

Willa and the Magic Widget SEL Companion





This Book belongs to

Welcome, Willa Readers!

Every feeling is a visitor, and every visitor has a message.

This workbook aims to help explore feelings, just like Willa explored hers with the Magic Widget.

Everyone can draw, think, write, move, breathe, and discover their own “inner magic.”

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*Big Feelings,
Small Shifts –
Magical Tools for
Wonderful Kids!*



SEL Guide for Teachers, LSWs & Counselors, Parents & Caregivers

Based on Willa and the Magic Widget

SEL Focus Areas

- Emotional awareness & naming feelings
- Understanding intensity levels (big/little feelings)
- Body awareness & early cues
- Cognitive reframing (thoughts influence feelings)
- Mindful breathing for regulation
- Self-compassion and emotional acceptance
- Play-based emotional literacy
- Problem-solving & emotional choice-making



SUMMARY OF THE STORY FOR EDUCATORS

Willa experiences a morning full of small frustrations that build into big emotions. When she discovers the Magic Widget, each button brings a different “Feelie” to life—Grumble (anger/frustration), Gigglefritz (silliness), Zing (excitement), and Mello (calm/neutrality).

Through these playful characters, Willa learns she can:

- Name her feelings
- Acknowledge them without judgment
- Use tools to calm her body
- Shift her thoughts to guide her emotions

 FOR TEACHERS
(Classroom SEL Guide)

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Identify and label basic emotions (happy, sad, mad, excited, overwhelmed).
- Recognize physical cues associated with each feeling.
- Explore how thoughts influence emotional experiences.
- Practice calming strategies like deep breathing.
- Build empathy by understanding that feelings change and everyone has them.

BEFORE READING (5 minutes)

Ask students:

- “What feeling did you bring with you today?”
(Let them choose an emoji or gesture.)
- “Have you ever felt ‘too much’ of a feeling?”
- “What helps your body feel calmer?”

DURING READING (Interactive Questions)

Pause at key moments:

- Willa’s bad morning: “What feeling might Willa be having right now?”
- Grumble appearing: “What does your body do when you feel grumpy?”
- Gigglefritz: “When is silliness fun? When can it get too much?”
- Zing: “What happens when excitement gets BIG?”
- Mello: “What does calm feel like in your body?”

Encourage students to make faces or mimic body postures.

AFTER READING DISCUSSION (Grades Pre-K–3)

1. “Which Feelie do you feel most like today?”
2. “Is there a feeling Willa had that you relate to?”
3. “How did Willa help herself feel better?”
4. “Why do you think feelings change throughout the day?”
5. “What might you do the next time your feelings feel too big?”

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. Make Your Own Feelie

Students draw or create their own emotion creature:

- Name the Feelie
- What it looks like
- What triggers it
- What helps it calm down

2. Feelings Thermometer

Create a large poster:

- Green = calm
- Yellow = wiggly/excited
- Orange = frustrated
- Red = very upset

Students move their name to show how they're feeling.

3. Thought Switch Activity

Show two scenarios and let kids “switch the thoughts”:

- Negative thought → alternative helpful thought
- Teach: “Thoughts can shift how we feel.”

4. “Magic Breath” Practice

Do the breathing Mello taught:

- Inhale for 3
- Hold for 1
- Exhale for 4

Use glitter jars, scarves, or bubbles for visual support.

5. Morning Feelings Check-In

Use the Magic Widget as inspiration:

Four cups or envelopes labeled: HAPPY • SAD • MAD • EXCITED

Kids drop a token based on how they feel.



**FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL
WORKERS, LSWs &
COUNSELORS**

SEL & Clinical Applications

Use the story to explore:

- Emotional escalation patterns
- Oppositional or dysregulated behavior as communication
- Cognitive distortions (“My day is ruined!”)
- Psychoeducation: “Feelings are visitors”
- Nervous system states (hyperarousal, shutdown, regulation)

One-on-One or Group Activities

1. Externalizing Emotions

Just like the Feelies, ask:

- “If your anger had a character, what would it say?”
- “What’s the voice of your worry?”

This reduces shame and opens conversation.

2. The Body Map

Have the child color where each Feelie shows up:

- Grumble: clenched fists? hot face?
- Gigglefritz: wiggly legs? bouncy energy?
- Zing: fast heartbeat? fluttery tummy?
- Mello: soft shoulders? quiet chest?

