

READER GUIDE

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Surf Soup Honi the Honu Turtle

I'm Shy and That's Okay

A Social-Emotional Learning Story About Communication,
Listening, and Connection

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A Note to Teachers, Parents, and Librarians

Dear Educators and Caregivers,

Honi the Honu Turtle is shy — and that's perfectly okay. This book is designed to help children recognize and honor their feelings while practicing gentle communication, listening, and confidence-building.

The pages that follow offer conversation prompts, reflection questions, and hands-on activities to support social-emotional learning (SEL) in classrooms, libraries, and at home. These tools are aligned with CASEL competencies — including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making — and can be adapted to fit your students' or children's needs.

Our goal is to help children feel seen, heard, and empowered to express themselves at their own pace. Thank you for guiding them in this journey of self-discovery and empathy.

Warmly,

Donna

Creator of Surf Soup®

Purpose

This guide helps teachers, homeschoolers, and parents support children in:

Identifying and expressing emotions

Practicing safe communication and listening

Building confidence at their own pace

Before Reading

Introduce the book: “We’re going to meet Honi, a turtle who is shy, and that’s okay.”

Ask: “What does it mean to be shy? Is it okay to feel shy?”

Create a calm reading environment.

During Reading

Pause after each page and ask reflection questions:

“How does Honi feel?”

“Have you ever felt the same way?”

“What do you notice about the other kids?”

Point out Honi’s strategies: slow breaths, naming feelings, noticing others.

After Reading

Activities

Name Your Feeling

Kids say or draw how they feel today.

Optional: Use a turtle shell template to write feelings inside.

Gentle Starter Practice

Practice one-line greetings: “Hi,” “Can I play?”

Role-play in pairs or with toys.

Listening Practice

Play “Turtle Listening”: one child speaks, the other listens quietly, then repeat.

Brave Choices Reflection

Discuss situations where kids can choose to speak or stay quiet.

Emphasize: every choice is valid.

SEL Skills Highlighted

Self-Awareness: Honi says, “I’m shy — and that’s okay,” helping children identify and name their feelings.

Self-Management: Honi practices slow breathing and waits until he is ready to speak, modeling emotional regulation.

Social Awareness: Honi notices other shy kids and considers how they feel, building empathy.

Relationship Skills: Honi practices saying hello, asking questions, and listening carefully to others.

Responsible Decision-Making: Honi chooses when to speak or listen, showing thoughtful social choices.

Alignment with CASEL Competencies

Self-Awareness: Name your feelings and recognize emotions, like Honi identifying his shyness.

Self-Management: Use calm breathing, pause before speaking, and regulate behavior in social situations.

Social Awareness: Notice how others feel and show empathy, like Honi watching other shy classmates.

Relationship Skills: Practice greeting others, asking questions, taking turns, and listening actively.

Responsible Decision-Making: Choose when to speak or listen, reflect on your actions, and make thoughtful social choices.



TEACHER / PARENT GUIDE (SHORT + PRACTICAL)

What this book teaches:

Self-acceptance

Emotional awareness

Communication skills

Listening and empathy

Confidence without pressure

How to use it:

Read slowly

Pause often

Allow silence

Never force participation

Say things like:

“It’s okay to be shy.”

“You can take your time.”

“I’m proud of you for trying.”



School/Parent/Homeschool USE (BUILT-IN)

This book naturally supports:

SEL classes

Communication practice

Shy-friendly participation

Role-play & discussion

Reusable lesson plans

You can teach:

One session per tool

Or a multi-week confidence series

Or read-aloud + practice workshops