



# Mental Health Awareness Week

## Stressors and Stigma



**Grades K-4**

## FEELING STRESS IN OUR BODIES

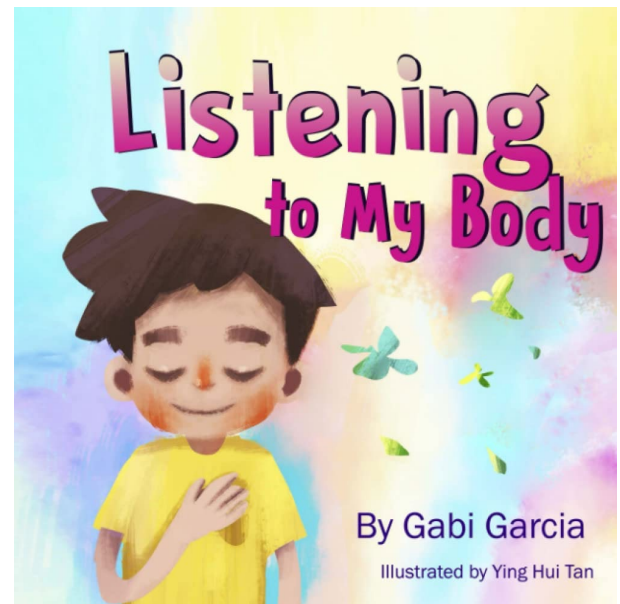
**Time:** 15-30 minutes

**Materials:** “Listening to my Body” book by Gabi Garcia, or watch the read-aloud on YouTube: [sdsfec.org/mhaw-t1](https://sdsfec.org/mhaw-t1)

**Directions:**

Read the book or watch the video in the link above. Take a few minutes to answer any questions afterward. Reiterate the theme that our body is always giving us clues to our own health.

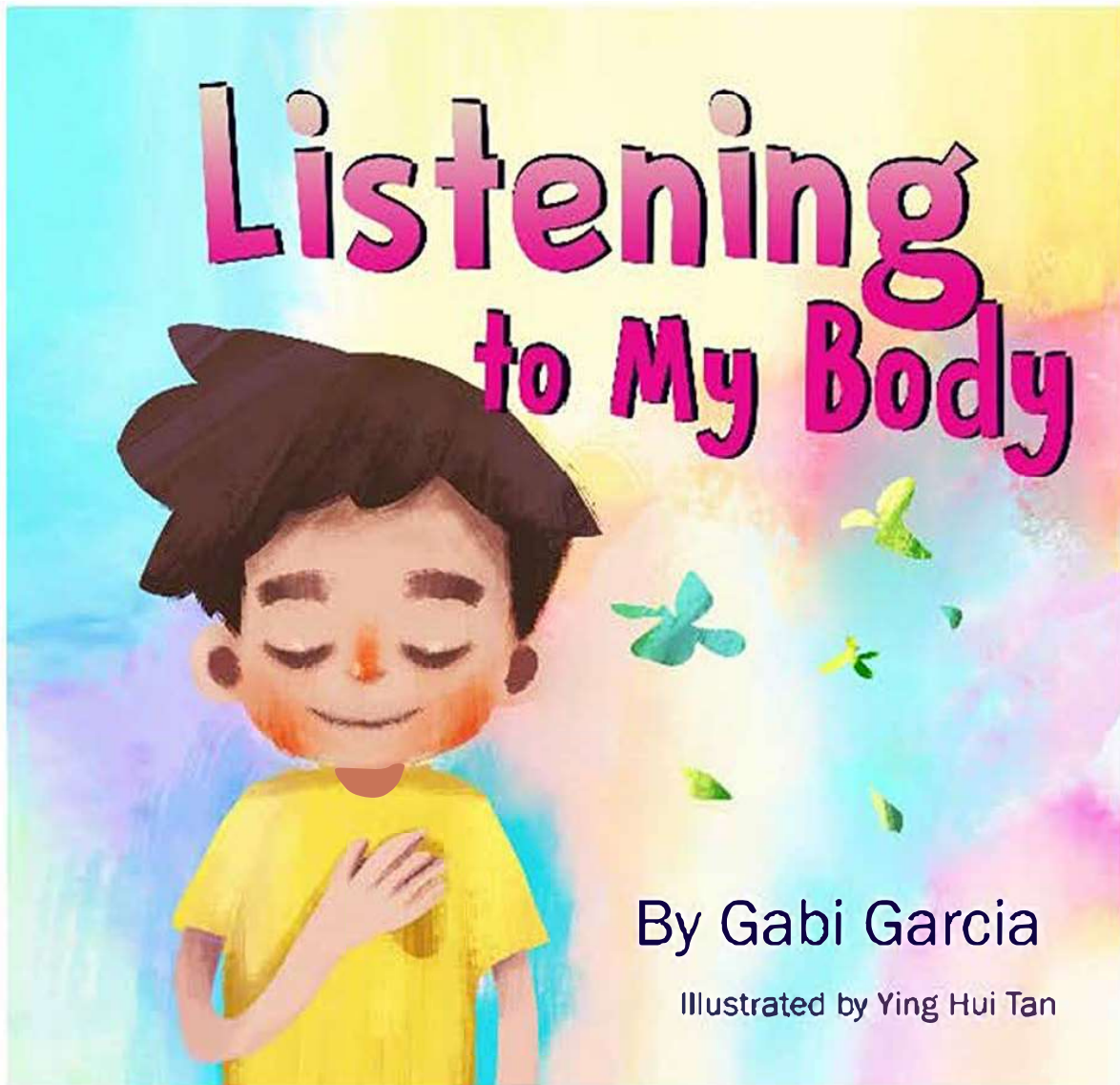
Consider using one of the supplemental activities provided by the author, Gabi Garcia, found on the following pages.