3. “Channel Off” Skill

Teach a tool for overstimulation:

- Sit down
- Place one hand on heart, one on belly
- Name the feeling
- Breathe until body quiets

Use the story’s “CHANNEL OFF” as metaphor for grounding.

4. Reframing

Use the Magic Widget’s message: “Your feelings are mighty, but thoughts let them flow.”

Help kids identify:

- Feeling
- Thought
- Replacement thought

Example:

✗ “My day is ruined.”

✓ “My morning felt bad, but the rest can get better.”

5. Calm Corner Setup

Include:

- Feelie cards
- Breathing prompts
- Widget-inspired buttons
- Glitter jar
- Weighted plushie



**FOR PARENTS &
CAREGIVERS**

Home Connection Activities

1. Magic Widget Routine

- Use 4 household buttons, stickers, or paper circles:
- HAPPY • SAD • MAD • EXCITED
- Have your child choose one after school and explain why.

2. Giggle Release Time

- Set a timer for a 30-second giggle blast.
- Afterwards: “What does your body feel like now?”

3. “Tell Me Your Feelie” Bedtime Check-In

Ask:

- “Which Feelie visited you today?”
- “What helped?”

4. Glitter Jar Calming Tool

- Shake → fast feelings
- Watching it settle → body settling
- Connect explicitly to Mello's message about breathing.

5. Encouraging Thought Shifts

Help kids reframe with:

- “Can we think of this another way?”
- “What would Mello say right now?”

KEY MESSAGE **FOR ADULTS**

Willa and the Magic Widget teaches children that all feelings are acceptable, all feelings change, and every child can learn skills to understand and guide their emotional world.

Through imaginative play with the Feelies, kids build confidence, self-awareness, and emotional resilience.

✨ ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS ✨ AND GROWN-UPS

This section facilitates SEL competencies:

- Emotional Awareness
- Self-Regulation
- Empathy & Social Skills
- Mindfulness
- Growth Mindset

Includes simple, low-prep practices for home or classroom.

SECTION 1 – Understanding Feelings

1.1 What Are Feelings?

Fill-in-the-blanks:

Feelings are things I _____.

They can be _____, _____, or _____.

All feelings are _____.

1.2 Meet Your Feelings

Every feeling has a message. Use these pages to explore what they look like, sound like, and feel like.

1.3 Big Feelings Map

Draw or write: What does happy look like in your body? What about sad, mad, worried, excited, brave, or calm?

1.4 Feeling Check-In Charts

Use these every day or whenever you want.

How Do I Feel Today?

Circle one or draw your own:

 Happy

 Worried

 Mad

 Sad

 Excited

 Calm

 Curious

 Happy

 Okay

 Overwhelmed

My feeling feels like: (warm, heavy, fluttery, tingly...)

I think this feeling came from: (an event, a person, a thought...)



SECTION 2 – Willa’s Morning: Big Feelings Arrive

Willa woke up feeling twisty, jumbled, and mad!

What Does “Twisty” Feel Like in Your Body?

2.1 Draw or circle:

- Tight stomach
- Fast heartbeat
- Hot face
- Wanting to yell
- Wanting to cry

Space: Add your own!

2.2 Your Turn

Think of a time your morning felt “twisty.”

- What happened?
- What did your body feel like?

Write or draw.



SECTION 3 — Meet Grumble (Grumpy)

3.1 What Makes Grumble Show Up?

Check all that fit:

- ☐ Someone took my stuff
- ☐ Things feel unfair
- ☐ My body is tired
- ☐ I want things my way
- ☐ Someone is loud or rude
- ☐ Something else: _____

3.2 What Helps Grumble Calm Down?

Match each picture to the calming skill:

Breathing

Squeezing a pillow

Counting to ten

Asking for help

Saying “I need a break”

3.3 Draw Grumble

Give Grumble:

A shape

A color

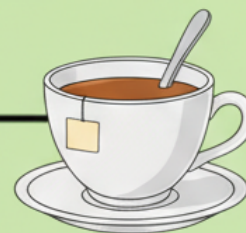
A size

A noise he makes





Start



Exit



SECTION 4 – Meet Gigglefritz (Giggles)

4.1 Too Much Gigglefritz

Giggles are great...until they cause chaos.

