



MINDFUL BREATHING

OVERVIEW

Mindful breathing is the practice of developing a deeper connection to your breath and it is a core foundation to the practice of mindfulness. It is like using your breath as an anchor to keep you in the present moment. Just like an anchor on a boat will help prevent that boat from drifting away, your breath can be something you focus on to help you stay in the here and now. This can be especially helpful when your mind naturally wanders off and you get distracted by thoughts, emotions, or different sensations in your body. When you focus on breathing, your heart rate will slow down, which will calm down your brain and your body, making it easier to deal with whatever is happening in the moment.

Please note: for some people, especially those experiencing anxiety, connecting with their breath may not feel calming or relaxing; in fact, being told to focus on their breath might be more anxiety provoking. If that is the case with the people you are working with, have them use the stuffed animal variation for the breathing exercise. Or, you can skip the breathing practice for now, and move onto other exercises. Note lesson #4 (body awareness) offers the variation of placing your feet on the ground, which is helpful for those who have a hard time connecting with their breath.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Nothing! You already have your breath with you, no matter where you are!

Small stuffed animal (optional)

Breathing Exercise



PROCEDURES

1. Ask the students to get into a mindful body position - this means to practice sitting still in a position that is comfortable for you. If it feels okay for you, close your eyes; if you prefer to keep them open, please choose one spot on the floor to focus on. (This helps our mind from getting distracted, and tunes our awareness inwards, towards ourselves.) We are going to begin by taking a deep breath in – imagine that you are smelling a batch of freshly baked chocolate chip cookies. Nice and slow...
2. Now, I would like for you to take a slow deep breath out – imagine that you are blowing a bubble...blow out nice and slow because if you blow too fast the bubble would pop!

3. We are going to practice breathing slowly a few more times, and to help you keep your attention on your breath, I would like you to say the words “breathing in, breathing out” inside your mind. This may help keep your attention from wandering.
4. On the next few breaths, we are going to practice a different way of keeping your attention on your breath. This time, try counting the length of your breath in and breath out. Imagine counting slowly in your mind, connecting it to your inhale/exhale: 1-2-3-4-5; 5-4-3-2-1. See which you like better – the words “breathing in, breathing out,” or the counting – everyone is different!
5. Continue to practice this mindful breathing practice for at least 10 breaths, and as you do, notice how your body is feeling as you slow down and breathe.
6. If your mind begins to wander, I want you to imagine that anchor holding you steady, slowing you down. You might also like to imagine a puppy on a leash – when a puppy wanders off, there’s no need to get upset with the puppy, you simply need train it to come back. It’s the same idea when getting distracted. Our breath is how we train our mind, just like pulling on that leash to come back to the present moment.

VARIATION: USE A STUFFED ANIMAL

Instruct the students to lie down on their back and place a small stuffed animal on their tummy. Say to them, “Watch the stuffed animal and notice what happens. You will see it rising up and down... this is a way to help you connect with the fact that you are already breathing, so you don’t have to do anything different other than notice that your body is breathing all on its own!”

VARIATION: PLACE HANDS ON YOUR BODY WHILE BREATHING

As the students are in a mindful body position, suggest that they place a hand on their lower tummy (diaphragm) as they practice breathing in and breathing out. Actually feeling themselves breathe is a physical way to connect with their body and can serve as that anchor or a “leash” to come back into the present moment, which is important when feeling overwhelmed or distracted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How did it feel to slow down and focus on your breath? Did you feel calm, relaxed, tired, energized, distracted...?
- Think of why you have a fire drill...it’s to help you prepare in case there is an emergency! How do you think practicing taking deep breaths can help prepare you for when you feel overwhelmed or stressed out?
- When are times throughout your day that you can practice taking 5 mindful breaths?
- What do you think are some options you can do if you are too overwhelmed to slow down and focus on your breath?

