

Therapeutic Stories

Cindy Brooks

The following therapeutic stories, while adaptable for an early childhood group setting, were intended for parents who have children between the ages of three and nine. It is still possible to tell therapeutic stories to children age nine or over, but parents need to know their child and what she or he is likely to find inspiring. Once the child turns nine she will more likely see the correlation between a therapeutic story told by an adult and the adult's motivation in telling the story, although not always. True stories, especially from one's own experiences or biographies of historic figures, are usually more useful as therapeutic stories for children age nine and older.

"The Little Seed's Journey" is helpful for building a sense of security, safety and confidence in the young child. Meant especially for children ages three to seven, this story could be used with children up to ages eight or nine. "A Stormy Day in Mother Earth's Garden" is helpful for bringing healing after a day of explosiveness—a child's or yours or both! Parents may find that reading this story at bedtime after a "stormy" day leads to greater calm in the child the next day.

The Little Seed's Journey

Once there was a lovely green meadow high up in the distant mountains. In summer the meadow was filled with every kind of beautiful flower—yellow and white daisies, blue cornflowers, purple lupines, orange and red paintbrushes, and pink and white wild orchids.

This meadow was filled with abundant life! The fairies came to play and dance day and night. All kinds of birds, big and little, swooped over and through the trees, singing all manner of songs. Butterflies and bees visited the flowers every day and chased the golden sunbeams dancing through the meadow.

In the midst of this field of flowers there stood a lone sunflower. She had grown from a seed spilled by a young boy early in the springtime while he hiked through the meadow with his family. The sunflower was by far the tallest flower in the meadow! Baby seeds were just starting to grow inside her blossom, but they were still sleeping.

One day, towards the end of summer, the bees came visiting. On the back of every bee there rode

a fire fairy, sending warm light all around. On this day one especially fuzzy bee flew atop the sunflower and sat down quietly. The fire fairy on that bee was wearing a fiery red dress and she glowed with a sparkling halo. She stepped down onto the sunflower's yellow petal and bowed very gracefully, as fairies always do. She noticed that one of the little seeds was waking up, standing very straight and tall. She bowed to the little seed and her halo sparkled all over her. The little seed had never seen a fire fairy before, let alone a fairy bowing to him, but he was sure that he should bow to her too and so he did. He bowed so far down that his head touched the very tips of his feet and he thought he might fall over!

The fairy spoke to the seed. "On this day I have brought you a special gift. I have made this gift especially for you. You will need it very soon, for soon you are going on a very long journey." The seed stood up even straighter—even though he did not know what it meant to go on a long journey. The fairy had wrapped her present in the finest of silks, one for every color of the rainbow. Since the seed was still quite young, the fairy unwrapped the silks to show him what was inside. What a wondrous sight he did behold! Underneath the silk wrapping there glowed the most radiant golden blanket! It was woven of golden threads filled with light from the stars, moon and sun. The seed was filled with wonder and said, ever so respectfully, "Oh, thank you dear fairy for this beautiful gift," and bowed his head down to his toes.

Then the fire fairy bowed to the seed, climbed back on the fuzzy bee and they flew away. The sunflower told the little seed of the great long journey he would be taking one day when Brother Wind began to blow his cold winds across the land.

Mother Earth was very busy deep down underground. She was making tiny beds to welcome all the seeds for winter, for flower seeds are oh so tender and do not like the cold. Soon Brother Wind would blow his gusty winds through the meadow, and then the little seeds would pack their bags and travel the long path down to Mother Earth's

underground garden.

Brother Wind began to blow his cold breath through the land. All the little seeds packed their bags and started down the steps to find the land where Mother Earth was waiting for them. The little seed went with them. He carried his golden blanket wrapped in the fairy's rainbow silks. He walked and walked. Soon he found the door to a long, dark tunnel. A friendly gnome working there told him that this was the way to go. As the little seed made his way through the tunnel he saw many gnomes inside. They were hacking and cracking the rocks and the stones, finding sparkling crystals and beautiful shining ores. It seemed that the gnomes never slept, they just kept working all the time! They scooted the little seed along his way whenever he felt drowsy, and so he kept on going through the long tunnel.

Then he came to the end of the tunnel and there was Mother Earth waiting for him. She had lit some fires in fire rings to keep her land underground toasty warm. The little seed loved this warm and cozy world. Mother Earth showed him to the little bed she had made especially for him and helped

him settle into it. For he and all the other seeds were going to sleep a very long time while Old King Winter stormed about in the meadow high above.

