

Welcome back!

Our theme for this week is 'how to shine in your new class'.

Mr Brown would like to share his ideas...



CHAPTER THREE

SAFE SPACES



This book is a safe space. It doesn't matter if you don't get things straight away. I don't mind if you get things wrong. You won't get told off here.

When we have safe spaces where people are unafraid to try new things, the best learning happens. In fact, I need you to get things wrong. *That sounds strange, right? But when you get things wrong, you are actually learning.* You're finding out ways to not do something. The more you try, the more likely you are to find the right way to do that same thing.

MR BROWN'S TOP TIP

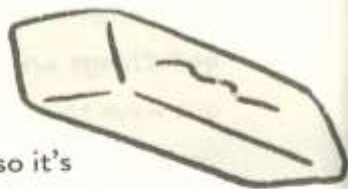
Everyone has to FAIL at some point. That's because fail stands for . . .

First
Attempt
In
Learning

It's the same in school. You might be someone who dashes into school without a second thought, eager to see all your friends, excited by the hustle and bustle of the playground. Or you might be someone who wants a quieter space or worries that there's not a space for you. *When you are happy being in a space and you feel comfortable enough to try new things, you're one step closer to SHINING.*

YOUR CLASSROOM

You spend a lot of your time in the classroom, so it's important that you feel comfortable. Your seat is your own personal space, but there might even be more areas that belong to you. You might have your own drawer with your name on, a cubby space or a special corner of the classroom that's your own. There may well be a hanger with your name on where you can leave your items, and your own book bag and pencil case which you can leave in the class. If you're worried about going to school, know there is a little place somewhere that is just for you.



TRY IT YOURSELF

School is not EVERYONE'S favourite place – I get that. That's why it might help to leave some items there which you will look forward to returning to. For example:

- ★ A FAVOURITE BOOK
- ★ A PICTURE THAT YOU'VE DRAWN
- ★ A PIECE OF WRITING THAT YOU'RE PROUD OF
- ★ STICKERS
- ★ A NOTE FROM A FRIEND



BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

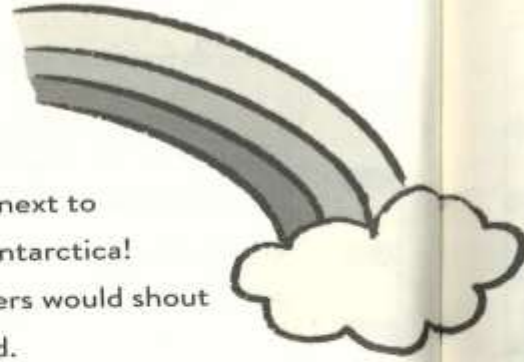
One classroom does not make an entire school. *Imagine how crowded it'd be!*

Reception kids would be squashed tightly next to Year Six like penguins waddling about in Antarctica! Footballs would fly through the air. Teachers would shout over each other to make themselves heard.

Perhaps your classroom is a great safe space – or maybe you feel more comfortable in the library, or a quiet corner of the playground. *Find the space that suits you. Then, as your confidence grows, search for more.*

MR BROWN'S TOP TIP

The people in school can help any space appear less scary. Knowing that you have someone who looks out for you and cares for your wellbeing can make all the difference. You can also be that person for someone else!



NOT JUST A CLASS, BUT A TEAM

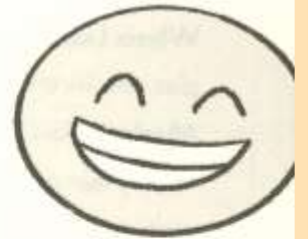
You, your best friends, your teacher, your teaching assistant (and even the class hamster, guinea pig, giant snail or rabbit, if you've got one) don't just make up a class . . . *you make up an entire team!* And everyone in the team has the same aim: to **SHINE!**

By being kind to each other and listening to each other's opinions, your team can make every person feel valued, respected and that their opinion matters.

TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK!

THINK POSITIVE, DO POSITIVE

In the safe space that your team creates, there is no need to worry. When you don't have to deal with negatives, you can focus on being positive. The more positive you are, the better your experience of school will be. You'll look forward to coming in every day, be more likely to give it your all and get on better with your teammates.



Anyone can get into a positive attitude, which is why it's so important to start every day with positivity.

MR BROWN'S TOP TIP

When you're feeling positive, it becomes so much easier to focus on what you can do, rather than what you can't do.

When I went to school as a pupil, I'd always listen to music to put me in the right frame of mind. My choice was usually Bob Marley. You could have your favourite musician coming on with your alarm clock every morning, play your favourite radio station in the car on the way to school, or you could even just sing your most-loved song in your head as you walk into the school building. Ask nicely, and your teacher may even play motivational music for you to walk into the classroom to!



TRY IT YOURSELF

List three things that you are looking forward to tomorrow. It could be seeing a friend, being in a certain lesson or something as simple as getting to eat your favourite snack. Put yourself in a positive mindset for shining at school.

STAYING POSITIVE

But what about a negative mindset? In the classroom, you will face setbacks. There will be new things you learn which you won't fully understand. What if you're not in a safe space, and you are not finding it easy to learn?

If you have a negative mindset, you might see setbacks as permanent, rather than challenges to overcome. Or you might feel that when setbacks knock you down, you can't get back up again. If you're thinking negatively, you might think 'I can't' instead of 'I can'.

Maybe you have had arguments at home or disagreements with classmates, and you think that the world is out to get you.

In those moments, the spaces that once felt safe might no longer seem so comfortable.

And that doesn't just impact you in the classroom.

It means you have less laughter at lunchtime.

Fewer fun chats with classmates.

Less enjoyment at school.



Being negative sounds kind of rubbish, doesn't it?