Write or draw:

A time you were too silly

What happened

How you could slow the silly next time

4.2 Draw Gigglefritz

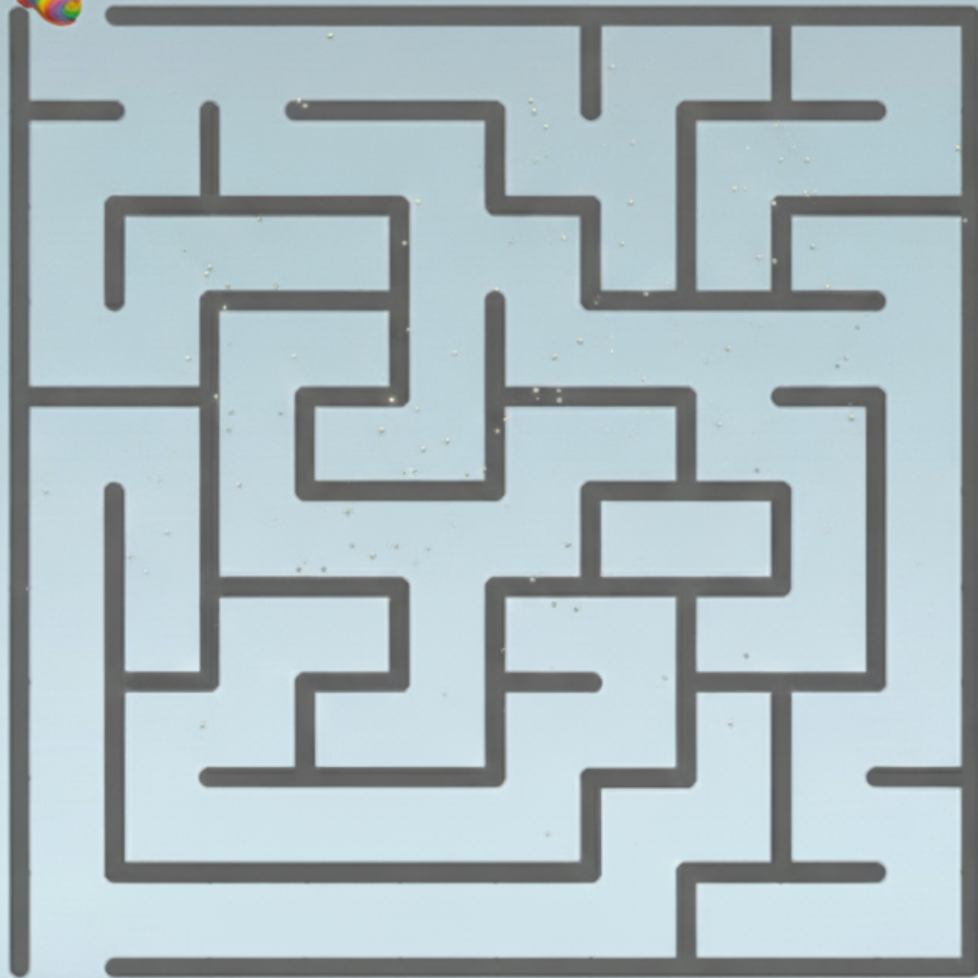
Big eyes?

Squishy body?

Sparkles?

YOU decide





✨ SECTION 5 – Meet Zing (Excitement)

5.1 What Excited Energy Feels Like

Circle all that match:

- ⚡ Fast talking
- ⚡ Bouncing legs
- ⚡ Hard to sit still
- ⚡ Big ideas!
- ⚡ Forgetting to listen

5.2 Draw Grumble

Give Grumble:

