

# CHARACTER BUILDING LESSONS

CARL SOMMER

## CAN YOU HELP ME FIND MY SMILE?



### About the Book

The bear cub Teddy is a grumpy bear. Even though he had been a happy baby from a loving family, along the way he lost his smile. He doesn't enjoy any of the things that usually make children happy, such as baseball, bike riding, rides at Playland, and swimming. Teddy tries real hard to find his smile, but nothing works, until he asks his grandpa for advice. Grandpa tells him that he can only get his smile back by making others happy.

Teddy can't understand how this will help, but he's willing to try. He goes home and starts doing helpful things for his family and for his friends at school. He quickly discovers that Grandpa was right—happiness comes by helping others.

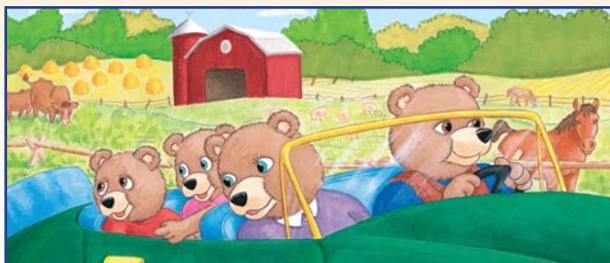
In this moving story by Carl Sommer, children will learn about caring, citizenship, and about one of the most important principles of living a happy life—helping others.

### Main Virtues

#### Caring/Cheerfulness/Citizenship

#### Other Virtues

Compassion, Generosity, Kindness, Positive Mental Attitude, Respect for Old Age, Responsibility, and Self-Discipline



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## **Being Unselfish**

Teddy did not like being grumpy. “If I just had a new bat and ball,” he thought, “I know I’d get my smile back.”

Sure enough, when he got a new bat and ball, Teddy smiled.

He was smiling when it was his turn to bat...but he quit smiling when it was his turn to play in the outfield. Grumpy Teddy did not like running after the ball. He only wanted to hit the ball.

Teddy became grumpy because he became selfish; he only thought about himself. If Teddy had been unselfish and thought about others, he would not have been grumpy running after the ball.

## **Willing to Work**

Teddy’s dad and mom gave him a new bicycle for his birthday.

“Hooray!” shouted Teddy. “This bike will surely bring back my smile!”

Dad and Mom took him to the park, and happy Teddy had great fun riding down the hill...but unhappy Teddy grumbled when he had to pedal back up the hill.

Before long, riding his bike did not make him smile anymore.

We see something else in Teddy; he became lazy. Teddy did not like to work. You will find that selfish and lazy people are not happy

## **Seeking Advice From the Wise**

Teddy, on the advice of his friends on finding his smile, went to Playland and to a river to go swimming. Neither place helped him. Then Teddy said to an older friend, “I’ve tried very hard to find my smile, but nothing works. Maybe I can ask my grandpa what to do.”

His friend shook his head and laughed. “Grandpas can’t help kids. They’re too old!”

It’s the exact opposite—grandpas are old and wise. They have much wisdom, and you can learn much from them.

Notice that all the advice his friends gave him did not work. Learn to seek advice from the wise. A good place to begin is to learn to seek advice from your dad and mom.

## **Loving One’s Neighbors**

Grandpa said to Teddy, “When you try to make only yourself happy, you will always be sad and grumpy. But when you try to make others happy, you will find your smile.”

The problem with Teddy was that he tried to make only himself happy. The secret of happiness is to make others happy. We make others happy by doing good things for them.

## **Caring—Helping the Poor and Needy**

Grandpa took Teddy and drove him around town and showed him needy people. He said to Teddy, “Everywhere you go there are those who are

poor and needy. If you help those who really need help, you will find your smile.”

We should be filled with compassion and desire to help the poor and needy.

### **Doing Good to Others**

“I don’t understand, Grandpa,” said Teddy, shaking his head. “But I’m going to do just as you say. I’m going to try really hard to make others happy.”

Teddy couldn’t understand how doing good deeds to others would bring him smiles. But Teddy was wise; he was willing to try.

### **Being Kind to Our Enemies**

Billy often hid Teddy’s books to make him mad. This time Billy was in trouble because he had lost his notebook. Billy did not want to tell the teacher that his mother did not have the money to buy another one.

Teddy remembered what Grandpa had told him about making others happy, so he gave his enemy his extra notebook. Teddy did not know it, but he had a smile on his face. And he had a new friend—Billy.