So the little seed carefully unwrapped his golden blanket from the layers of rainbow silk that were wrapped around it. Then he snuggled into his bed. Mother Earth tucked his golden blanket carefully around him so that he would be toasty warm. Then she sang the sweetest lullaby he had ever heard. Soon he was fast asleep. High above, King Winter reigned supreme. He blew his icy winds hither and yon and sent his frost boys and snowflake girls dancing all around. The grasses were frozen stiff; long icicles hung from the branches of the trees; not one bird, flower, butterfly or bee was anywhere to be seen.

The little seed lay peacefully in his warm winter bed, wrapped in the sparkling warmth of his golden blanket and tended oh so lovingly by Mother Earth. He dreamed of flower meadows, sunny days, fairy dances and bird songs. Mother Earth hummed sweet lullabies as the little seed slept snuggled in his bed. And the little seed's golden blanket shone with the light of heaven all winter long.



A Stormy Day in Mother Earth's Garden

Mother Earth lives in a beautiful green garden. In the back of her house is a lovely blue pond, as round as the moon and as blue as the sky on a bright sunny day. When Father Sun shines his warm sun rays down to Mother Earth's garden, they dance around on the surface of the pond behind her house, and then the golden fishes living there jump up high to catch them.

At one edge of the pond is a great old willow tree, whose branches float over the edge of the water. Under the willow tree, at the edge of the pond, is a patch of soft green lily pads, where all the frogs that live in the pond like to sit. The great big frogs sit on the great big lily pads and the little frogs sit on the little lily pads, and they all sit there and sing together when Father Sun wakes up and again when he goes to sleep. Their song is very loud, so even Father Sun can hear it!

The little frogs like to swim in the pond all day long and they are friends with the golden fishes that live there. Sometimes they swim together with the golden fishes down to a world of rocks at the very bottom of the center of the pond. This is their very own castle and they love to play there, for there are many rooms to play in!

Brother Wind comes visiting Mother Earth's garden some days and blows his gentle breath across the land. Then the branches of the old willow tree dance on top of the pond and tickle the great big frogs that are sitting on the lily pads there. Brother Wind sends his gentle breath across the surface of the pond and the golden fishes are rocked ever so gently down below. Sister Rain sometimes comes visiting Mother Earth's garden and sprinkles her drops all around. The little frogs love to swim on the surface of the pond when she comes to visit and to feel the pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat of her fingers tapping on their backs.

One day, Brother Wind came visiting Mother Earth's garden and brought two new friends with him: Terrible Thunder and Crackling Lightning. Even Brother Wind didn't know how much trouble they could make! Into Mother Earth's garden they came to play. At first nothing seemed unusual. But then Terrible Thunder began to clap and shout so loudly that all the little frogs went dashing down to the bottom of the pond to their castle of rocks to

get away from the terrible sound. Then Crackling Lightning began to shriek and pounce, and all the golden fishes went dashing down to the bottom of the pond to get away from him. Brother Wind was so upset that he began to whirl and dash here and there, round and about, great waves began to crash on the edge of the pond and the great old willow tree's branches got tied into a terrible knot.

Mother Earth heard all the noise in her garden, and saw how frightened everyone was. She went outside and called to Father Sun for help. Together they shooed Terrible Thunder and Crackling Lightning on their way. Only then did Mother Earth see what a terrible mess they had made! Then she called to the flower fairies and garden elves, and together they worked to make the garden beautiful again. The flower fairies untied the great old willow's terrible knot and her branches hung gently over the edge of the pond again. But the little frogs and the golden fishes were nowhere to be found! They stayed hidden in their underwater castle until Mother Earth called her water fairies to swim down and tell them all was safe again.

That night the great big frogs and the little frogs sang to Father Sun as he got ready to go to bed, and they were as loud as ever could be. They wanted Father Sun to know how glad they were to see him again! That night Lady Moon brought all her star children to shine and sparkle in the dark night sky and they sang lullabies over Mother Earth's garden all night long.

Cindy Brooks is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in Santa Cruz, CA, who specializes in working with children and adults. A graduate of the Bay Area Center for Waldorf Teacher Training (2003), Cindy is integrating Anthroposophy and Depth Psychology in her work as a parent educator and therapist. These stories are part of a book she has co-authored with Joya Birns, Waldorf Teacher, called Parenting with Spirit. For more information, contact parentingwithspirit@gmail.com.