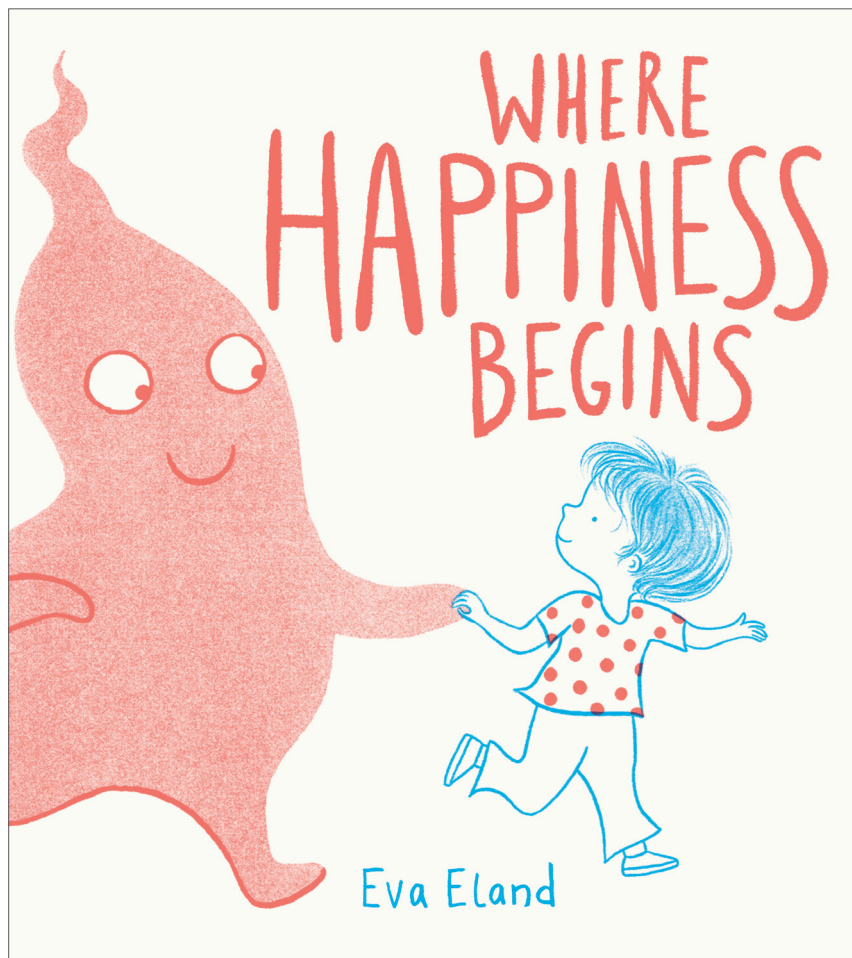


Teaching Notes for WHERE HAPPINESS BEGINS

By Eva Eland

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These notes have been written by the teachers at the CLPE to provide schools with ideas to develop comprehension and cross-curricular activities around this text. They build on our work supporting teachers to use picture books to enhance critical thinking and develop creative approaches in art and writing. They encourage a deep reading of and reflection on the text, which may happen over a series of reading sessions, rather than in just one sitting. We hope you find them useful.

The concepts explored in the book and these teaching notes are more suitable for children aged 5+.

Reading aloud and key talking points:

- Look at the front cover of the text and read the title of the book 'Where Happiness Begins'– *what do you think this means? What do you think this book might be about?* Collect the children's initial ideas around a copy of this illustration to come back to later.
- Spend time closely looking at the illustration, before exploring the words you can see. *What do you notice about the two characters that you can see? Who do you think they are? What do you think they might be thinking or doing? How do you think they are feeling? What makes you think or feel that way?* Explore the ways in which their expressions and body language are mirrored, how the colours in the words of the title, the spots on the child's shirt and the colour of the shape character are all connected. *Why do you think that is?*
- If you have the hardback edition of the book, pass it round to the children, so that they can feel the debossed expression on the orange character's face and literally feel its emotion. *Can they make the same expression with their own faces?* Now explore the body language of the two characters; *does this also tell us how they are feeling? How? What are the different ways that we can tell how other people are feeling? What should we look for to tell us?*
- Now, encourage the children to think more deeply about the story that lies ahead. *What do they think might happen in a story involving these characters?* Continue to collect the children's thoughts and ideas around a copy of this illustration to come back to later.
- Now open the book to reveal the front endpapers. Spend time looking closely at the different images they can see and talking about these together. *What can they see the different people doing? How do you think they are feeling? How can you tell? What do you think is making them feel this way?* If the children do not talk about this naturally, draw attention to the constant thread of the bright orange colour throughout the illustration. *Why do you think the illustrator has included a touch of this colour in all the images? What might it represent? Do you think this is a good colour to represent happiness? Why or why not? What colour do you think of when you think of happiness?*
- Encourage the children to picture a happy memory, inspired by the images they have seen in the endpapers and to talk to the group or a friend nearby about this if they feel comfortable to share this. Talk about the similarities and differences in their shared experiences. You could give time for the children to draw these out in the style of the endpapers, providing access to a bright orange colour like the one used by the illustrator and encouraging the children to think about where they would use this in their own illustration. Display these prominently in the classroom environment and allow the children to reflect on and discuss their individual and shared experiences.
- Now look at the inside title page. *Who can you see in the illustration? What is happening?* Look again at the mirrored experiences of the two characters, the similarities in their facial expressions and body positions and talk about why this might be.

