



STORYTIME KIT

FIVE ACTIVITIES TO NAVIGATE THE EXPERIENCE OF FEELING SO MANY THINGS—ALL AT ONCE!

Dear Readers,

As a children’s book author, one of the most satisfying moments is reading aloud and having a child laugh or gasp and make a genuine connection to the book. During the early stages of writing *Olive All at Once*, I took a draft into elementary school classrooms to get feedback from over 80 kids. I was writing a book that I hoped would reflect the rich inner lives of children—so who better to ask?

There are a lot of children’s books about big feelings, but very few about what happens when you seem to have multiple ones. What interested me in writing *Olive* was exploring what it’s like when you feel more than one way about important life moments.

As adults, we know we regularly have contradictory feelings, like fulfillment and loss. (Ask any parent who has dropped their child off at kindergarten—or college!) Nevertheless, we often want our children’s lives to be more simple and straightforward: a happy event = a happy feeling, and so on.

I wrote *Olive All at Once* to reflect to young readers that having “mixed feelings” and holding the contradictions of life is not just okay—it’s a wonderful part of being human.

The kids in the classrooms I visited were eager to talk about their experiences. They shared that, like Olive, they did feel more than one way about having a sibling, the first day of school, and even going to birthday parties. The book opened up so many conversations about feelings!

An enormous gift with this project has been the incredible talent of illustrator Alison Hawkins. She created a world with vibrant colors and expertly depicted the humor and sweetness of being a child. Olive’s plucky and curious personality shines through her illustrations as Olive navigates the experience of feeling so many things—all at once!

I am so grateful to the team at Sounds True who have brought Olive to life and now to you!



All my best,
Mariam



HOW IS OLIVE FEELING?

Like all of us, Olive has a lot of different feelings throughout her day. For each picture, write down a word that you feel best describes how she is feeling. There's an example to get you started. There are many words for each one and no right or wrong answer! If you need help, you can choose from the Word Bank below.



Surprised



Word Bank

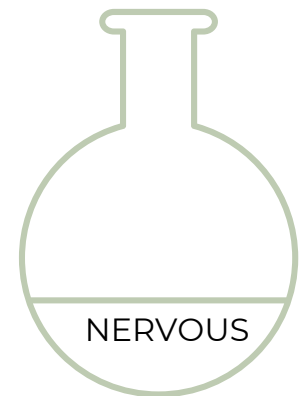
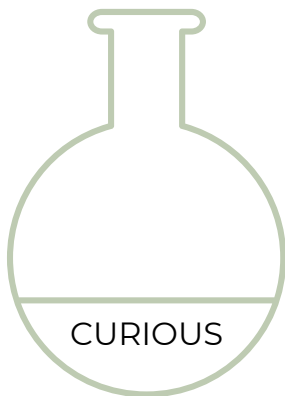
Joyful Frazzled Sad Uncertain Curious
Mad Happy Confused Silly Stubborn

WHAT COLOR DOES IT FEEL LIKE?

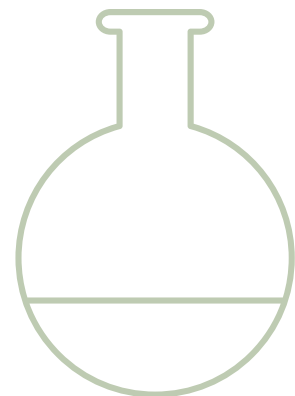
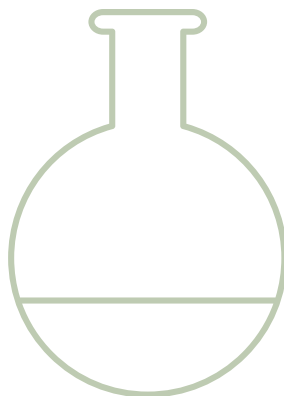
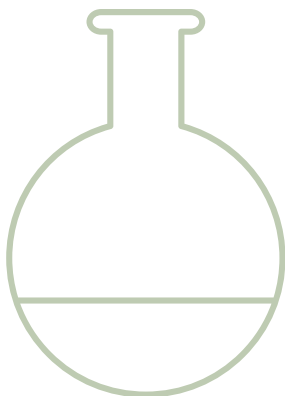
When you feel a certain way, try matching that feeling to a color to help you visualize it. For Olive, mad is red, happy is yellow, and sad is blue.



Your turn to try it. Close your eyes and think about each word below. What color comes to mind? Is it a bright color? A darker color? Something in the middle? Color each bottle.



Now, choose three feelings of your own. Write those words on the bottles and pick a color to match each one.



YOUR "ALL AT ONCE" STORY



“Sometimes my feelings swirl together.

Sometimes I want to do something, and
I don’t want to do it at the same time.

Sometimes I don’t know how I feel
because I don’t feel just one way.”

—Olive

Think of a Time When Your Feelings Swirled Together

For example, on Olive’s first day of school she was excited and scared. When she went to her friend Malcolm’s birthday party she was delighted and jealous.

Answer these four questions to tell your story.

1. Where were you?
2. What were you doing?
3. Who were you with?
4. What are two or three (or even four!) different feelings you had all at once?

Now, pick colors to match those feelings and head to the next page to create a Feelings Swirl!

FEELINGS SWIRL

Turn your “All at Once” story into a Feelings Swirl.

Here’s an example of what happened when Olive mixed her feelings of happy, sad, and mad.

It became a piece of art!

Pull out your crayons, markers, paints, whatever you prefer, to create your own. You can use the space below or use a blank piece of paper for more room.



BELLY BREATH

Let's conclude with a simple breathing practice from another one of Mariam Gates's books, *Breathe with Me*. Your breath is always here for you in a calm and quiet way. You can use it to relax and help you connect with your different feelings.



Lie down on your back.

Place one hand on your chest.

Place your other hand on your belly.

Take slow deep breaths and feel your chest and your belly move up and down as the air goes in and out of your body.

Repeat three times.