Oh, the Gulf Coast We Know!

A Healing Journey Through Louisiana's Coastal Parishes



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Emeril Lagasse Foundation

United Way

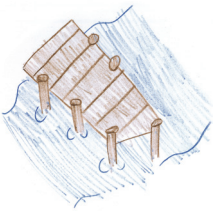
Dedicated to the children and families of Louisiana affected by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill







Shelby Shrimp and Otis Oyster were feeling different than usual. Otis's mom and dad told him there was an oil spill. Shelby heard the local news reporter Polly Pelican warning fisherman about trouble in the nearby Gulf.



Shelby saw Otis sitting on the dock of the gulf...
"Hey Otis!
What are you doing?"



Otis replied, "I'm just sitting here watching the oil wash by...I don't know what is going to happen. My mom and dad say our heritage is losing some of its original flavor..."

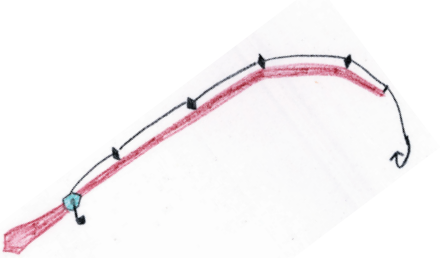


"I'm feeling worried too!" Shelby said with a frown.





"I know what we should do!!" said Otis, "Let's go visit Stanley. He always knows how to help when I'm feeling down. Stanley is always there to show us how to listen and care. He is one of a kind and always helps to ease our mind. Whenever we need a hand, Stanley knows how to understand."



Shelby and Otis walked down to the dock where they found Stanley fishing. They both began talking at once.



"What will happen?" yelled Shelby.



"How can we help?" shouted Otis.



"Slow down!" said Stanley.
"It's easy to think about all you might lose,
but there's still so much fun from which
you can choose. Take a deep breath in
and a slow breath out. Take some time
to think about something else."





"Like what?" inquired Shelby.



"Come on! Hop aboard." said Stanley.
"We need to travel down the coastal line to
see the swamps, marshes, and muddy waters."

Stanley guided his boat through the water and began to sing. "Here's the latest news... Think positive! Today is your day! I know you're feeling sad, but I'll show you the way."



Stanley helped Shelby and Otis into his boat and they were off! Cameron Parish was their first stop.

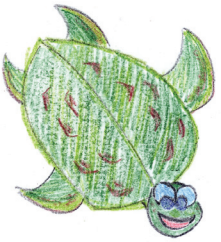
"Will we be able to see the oil?" wondered Otis.



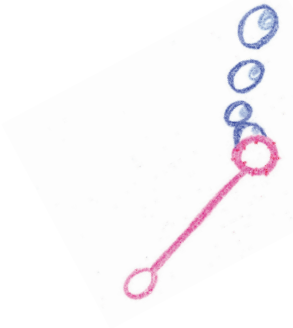


"Will it come onto the land and begin to cover up my school?" asked Shelby.

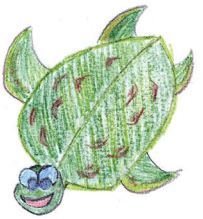




"Slow down!" said Stanley. "Take a deep breath in and a slow breath out. I'll teach you some tips to turn to when you are in doubt. It's easy to think about all you might lose, but there is still so much fun from which you can choose. Think about the Alligator Harvest Festival or travel up to Lake Charles where they have the two week long Contraband Pirate Festival! Now here are some bubbles for you to practice with. The bigger breath you take in, and the slower breath you blow out, the bigger the bubble will be, no doubt!"



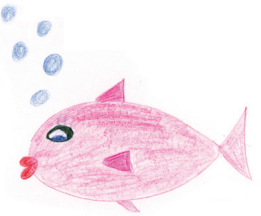
Otis and Shelby practiced blowing their bubbles. Otis learned that the faster you blew the bubbles out the smaller and more in number they were. Shelby practiced Stanley's tip and found that his bubbles in fact grew to be quite large and magnificently out of sight. The two had fun together trying to see who could blow the bigger bubble and before they knew it, their worries had gone away!



"Onward!" shouted Stanley ...
and down the coastal line they went....



As Vermillion parish appeared in front of their eyes, Shelby began to think of her friend Frieda Fish. She knew Frieda's dad had lost his job at the bait shop near Freshwater Bayou due to the effects from the spill.



