

Character Building Picture Books

(* denotes series)

Bravery

Stacey's Extraordinary Words by Stacey Abrams

Stacey is a little girl who loves words more than anything. She loves reading them, sounding them out, and finding comfort in them when things are hard. But when her teacher chooses her to compete in the local spelling bee, she isn't as excited as she thought she'd be. What if she messes up? Or worse, if she can't bring herself to speak up, like sometimes happens when facing bullies at school? Stacey will learn that win or lose . . . her words are powerful, and sometimes perseverance is the most important word of all.

Let's Go to Taekwondo by Aram Kim

Yoomi and her friends are ready to take on the test for their yellow belts in taekwondo. But Yoomi is afraid to break a board. Meanwhile, Grandma is struggling to learn something new, too. But Yoomi and Grandma encourage and inspire each other. Yoomi discovers how, with persistence, focus, deep breathing, and above all, a loving Grandma, even the toughest challenges can be overcome.

A Little Bit Brave by Nicola Kinnear

Logan is a stay-at-home bunny - but he's about to discover how brave he really is. It's time for his first adventure, and he doesn't want to go. But there's an amazing world outside, if he can just pluck up courage to look.

Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon by Patty Lovell*

Molly Lou Melon is short and clumsy, has buck teeth, and has a voice that sounds like a bullfrog being squeezed by a boa constrictor. She doesn't mind. Her grandmother has always told her to walk proud, smile big, and sing loud, and she takes that advice to heart. But then Molly Lou has to start in a new school. A horrible bully picks on her on the very first day, but Molly Lou Melon knows just what to do about that.

When You Are Brave by Pat Zietlow Miller

Saying goodbye to neighbors. Worrying about new friends. Passing through a big city. Seeing a dark road ahead. In these moments, a young girl feels small and quiet and alone. But when she breathes deeply and looks inside herself, a hidden spark of courage appears, one she can nurture and grow until she glows inside and out.

The Thing Lou Couldn't Do by Ashley Spires

Lou and her friends are BRAVE adventurers. One day, when they're looking for a ship to play pirates in, Lou's friend has an idea: the tree can be our ship! This is something new. Lou has never climbed a tree before, and she's sure she can't do it. So she tries to convince her friends to play a not-up-a-tree game. When that doesn't work, she comes up with reasons for not joining them --- her arm is sore,

her cat needs a walk, you shouldn't climb so soon after eating. Finally, she tells herself she doesn't want to climb the tree. But is that true, or is this brave adventurer just too afraid to try?

I Am Courage by Susan Verde*

When we picture someone brave, we might think they're fearless; but real courage comes from feeling scared and facing what challenges us anyway. When our minds tell us "I can't," we can look inside ourselves and find the strength to say, "Yes, I CAN!"

The Very Last Leaf by Stef Wade

Lance Cottonwood is the best and brightest of the leaves, but even the top students on the tree have worries. Can Lance conquer his fear of falling and just let go when the time comes for his final exam, or will he let his worries take over?

Trying by Kobi Yamada

How will you know what's possible if you don't try? This is a story for anyone who has ever felt like a beginner, or had doubts, or worried they weren't good enough. It's a story for those who have experienced the pain of trying something new and not having it turn out as they had hoped.

Bear Outside by Jane Yolen

A girl explores the many ways she expresses herself by imagining that she wears a bear as her personal protective shell. They go everywhere and do everything together. The Bear is like a suit of armor and a partner all in one, protecting her from bullies and giving her strength to be bold when she needs it. In turn, she listens to and takes care of the Bear.

Patience

The Very Impatient Caterpillar by Ross Burach*

When a group of caterpillars scamper up a tree to metamorphosize, one of them is still learning about this whole transformation thing. Who knew that with a little time, and patience, he could become a beautiful butterfly? But the two-week wait inside his chrysalis feels interminable. His fellow caterpillars all tell him to be patient and let nature take its course, but the waiting is just so hard. Can he do it??

Almost Time by Gary Schmidt

Eager for maple syrup, Ethan can't wait till sugaring time rolls around. And he can't wait till his loose tooth falls out. But his father keeps telling him it's not time yet, and no matter how hard he tries, he can't make time pass more quickly.