FOLLOW UP

Breathing is a foundational practice of mindfulness, and is helpful to calm down the brain, calm down the body, allowing you to respond and not react to whatever is arising. It is an easy practice because it can be done anytime, anywhere and no one even has to know what you are doing. The hardest part is to remember to breathe when you feel like you are getting overwhelmed, distracted, or stuck in a cycle of negative emotions. It's also important to know that you don't need to change the way you are breathing – you don't want to sound like Darth Vader breathing heavily and loud; this will not be relaxing to your brain or body! You have a 100% success rate at breathing since you've been doing it your whole life! Mindful breathing is simply about noticing that your body is breathing all on its own, and when you can choose to focus on your breath, you have a better chance at self-soothing, focusing, calming down and being present.



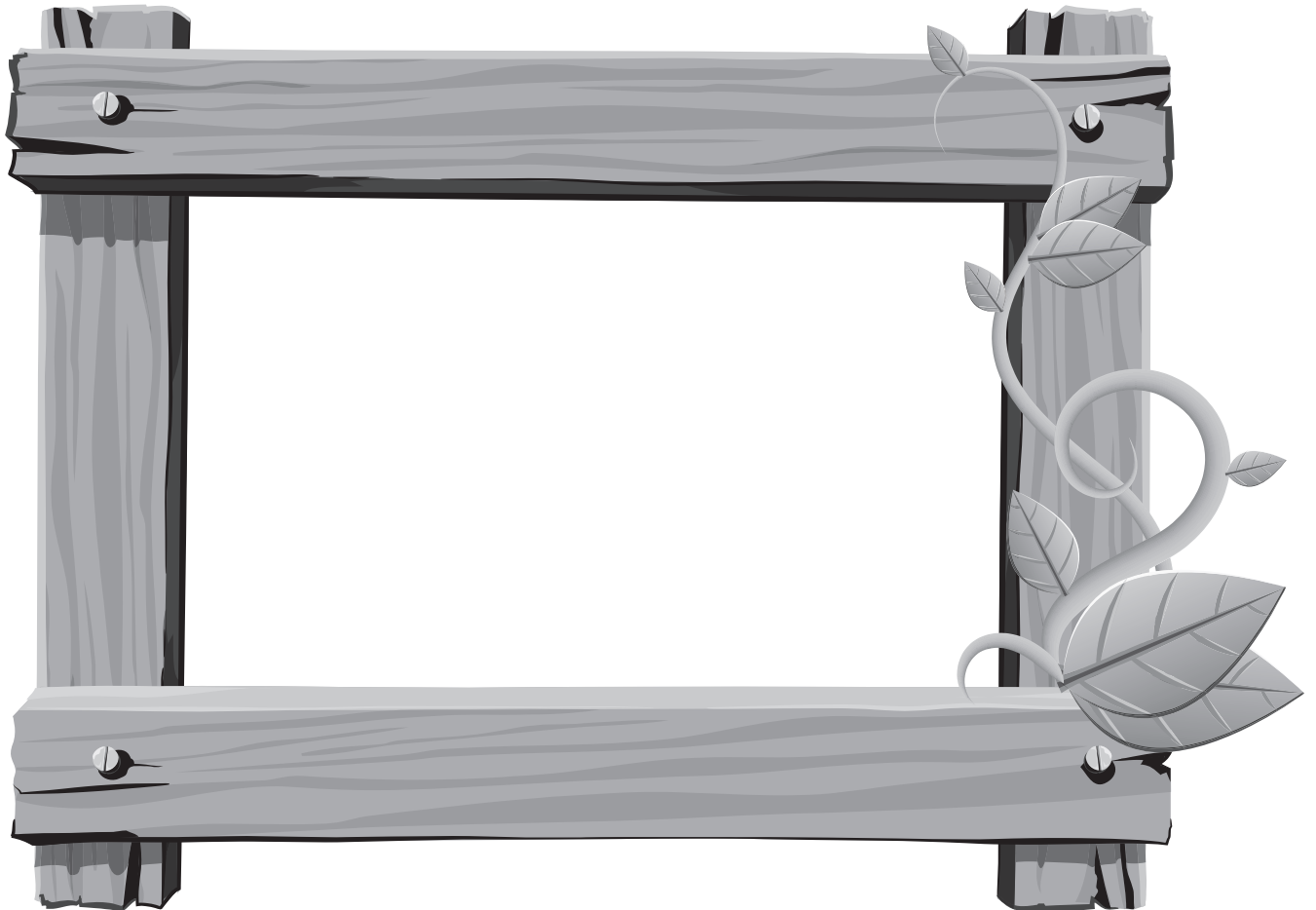


BREATHING EXERCISE



Select from the list below, words that describe a place or an object in which you feel calm or peaceful. And then in the frame, draw a picture that best describes the words you chose. You can then use this image to focus on when you are practicing mindful breathing.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ocean | <input type="checkbox"/> Rainbows | <input type="checkbox"/> Being barefoot |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunset | <input type="checkbox"/> Flowers | <input type="checkbox"/> Grass |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pillow | <input type="checkbox"/> Pajamas | <input type="checkbox"/> Rain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Balloons | <input type="checkbox"/> Waterfalls | <input type="checkbox"/> Your bed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunrise | <input type="checkbox"/> Animals (or your pet) | <input type="checkbox"/> Clouds |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trees | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Summertime |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snow | <input type="checkbox"/> Stuffed animal | <input type="checkbox"/> Blanket |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Full moon | <input type="checkbox"/> Fuzzy socks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hot chocolate | <input type="checkbox"/> Your birthday | <input type="checkbox"/> Your best friend |



To Parents:

Before you or your child reads this book, it is important to explain clearly what Public and Permanent means when referring to digital tools and the World Wide Web.