# LISTENING TO MY BODY

A DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITY GUIDE

by Gabi Garcia



# PARENTS & EDUCATORS

Whether you are a parent, teacher or counselor, my hope is that you will find *Listening to My Body* and the accompanying resources to be useful tools for your child.

Helping children identify and bring mindful awareness to their sensory experiences (are they tired, hungry, thirsty, squirmy, etc.?) is the foundation for self-regulation. Learning to pay attention to their sensations, helps children to be better able to identify what they need (rest, food, water, etc.), so that they can better care for themselves.

A hungry child may also be a grumpy or cranky child. A tired child may be squirmy and unfocused. A nervous child may feel their belly tighten or have shortness of breath. As the responsive parent, teacher, or counselor, you may often be the one to notice what is happening and proceed to help your child slow down, identify what they are experiencing, and help them figure out what they need. But through practice, children can also learn to move through this process.

It is equally important for children to learn to tune in when their bodies feel relaxed, calm, safe, etc., so that they can also begin to figure out what it is that helps them feel this way. Additionally, an angry, frustrated or upset child can begin internalizing and understanding that sensations and feelings are always changing, and they won't feel upset forever (or even that long). The practice of "listening" to their bodies will empower children to respond with care and kindness for themselves, even when they are experiencing difficult emotions.

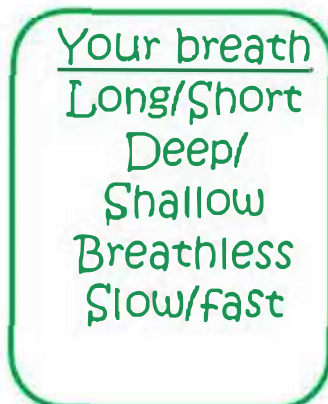
There are many ways to help your child continue to pay attention to sensations that they notice in their bodies. You can:

- Build a sensation vocabulary. Start with the list of sensations found in the book and build from there.
- Help them further connect their sensations and feelings. When they are able to identify how they are feeling, you can ask questions like: How does your body tell you that you are happy, excited, angry, etc.? Where in your body do you notice the calm, nervous, sad, etc., feelings?
- Model the process of "listening" to your body and showing care and kindness for yourself.
- Use and discuss the worksheets included below.