A shape

A color

A size

A noise he makes

5.3 Channeling Energy

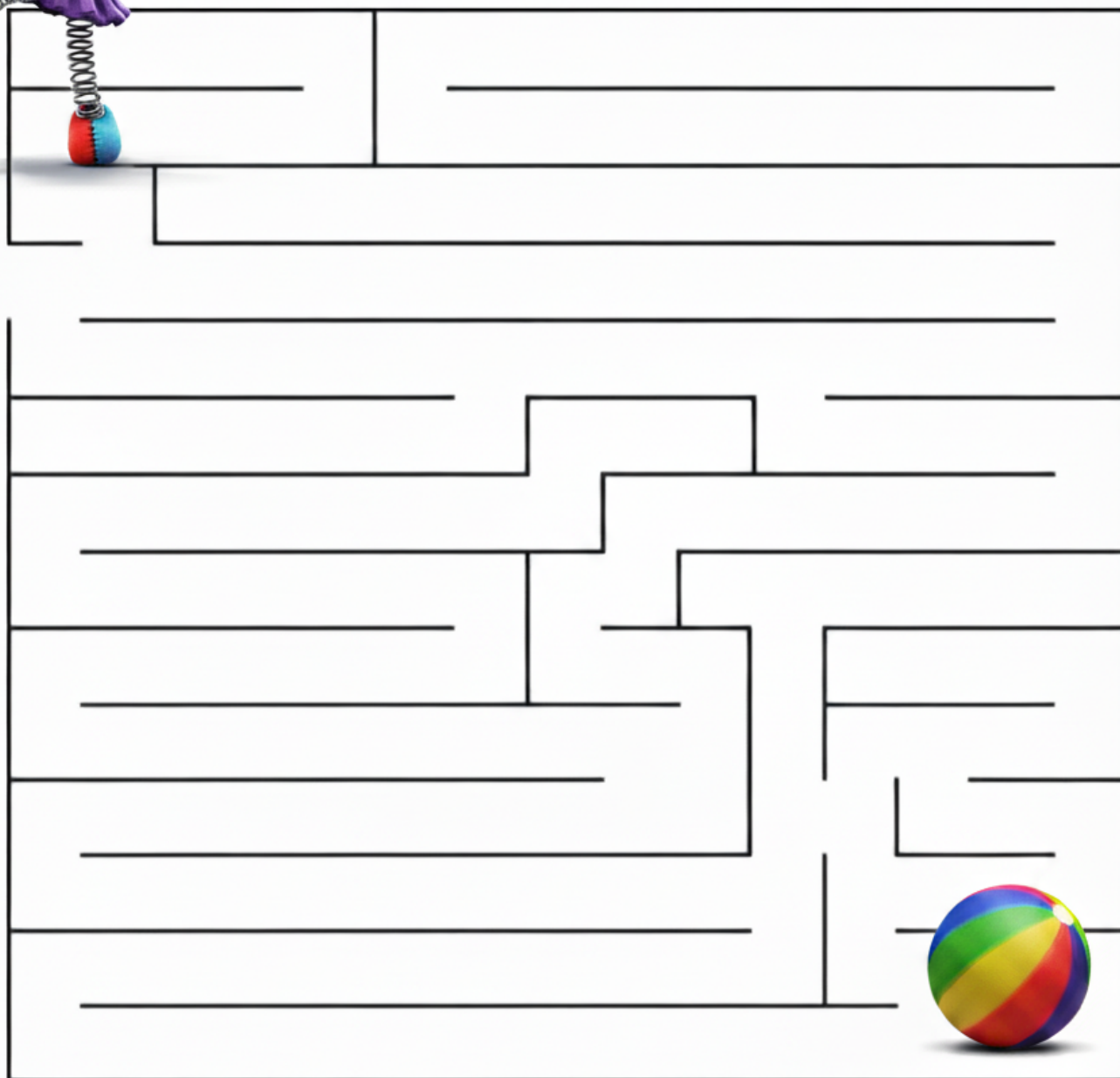
Willa clicked the Channel Off button.

You can't turn off excitement—but you can channel it.

Draw or list your “Excitement Helpers”:

- Running outside
- Jumping jacks
- Dancing
- Writing down ideas
- Taking a movement break







SECTION 6 – Grey Flat Feeling (Numb or Blah)

6.1 Understanding the “Grey Feeling”

Sometimes we feel... nothing.

Not sad, not mad, not happy. Just flat.

Questions:

How does “grey” feel in your body?

What colors would it be?

What do you need when you feel grey?

(Quiet? A hug? Music?)

SECTION 7 – Meet Mello (Calming)

7.1 Draw Mello

Soft colors? Floaty body? Calm smile?