"I bet Frieda will have to move away!" Shelby cried.





"Slow down!" said Stanley. "Take a deep breath in and a slow breath out. I will teach you some tips to turn to when you are in doubt. It's easy to think about all you might lose, but there is still so much fun from which you can choose." Stanley thought about something that would help Shelby and Otis to remember something they had once enjoyed.





"Down there in Abbeville...
you do remember the Giant Omelette Celebration! Let's draw a picture of it and remember all the good times we've had!"

Shelby and Otis thought about alligators, pirates, and good omelettes...
and down the coastal line they went.

"Look Otis! What about the good ole' shrimpin'? Those shrimp boots over there looked like they haven't been worn in weeks!" cried Shelby.







"Yeah... all squeaky clean and not a drop of water on them, oh no!" wept Otis.



"Slow down!" said Stanley. "Take a deep breath in and a slow breath out. I'll teach you some tips to turn to when you are in doubt. It's easy to think about all you might lose, but there is still so much fun from which you can choose. Remember, down here in New Iberia and Avery Island they have the tasty Tabasco, Sugar Cane festival, and Shadows on the Teche! Remember last year when you got up on stage and sang with your class as everyone cheered! Thinking about past times will surely help you to turn that sad frown upside down. All together now! Let's pretend we are on stage doing a little play."



"Come along, let's keep trolling!"







"Look Shelby, we are coming up on Franklin and Morgan City in St. Mary!" yelled Otis.

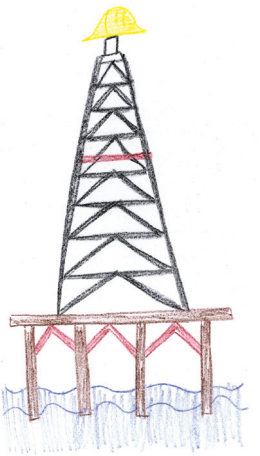




"Oh no! What about the port Otis?" cried Shelby.



"Slow down!" said Stanley. "Take a deep breath in and a slow breath out. I'll teach you some tips to turn to when you are in doubt. It's easy to think about all you might lose, but there is still so much fun from which you can choose. The port of Morgan City is the birthplace of the offshore oil exploration industry. You know they will always hold their annual Shrimp and Petroleum festival! Now come on and count with me to ten. By the time we are done, we will be in for some fun!"



"Wow, Otis, it looks like Stanley has a tip for everywhere we've passed so far!" said Shelby.







"Yeah, but look here now we are coming up on Terrebonne parish - you know where Houma at," said Otis in his Cajun accent.

"Are the swamp tours and charter fishing still going to go on?" asked Shelby.





"Slow down!" said Stanley. "Take a deep breath in and a slow breath out. I'll teach you some tips to turn to when you are in doubt. It's easy to think about all you might lose, but there is still so much fun from which you can choose. Think about the live Cajun music they have."





"Right!" exclaimed Otis and Shelby at once. "We can always liven up the mood with some Zydeco dancing!"



"Yes," said Stanley, "dancing with each other eases our minds and helps us to unwind. Come on let's move ahead."





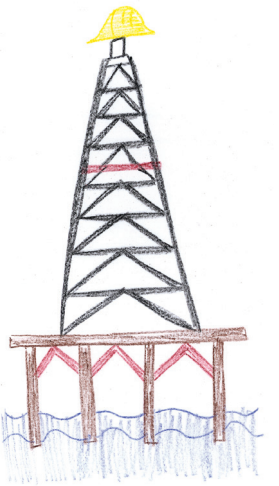
"Wow, Stanley, you sure do know how to stay positive despite all this uproar that keeps us up at night." said Otis.
"Onto Lafourche!" cried Shelby!!

"Ohhhh!" screeched Otis, "Thibodaux is where those old plantations stand."





"Slow down!" said Stanley. "Take a deep breath in and a slow breath out. I'll teach you some tips to turn to when you are in doubt. It's easy to think about all you might lose, but there is still so much fun from which you can choose. Those plantations have been around for hundreds of years and a hundred more they will stand! Thinking about things that have been around for years keeps our minds ever so clear to stay focused on places that are warm and safe, so keep focused and steer straight!"





"I can hear the cheers from Zephyr Field!" said an excited Shelby. "That means we're in Jefferson parish!"



"Oh, I hope Boudreaux D. Nutria and his wife Clotile are safe!" Otis cried.