It can be tough to get out of a negative mindset. That's normal. Fortunately, there are a few things that always help to improve your mood.

For example, what do you do when everything seems to go wrong? How would you feel in these examples:

- ★ *Your alarm doesn't go off, or your stinky sibling hasn't woken you up like they usually do.*
- ★ *The bus is late, or the car has broken down.*

- ★ *It's raining heavily and you forget to grab your umbrella. You're soaked when you get to school!*



After all of that, it could be hard to be positive. ***But try promising yourself that such a challenging morning won't ruin the rest of your day.***

Remind yourself of what you're looking forward to. ***Play your favourite music*** (even if it's only in your head). ***Put on your favourite pair of socks!*** If you're still feeling a little negative, ***write down things that make you happy.*** Once you've written down enough of those things, tick them off.

- ★ **YOUR FRIENDS**
- ★ **SPORT**
- ★ **READING**
- ★ **HELPING PEOPLE**
- ★ **LAUGHTER**

After every tick you'll feel a little more positive.



TRY IT YOURSELF

Write down five things that make you happy on a piece of paper. Spend thirty seconds thinking how happy they make you feel. Get on with your day.

Soon, you can look at your morning with a new mindset. So, to go back to our examples...

- ★ Your alarm doesn't go off, or your stinky sibling hasn't woken you up like they usually do. → **At least I had a good night's sleep and some amazing dreams!**
- ★ The bus is late, or the car has broken down. → **I made it into school in the end – and after all, these things happen every now and again!**
- ★ It's raining heavily and you forget to grab your umbrella. You're soaked when you get to school! → **My clothes will dry out eventually – for now I'll joke to my friend that I look like a fish!**

MR BROWN'S TOP TIP

Studies show that having a positive mindset is so powerful it can improve your health and reduce anxiety!

NEW SPACE

'That's great, Mr Brown,' I hear you say. 'I'd love to be positive. But I'm going to a classroom that may not be a safe space. I'm going to have a new teacher in a new class with new pupils.' **WOW – OK. THAT'S SCARY!**

Whether you're moving up a year or switching teacher, you never know what you might get. Mr Jones might be a slimy monster with three heads. Mrs Walters might have a pink mohawk and a pet parrot resting on her shoulder shouting mean things to everyone in class! (Hopefully not, though!)



Any worries you have about a new teacher will be normal. It's the feeling of the unknown. But different teachers can unlock different qualities in you. You can enter a new level of learning, just like in a video game!

Expect new experiences, new challenges and new routines. Your new classroom will also look different. The work on the walls won't be the same. The tables may be laid out differently. It may even smell different. At first, it'll feel weird. **But after your first day, it'll feel less weird.**

There are even little tricks you can do to become more used to your new surroundings. Remember, everyone belongs in a classroom, so start by searching for the places in the weird new classroom that are dedicated to you. Find your peg, look for a drawer with your name on, see where your seat is. Get your reading book and place it in your drawer or put it on your table. **Try these places out and see if you feel comfortable in them.**

The more familiar you can become with your surroundings, the safer you will feel. **And that includes your teacher.** Ask them

questions (though maybe don't mention their three heads or their pink mohawks). Find out what they like and what they expect of you for the year ahead. If you don't feel brave enough to ask them out loud, you can leave a note on their desk. **If you want to know something about this new space, chances are others in the class also want to know it.**

NEW CLASSMATES

Sometimes it won't just be a new teacher and a new classroom. Sometimes a new pupil will join. As soon as the class finds out, chatter flies around the tables.

Who are they?

What do they look like?

Will they be friendly?

Are they good at sport?

What if they are secretly an alien?

That new pupil will be going through the same worries that every other pupil has when they move to a new class. They'll want to make friends, be happy, get on with the teacher or find out information about Earth that they can take back to their distant

planet. Even then, they are going to want their own safe space. That means it's **SUPER IMPORTANT** that they feel welcome.

MR BROWN'S TOP TIP

Your older sister or brother might tell you terrifying tales of how mean your new teacher is going to be or how scary it is in the 'big' class. Many pupils will hear such stories – but they are never true!

How would you feel if you were that new pupil? Imagine the nerves, the uncertainty. Now, think what you would be grateful for if you were that new pupil.

Someone to say hello?

Someone to show you where everything is?

Someone to look after you for your first day?

If someone does these things, then straight away, the new pupil feels welcome. They are comfortable, happy and ready to learn. They understand that this isn't just their new space.

It is their safe space. *Why don't you try it for yourself next time you get the chance?*

MR BROWN'S TOP TIP

'Hello' is a simple word, but such a powerful one. Saying it to someone new can help to ease their concerns. If you are that new person, saying 'hello' to someone can help to build new friendships and give you confidence to speak to other people. Be brave!





NEXT STOP: FUN

There are no hidden trapdoors in your classroom where dragons are lying in wait. There are no skeletons in the cupboard, no ghosts that come out at night. The classroom should be a welcoming space where you can learn with your friends without fear.

The same goes for this book.

None of these pages will explode after you read them, so feel free to flick back and forth.

Because when you feel safe in a space, your best learning can take place, which is especially important now we're going to learn about one of the most important things in the whole wide world.

YOURSELF.



How can you help make your new classroom a less scary place to be?

Have you set yourself a challenge for this new school year?





School Reflection

This is our school,
Let peace dwell here,
Let the rooms be full of contentment.

Let love abide here,
Love of one another,
Love of mankind,
Love of life itself.

Let us remember
That as many hands build a house,
So many hearts make a school
Help us to learn, play and share together.

We hope our school will be a place of great discovery, adventure and creativity.

May it be a place where we love to learn and where we learn to love,
A place where everyone is respected, and all are deeply valued.