### **Showing Compassion to Others—Citizenship**

When Teddy saw Bonnie having trouble carrying her books, he called out, “Bonnie! Let me help you.”

Teddy had compassion for others. He felt very happy as he carried Bonnie’s books. He did not know it, but he had a big smile on his face. Notice that Teddy’s smile is getting bigger and bigger.

### **Honoring and Obeying Parents**

The first thing Teddy decided to do was to make his mom happy by cleaning up his room. Teddy’s final act of helping others was to make his dad happy. The next day he was supposed to help his dad pull weeds in the garden. Teddy not only pulled the weeds by himself, but he did extra work—he raked the yard.

When Dad came home from work, he was so surprised. Dad picked Teddy up and gave him a great big hug. Finally, Teddy realized...he was happy! He had found his smile by helping others!

### **Helping Others Brings Happiness**

From then on wherever Teddy went, he led the way by making others happy.

No longer was Teddy a grumpy bear. Now he had lots of smiles. His friends even gave him a new name—Smiley bear.

Best of all Teddy never forgot Grandpa’s lesson: Happiness comes by helping others.

Let this be your aim in life—making others happy. When you live like this, you will find that it will bring happiness to your life. Selfishness brings misery—helping others brings happiness.

## How to Be Unhappy

Think only about yourself.

Be selfish.

Don't share with others.

When you play with others, do things that only you like to do. Teddy wanted to be only at bat; he didn't like to play in the outfield.

Complain when you have to work. Teddy loved riding down the hill, but he grumbled when he had to ride up the hill.

Try to find happiness by seeking pleasure only for yourself. Teddy went to Playland and to the river to go swimming, but he did not find his smile.

Try to make yourself happy by convincing yourself that you are happy.

Teddy listened to his friend and stood in front of the mirror and said, "I am happy! I am very happy! I am really very happy!" Then he grinned as big as he could.

But it was not a real smile, and it did not make him happy. In fact, it made him grumpier. Trying to talk yourself into being happy doesn't work.

Don't care about the poor and needy.

Don't listen to your parents.

Make it your goal in life to think only about making *yourself* happy.

Follow these principles, and you will be guaranteed to live a life of unhappiness.

## How to Be Happy

Think about helping others.

Be unselfish.

Share with others.

Be an eager and willing worker.

Think about how you can help the poor and needy.

Listen to your parents.

Make it your goal in life to discover how you can make *others* happy.

Follow these principles, and you will also find lots of happiness. Teddy learned that happiness comes by helping others, and as a result he became known as Smiley Bear.

## Questions

1. How happy was Teddy when he was a baby?

*Teddy was a very happy baby—he always smiled.*

2. What happened to Teddy when he became older?

*When Teddy grew older, he began to lose his smile. This made him feel grumpy.*

3. Dad and Mom loved Teddy. What are some of the things they did for him?

*They gave him gifts for special times, played games with him, and took him on fishing trips.*

4. When did Teddy smile playing ball?

*Teddy was smiling only when it was his turn to bat...but he quit smiling when it was his turn to play in the outfield.*

5. Why did Teddy become grumpy?

*Teddy became grumpy because he became selfish. He thought only about himself.*

6. When Teddy rode his bike, what did he like to do?

*Teddy had great fun riding down the hill.*

7. What did Teddy grumble about when he rode his bike?

*Teddy grumbled when he had to pedal back up the hill.*

8. Why is Teddy grumbling about pedaling his bike up the hill?

*Pedaling a bike up a hill is work. Teddy does not like to work; he is showing that he is lazy.*

9. What did Teddy's first friend tell him he could do to find his smile?

*His friend said, "We'll go to Playland. You'll find your happiness there!"*

10. What happened when Teddy went to Playland?

*The more rides he rode, the grumpier he became.*

11. What did Teddy's second friend tell him he could do to find his smile?

*His friend said, "Let's go swimming in the river. You'll find plenty of smiles there!"*

12. What happened to Teddy when he went swimming in the river?

*Teddy just laid on his float with a big frown on his face.*

13. What did Teddy's older friend say about grandpas?

*Teddy's older friend said, "Grandpas can't help kids. They're too old!"*

14. Why is it good to go to parents and grandparents for advice?

*It is good to go to parents and grandparents for advice because they are older and know much.*

Notice that all the advice his friends gave him did not work. Learn to seek advice from the wise. A good place to begin with is from your father and mother.