"Slow down!" said Stanley. "Take a deep breath in and a slow breath out. I'll teach you some tips to turn to when you are in doubt. It's easy to think about all you might lose, but there is still so much fun from which you can choose. The annual Redfish Rodeo is on!"



"Otis and Shelby, when
things seem scary,
use what I call
self-talk. Sort of like this-
"There's no place like Louisiana!
There's no place like Louisiana!"





Arriving in St. Bernard Parish, Stanley, Otis and Shelby found Nettie Net on the boat dock crying! After the oil spill, she could not go into the water to scoop up and hang out with her friends, the crabs, crawfish, and shrimp. "Don't cry, Nettie" said Shelby. "Stanley has shown us that there are still so many fun things to do." "She's right!" agreed Otis. "When things get tough, remember to slow down!" said Stanley. "Take a deep breath in and a slow breath out. I'll teach you some tips to turn to when you're in doubt. It's easy to think about all you might lose, but there is still so much fun from which you can choose. There is still the Domino Sugar Festival, the Los Islenos Festival and Museum, the Chalmette Battlefield and Museum, or we can go to the Farmer's and Seafood Market in old Arabi. " "Sounds fun!" exclaimed Nettie. Otis, Shelby, and Stanley invited Nettie to join them as they continued down the coastal line, but she was too happy to leave. "I'm going to stick around and enjoy all the fun St. Bernard parish has to offer," said Nettie. "Come back anytime and we'll have a fun time! she yelled as the crew floated away to their next stop.



"I can see the sands of Pelican Island ahead!" said Otis. "





"I wonder if the oil made it all the way to Venice?" questioned Shelby.



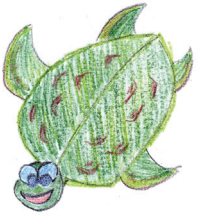
"Slow down!" said Stanley. "Take a deep breath in and a slow breath out. I'll teach you some tips to turn to when you are in doubt. It's easy to think about all you might lose, but there is still so much fun from which you can choose. Plaquesmines Parish remains full of fun. The people will make sure that justice is won!"







"Now for our last two stops... Orleans and St. Tammany," said Stanley. "These two parishes have weathered some severe setbacks, but as you know they have always come back. Now, take some deep breaths and look at New Orleans, the city that was rebuilt after Hurricanes Betsy and Katrina."





"Yeah," agreed Otis, "looks like those New Orleanians are preparing for the worst again. No seafood poor boys, crawfish boils, or gumbo fever!"





"Slow down!" said Stanley. "Take a deep breath in and a slow breath out. I'll teach you some tips to turn to when you are in doubt. It's easy to think about all you might lose, but there is still so much fun from which you can choose. Let's go talk to the elders; they will keep us focused by brightening our day. Talking with those that are a bit older helps us to lean on their shoulder. Us young ones shouldn't worry about the things that our moms and dad, grandmas and grandpas are responsible for."

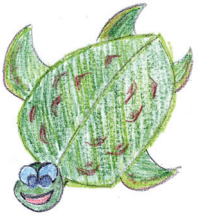
"You do know, Otis, that down there in New Orleans they always have something to think positively about whether or not they have shrimp, fish, or oysters." remarked Shelby.



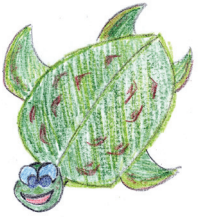
"Yeah," said Otis, "they have those red beans and rice, pralines, and Zatarain's spice!"



"I know," Shelby excitedly replied, "Jambalaya, King Cakes, and Zapp's potato chips!"



"Better than food," chimed in Stanley, "they have the Saints! The Jazz and Heritage Fest! Mardi Gras! And French Quarter Fest!" "Now, relax and stop worrying..." "You see," said Stanley, "no matter where you go, Louisiana has so much to reel in. Any time you want to cast your net, you'll be sure to get all your needs met. Whether you are dancing or laughing, counting or talking, using these tips will always get you equipped to handle all that comes up the mouth of the Mississipp' way down in the deep south."



Otis and Shelby thought about their trip down the coastal line and sat back and smiled. Although there was so much to lose, there would always be something else from which they could choose! Louisiana wasn't going anywhere anytime soon. They knew there may be some tough times, but Louisiana would surely be fine!