- o Public - Everyone on the planet may have an opportunity to see what you are saying, doing and posting.
- o Permanent - There is no way to take the words or images (pictures, videos, etc) back once it is shared, it may be viewable on the World Wide Web forever.

Discuss that digital devices are tools, and how our decision making with these tools determines whether our digital experience will be positive or negative.

Talk about some positive and responsible uses of digital tools and technologies (creating positive pictures, stories, songs, etc) and how positive decision making could be rewarded vs examples of abusing digital tools and technologies (inappropriate pictures, texts, etc) and the potential consequences of that abuse.

Point out the many ways that our content (pics, texts, etc) can purposefully or accidentally “get out” and become public and permanent which is why we should NEVER digitally create something we are not ok becoming Public and Permanent.

Some examples of how our content become Public and Permanent accidentally...

- Lost Device
- Stolen Device
- Hacked Device
- Pocket Dial
- Pocket Text (may also accidentally pocket tweet, facebook, etc)
- Accidental Post or Send
- Send to Wrong number
- Reply All (instead of to a specific person)
- Friend borrowing / using our device or browsing our social web page can see content and send it to themselves
- Friends can share something we asked them to keep private with someone else

Note: If a friend has our content on their device, any of the above bullets can also happen to them which creates even more ways for our content to get out!

There are millions of obvious and obscure ways for our content to “get out” because digital tools were designed to make sharing easy. If we are ok with what we are digitally creating being Public and Permanent before we ever digitally create it, then we eliminate the chance of ever facing a self-inflicted digital challenge.

Cyman Says:

Digital Activity is Public and Permanent

*Before we create something digital,
despite our intent,
We must first be prepared,
For it to be Public and Permanent!*



*Cyman took a picture with his camera,
a picture of a beautiful tree.*

*It was a picture he was ok being
Public and Permanent,
so he had nothing to worry
about you see.*



Because Cyman accidentally
lost his camera,
and the picture of the
tree was found.

Not by a friend -
but a stranger,
who shared the picture
with everyone in town.



Now because this picture
was so awesome,
a picture the entire
town adored.

the picture was made Public
and Permanent online,
and Cyman received
an award!

