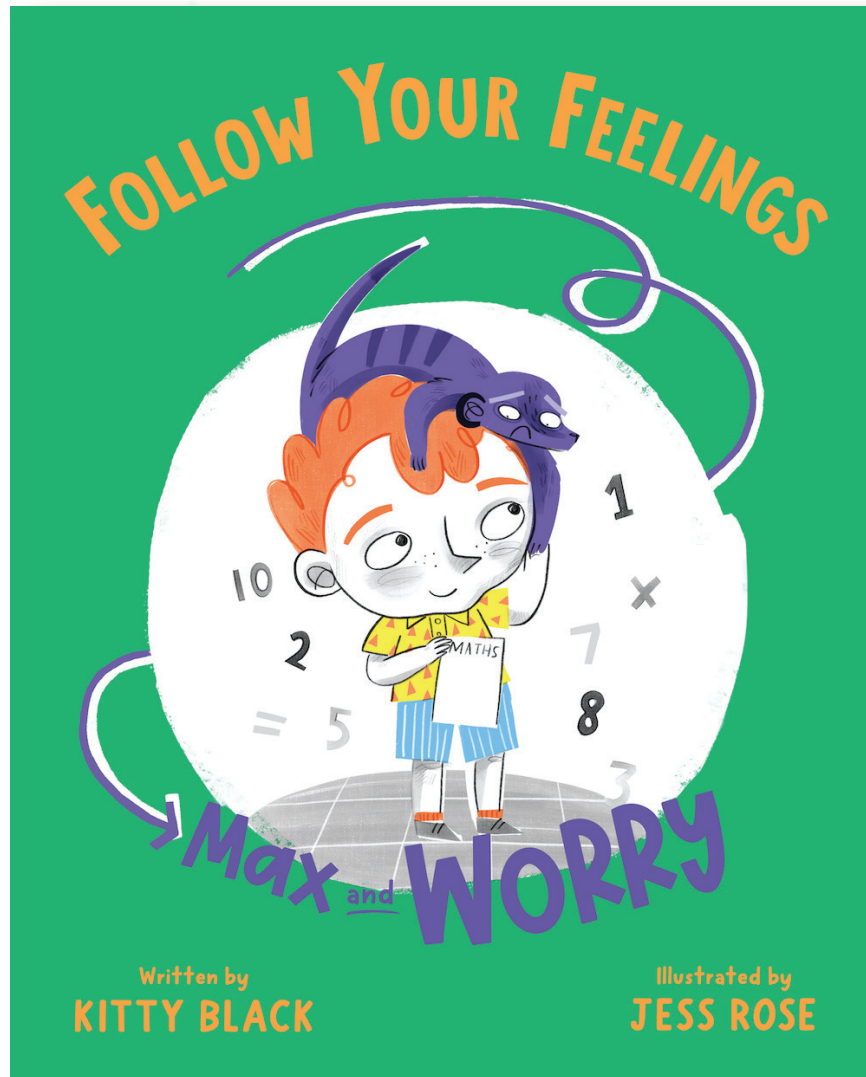


Teachers' Notes & Activities



Written by

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Illustrated by

Jess Rose

Suitable for

Ages 3+

Themes

Feeling worried

Accepting our feelings

Developing confidence

Contents of this pack

- Overview of Follow Your Feelings: *Max and Worry*
- Before we begin reading
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Description

When Max has a hard time starting his maths work, he's joined by someone new: Worry.

But Worry doesn't give Max the help he needs. It feels like Worry will never leave, even when Max does what Worry tells him to!

But with the help of some deep breaths and a vow to just try his best, Max can say goodbye for now to Worry, and hello to someone new ...

Follow Your Feelings is a touching, funny and charming new series about getting to know and love our emotions, from emotional acceptance champion Kitty Black and illustrator Jess Rose.

About the author

Kitty Black is a children's author living in Perth, Western Australia. Kitty studied psychology and education. After doing lots of research type things and talking to kids about their feelings type things, Kitty found that stories are the most important things in the world. She lives with her partner and two children who are excellent at providing both inspiration and noise, although rarely in equal amounts.

About the illustrator

Jess Rose is an Illustrator and designer living in Yorkshire, England. She has always loved to draw, and what was once a hobby growing up is now her career. She feels incredibly fortunate to get to spend her days doing something she loves this much! Alongside her work, she can often be found with her husband, two children, cat (Gizmo) and dog (Ghibli). Her free time is spent walking, practising aerial hoop and reading good books.

Find this book at our website:

<https://affirmpress.com.au/publishing/follow-your-feelings-max-and-worry>

Key themes

FEELING WORRIED

As soon as Max sees his maths classwork, he begins to feel worried. His racing thoughts and fears appear in the form of a meerkat who voices all of Max's concerns and starts to give advice on how Max should behave. By characterising Worry as a stressed-out meerkat, this book shows how worried thoughts can escalate and how they can affect our behaviours. The humour in Worry's increased anxieties, as shown in Worry's movements and speech, lightens the mood and can open discussion on pinpointing when our worries can start to feel overwhelming and unrealistic.