Bear Can't Wait by Karma Wilson*

Patience might be a virtue but waiting is so hard! On a beautiful sunny afternoon, Bear can't sit still because he's got a surprise planned for his good friend Hare. He hustles and bustles and scuttles about. But when, in his excitement, he makes a mess of things, can he set it all right before Hare shows up?

Perseverance

The Little Butterfly That Could by Ross Burach*

This funny little butterfly doesn't think he can make the 200-mile migration, but he'll learn an important lesson: If at first you don't succeed, fly, fly again!

A Thousand No's by DJ Corchin

NO after NO after NO come the little girl's way, twisting and squishing her idea. But by persevering, collaborating and using a little imagination, all those NO's become the building blocks for the biggest YES ever!

Astronaut Training by Aneta Cruz

Astrid is training to go to space! But as she builds her shuttle, cooks astronaut food, and practices floating in zero gravity, Dad tells Astrid that the ship's construction is too dangerous, she's too little to cook alone, and she's not allowed to flood the bathroom. That night, when Astrid dreams she's an astronaut, the challenges she encounters are overwhelming. Astrid realizes she isn't as ready as she thought. Back on Earth, Astrid turns to her loving and supportive Dad, who helps Astrid continue her astronaut training.

Dancing Devi by Priya Parikh

Devi knows that she's a good dancer. In fact, she's one of the best Bharatanatyam dancers at her dance school. So she's very upset when she learns she's lost the big dance competition. Her mom is a perfect dancer and Devi needs to be, too. Devi vows to practice her facial expressions and footwork until her dance is flawless, but no matter how much she practices, she keeps making mistakes. Come along with Devi as she learns that failure is an important part of learning and growing.

Nya's Long Walk by Linda Sue Park

Young Nya takes little sister Akeer along on the two-hour walk to fetch water for the family. But Akeer becomes too ill to walk, and Nya faces the impossible: her sister and the full water vessel together are too heavy to carry. As she struggles, she discovers that if she manages to take one step, then another, she can reach home and Mama's care.

My First Day by Phung Nguyen Quang

This is no ordinary first journey. The rainy season has come to the Mekong Delta, and An, a young Vietnamese boy, sets out alone in a wooden boat wearing a little backpack and armed only with a single oar. On the way, he is confronted by giant

crested waves, heavy rainfall and eerie forests where fear takes hold of him. Although daunted by the dark unknown, An realizes that he is not alone and continues to paddle. He knows it will all be worth it when he reaches his destination--one familiar to children all over the world.

Hugo and the Impossible Thing by Renée Felice Smith

At the edge of the forest stood the Impossible Thing. All the animals in the forest often wondered what was beyond the Impossible Thing, but since everyone said getting through it would be impossible, no animal ever tried. Until a brave little dog named Hugo decides he just might be up to the challenge. With determination and some unexpected help from his friends, Hugo learns that what may seem impossible might just be possible after all.

Apologizing

Even Superheroes Make Mistakes by Shelly Becker

Even superheroes sometimes slip up and err. Whether they've nabbed the wrong guy by mistake or bashed into a planet while zooming through space, all superheroes 'fess up their mess-up, get on with their day, and keep on saving the world in the most super way!

I'm Sorry by Michael Ian Black*

Flamingo is upset. Very upset. Potato is sorry. Very sorry. In fact, he is the sorriest. But he doesn't know how to tell Flamingo. He would rather run away to the South Pole and live with penguins. He'd rather wear a disguise for the rest of time. But will that be enough to fix their friendship? Will they ever go back to being a girl, a potato, and a flamingo again?

How to Apologize by David Larochelle

Wouldn't the world be a better place if everyone knew how to apologize? Luckily, this humorous guidebook is full of practical tips about when, why, and how to say you're sorry. From a porcupine who accidentally popped his friend's balloon to a snail who was running so fast he stepped on a sloth's toes, hilarious examples and sweet illustrations abound.

Self-Esteem

Free to be Elephant Me by Giles Andreae

It's time for the Elephant Games! Every young elephant parades their talent in front of the king to earn their special elephant name. But Num-Num doesn't have a special skill to display. With a little help from some familiar friends, will this little elephant learn that being yourself is the most important talent of them all?

Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andreae

Gerald is a giraffe who simply can't dance. Try as he may, his long, spindly legs buckle whenever he starts to boogie. Every year he dreads going to the Great Jungle Dance - until one night when he finds his own special music.

I Am Every Good Thing by Derrick Barnes

The confident Black narrator of this book is proud of everything that makes him who he is. He's got big plans, and no doubt he'll see them through--as he's creative, adventurous, smart, funny, and a good friend. Sometimes he falls, but he always gets back up. And other times he's afraid, because he's so often misunderstood and called what he is not. So slow down and really look and listen, when somebody tells you--and shows you--who they are. There are superheroes in our midst!

The World Needs More Purple People by Kristen Bell

What is a purple person? Great question. I mean, really great! Because purple people always ask really great questions. They bring their family, friends, and communities together, and they speak up for what's right. They are kind and hardworking, and they love to laugh (especially at Grandpa's funny noises)! A purple person is an everyday superhero! How do you become one? That's the fun part! Penny Purple will lead you through the steps. Get ready to be silly, exercise your curiosity, use your voice, and be inspired.

Odd Dog Out by Rob Biddulph

It's a dog's life in the big, busy city, but there's one lonely pup who doesn't quite fit in. She behaves differently from the rest, sports rainbow in a sea of gray, and marches to the beat of her own drum. She's one Odd Dog. Join Odd Dog as she journeys to the other side of the world to find her place in it, only for her to discover that maybe she's meant to be right where she started.

I Am Perfectly Designed by Karamo Brown

In this empowering ode to modern families, a boy and his father take a joyful walk through the city, discovering all the ways in which they are perfectly designed for each other.

I Believe I Can by Grace Byers

An affirmation for boys and girls of every background to love and believe in themselves.

I Am Enough by Grace Byers

A gorgeous, lyrical ode to loving who you are, respecting others, and being kind to one another.

Luci Soars by Lulu Delacre

Luci was born without a shadow. Mamá says no one notices. But Luci does. And sometimes others do too. Sometimes they stare, sometimes they tease Luci, and

sometimes they make her cry. But when Luci learns to look at what makes her different as a strength, she realizes she has more power than she ever thought. And that her differences can even be a superpower.

Bodies Are Cool by Tyler Feder

This picture book is a pure celebration of all the different human bodies that exist in the world. Highlighting the various skin tones, body shapes, and hair types is just the beginning in this truly inclusive book.

Llama Glamarama by Simon James Green

Larry lives a slow and quiet life at the barn with all the other llamas, just the way they like it. But at night when everyone has gone to bed, Larry loves to dress up in bright costumes and DANCE! He has to hide this from the others, for fear that they won't approve of his raucous ways. One day, he stumbles upon the Llama Glamarama, a carnival full of music, laughter, and yes-dancing! Will this vibrant celebration give Larry the pride he needs to bring his dance back home?

Itty-Bitty Kitty-Corn by Shannon Hale

Kitty thinks she might be a unicorn. She feels so perfectly unicorn-y! But when Unicorn clop clop clops over, sweeping his magnificent tail and neighing a mighty neigh, Kitty feels no bigger than a ball of lint. Can this unlikely pair embrace who they are, and truly see one another?

Ambitious Girl by Meena Harris

When a young girl sees a strong woman on TV labeled as "too assertive" and "too ambitious," it sends her on a journey of discovery through past, present, and future about the challenges faced by women and girls and the ways in which they can reframe, redefine, and reclaim words meant to knock them down.

When You Need Wings by Lita Judge

This is an exploration of a child's imagination, weaving in a gentle suggestion of how to explore that bountiful inner world, and let it help them shine with courage in the real one.

Elmer by David McKee

Elmer the elephant is bright-colored patchwork all over. No wonder the other elephants laugh at him! If he were ordinary elephant color, the others might stop laughing. That would make Elmer feel better, wouldn't it?

What Will You Be? by Yamile Saied Méndez

A young girl dreams about all the endless possibilities, sparking a sense of wonder, curiosity, and growth. With her abuela's loving guidance, she learns her potential is limitless.