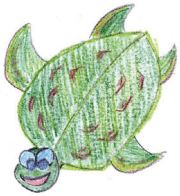
"Wow, Stanley!" exclaimed Shelby. "Thanks for the trip. You were so helpful and taught us great tips."





"No problem!" said Stanley. "I was happy to share. If you feel worried or sad, remember you can use them anywhere."

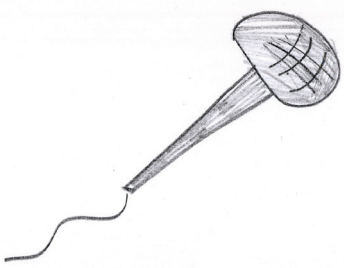
"Now one last thing," added Otis. "Shelby and I came up with a song to show how happy we are that you came along."



And together they sang,







"At first we were afraid,
We were petrified.
Kept thinking we could never live
without Louisiana by our side.
But we spent so many nights
thinking how the oil did us wrong
and we grew strong,
We learned how to move on.
And so Louisiana's back!"



Stanley's Catch of the Day: Cast Your Worries Aside and Reel in a New Tip

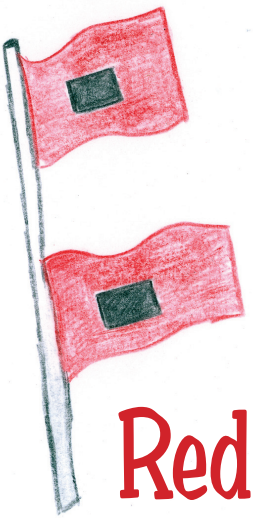
1. Talk About it With a Helpful Adult
2. Draw a Picture of The Worry or Something That Makes You Smile
3. Act it Out
4. Take Deep Breaths in and Slow Breaths Out
5. Use Self Talk
6. Count to 10
7. Find a Safe Place to Rest Your Mind for a Bit
8. Blow Bubbles
9. Play Your Favorite Song and Dance Around
10. Think of Something Funny and Find Someone To Laugh With



Parent/Teacher Guide

How to Help Kids Who Are Worried

1. Respond to the Questions Kids Ask
   (let them know you hear them!)
2. Be Honest and Truthful
3. Acknowledge Children's Wishes, Wants, Desires, Needs, etc.
4. Reflect Feelings (ex. "Looks like you feel sad".)
5. Restate Content (ex."I hear you saying...")
6. Set Limits and Be Consistent
7. Return the Role of the Caregiver (Parent or Teacher)
8. Give Children Roles, Responsibilities and Choices
   (Small Ones for Little Kids; Big Ones for Big Kids)
9. Refer for Consultation (Therapist) if Needed
10. Provide Opportunities for Relaxation and Laughter



Red Flags

When To Seek Professional Consultation

Excessive or Unusual:

Crying or Sadness

Worry or Fear

Anger

Aggression

Frustration

Overly Responsible

Overly Dependent

Avoidant

Sleep Cycles Reversed

Asks Lots of Questions

Erin Dugan, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center - New Orleans (LSUHSC - NO) in the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling. She is a National Certified Counselor, a Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor and a Registered Play Therapist Supervisor. Dr. Dugan specializes in providing play therapy services to children, adolescents, and families at the LSUHSC - NO Play Therapy Clinic. She conducts workshops and training seminars to promote play therapy to students, professionals, and the Greater New Orleans community. Dr. Dugan has presented both nationally and internationally at professional conferences and is committed to servicing the children and families to whom she provides mental health counseling services.

For further information on services or trainings at the LSUHSC- NO Play Therapy Clinic, please contact Dr. Dugan at (504) 568-4329 or emart3@lsuhsc.edu.

Adrianne Lolan, MHS is a Licensed Professional Counselor, a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, and a Registered Play Therapist. Adrianne holds clinical work experience in a variety of settings and has presented at many professional conferences. Adrianne provides counseling services to children and families as owner and director of NOLA Play Therapy, L.L.C in Metairie, LA. Currently, she is a doctoral student in Counselor Education at the University of New Orleans.

For further information on services at NOLA Play Therapy, L.L.C, please contact Adrianne at (504) 309-1049 or visit

www.nolaplaytherapy.com

This book is dedicated to help the children and families of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill deal with and combat post traumatic stress and anxieties they have experienced. The authors wish to acknowledge the Emeril Lagasse Foundation and United Way for their partnership and dedication to the Gulf Coast community, without whom this project would not be possible.