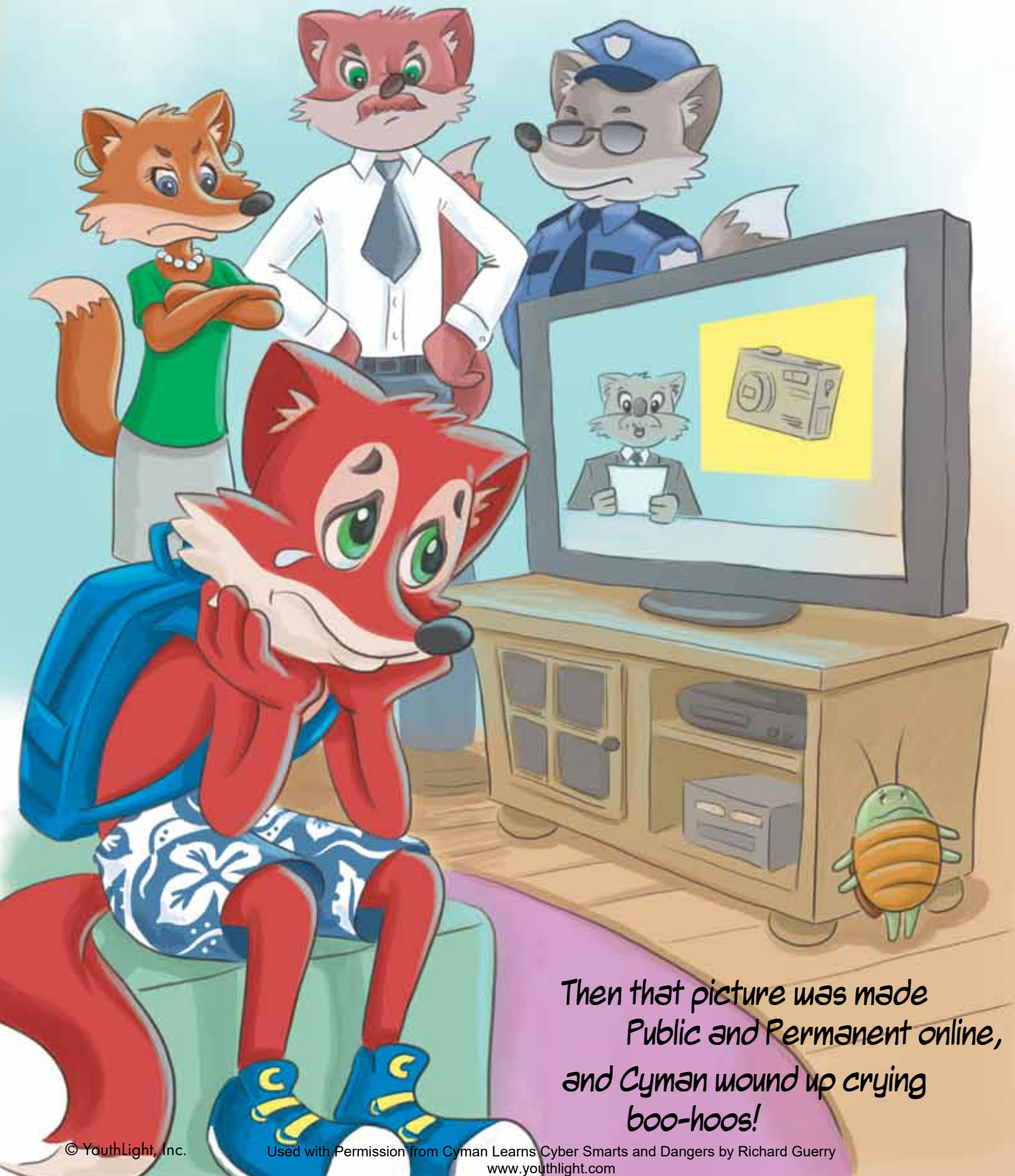




*Cyman took a picture with his camera,
a picture that would make his mommy mad.
It was a picture he was NOT ok being
Public and Permanent,
a picture he would never show his dad.*

*Uh-Oh, Cyman accidentally lost his camera,
and the naughty picture was found.
Not by a friend - but a stranger,
who shared the picture around town.*

Now because this picture was so shocking,
the picture wound up on the news.



Then that picture was made
Public and Permanent online,
and Cyman wound up crying
boo-hoos!



