

The Compassion Circle

Somewhere in Colmar, lived a curious and kind-hearted boy named Ben. Ben loved exploring the countryside, reading adventure books, and spending time with his friends at school. But recently, Ben had been feeling down because he had made a mistake during an important math test, and he couldn't stop thinking about it.

One sunny Saturday morning, Ben decided to take a walk by the river, to cheer himself up and take his mind off the math test. As he strolled along the path, he saw his friend Lucy skipping stones across the water. Lucy noticed Ben's troubled expression and called out, "Hey Ben, what's wrong? Why the long face?"

Ben sighed and sat down next to Lucy. "I made a big mistake on my math test, and now I feel really stupid. I can't stop thinking about it."

Lucy put her hand on Ben's shoulder. "You know, Ben, everyone makes mistakes, it's not the end of the world, even though sometimes it feels like it. It's part of learning. Remember when I got lost during the treasure hunt? You helped me find my way back and we laughed about it later" she said, smiling just thinking about this absurd adventure.

Ben nodded, recalling the fun they had despite the mix-up. Lucy's words made him feel a little better, but he still was quite sad.

Just then, their friend Tom rode up on his bike. Seeing the serious looks on Ben's face, and Lucy trying to cheer him up, he asked, "What's going on?"

"Ben's upset about a mistake he made on his math test," Lucy explained.

Tom, a notorious worrier himself, said, "Ben, I know how you feel. Last week, I missed an easy goal in our soccer game, and I felt awful. But my coach told me that everyone

has bad days and that's how we get better. We learn from our mistakes, even when the mistakes feel awful."

Ben felt a bit of relief hearing Tom's story. "I guess you're right, and it does feel awful! It's hard not to feel bad about it..."

Lucy, trying to cheer Ben up, suggested, "Why don't we talk about our mistakes and how we learned from them? It might help us see that mistakes are just part of growing."

The three friends found a shady spot under a tree. Ben talked about his math test mistake and how it taught him to double-check his work. Lucy told a story about getting lost during the treasure hunt and how she learned to pay better attention to the map. Tom talked about missing the goal and how it made him practice even harder.

After they shared their stories with each other, each of them felt lighter knowing they weren't alone in making mistakes, and that making a mistake didn't make them look stupid.

As they were lying on the grass, looking in the sky and the trees, Ben saw Anna in the corner of his eye. She looked upset and was walking fast, her fists clenched.

"Hey! Anna! Hey!" Ben shouted, scaring away some birds that were sitting on the tree above them. In no time, Anna was sitting on the grass surrounded by her three friends. "What's wrong, Anna? You look angry and sad!" Ben said.

"I spilled paint all over my art project. I worked so hard on it, and now it's ruined," Anna said, tears welling up in her eyes.

Lucy, Ben, and Tom exchanged knowing looks. Tom spoke up, "Anna, we were just talking about how everyone makes mistakes. It's a normal thing to do. We just told each other stories about our own mistakes and what we learned from them. Do you want to join us?"

Anna nodded, and they continued their game. She talked about her art project and how it made her realise that mistakes could lead to new and unexpected creativity. They all shared their stories again, and Anna suddenly felt better, thanks to the support of her friends.

As they finished, Tom said, "You know, we should do this more often. It helps to talk about our mistakes and learn from them together."

From that day on, the friends made it a habit to meet by the river every week to share their challenges and support each other. They called it their "Compassion Circle." They discovered that by being kind to themselves and each other, they could turn their mistakes into valuable lessons.

The lesson was embraced by all, reminding everyone that compassion, for others and for oneself, brings healing and happiness. The friends flourished together, their bond growing stronger with each shared story and act of kindness.