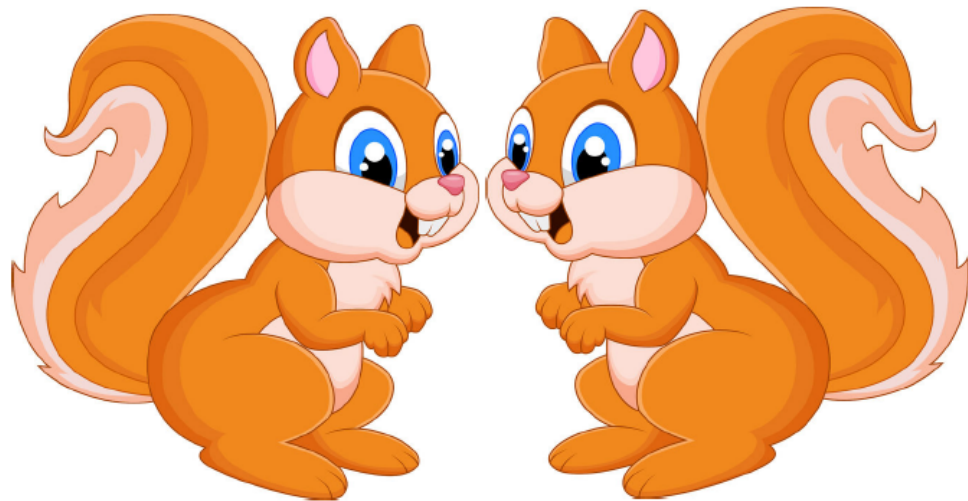


# Whispering Squirrels

**A Cosmos Grow Adventure**



You are confronted with “Whispering Squirrels” situations every day.

You cannot control the challenges life gives you  
but you can control how you deal with them.

The more often you choose to take control of your life,  
the easier it is to be in control.

Eventually, it will become a habit and you  
will smile at the foolish behavior of the  
“**Whispering Squirrels**” in your life.

# The Whispering Squirrels

## A. Main Focus:

**Learning that your thinking determines your emotions and behaviors. That Stinky Thinking will lead to "Not Ok" emotions and "Thumbs Down" behaviors. If your thinking is Good, then you will be able to evaluate options when confronted with a "threatening" situation because your emotions are "OK" and your behaviors are "Thumbs Up."**

**In other words, no person or thing can MAKE you feel anything. We control our feelings and our behaviors when we control our thinking.**

## B. The Main Concepts:

The concepts used in this lesson are frequently referred to as the ABC theory:

"A" An activating event or experience

"B" Your belief/thoughts/self-talk about "A"

"C" The emotional and behavioral consequences

Most children and many adults think that an event or situation (A) leads directly to an emotion or a reaction (C). For example, "He stepped on my foot and that made me mad so I hit him." The problem for this child is that he believes, stepping on his foot caused the anger and he had no choice but to fight.

What is missed by this student is that there were also some thoughts or self-talk (B) involved in the outcome. Negative thoughts such as, "That punk better not mess up my shoes," or "Nobody is going to mess with me," will cause more intense emotional reactions such as anger and more irrational behaviors such as fighting.

A student with more rational thinking, "It was just an accident," or "No need to get angry, I can clean the shoe," etc., will be better able to control their emotional and behavioral reaction in this situation.

What we are targeting in this lesson, is to help students begin to realize that what they are thinking, either rational or irrational, is what is causing their emotions, both good and bad and that this in turn is causing their behavior.

### **C. Teach the Defining Terms to The Students**

### **D. Listen to the Flip Book Story**

### **E. Sample Dialogue with Students after Listening to the Story**

I think those squirrels acted a lot like some of us in this class. I am sure there have been times when you think that someone is talking about you and without even knowing for sure, you make yourself angry or sad or embarrassed. (They may just acknowledge or want to give examples)

What is interesting is, does anyone really know what the “Whispering Squirrels” were saying to each other? (No we don’t. They could have been telling each other knock knock jokes that they do not want to share. Or they could have been talking about who they have a crush on. Or really anything)

Let’s start with the squirrel that Cosmos named Angry Squirrel...who would like to give us an example of what Angry Squirrel probably thought they were saying? (Let them give examples and focus on those that would be reasonable “anger producing” thoughts)

So if someone said (use one of their examples) to you, do you have to get angry...even if it is not true? (You want them to see that just because someone says something...particularly if it is not true, you have to choose to become angry...you have the control)

How about the squirrel that Cosmos named Sad Squirrel...who would like to give us an example of what Sad Squirrel probably thought they were saying? (Let them give examples and focus on those that would be reasonable “embarrassment producing” thoughts)

So if someone said (use one of their examples) to you, do you have to get sad or embarrassed...even if it is not true? (You want them to see that just because someone says something...particularly if it is not true, you have to choose to become angry...you have the control)

I think Cosmos is trying to help us understand that our anger and sadness and all of our emotions is up to us. Neither of these two squirrels knew what was really being said by the Whispering Squirrels but they decided it must be something

about them. They chose to get themselves all worked up about something that they just thought to be true.

But what about that third squirrel? She had the same thing happen to her as did the first two squirrels. But what is it that she did differently? (She told herself, "Even if they are talking about me and even if it is mean or ugly, why should I care? Is there any good reason to let those two cause me to upset myself and make myself angry or sad? And since there is no good reason to let them control how I feel or behave, I didn't and I continued to have a very nice day.")

With a quick show of hands...how many of you would like to be like the Happy Squirrel and not let the foolish behavior of others cause you to get angry or sad? (Pause...hopefully many will choose to be like Happy Squirrel)

It is not always easy because remember, you cannot control the behavior of others but can control yourself. You cannot control if others are being mean or calling you names or maybe even whispering about you. But you can control what you tell yourself and how you react to them.

What do you think that Cosmos Crow is wanting us to learn from this story?

I think that Cosmos Crow is trying to explain that when something you don't like happens, like making a poor grade or someone makes fun of you, you have to be aware of your thinking and use your "Good Thinking"

Just because someone calls you a name, does not mean that you have to get angry or that you have to feel embarrassed. When they call you a name you can tell yourself, "Why do I care what they think", or "I am not going to let them ruin my day" and will be able to stay in control of your feelings and your behaviors.

We can work each day to be like Happy Squirrel and to Stop and Think about things that happen to us.