Be You! by Peter Reynolds

Discover a joyful reminder of the ways that every child is unique and special. The book reminds readers to "be your own work of art." To be patient, persistent, and true. Because there is one, and only one, YOU.

You Matter by Christian Robinson

In this full, bright, and beautiful picture book, many different perspectives around the world are deftly and empathetically explored—from a pair of bird-watchers to the pigeons they're feeding. Luminous illustrations invite readers to engage with the world in a new way and see how everyone is connected, and that everyone matters.

A Normal Pig by K-Fai Steele

Pip is a normal pig who does normal stuff: cooking, painting, and dreaming of what she'll be when she grows up. But one day a new pig comes to school and starts pointing out all the ways in which Pip is different. Suddenly she doesn't like any of the same things she used to...the things that made her Pip.

Lili Macaroni by Nicole Testa

Lili Macaroni loves drawing butterflies, counting the stars, and being exactly who she is—Lili Macaroni. That is, until she starts kindergarten. There her classmates tell her that her hair is like a pumpkin, her eyes are squinty blueberries, and her laugh is like a parrot's squawk. She has never felt such unhappiness before. It makes her want to erase herself and draw a brand new Lili. Then she reconsiders. With her parents' help, she creates a polka-dotted butterfly to wear at her collar, publicly announcing her own resilience and symbolically letting her sorrows be flown away. And when she explains the butterfly to her classmates, Lili discovers she has begun a powerful conversation, and that everyone has some trouble to be carried away on butterfly wings.

Scarlet's Tale by Audrey Vernick

Born a bit different than expected, Scarlet has always embraced her uniqueness. When she starts preschool, though, she finds it can be a little scary to stand out from the crowd. But with the help of some new friends, Scarlet's infectious enthusiasm has everyone celebrating what makes her special!

The Day You Begin by Jacqueline Woodson

There are many reasons to feel different. Maybe it's how you look or talk, or where you're from; maybe it's what you eat, or something just as random. It's not easy to take those first steps into a place where nobody really knows you yet, but somehow you do it.

Giant Tess by Dan Yaccarino

Tess has a BIG problem. She's a giant with an enormous wish to be like everyone else in the city of Myth-hattan. When she gives up on ever fitting in, she meets a friend just her size, and the two team up for a daring rescue. Can these misfits save the day—and the big city parade?

Sweety by Andrea Zuill

Sweety is awkward, even for a naked mole rat. She has protruding front teeth, thick glasses, and some very unusual hobbies, including interpretive dance and fungus identification. She's intense and passionate--and her peers don't always get her. But surely there are other mushroom lovers out there? As Sweety sets out to find them, she comes to realize--with a little help from her cool Aunt Ruth--that being Sweety is actually pretty awesome.

Creativity

Remember to Dream, Ebere by Cynthia Erivo

When Ebere's mother puts her to bed at night, she always says, "Remember to dream, Ebere." And dream, Ebere does! Encouraged by her mother to make her dreams as big as possible, Ebere imagines herself as the captain of a rocket ship with the ability to go anywhere in the universe.

Arlo Draws an Octopus by Lori Mortensen

When Arlo decides to draw an octopus, he can't help but think that maybe he's just not an octopus drawer. His drawing has a head that looks like a hill and eight squiggly arms that look like roads. It's an octopus disaster-piece! But just as Arlo vows to never draw an octopus again, he makes a discovery that changes his perspective about his drawing . . . and much more.

The Year We Learned to Fly by Jacqueline Woodson

On a dreary, stuck-inside kind of day, a brother and sister heed their grandmother's advice. And before they know it, their imaginations lift them up and out of their boredom. Then, on a day full of quarrels, it's time for a trip outside their minds again, and they are able to leave their anger behind. This precious skill, their grandmother tells them, harkens back to the days long before they were born, when their ancestors showed the world the strength and resilience of their beautiful and brilliant minds.

Curiosity

The Girl with Big, Big Questions by Britney Winn Lee

Countless questions bubble forth from one little girl with twinkling eyes and a curious mind. When the girl finds that her big questions make some people

uncomfortable, she stops. But then she learns that her questions can solve problems and that asking questions is how we learn and grow.