They also may try to fulfill their needs in a way that's inconsiderate to others. Often times, they may not know a better way of finding contentment in life, and so they resort to doing things that are hurtful to others.



Think about a puppy that's really hungry. The hungry puppy comes upon a feast that has just been set at the table. Seeing nobody around, he sneaks up and snatches a big, juicy steak from the serving platter, gulping it down in a few humongous bites.

If this were to happen, we would say, "bad puppy!" and scold it for stealing food. We get upset at this puppy's behavior, because it's taking food that belongs to us. But really, the puppy isn't *trying* to be bad. It's just trying to get something it really wants and feels it needs.

People are the same way. Everything others do is an attempt to either seek pleasure or avoid pain. It's perfectly natural to feel upset when someone tries to fulfill their desires in a way that interferes with our own, just as it's natural to be upset if a puppy steals the delicious dinner we prepared. But we should remember that the desire to be happy and content is a perfectly good goal, even if sometimes people go about it in all the wrong ways. We should try not to get any more upset about this than we would over a mischievous puppy. We should do our best to try and understand.



Needs & Behaviors

Think about each of the different cases below, and write about how these unfulfilled needs might change someone's behavior or cause them to resort to hurtful ways of trying to meet this need.

If someone were hungry all the time and didn't get enough to eat, they might

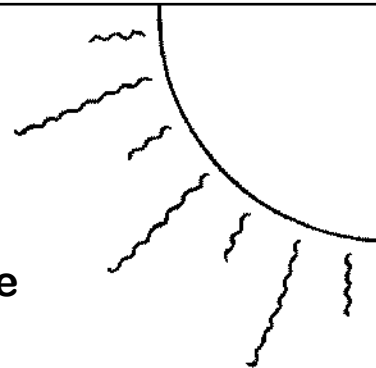
If someone felt that nobody else cared about them, they might

If someone was lonely and didn't receive enough love, they might

If someone had a hard time finding pleasure or had very few good things in their life, they might



It's only natural to feel upset when someone acts rude, angry, or insensitive toward us. But we should try to remember that almost all hurtful deeds stem from hidden injuries and unfulfilled needs. So instead of getting angry, or worse, trying to hurt them back, we should ask ourselves how we might bring this person more pleasure and joy.



After all, if bad things come from incomplete people, then helping others feel happy and fulfilled, not making them more miserable and insecure, is how we solve our problems. That way we can all be happy puppies!