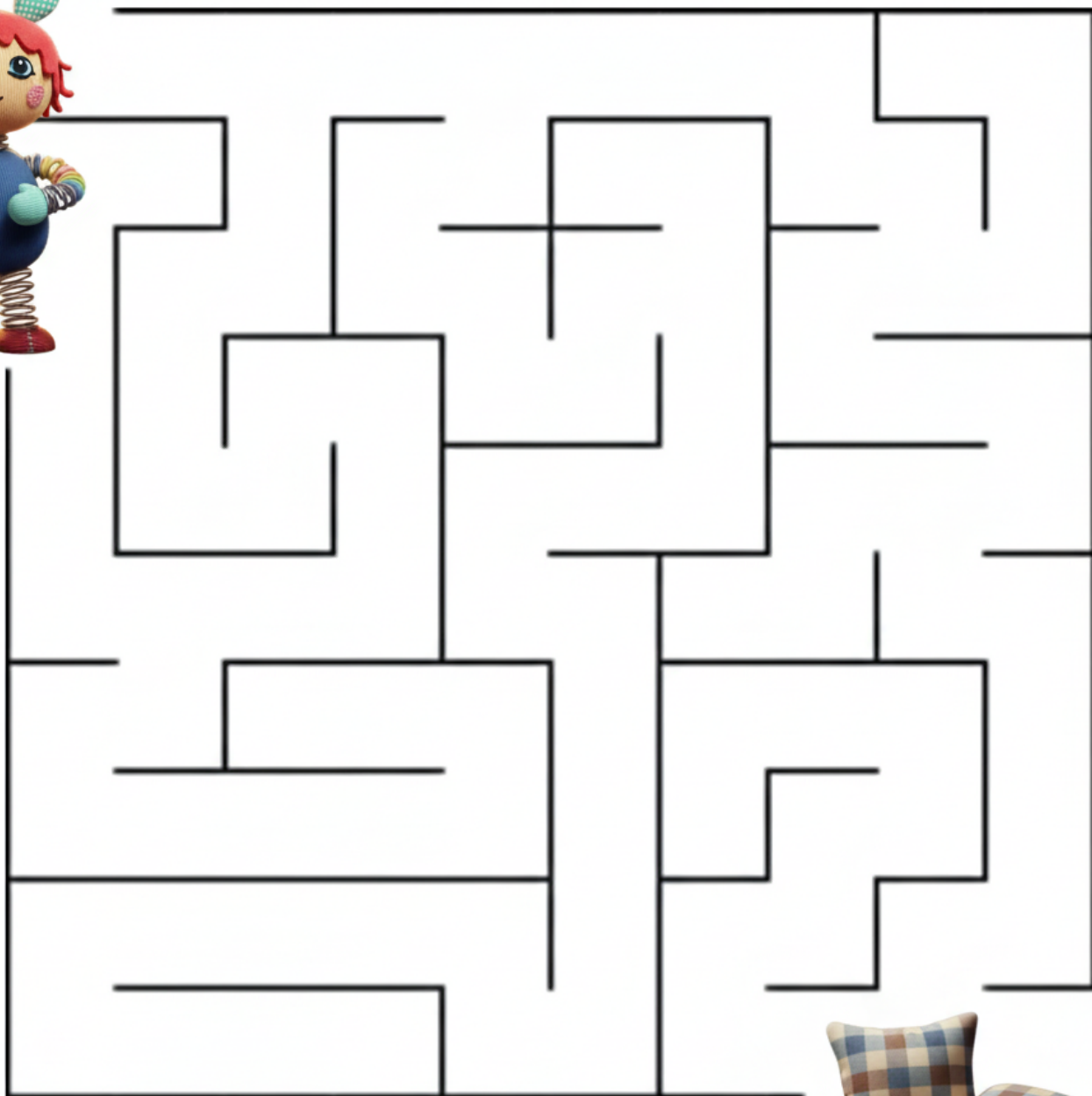
7.2 Mello's Message

Complete the prompts:

“When I feel swirly inside, Mello reminds me to...”

“When I feel overwhelmed, I can...”





SECTION 8 – Willa’s Magic Breathing Practice

8.1 Three Slow Breaths

Put your hand on your belly

Breathe in slow

Watch your belly rise

Breathe out sloooow

Repeat 3 times

Space to draw themselves doing it.

8.2 Breathing Stars

Trace the star: inhale up, exhale down each point.