*Cyman sent a text message with his cell phone,
a text about his terrific Family.*

*It was a text he was ok being Public and Permanent,
so he had nothing to worry about you see.*

*Because Cyman accidentally texted a wrong number,
and the text about his Family was read.*

*Not by a Friend - but a stranger,
who shared the text message on the World Wide Web.*

*Now because this text was a nice one,
a text that Filled Cyman's Family with glee,
It was ok that the text was Public and Permanent online
For the entire world to see!*



*Cyman sent a text message with his cell phone,
a text that wasn't nice in the least.*

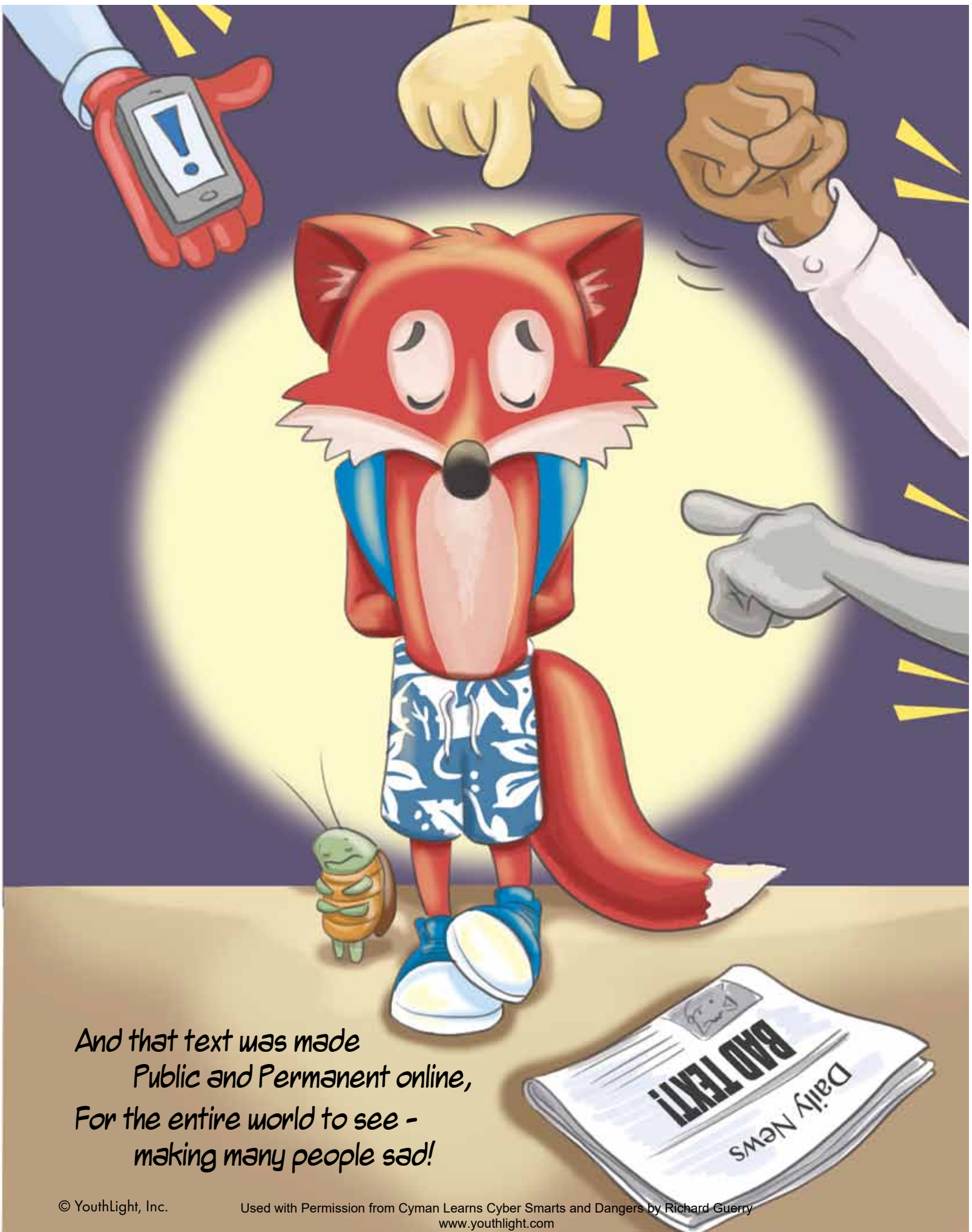
*It was a text he was NOT ok being Public and Permanent,
it made him look like a BULLY - a beast.*