Warmly,  
Gabi

# LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

**Pause & check-in with yourself.**  
**You can pay attention to:**



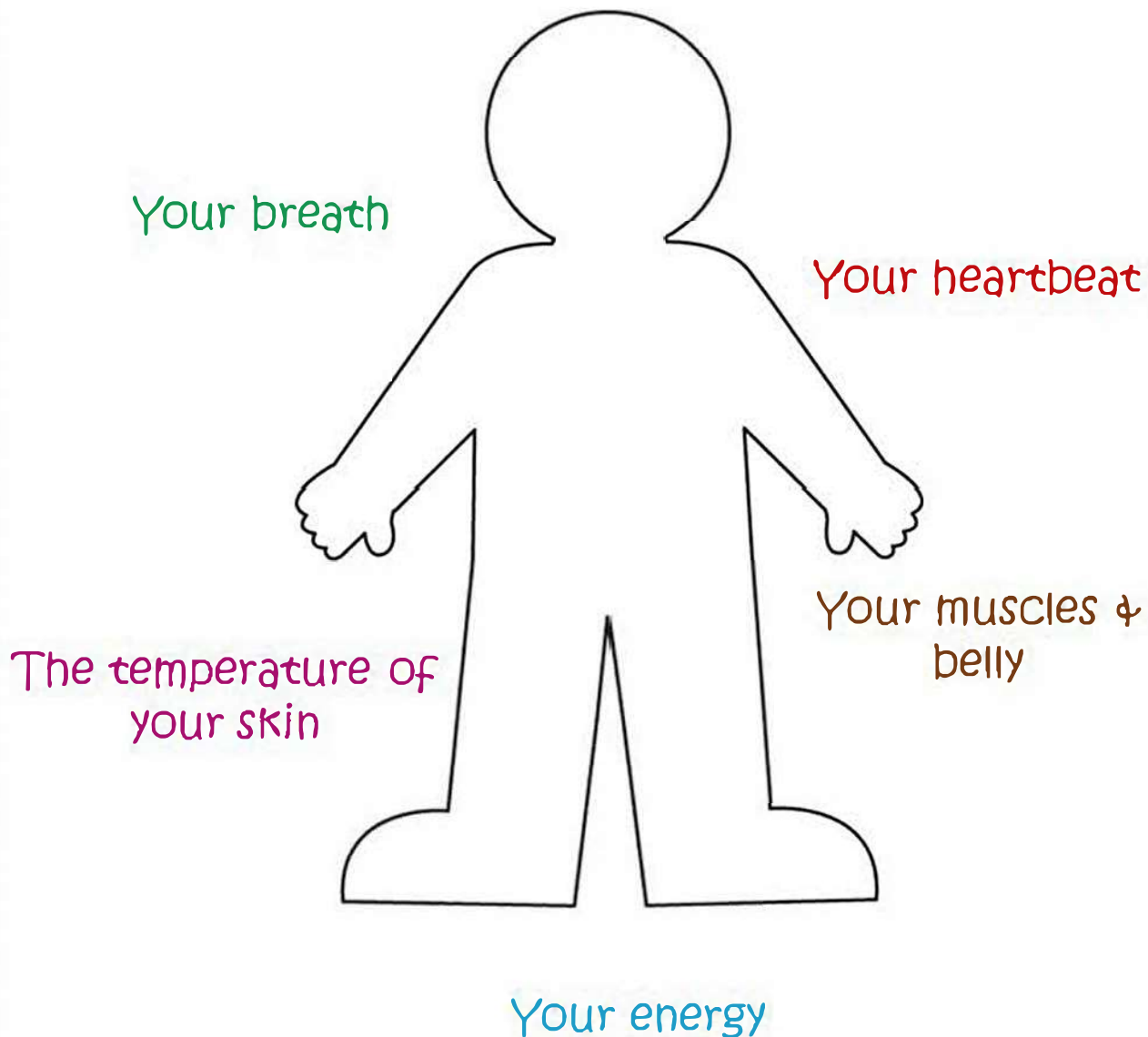
There are many different sensations. What sensations do you notice right now?

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# LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

Pay attention to:



What sensations do you notice?



# FEELINGS

We all have feelings. Our feelings are not good or bad. They are something that we all experience. Paying attention to how we are feeling can help us figure out what we need. Below are 2 lists of feelings found in this book.

These are some feelings we experience when our needs are taken care of. Can you add any other feelings to this list?

Awesome	Happy	Safe	
Calm	Peaceful	Silly	
Curious	Playful		
Excited	Proud		

These are feelings we experience when our needs are not taken care of. Can you add any other feelings to this list?

Angry	Grumpy	Overwhelmed	
Confused	Hurt	Sad	
Cranky	Lonely	Upset	
Frustrated	Nervous		

