

THE * WAY * I * FEEL * BOOKS

When I Feel Sad

WRITTEN BY Cornelia Maude Spelman

ILLUSTRATED BY Kathy Parkinson



For Tidie, who didn't know she could share it. — C. M. S.

To Katie, with love. — 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 Sad ~ When I Feel Scared

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Note to Parents and Teachers

It is painful for us when children are sad. Their sorrow makes us anxious to help them so that they can feel happy again. It also arouses our own feelings of sadness. Yet, if we didn't learn that it was okay to acknowledge and share our own unhappy feelings, we may deny or minimize our children's, or try to distract them from these feelings.

This reaction, while understandable, is not helpful. It teaches children not to pay attention to their feelings or share them with others. Children need to learn that sharing feelings with other human beings brings comfort. Some adults who did not learn this, who did not experience being understood and listened to, have problems in relationships. Others may turn for comfort to substances instead of to people.

But there is a difference between acknowledging a child's feeling, offering comfort, and overindulging. The child who is sad can be offered physical closeness, listening, and time to share his sadness, yet still be expected to pick up his toys, to carry on. It's a question of timing, of giving emotions their due before we offer activities which will help move the child past the sadness.

This book addresses ordinary sadness. We can help a child who grieves following a death or other major loss in these same ways, but we need to be attentive over a longer period of time. And when for too long a child stays sad, cries frequently, is listless, has problems eating and sleeping—seek professional help. Even very young children can suffer from clinical depression, which requires intervention.

We want our children to know that we value all of their feelings—positive or negative; that all of us, children and adults, experience such feelings; and that we know how to deal with them. We want to build our children's confidence in their coping ability, so that they will be able to say, "When I feel sad, I know I won't *stay* sad."

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





Sometimes I feel sad.
I feel sad when someone won't let me play,

or when I really want to tell about
something and nobody listens.