*Now Cyman accidentally sent this naughty text,
to a stranger, and not to his Friend.*

*And when Cyman realized his mistake,
oh how we wished he had never pushed "send".*



*Now that stranger
shared Cyman's message,
with police, the news, and Cyman's Mom and Dad.*



*And that text was made
Public and Permanent online,
For the entire world to see -
making many people sad!*



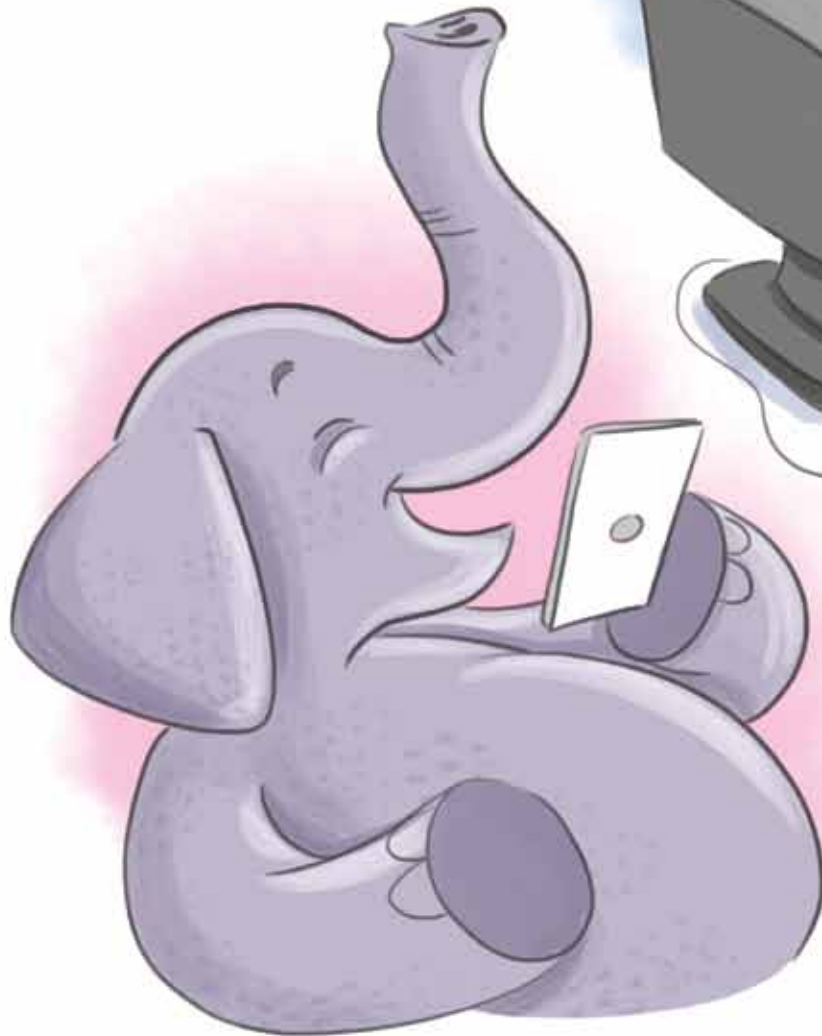
*Cyman made a movie with his webcam,
a movie about his puppy Wiley.
It was a movie he was ok being Public and Permanent,
so he had nothing to worry about you see.*

*Because Cyman posted his Film to a website,
and the movie was seen a lot.
Not just by Friends - but by strangers,
He could not believe how many viewers it got.*

*Because this movie was so cute
and creative,
a film that showed his talent
with technology,*



*His movie which is Public
and Permanent
online,
is making people all
over the world
quite happy!*