How do you feel right now? \_\_\_\_\_

# What do you need?

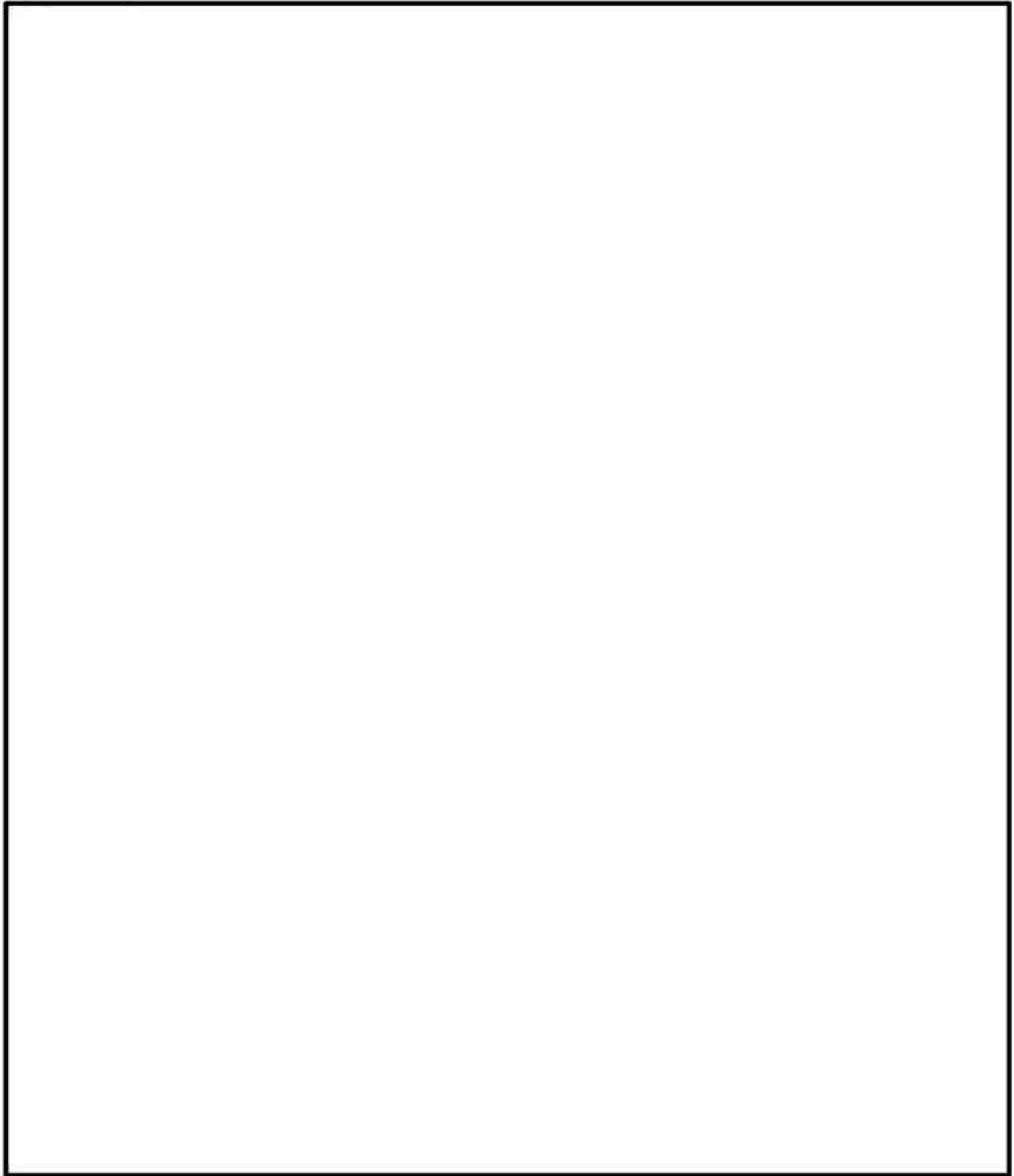
When we don't feel the way we want to feel, that's a **BIG** sign that we're not getting something we need. Examples of things we all need include: **food, water, rest, shelter, safety, movement, love, play, friends, respect and expressing ourselves.** When we get what we need, we feel at our best!

Below are activities found in this book that may be helpful, especially when you're feeling upset. Think about how you feel when you do these activities. What other things that you can add to this list that help you feel calm, relaxed or safe?

<b>Eat a snack</b>	<b>Drink water</b>	<b>Rest</b>	<b>Take a deep breath</b>
<b>Sing a song</b>	<b>Sit in a quiet place</b>	<b>Go outside</b>	<b>Blow horse lips</b>
<b>Jump around</b>	<b>Color/Draw</b>	<b>Dance</b>	<b>Give yourself a hug</b>
<b>Listen to music</b>	<b>Cuddle with a pet</b>	<b>Hang around someone I love</b>	

