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Better Than You



Synopsis

Jake's bragging is really starting to get to his neighbor Tyler. Tyler can't show Jake a basketball move, a school assignment, or a new toy without Jake saying he can do better. Tyler starts to wonder: "Is something wrong with him? Is he really such a loser? Is Jake really better than him at everything? Or is Jake the one with the problem? With the help of his uncle Kevin, Tyler begins to understand that Jake's bragging has nothing to do with Tyler's own abilities and that puffing yourself up leaves little room for friends.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars " See all reviews" (27 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #104,717 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #167 in " Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Bullies #520 in " Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Self-Esteem & Self-Respect #904 in " Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Emotions & Feelings

Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Grade Level: 1 - 4

Customer Reviews

I am a school counselor and have had the privilege of Trudy visiting our school twice. Her books are always straight to the point (on tough topics) and well written. When I read her books to group of students, you can hear a pin drop... they are captivated by her ability to connect on issues that are often difficult to put your finger on. Better Than You does not disappoint, in fact, I can't wait to read this with my own children and plug it into classroom lessons in the next couple of weeks. So grateful for all of Trudy's dedication to quality literature based on felt needs of children today! I would recommend purchasing all of Trudy's books for proactive parenting. :)

I first fell in love with Trudy Ludwig's writing when I read *My Secret Bully*. It was the perfect Read & Discuss student activity to include in my own book, *Friendship and Other Weapons: Group Activities to Help Young Girls Aged 5-11 to Cope With Bullying*. Since then, I've become a avid fan of Ludwig's books for reading and sharing with kids--including my own daughters, ages 8 & 5. Yesterday afternoon, when our copy of *Better Than You* arrived, we all cozied up on the sofa, eager for another good read. Indeed! Both of my kids are all too familiar with the "Jake-type:" the kid who has an incessant need to one-up everyone else. They both really related to the pufferfish analogy about kids who brag a lot and understood exactly what Ludwig means when she writes, "But when a kid acts like a pufferfish, he takes up so much space that he can also push friends away." Brilliant. So simple, so clear, and so true. As a Mom of kids who have been guilty of "puffing" a time or two themselves--particularly with each other--*Better Than You* was a great conversation starter and powerful reminder of how others perceive puffery and bragging. This book is a must read for kids and a must-share for parents, teachers, counselors, and anyone living or working with kids.

Author Trudy Ludwig continues to help the kids in my school with yet another awesome book. Does she read my mind or something? I'm always complaining there are not enough good ones out there on sportsmanship and bragging. These behaviors can be big problems for children and cause many an unhappy face in the classroom or on the playground. Let's not forget the headache they cause the adults too! You are gonna love the metaphor of a pufferfish Trudy uses to give insight as to what's behind these bragging attitudes. "But when a kid acts like a pufferfish, he takes up so much space that he can also push away friends." Light bulbs were flashing all through my audience as I read that page. This was so helpful to me as a teaching tool. I made an outline of a pufferfish on the board so we could get some brainstorming/discussion rolling. I love the ending of her story. Trudy doesn't sugarcoat it with a "and then we made up and were bff's." Tyler decides in the end to go his own way with a new friend - one that doesn't have issues. One of the students yelled out, "Yes! He chose a friendly fish. Like a dolphin!" Ha ha. Kids need to be reminded they don't have to stick around and be beat up emotionally by bad behavior. When I look around our playground I see kids in that sidekick position. But I got to make an impact on them with this great new story. Maybe they will start making some new friendship choices. It seems likely.....Keep em' coming Trudy.

A good story but I felt like I was left hanging a bit at the end. I wanted to see how Tyler might confront Jake about the bragging problem. To give kids an example of how to bring up a problem

their having in a polite way and in the end being able to possibly maintain the friendship.

As a retired clinical psychologist and a character education consultant, I have seen characterological problems from all aspects and for people of all ages. What began with the "Me-Generation" seems to have fostered a generation of kids who tend to be somewhat narcissistic and insensitive to others' feelings--kids we describe as lacking in empathy. Readers, both kids and adults, will immediately recognize the egocentric Jake and will also readily identify with the long-suffering Tyler who doesn't know how to deal with Jake's ongoing one-upmanship and his lack of empathy. This is a wonderful resource for both the home and the classroom and will facilitate some great discussions. As with all of Ms. Ludwig's books, another life lesson is presented in a warm and caring way. Highly Recommended!

I have used all of Trudy Ludwig's books in my counseling practice at an elementary school. I share them with assemblies, classes, small groups of students, and families. Her style is current and right on target for each relationship issue she addresses. *Better Than You* is a wonderful addition to her collection that addresses arrogance with empathy, humor, and tools. The students I shared it with this fall connected with it right away and loved the funny scene of how arrogance is like a puffer fish! They also appreciated the message that you didn't have to be cool in everything, but connecting, rather than competing, was the coolest way to be friends. It is rare to find such a talented author bringing awareness to such important life skill topics in a way that is accessible to young and old alike. I love Trudy Ludwig and her books!!! :

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