*Cyman made a movie with his webcam,
he did things in the Film that were bad,
It was a Film he was NOT ok being Public and Permanent,
it was a Film that would make his Family sad.*





*Now Cyman posted this Film to a web page,
a page he thought only his Friends could see,
But the Film was seen by a complete stranger,
and that stranger shared it with many.*

*How did the stranger see the movie?
Cyman's Friends shared it with everyone in school,
And now that Film is Public and Permanent online,
Making Cyman Feel like such a Fool.*

*Cyman just started using Social Media,
he was so excited about the things he could share,
Things he was ok being Public and Permanent,
Like how much he loved his uncle's purple hair!*

*See Cyman's mom and dad explained to him,
that he should never expect Privacy.
Even if he had a password and privacy settings,
Social media is For sharing you see.*

*Now because Cyman understood how quickly,
his social media activity could be shared anywhere online,
He always posted things he was ok being Public and Permanent,
which made his Social Media experience just Fine!*



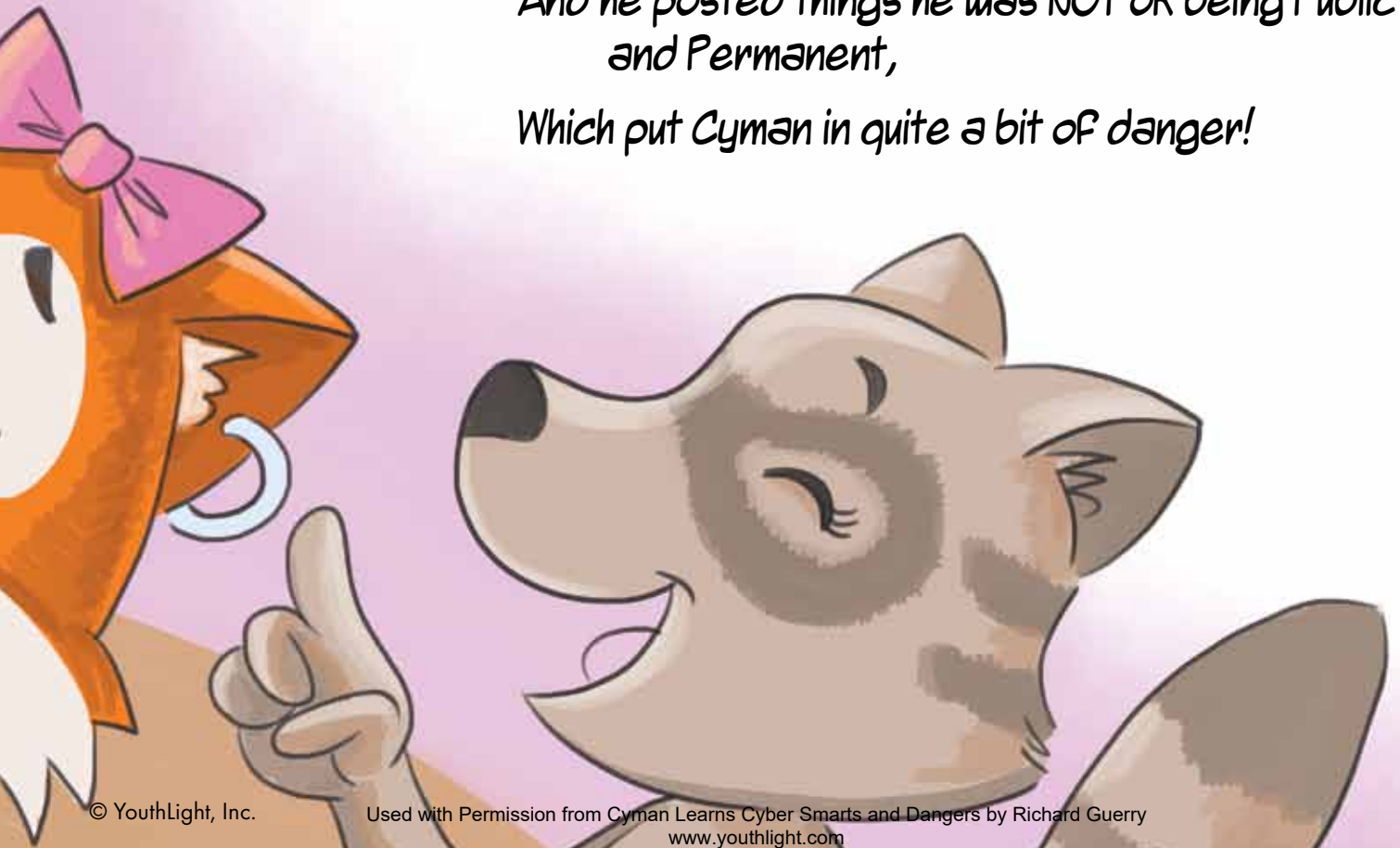




*Cyman just started using Social Media,
he was so excited about the things he could share,
But he did not realize his posts were Public and Permanent,
Including that picture of him in his underwear!*

*See nobody ever explained to Cyman,
that he should never expect Privacy.
Even if he had a password and privacy settings,
he should NEVER think "Only My Friends Can See!"*

*So Cyman never understood how quickly,
what he did and said in Social Media could be
shared with a stranger,
And he posted things he was NOT ok being Public
and Permanent,
Which put Cyman in quite a bit of danger!*



*Cyman enjoys posting status updates,
sharing information about what he has done,
He posts information he's ok being Public and Permanent,
So his posts are always interesting and Fun!*

*See Cyman learned a very important lesson,
In an assembly he saw while at school,
He learned that status updates should always be past tense,
Because telling strangers about his Future is not cool.*

*Now because Cyman received this information,
And he knew never to say online where he will be,
He posts status updates he's ok being Public and Permanent,
so it does not matter how many strangers might see!*



Cyman: the assembly at school today was pretty cool!

Like

Dislike

Share



Roger: Right ON!!!!

Like

Dislike

Share



Tiffany: It was pretty funny too.
Don't you think?

