

For all our children. — C. M. S.

For the Andersons, especially Reece and Etamo,
with love and every best wish. — K. P.



Books by Cornelia Maude Spelman

After Charlotte's Mom Died ~ Mama and Daddy Bear's Divorce
Your Body Belongs to You

The Way I Feel Books:

When I Care about Others ~ When I Feel Angry
When I Feel Scared ~ When I Feel Sad
When I Feel Good about Myself

Please visit Cornelia at her web site: www.corneliaspelman.com.
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Summary: A little bear describes situations that bring about fear,
how it feels to be scared, and what can make things better.

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Note to Parents and Teachers

While there are times children need to tolerate their fright in order to learn from new situations, it isn't helpful to minimize or deny their fear. We may believe we're reassuring when we say, "That's nothing to be afraid of!" but this response can, in fact, hurt children by making them feel ashamed of an emotion that is both common and unavoidable.

For healthy development, children need to be able to identify their feelings and to receive acknowledgment, understanding, and comfort when they convey these feelings to adults. The child whose feeling is ignored or denied or who is made to feel embarrassed is left alone with an upsetting emotion and does not learn to seek help when needed.

Instead of downplaying children's fear, we need to acknowledge it and then show them how to manage it. Management will depend on the situation. Sometimes fear is appropriate, and actions based on fear keep children safe (staying away from a growling dog). Sometimes fear is unfounded, and we can help a child discover this by experiencing the fearful situation together (looking under the bed to see what's there; taking a pleasant walk in the dark). Sometimes fear must be tolerated (as in getting a shot), but we can stay in close physical and emotional contact with children and thus help them bear it ("I am right here with you").

We want our children to know that we will be attentive to all of their feelings—positive or negative; that all of the human family—children and adults—experience such feelings; and that we know how to deal with unpleasant emotions. We want to build our children's confidence in their coping ability, so that they will be able to say, "When I feel scared, I know what to do!"

Cornelia Maude Spelman, a.c.s.w., l.c.s.w.



Sometimes I feel scared.



I feel scared when there's a big, loud noise
or when I have a bad dream