15. What did Teddy's third friend tell him he could do to find his smile?

*His friend said, "Your smile is inside you! Just keep telling yourself that you're happy, and then put a big smile on your face."*

16. What happened to Teddy when he stood in front of the mirror and did what his older friend had told him?

*It did not make him happy. In fact, it made him grumpier.*

Trying to talk yourself into being happy doesn't work.

17. What happened to Susie on the farm when she fed the animals and rode the horses?

*Susie had lots of fun and lots of smiles.*

18. What happened to Teddy on the farm when he fed the animals and rode the horses?

*Teddy never smiled.*

19. What did Teddy say when Grandpa told him that maybe he could help him find his smile?

*Teddy said, "I don't think so. My friend says, 'Grandpas can't help kids. They're too old.'"*

20. What did Teddy say when Grandpa asked, "Did your friend help you find your smile?"

*Teddy said softly, "No."*

21. Teddy thought, "All my friends have been wrong. Maybe Grandpa can help me!" What did Grandpa say when Teddy whispered, "Grandpa, can you help me find my smile?"

*Grandpa said, "When you try to make only yourself happy, you will always be sad and grumpy. But when you try to make others happy, you will find your smile."*

22. Why is it when you try to make only yourself happy, you do not find happiness; but when you make others happy, you find smiles?

*When you are trying to make only yourself happy, you are selfish. Selfish people are not happy. Teddy's problem was he tried to make only himself happy. The secret to happiness is making others happy. We make others happy by doing good things for them.*

23. What did Grandpa tell Teddy to do as he drove Teddy around town and showed him the poor and needy?

*Grandpa said, "Look Teddy. Everywhere you go there are those who are poor and needy. If you help those who really need help, you will find your smile."*

24. Teddy did not understand what Grandpa had told him, but what did he say he was going to do?

*Teddy said, "I'm going to try hard to make others happy."*

Teddy couldn't understand how doing good deeds for others would bring him smiles, but he was willing to try. It is an excellent virtue when we make it our goal in life to try always to do good deeds for others.

25. Teddy didn't understand how helping others would help him find his smile, but he was willing to try. What was the first thing Teddy did?

*Teddy cleaned up his room to make his mom happy.*

26. What happened to Teddy as he began to clean up his room?

*As Teddy cleaned up his room, he began to smile.*

27. Why is Teddy beginning to smile?

*Teddy is beginning to smile because he is making his mom happy.*

28. In school, Teddy's classmate Billy would often hide his books just to make him mad. What did Teddy say to Billy because he knew he was poor?

*Teddy said, "Billy, you can have my extra notebook."*

Teddy remembered what Grandpa had told him about making others happy, so he gave his enemy his extra notebook.

29. Who became Teddy's new friend?

*Billy became Teddy's new friend.*

Teddy was kind to his enemy, and now his enemy became his friend.

30. What did Teddy do for Bonnie?

*Teddy helped Bonnie carry her books.*

Teddy had compassion for others. Teddy felt very happy as he carried Bonnie's books.

31. What kind of smile did Teddy have as he helped Bonnie carry her books?

*Teddy had a big smile on his face.*

32. Why is Teddy's smile becoming larger and larger?

*Teddy's smile is becoming larger and larger because he is helping more people. The more people you help the happier you become.*

When you help others, it makes you feel good inside.

33. What did Teddy's mom say and do when she saw that Teddy cleaned up his room?

*Teddy's mom said, "I'm so happy!" Then she gave Teddy a great big hug.*

34. What did Teddy do to make his dad happy?

*Teddy went to work in the garden. He pulled out all the weeds by himself. He even did extra work—he raked the yard.*

35. When Dad picked Teddy up and gave him a great big hug, what did Teddy realize?

*Teddy realized—he was happy!*

36. How did Teddy find his smile?

*Teddy found his smile by helping others.*

37. What did Teddy say to Grandpa about how he found his smile?

*Teddy said, "I began making others happy, and now I have the biggest smile in the whole world!"*

38. From then on wherever Teddy went he led the way by making others happy. What was the new name his friends gave him?

*His friends gave him the name Smiley Bear.*

39. Teddy never forgot Grandpa's lesson. What was Grandpa's lesson?

*Happiness comes by helping others.*

Let this be your aim in life—making others happy.