**Pause. Take a deep breath. Notice. What do you need right now?**

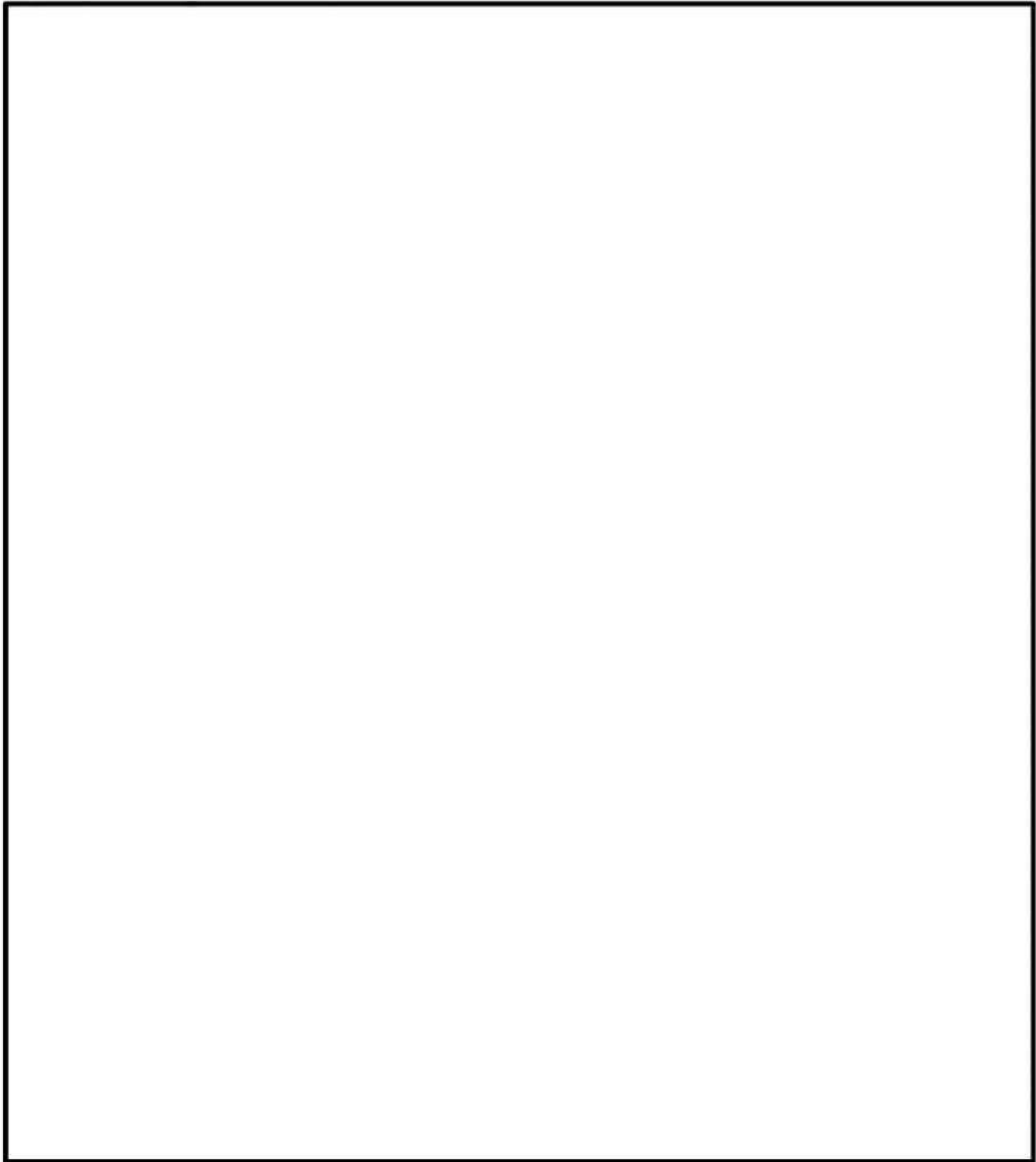
Draw of picture of yourself doing something that makes you feel calm, safe or loved.





# **I can show care & kindness for myself.**

Draw of picture of yourself doing something that shows care and kindness for yourself.



# Hi!

I hope you have found these resources helpful to you in your home or Classroom. If you've read *Listening to My Body* (or any of my books) and found it useful, I would sincerely appreciate a few minutes of your time so that you can leave an honest Amazon review.

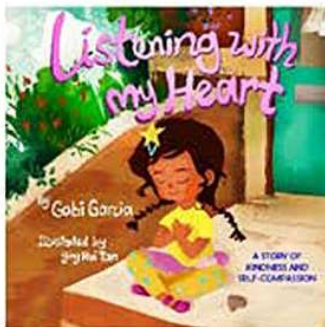
You can stay connected by signing up for my newsletter on my website, or via social media. I'm @gabigarciabooks on Instagram and Facebook.

With gratitude,

Gabi



## OTHER BOOKS YOU MAY FIND USEFUL



All titles are available in Spanish

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