

# Use the Turtle Steps to Manage Your Feelings

## What to Know

Sometimes you might not know how to manage difficult feelings. If you're at school, it might be even more challenging to cope with feelings like frustration, anger, or worry. Have you ever heard the story about Clarence and Sandy? Read on to learn how Clarence and Sandy used a technique to manage their feelings!

Clarence just started middle school, but he didn't want to go to school. He wasn't really interested in his classes - he'd rather stay home and watch movies or play video games. Learning was hard for Clarence, and he got into fights with the other turtles. Most of the time he was unhappy at school, and he felt like he was always getting into trouble. He began to feel like a "bad" turtle.

Sandy was Clarence's classmate, and she didn't like school, either. Most of the time Sandy felt sad or worried, and she didn't do very well in school. She couldn't focus on her schoolwork, and she felt awkward around the other turtles.

One day Clarence and Sandy's teacher sat with them at lunch. The teacher, Ms. Jones, was very kind, and she told them she was always available if either of them needed to talk. Clarence decided to tell Ms. Jones that he was feeling bad, and then Sandy told Ms. Jones how she was feeling.

Ms. Jones smiled and said, "Do you know you're carrying the answer around with you?" Clarence and Sandy were confused. Ms. Jones said, "Your shell! You can go inside your shell when you feel sad, or you get angry, or just feel upset. When you are in your shell, you can take a break and figure out what to do."

Ms. Jones went on to explain that when they are in their shells, they can relax all the muscles in their bodies, take deep breaths, and slowly blow their feelings away. Then, once they are relaxed, they can think of something to do to feel better.



Remember the four turtle steps:

1. Stop what you're doing and identify how you're feeling.
2. Go into your shell, relax, and breathe.
3. Think of something to do.
4. Leave your shell and do it!

Both Clarence and Sandy used the four steps for the rest of the school year. They felt happier and they both were proud of themselves when they remembered to use this technique to manage their feelings.

## What to Do

You can use the four turtle steps to manage your feelings. Over the next two weeks, every time you experience a challenging feeling, practice the four steps.

Use the following chart and write down how you feel and what you do to relax. Then think of something to do that will help you. For example, you might distract yourself by watching a funny video, playing a game with a friend, or going on a walk. If you're at school, you might ask permission to take a break. Then, leave your "shell" and do it.

Is there an adult who can help you? Write down the names of two people who can help you. Choose a teacher or other person at school that you can talk to when you're having a tough time.

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Did the four turtle steps help you manage difficult feelings? Why or why not?

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What else can you do to manage your feelings?

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