ACCEPTING OUR FEELINGS

At first, Max listens to Worry, but eventually he decides to go against Worry's advice and ask the teacher for help with his maths work. Importantly, Max does not reject Worry entirely, ask Worry to leave, or try to ignore Worry. We see Max speaking calmly and rationally to Worry, and comforting Worry as if his emotion is his friend. And even though Worry is opposed to Max's plan to just try his best in his next maths lesson, Max does it anyway. This is a great way of showing young readers that we should not push our feelings away: we can accept that they're there, speak to ourselves with kindness when they show up, and even act differently to what they're telling us while knowing they're still there.

DEVELOPING CONFIDENCE

Max is not confident in his ability in maths and is too afraid to ask for help. This is a common feeling among young people about maths, but the situation Max is in can be applied to any situation in which a child is worried about something. Max listens to and believes in Worry's fears, which only makes him fear maths more. By the end of the book, Max has decided to act differently. He may still have worries about maths, but he is now confident in his ability to ask for help without any of Worry's catastrophic fears about this coming true.

Before we begin reading

- Have a look at the front cover; what do you think this book will be about?
- Who do you think is Max, and who is Worry?
- Have a look at the characters' faces. What emotion is Max feeling?
- What kind of animal is Worry?
- Why do you think Worry is an animal?
- Can you tell from the cover what Max might be worried about in this story?
- Do you worry about doing maths? Why/why not?

Discussion in key curriculum areas

COMPREHENSION

- At the start of this book, Max wishes he could run away. Why is this?
- On page 7, Worry says 'it's a risk'. What does Worry think is a risk? Why does Worry think this would be a risk?
- What does Max do to avoid completing his maths work in class?
- Why do Max and Worry hide and run away from the teacher?
- On page 17, Max's grown-ups hug him and tell him to just try his best before tucking him in bed. Why can't Worry sleep that night?
- Why does Max say to Worry, 'I'll look after you'?
- When does Max decide to do something differently in his next maths class? Why does Max decide to do this?
- Worry starts to fade until they're eventually gone. When does Worry start fading?
- Why does Worry fade away completely?
- At the end of the book, when Worry has faded away, a new character called Resilience lands on Max's desk. Do you know what 'resilience' means? Why does Max meet Resilience?
- Only Max can see or hear Worry. Why do you think this is? Do you think the other characters have their own Worry or other animal with them?

NUMERACY

- How many times does Max frown or look unhappy in this book? When does this happen the most?
- How many children can you spot in Max's class?
- How many maths equations are written on the board? Can you solve them?
- Can you count how many times the alphabet chart appears in the book?
- On page 7, you'll see that Max has written the answer to a question. $4+6 = 9$. Is this sum correct?
- How many toys can you find in Max's bedroom?
- What shape is the orange pattern on Max's yellow shirt?

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- When Max feels worried, his stomach churns like a washing machine. Have you ever felt like that? What happens when you feel worried or nervous?
- On the classroom wall behind Max, there are three posters with faces on them. What emotions do each of these three faces show?
- When Max asks Worry what happens when something isn't perfect, Worry tells him the world could explode, or worse: everyone looks at you. Do you think the world really would explode? What might happen instead?
- When we're feeling worried, asking for help can seem a bit scary. What happens when Max asks for help in the book?
- Does Worry become more worried, less worried or stay the same as the book goes on? Does Max become more worried, less worried, or stay the same as the book goes on?
- Why does Max not just ask Worry to leave? Why does Worry stay?

Final Reflections

- What was your favourite part about this book? Did you have a favourite page?
- If your worry was an animal, what animal would it be?



Activity One: Draw your feeling

How do you feel right now: Happy? Excited? Bored? Angry? Imagine that whatever you're feeling is an animal who has come to sit with you. What would your animal be? Perhaps it's a Happy lion, or a Sad giraffe, or an Angry duck! Draw your feeling friend in the space below, or find a spare piece of paper. Perhaps you could be in your picture, too?

A large rectangular area with a dotted orange border, intended for drawing.

Activity Two: Worry box & happy box

For this activity, you will need two boxes or two jars with lids, a pen/pencil, and some strips of paper. One box will be a 'Worry Box' and the other will be a 'Happy Box'. If you have scrap paper, materials, glitter and other crafty things available, you could decorate your boxes in a fun way!

When you feel worried about something, write down what is worrying you on a slip of paper and put it in the worry box. You can write a full sentence, or just a word or two.

Perhaps soon after you have done that, or at another time, write something that makes you happy on another slip of paper, and put that paper in the happy box. Try to think of something that made you smile recently. You can write the same thing multiple times for the worry box and the happy box. Why not open the happy box from time to time and have a look at all the things that have made you feel good?

Activity Three: Your own Max & Worry

Partner up with a friend or two for this activity! Together you will write your own short story about Max and Worry. Think of a scenario when Max is feeling worried again, and what will happen when Worry returns.

Here are some questions to consider:

- What is Max nervous about?
- What does Worry say when they come back?
- What does Worry tell Max to do? Does Max do it?
- How does Max help Worry to start fading away?
- Who does Max meet at the end of your story?

If you feel like it, perhaps you could act out your story to the class?