Like

Dislike

Share



Glitch: I like getting out of class!

Like

Dislike

Share



*Cyman enjoys posting status updates,
sharing information about where he will go,
He posts information he's not ok being Public and Permanent,
And this is a very big NO NO!*

*See Cyman never learned a very important lesson,
that it is risky to check in online or over-share,
When posting information about where he is - or will be,
He is telling strangers where to Find him - BEWARE!*

*Now because Cyman over-shared information,
through a status update that said his Family was away,
Some not so nice people robbed his Family's house,
because they knew Cyman and his Family would not be
home that day!*



*Cyman enjoys using digital tools,
To take pictures, create videos or chat with a friend,
And what he creates he's ok being Public and Permanent,
So what he creates always winds up Fun in the end!*

*See Cyman understands how to use technology,
he understands they are tools, not toys,
He understands that in just one second,
What he creates could be seen by many girls and boys.*

*Cyman understands that digital tools were created,
To help us instantly know information and instantly share,
He understands that with his powerful tools,
He can share his creativity with anyone, from anywhere!*

*Cyman is a very bright digital citizen,
What he creates with technology he would let anyone see,
He is ok with EVERYTHING he creates becoming
Public and Permanent,
And this is a Golden Rule For EVERYONE in the 21st Century!*



Cyman Says:

A Message to All My Digital Neighbors

*These digital tools we are all using,
They give us the power to
instantly share,
they give us the opportunity
to instantly know anything,
We can talk with anyone and know
anything, From anywhere!*

*But what is important for all
of us to realize,
is that tools designed for
sharing cannot be,
used to create things
that can harm us,
they should not always
be used for privacy!*



Remember - Just because we can,
Does not always mean we should,
So before you digitally create anything - THINK,
would I share this with my entire neighborhood?

And keep this vital thought in mind,
Your neighborhood is no longer the
town in which you live,
Your neighborhood is now
the entire planet,

Welcome to the new
global village!

We are now all connected
instantly,
technology has eliminated
space and time,

So are you ready for what you
are about to do being
Public and Permanent?

Because what's on your phone
or computer, could very
quickly be on mine!

