

LESSON 5 - HANDOUT - MONSTERS ON THE BOAT (PART 1)

We're going to first close our eyes, and then go on an adventure! Make sure you're comfortable and then we can set the scene. Are you ready? Imagine the ocean, the sparkling blue sea, vast and wide. It stretches out in front of you, as far as you can see. Imagine the deep blue water, underneath a pale blue sky. Can you see it? Can you hear it? Imagine how the water might feel. Is it cold or warm? Is the sun high in the sky, or tucked behind a fluffy white cloud? When you can see it, we're going to add something more to this picture: a boat! It is your boat so you can imagine it however you like, maybe it is made of wood with simple paddles. Perhaps your boat has a large sail that captures the wind. It doesn't need to be too big; you'll have company soon... but you really only need space for one.

Can you see your boat gently bobbing over the water that moves under it, swaying in the wind? Does your boat have any colour on it? Try and find a place where you can see yourself sitting in the boat, so that you have a good view of the sky, the ocean and anything around you.

In the distance, far away near the horizon, you can see an island. I want you to take a closer look at this island, you might need to sail or row your boat closer to get a good look.

You're a little bit closer now! It's still far away, but near enough that you can see this island has some very special things there waiting for you. It's something fun, you decide! But it's also something that makes you a little nervous. Nervous, like staying over at a friend's house overnight for the first time. Or joining a new sports team or trying something new that you have always wanted to give a go but have never done before.

Can you think of something like that? Sitting on that island, waiting for you? Try and imagine it.

While you're sitting on your boat, gazing out at the island, something else suddenly appears, and it's coming from inside of you.

You notice you're having big feelings about what is on the island: perhaps you are feeling nervous, afraid, unsure, or doubting yourself.

The feelings might say some things to you, like: 'What if you try this, but you're not very good, and someone laughs at you?', 'What if you don't know what to do and don't know who to ask for help?'. Some feelings might even say things that are just horrible! They might tell you you're not good enough, strong enough, or smart enough.

Think about those feelings for a moment. They become so loud and so big sometimes, it is almost like they are monsters!

What a sight that would be. I want you to, if you can, think of yourself on the boat, with these big feelings that feel like monsters. Looking at the island, you see that something exciting and new, something that would be fun, an adventure! But when you start rowing or sailing toward it, the monsters appear, louder and angrier the closer you get.

The monsters sure have A LOT to say. They keep telling you that you're not big or smart or strong enough to go to the island. They say that if you go, something bad might happen and you'll feel even worse. They tell you things that make you feel worried and now you're afraid to go to the island.

What's more, the monsters have a nasty trick! They promise you that if you stay in the ocean, and don't sail toward the island, and stay exactly where you are, that they will go under the boat and leave you alone, a bit like an anchor. So long as you stay where you are, they'll leave you alone and you won't have to look at them or listen to them anymore.

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So, you stop sailing or rowing. And the monsters do what they promised. You can't see them anymore because they're deep under the waves of the ocean. But you also can't go anywhere, stuck in the same place, only able to catch glimpses of the island. You feel sad, because while you're stuck on the boat, you're not able to go to the island that has so many adventures waiting for you. You're missing out.

What do you do? Should you stay here, where it's nice and quiet and you can't see monsters, but never moving toward the things that you want?

I wonder, and don't you? Could you possibly bear the monsters and try to sail to the island?

Remember that these monsters are just feelings, and feelings ARE very difficult sometimes, but they can't physically hurt you. They can't push you over so you trip, they can't grab hold of your hand and stop you from rowing.

You've had enough of sitting in the boat, going nowhere just to feel safe from the monsters, so you decide to try something brave. You lift your sail, or pick up your paddles, and start heading to shore.

Surely enough, the monsters spring up from underneath the water. They are cranky that you are going to the island! And the closer you get, the harder you push, the louder and louder they get.

But you keep rowing. And the monsters say unkind things, but you keep rowing anyway. You're so close now, everything on the island is nearly within reach! You keep rowing (or sailing!), even as the monsters grow bigger, shouting louder. But you know something very important... do you remember? They can't hurt you, they're just saying things, nothing more.

And finally...you've made it. You've reached the island, and everything you have been looking forward to is just as wonderful and exciting as you hoped it would be.

The monsters don't disappear entirely, but you notice that once you've reached the island, they're not as loud, and the things they were saying about you and what you could and couldn't do weren't even true! The monsters are now smaller somehow.

Feelings are like that, and while they haven't disappeared completely, and they still aren't very nice to look at, they don't stop you from doing what you want to do, from trying something new or giving yourself a chance to have fun.

Think about that for a moment, about what you're doing on the island, what you found out about the monsters, and when you're ready, open your eyes.