- Turn the page and read the first spread, looking closely at the illustration alongside. Discuss the text together – *where might you find happiness? Do you really think you can find it on a shelf like this?* Spend time looking carefully at the words on the bottles and jars. *What does this image really represent? What is the illustrator sharing with us here?* Come back to the children's own experiences again – *if they were to write something on a jar, bottle or tub of happiness, what would it be?* You could have some pre-prepared templates or some coloured paper that the children could draw their own object for the shelves of happiness and write what makes them happy on the front to create a shared class representation of this illustration for display.
- Re-read the text so far and on to the next spread: 'It often has disguises and goes by different names.' Explore with the children other words they know that could mean a similar thing to happy, using the different illustrations on this page to prompt their thinking. You could introduce the children to a thesaurus suitable for their age and stage of development to extend their stock of words. To consolidate their understanding of the shades of meaning between the words, you could display these against a thermometer image e.g.:



- Now, read on to 'While on others, it's right there with you wherever you go.' Re-read and closely look at the two sides of this spread in turn. *How does the first side of the image make them feel? What makes them feel this way?* Explore the fact that this is the first time we have seen the child character looking alone, that the background, for the first time, is dark and how large and tall the trees are in comparison with the character. *How does this all make us feel for or about the character? Read the text again; can they see anything hiding in the image? What might this other character represent?* Now compare this with the other side of the spread. *How is this side different? How does this side make them feel? How does the child character look on this side of the page?* Look at the use of bright colours, the amount of people on the page, what they are doing and how they look. *How does this all make us feel for or about the character now?* Encourage the children to think about the two images in a more sensory way. *What do you think each side of the image sounds like? How does it feel to be there? On which side of the spread would you most like to be? Why?*

- Read on to ‘But most of the time Happiness appears to have a will of its own.’ *What do you think this means?* Discuss what having ‘a will of its own’ means. *Is it always possible to control our feelings? Can we decide when we are happy, sad or angry? What makes us feel differently at different times?* Collect examples of the children’s thoughts and ideas around a copy of this illustration to come back to.



- Now read on to ‘and Happiness will be there waiting.’ Look back slowly over these two spreads: *what do you think is happening here? What is the child character doing? How do you think they are feeling? Why do you think this? How did they get through the woods? What do you think this might represent?* Now bring this back to the children’s own experiences; *is there a time that you have struggled to find happiness? What helped you?* Give the children time to think about this for themselves; then, if they are comfortable, you could ask them if they would like to share their experiences with the group. Collect examples of ideas that may be helpful to others if they are feeling down in the future. Look carefully at the illustrations again, noting the changes in colour and scale as the child moves from uncertainty back to happiness. Talk about how uncertainty can sometimes make us feel small and alone, how we might cope with feelings of uncertainty and how this compares with when we feel happy.
- Turn the page and read aloud the next spreads, up to: ‘but it will let you find new paths, enjoy your time with family and friends and do the things you love to do.’ Look closely at the images and explore some of the concepts introduced on these pages. *What do they think this part of the text is saying about happiness? Is it always overwhelmingly positive? Is it possible for happiness to be scary?* Encourage the children to draw on personal experiences of when the journey towards happiness has felt a bit scary or when they have felt a bit apprehensive on their way to feeling happy.
- Read and explore the next part of the text, up until ‘you can find your way back home.’ *What does it mean to ‘feel overwhelmed by your feelings’? Can they think of any feelings that can feel overwhelming? What are these? Can they picture or remember a time when they have felt overwhelmed by feelings? How did they overcome these to ‘find their way back home’?* As this is quite a challenging concept, it would be helpful here if you have some personal experiences of your own that you can share with the children, and then give them time and space to think of their own related experiences, sharing these with the group if they feel comfortable to. With older children you could explore the meaning of the common idiom ‘sail through troubled waters’ and explore why the illustrator may have chosen to illustrate this difficult concept using this particular imagery.

