

But Perhaps, Just Maybe

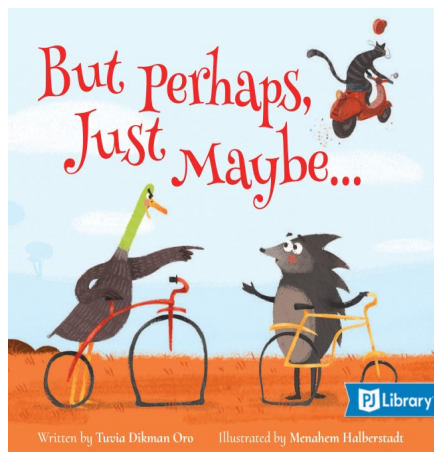
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How do we judge others?



It's All Good

A reckless motorcyclist cat, a road-blocking goat, and a berry-snatching fox – no one in this story is up to any good! At least, that’s how things seem to Duck. It can be easy to assume the worst about people and situations, but Hedgehog knows that if we go looking for the good instead, we’ll often see that it was there the whole time. He lives by the quote from Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Ancestors, an ancient collection of rabbinic wisdom) that inspired this story: “Judge everyone with the scale weighted in their favour.” And what goes around comes around. When we make a habit of searching out the good in others, then perhaps, just maybe, we’ll find those people looking for the good in us, too. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/butperhaps.

HANDS ON!

Guess the Motive Game

Here’s a kind of guessing game that might be challenging at first, but the better you get at it, the better you’ll feel – in lots of ways.

Supplies:

- Paper
- Crayons or markers
- Friends and family!

Draw a picture of a person doing an action that might confuse or upset others. Some examples are: driving the wrong way on a road, cutting in front of someone else in line, throwing food out the window, running away when they see a friend coming, and so on. Decide on a positive reason for the person’s action, but keep it secret. Show the picture to family and friends and ask them why they think the person is acting this way. Write the responses down – see how many different answers you get! Share the real answer with everyone and talk about how important it is to give people the benefit of the doubt.

Pirkei Avot, Backwards

That full quote from Pirkei Avot comes in three parts: “Find for yourself a teacher, choose for yourself a friend, and judge everyone with the scale weighted in their favor.” Our story follows right along with the quote, just in reverse order. From the beginning, Hedgehog assumes the best of everyone. Duck and Hedgehog stick together through it all, the hallmark of good friends. And in the end, Duck recognizes that he can learn a lot from Hedgehog – he has found himself a teacher. Maybe there’s another lesson here as well: When you’re open to seeing all the good around you, it makes you a much better companion and student – someone who can be a kind friend and willing learner.

Raise Your Glass

This book closes with a toast to Hedgehog, “who always believes in goodness.” But then the goodness keeps going: “And the raspberry juice was tasty. And the shade was pleasant. And the company was good . . .” The Jewish value of hakarat hatov – acknowledging the good – helps us to be mindful of all the goodness in the world. If we take a little time to do this each day, it will become a natural habit to look for the good things in our lives, both big and small. The more you look, the more you find. Now that’s something to raise your glass to!

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

IN this story, Hedgehog shows Duck how to “look for the good.” Can you choose one or two characters in this book and think about what their kind, positive qualities might be?

LOOK at Duck’s expression in the first part of the book, then in the middle, and then at the end. What’s different? How does it change?

WHAT are the good things in your life? Can you name two or three right now?