

What to Do When You're Not Sure What to Do

AUTHOR

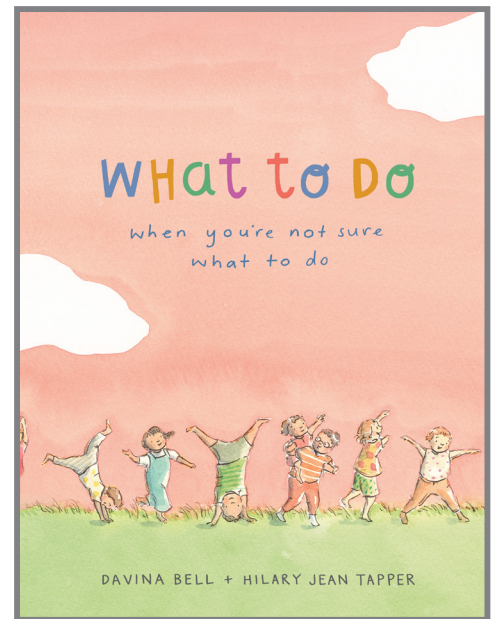
DAVINA BELL

ILLUSTRATOR

HILARY JEAN TAPPER

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SYNOPSIS

It might not be how you imagined . . . at first.

Find a you-shaped space.

Let yourself!

Another warm and whimsical guide to negotiating life's little and big moments, *What to Do When You're Not Sure What to Do* focuses on situations outside a child's home and domestic realm where they might feel unsure. It's another gentle exploration of empathy, courage and confidence from award-winning and much-loved author Davina Bell and with beautiful, heartwarming illustrations by Hilary Jean Tapper.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Davina Bell is a children's book editor and a writer for young people of many ages. Her picture books include *All the Ways To Be Smart*, *All of the Factors of Why I Love Tractors* and *Under the Love Umbrella*. Her debut young adult novel, *The End of the World is Bigger Than Love*, won the 2021 CBCA Book of the Year for Older Readers and the NSW Premier's Literary Awards' Ethel Turner Prize for Young Adult Fiction. *What to Say When You're not Sure What To Say* was her previous collaboration with Hilary Jean Tapper, and it won the ABIA Award for Children's Picture Book of the Year 2023 and was a CBCA Notable Picture Book of the Year 2023.

For more information about Davina, [visit www.davinabell.com](http://www.davinabell.com).

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Hilary Jean Tapper is an international award-winning illustrator based in New Zealand. She creates picture books, works as a creative arts therapist, lecturer and researcher, and facilitates creative arts workshops. Her awards include the ABIA Children's Picture Book of the Year and Foreability Book Award.

You can find out about Hilary and her work at www.hilaryjeantapper.com, or Facebook and Instagram [@hilaryjeantapper](https://www.instagram.com/hilaryjeantapper)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright AM operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. In 2011 she was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland, in 2012 the CBCA Nan

Chauncy Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Australia, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award. In 2021, she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.

STUDY NOTES

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

Emotions and Actions

- In each image in this book a child is confronted by a new experience, such as holding a baby, or carrying a goldfish home in a bag of water. Select any image and invite students to explain what it means to them; does the image remind them of something that they have experienced?
- Some of the images are 'cautionary tales'; they offer advice to young readers about how to translate their feelings into actions. For example: 'It's always good to ask first.' and 'If you go out and about let someone know.' and 'Some things need to be left alone.' Discuss any of the advice offered in this book, and how it might apply to your own life.
- Emotions explored include fear, uncertainty and sadness when faced with stressful situations. Discuss any of these feelings, when you have experienced them, and how you dealt with them.
- Write a sentence describing your reactions to any of the following situations:
 - Being bullied.
 - Buying something at a shop.
 - Losing your dog.
 - Finding yourself in the wrong place.
 - Being late for school.
 - Leaving your homework at home.
 - Looking after a younger sibling in a playground.

Then draw one of the situations above. Add a sentence to explain it, using the text in the book as a model.

- Discuss the various situations confronted by children in this text, such as going up an escalator, seeing a homeless man in the street, swimming in the ocean for the first time. Invite students to suggest how they might deal with any such situations. Then invite them to describe other situations where they have felt uncertainty and haven't known how to act appropriately.

Behavioural Skills

- The book canvases apparently 'good' behaviour (smiling at the shopkeeper when purchasing goods, or being quiet in a situation where quietness is appropriate, such as in a church) and potentially 'bad' behaviour (jumping on the seats of the train in excitement). But the book really demonstrates that children don't need to distinguish between such extremes and that careful thought can assist them in deciding how best to behave. Discuss any of the situations depicted in the book and how your students might behave in them.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

- Discuss the narrative person employed in this text, which is a combination of third person: 'It's always good to ask first.' (p 9) and second person: 'If you go out and about, let someone know.' (p 10)
- Invite students to write their own brief text describing an incident they've experienced where they have felt unsure of how to act or respond, or where they have felt nervous or overwhelmed by strangers. (Use the texts in this book as a model.)

VISUAL LITERACY

- The cover of the book depicts a line of children enjoying themselves being physically active. They are seen jumping, skipping, standing on their heads, and piggybacking another child. The scene contrasts sharply with the uncertainties expressed in the book and offers hope to children who, when left to their own devices, understand the joy to be found in the small moments in life, and in the company of friends and family. Invite students to discuss what the cover scene suggests to them.
- The endpapers feature a delightful image of a small child about to board a bus and looking nervously at the occupants. Have you ever boarded a bus or a train by yourself? How did that feel?

- The title page depicts a child holding a goldfish in a plastic bag full of water (an image repeated later in the book). Have you ever brought a pet home from a pet shop and been concerned about its safe transport?
- Each child in this text clearly reveals via their facial expressions and 'body language' their state of mind. Describe the feelings of any child depicted in this book.
- Read any of the pages in this book and invite students to comment on what the images mean to them. For example, 'Remember to look up! And look down.' (pp 12–13)
- The medium or style employed by the illustrator, Hilary Jean Tapper, is watercolour and pencil, and each image is hand-done. The colours used in this book are warm, charming pastels. Invite students to interpret a scene in the book in a similar style and medium. Discuss the differences between each interpretation.
- Invite students to draw, paint or collage a scene to accompany the brief text describing an incident of uncertainty which they wrote about above. Create a classroom mural using all the images.

CREATIVE ARTS

- Use puppets to act out a situation discussed in class which has made a child feel uncertain. Role-play different responses to the situation.
- Listen to a piece of music and ask the students how the music makes them feel. Then encourage them to express that feeling in a dance of their own design.
- Invite students to choose a feeling, write an acrostic poem about it, and then illustrate it.
- Create a poster to advertise this book.
- Create a Book Trailer to promote this book.

AUTHOR OF NOTES

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