- Now, re-read this spread and turn the page to reveal the next spread, with the phrase ‘Just breathe...’ *Look carefully at this spread, how does this make them feel compared to the previous spread?* Look at the colour on the page, how the child and Happiness are enclosed by the foliage in the foreground and the space and bright lights of the stars in the sky. Here you could take a moment in silence to ‘just breathe’ with the children, inhaling and exhaling slowly and deeply. Take a moment to reflect on how this makes them feel. You may also want to explore why Eva Eland has chosen to punctuate this phrase using ellipsis. *What effect does this have on us as a reader? What does it add to the mood of this part of the story?*
- Now read to the end of the book. Reflect on the final sentence ‘Happiness begins with you.’ *What do the children think this means? What do they think they can do to find the happiness inside of them when they need it?* Collect examples of the children’s thoughts and ideas around a copy of this spread and display these prominently for the children to reflect on at different times, when they or others may need support in managing their feelings. Look back at the illustration in this final spread – *what can they see in the spread that they have seen in other parts of the story?* You could look at this using a viewfinder, a piece of black card with a small window cut into it, to help isolate and identify the different objects. Support the children in flicking back and forth through the book to find the different objects in context, e.g. The jar of happiness from the first spread, the building of the house which mirrors the treehouse in the second spread, the shell from one of the memory collection jars, the paper boat and the boat in the picture, from the boat spread, the stars from the ‘just breathe...’ spread. Children may notice the other character sitting on the shelf that looks similar to Happiness. *Who do they think this might be? Why do they think that?* If they have read the companion text ‘When Sadness Comes to Call’ they may already recognise this character, or alternatively, they may connect the shape with Happiness and note the difference in colour, facial expression and body position and use this to make their own predictions about this character.
- Come back together to talk about the range of emotions we all experience. Encourage the children to name and recognise these emotions through sharing images and other texts. You may find the following examples useful:

A Book of Feelings by Amanda McCardie and Salvatore Rubbino (Walker)

The Great Big Book of Feelings by Mary Hoffman and Ros Asquith (Frances Lincoln)

Everybody Feels... (series) by Moira Butterfield and Holly Sterling (Quarto)

- Now look at the back endpapers. Compare these with the front endpapers and explore the similarities and differences. *What do you think the illustrator is showing us in these two different spreads?*



- Read the entire book from the beginning and continue to read aloud until the end. Allow the group to begin to explore their responses to it through booktalk with the help of what Aidan Chambers calls ‘the four basic questions’. These questions give children accessible starting points for discussion:

Tell me...was there anything you liked about this story?

Was there anything that you particularly disliked...?

Was there anything that puzzled you?

Were there any patterns...any connections that you noticed...? Did it remind you of anything else you’ve read or seen?

- The openness of these questions unlike the more interrogative ‘Why?’ question encourages every child to feel that they have something to say. It allows everyone to take part in arriving at a shared view without the fear of the ‘wrong’ answer.
- As children reply it can be useful to write down what they say under the headings ‘likes’, ‘dislikes’, ‘puzzles’, ‘patterns’. This written record helps to map out the group’s view of the text and the important themes and ideas around the story from the children’s perspective and is a way of holding on to ideas for later. Asking these questions will lead children inevitably into a fuller discussion than using more general questions. You may, for example, ask the children if they had favourite parts of the story, and why this was.
- Extend the children’s thinking through a more evaluative question, such as *Why do you think Eva Eland chose to write this book? Who do you think would like this book? Why?*
- Leave multiple copies of the book in the book corner for the children to revisit and re-read in independent reading time, by themselves or socially in a group.



To continue work around the book:

- Use watercolour paints to make shapes of your own to express what happiness looks like. *How do you make a shape that looks happy?* Encourage the children to explore and experiment with their own bodies to investigate what posture, facial expressions and body positions might best represent happiness. *What colours would you choose to represent happiness? Why? Extend this work by getting the children to think more widely about different emotions. What other emotions could you represent with the paints? What colours would they be? What would the shapes look like that represent surprise, happiness, fear etc.?*
- Write and draw about your own experiences of feeling happy or other emotions. Display these in the class so that children can see and reflect on their individual and shared experiences.
- Read the companion text 'When Sadness Comes to Call' by Eva Eland and explore the similarities and differences between the two texts.
- Encourage the children to make up their own stories about their adventures with a different emotion. *What have they learnt from reading these two texts that could help them tell this story in words and pictures?* Allow time and space for children to come up with initial ideas, to draft and create their own stories, to reflect on these with an appropriate response partner and to publish these in handmade books using appropriate art materials. More information about following an authentic writing process in the classroom can be found at: <https://clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures/teaching-approaches/following-authentic-writing-process>



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