

But It's Not My Fault

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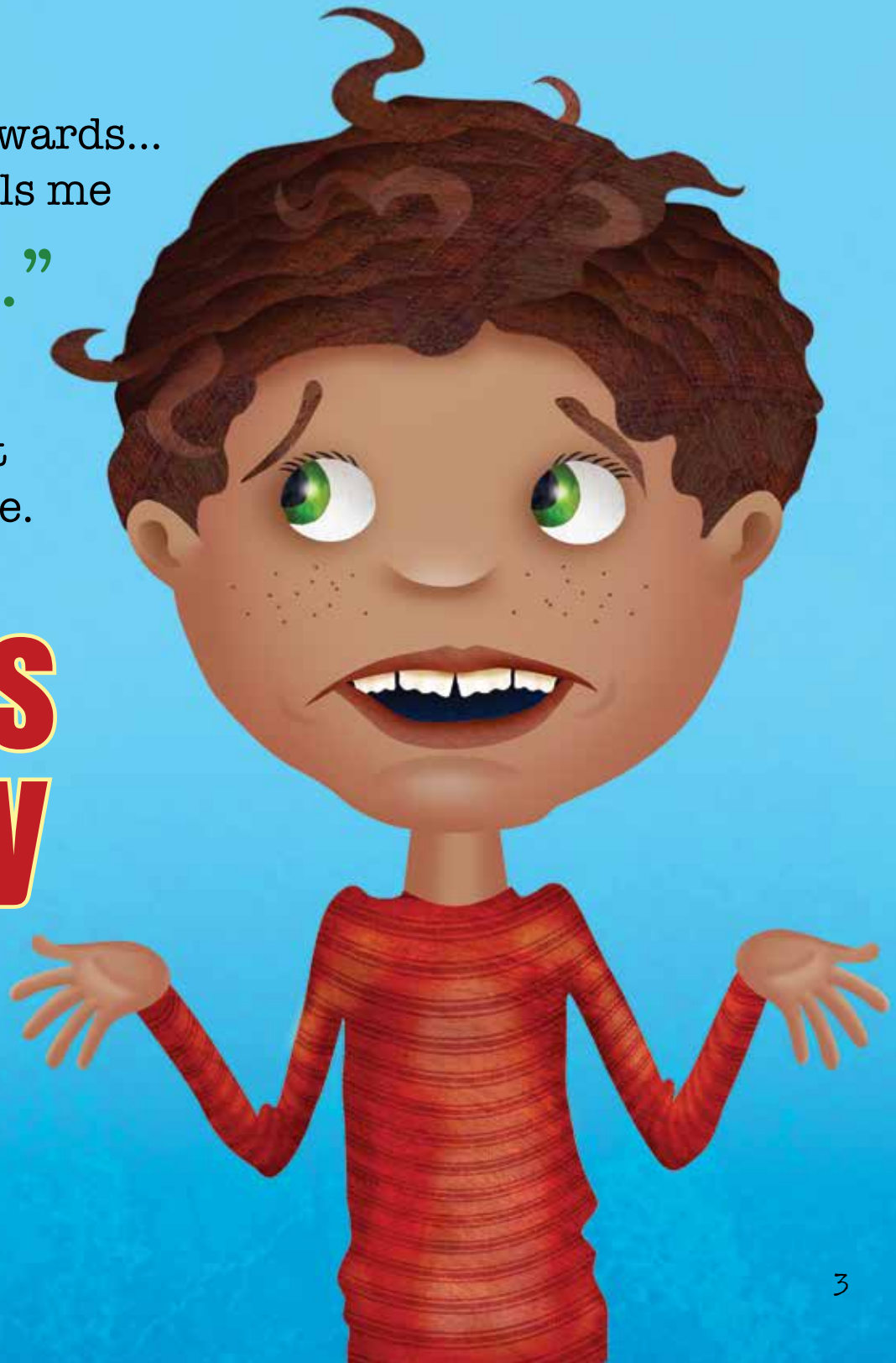



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My name is
Norman David Edwards...
but everybody calls me
“Noodle.”

Sometimes things
happen to me that
get me into trouble.

**But it's
not my
fault.**





Yesterday, I didn't get my math homework done. So this morning, my teacher made me stay in from recess and do it... **RATS!**

**But it
wasn't
my fault!**

Last night I had to go to my big brother's basketball game, and it went into overtime, and by the time I finally got home, it was too late to do my homework so my **MOM** made me go to bed.

Tips for Parents and Educators

Conquering the **BLAME GAME!**

Teaching children to accept responsibility for their actions is a learned behavior that is **VITAL** to character development. Children don't just grow out of the natural tendencies to blame others and/or shirk responsibility. In fact, if these behaviors are not effectively addressed early on, they become self-reinforcing and will likely dramatically increase into adulthood.



Here are a few tips that might help curb the “BLAME GAME”

- 1.** The consequences for making responsible choices should be highly motivating for your children, while blaming others and making excuses should result in negative consequences that are highly demotivating.
- 2.** Explain to your child that everyone makes mistakes. Mistakes are a good thing because every time children make one, it gives them a chance to learn something. When they blame others for their mistakes, they give away their chances to learn!
- 3.** Don't overreact when your child blames others or makes excuses for poor choices. If you keep your cool, your child will be more apt to focus on his or her own behavior rather than reacting to yours.
- 4.** If your child makes a poor choice, try not to nag or give excessive warnings. Instead, remain emotionally neutral and follow through with the appropriate consequences. In a nutshell, don't let your child drain your energy!
- 5.** If your child tries to argue with you or acts insincere, set a timer for three minutes and walk away. Explain to your child that you will come back when the timer goes off and discuss the situation with him or her, but you will not argue. Set your boundaries and stick to them. This gives your child a few minutes to internally process the situation, own it, and organize a more suitable response. It also allows your child to develop effective autonomy.

- 6.** Be very consistent in your responses and reactions. Children need to be well aware of the boundaries that apply to their world, and know what the consequences will be if they choose to violate them.
- 7.** With older children and teens, explain that appropriate choices yield appropriate privileges, including getting to use the car, hanging out with friends, having access to technology, enjoying activities, etc. The more responsible your child is, the more privileges he or she can enjoy. Remind your children that they have control over their quality of life, and then let them make the choices that will yield either privileges or negative consequences.
- 8.** When children make a poor choice, coach them toward accepting responsibility by expecting them to clearly vocalize what they did, explain how it was hurtful or irresponsible, and apologize. Then, help them identify what a better choice might have been.
- 9.** Model productive behavior!!! You are your child's coping instructor. Stop seeing your child as a victim. Don't blame external situations for his or her individual predicament.

Remember... it's not about **“fault,”**
it's about
responsibility!

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