SECTION 9 – Thoughts Are Magic

Willa learned: “My thoughts are the magic that help me grow.”

9.1 Thought Catcher

Write a tricky thought you often have:

“I’m not good at this.”

“This day is bad.”

“No one likes me.”

“I can’t do it.”

Then rewrite it into a helpful thought:

“I can try again.”

“Bad moments don’t make bad days.”

“I am learning.”

“I can ask for help.”

9.2 Choose Your Magic Thought

Pick one helpful thought and decorate it on the page.

SECTION 10 – Creative SEL Activities

10.1 Make Your Own Widget

Draw:

- Buttons
- Colors
- What each button does

10.2 Feeling Map

Draw your body → color where different feelings live.

10.3 Create a New Feelie Friend

Name: _____

What they represent:

Color:

When they show up:

What they help with:

SECTION 11 — Your Feelings Toolkit

Create a list of strategies that work for YOU:

- Breathing
- Snuggle with a pet
- Squeeze your hands
- Stretch
- Ask for help
- Use your words
- Draw your feelings
- Move your body

Space for adding more.

SECTION 12 — Reflection

Questions:

1. What did I learn about feelings?
2. What is one strategy I can use every day?
3. Which Feelie is most like me?
4. Which Feelie do I want to practice with more?



COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

**“This certificate celebrates
_____ for exploring feelings,
learning new skills, and
discovering their inner magic—
just like Willa Wonderly.”**

**Signature lines for caregiver +
child.**

 WILLA'S MAGIC
TOOLS AND TRICS

♥ Heart-Breath Skills ♥

Willa's favorite tool!

Try the Magic Heart Breath

1. Put your hand on your heart.
2. Breathe in slowly like you're smelling a flower.
3. Breathe out slowly like you're blowing a bubble.
4. Repeat 3 times.

Color in a star 🌟 each time you practice.

🌟 Willa's Magic Pause 🌟

When feelings get big, Willa uses her Magic Pause.

The Magic Pause Steps

1. Stop. Say, "Pause!"
2. Breathe. One Magic Heart Breath.
3. Name it. "I feel ____."
4. Choose. "I can ____ to help myself."

Practice Page: Draw Willa using her Magic Pause.

Calm-Down Toolbox

Create your own list of tools.

Ideas:

- Heart Breaths
- Counting Breaths
- Butterfly Hug
- Squeeze & Release
- Quiet Corner Time

My Tools: _____

✨ Kindness Quests ✨

Kindness grows your brain and heart!

Daily Quest Ideas:

- Say one kind thing to yourself.
- Help a friend or sibling.
- Draw a thank-you picture.

Check off the Kindness Boxes: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Reflection Pages

Today I felt:

Something that helped me was:

One thing I'm proud of is:

Little Moments, Big Hearts



With pen in hand I
pause each day, to
let my swirling
thoughts find their way.



I sit and breathe in
quiet space,
letting calmness fill
inner place.



I'm grateful for all I
have each day,
letting kindness shine
in every way.

Key Takeaway **for Grown-Ups**

Children don't need to avoid big feelings—they need gentle guidance to understand them.

By helping them notice the thought–feeling link, you teach emotional literacy, resilience, and optimism. When you and your child share this story, you're not just reading—you're developing new emotional tools together.

Visit us at

www.wonderlypublishing.com

to get more information about the series

**Big Feelings, Small Shifts–Magical Tools for
Wonderful Kids!**

and download interactive materials, SEL
guides, freebies for kids, and more.

Big Feelings, Small Shifts—Magical Tools for Wonderful Kids!, a heart-centered series that helps children name, understand, and embrace their emotions. Through gentle rhyme and mindful storytelling, Willa's adventures guide kids (and their grown-ups) to pause, breathe, and find calm, courage, and connection in every feeling.



Anna Murzhenko is the creator of the series about Willa Wonderly. As a yoga and meditation practitioner and teacher, storyteller, and parent, Anna brings together wisdom and imagination to help children understand their emotions in meaningful ways. Willa Wonderly was born from Anna's desire to make mindfulness and the understanding of our inner power not only accessible but magical -- turning everyday challenges into opportunities for growth, creativity, and connection.

Every feeling has something to teach us. Let this guide help you grow, connect, and shine a little brighter every day.