

# Express Less Stress

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Age  
group: 7-9



## *Dedication*

*To all children that feel that they can't express themselves, you're not alone. You're strong enough and you'll express yourself with less stress.*

Amal's first day of school.

Amal is a Lebanese girl who lives in Beirut. Today is her first day at school. Because she's so excited to get to meet new children, she woke up very early and asked her mother to prepare for her Labneh and Zaatar sandwich.

"Mom hurry up! I don't want to be late to school!" Amal said as she gave her mother the car keys.

Amal's mother smiled as they both entered the car and headed to Amal's school.

"Good luck honey! Don't be nervous. Everything is going to be okay!" Amal's mother said as she hugged her.

"Love you!" Amal answered as she closed the car door and entered the school gate.



However, all Amal's feelings of excitement were gone. As soon as she entered the school's playground, she felt so nervous. Amal took a deep breath, sat on a bench as she started observing other children.

The bell rang, and all the children gathered and went up to their classes.

“Good morning everyone” Ms. Lina said.

“My name is Ms. Lina, I'm from Syria, and I'm going to teach you English this year.” She added.

Then she asked the students to sit in a circle where each student must stand up, say his/her name and where do they live.

“My name is Anahit. I live in Burj Hammoud. ”said the first girl while smiling to everyone.

“My name is Muhamad. I live in Burj Abu Haidar” said the boy next to her.

“My name is Elie. I live in Achrafieh.” Amal felt that this boy is very kind, so she wished to become friends with him.

“I'm Qamar, I'm from Chouf but my parents moved in to Hamra last year.”

“My name is Zainab; I live in South Beirut” said the girl sitting next to Qamar.

Then the boy who was sitting next to Amal said: “My name is Omar, I'm from Palestine, but I live in Tayyouné.”

Amal's turn came and she had to introduce herself.



Amal stood up, she took a heavy breath, her eyes were looking at the other students that were waiting for her to talk.

“M...my n...name” Amal said while shaking.

She continued :“is...Am...Amal.” Her face became red, her palms started sweating as if it was raining, her breath became loud and heavy like winds at fall season. She stopped talking, she couldn't continue. She felt that her classmates got bored because it's taking her a long time to finish her sentence, so she panicked, ran to the toilet and started crying.

Students in class were shocked, they didn't know why Amal behaved like this.

Ms. Lina said, “It's okay, Amal was nervous, so we shouldn't laugh at her.”

Ms. Lina followed Amal to the toilet, “Don't cry, nothing bad happened. We all pass through such moments” she said to Amal as she took her hand and went back to the classroom together.





The day passed and Amal stayed silent all the time. She noticed how her classmates were becoming friends and talking with each other, yet she stayed alone.

She started counting seconds just so she can go back home, lie on her bed and write about what happened with her today.

“ding, ding, ding” the bell rang. Amal took her backpack and hurried up to her mother’s car.

“How was your first day?” Amal’s mother asked.

“I don’t want to talk about it” Amal answered in a low-sad voice.

Amal arrived at her house, took off her backpack as she went to her room, took her purple journal and started writing about what happened. Amal loves writing, whenever she feels sad or happy, she opens her journal and describes her feelings which makes her feel comfortable.

“I wish I could talk the way I write, I can be really funny and brave while writing, but talking freaks me out” Amal wrote in her journal. Then her mother called her to eat Tabbouleh- Amal’s favorite food.



The days passed, and Amal always felt lonely at school. she felt as if she's a fallen leaf from autumn that stayed on the ground alone throughout winter, spring and summer. School for Amal became only a place for studying and learning new things. It wasn't for having friends and enjoying her time with them.

November came, Amal was worried because her mother's birthday was in November and she didn't have enough money to buy her a gift until the next day when Ms. Lina entered the class holding a paper.

“ In November 22, there will be a speech competition. Participants have to write a speech about Lebanon because it would be Lebanese Independence Day, and the winner's prize is 30,000 L.L.” Ms. Lina explained.

“30,000 L.L.! I can buy a beautiful gift for my mom with this amount of money!” Amal thought happily.

After class, she told Ms. Lina that she wants to participate in the competition because she loves writing.

Ms. Lina smiled at her as she wrote Amal's name under the participants' list.



Amal woke up early, she was so excited that she was going to write a speech about Lebanon. Writing makes her feel happy and confident.

She went to school, and this time her mother entered inside too because parents were invited to see their children.

Students were distributed and given papers and pencils to write their speech. Amal has never felt more excited at school.

She was thinking of how much her mom would be proud of her for winning.

“Lebanon is the land of the free

It is my homeland, my country

It has a cedar tree and beautiful seas,

We’re different in Lebanon, but we love peace.”

Amal wrote while feeling confident and proud of herself.

Ms. Lina told the participants that they should stop writing and get ready to perform their speech on stage in front of the audience.

“WHAT!?! I ha...have to r-r-read my speech on th...the stage?” Amal asked while feeling scared.

Amal didn’t know what to do, she thought that the competition is only for writing not for performing the speech. Should she leave the competition and lose the prize? Or should she overcome her fear and perform in front of everyone?



Ms. Lina held Amal's hand and told her, "Dear Amal, people are good. They love you and they want to see you talking. They won't laugh at you if you talk, don't be afraid of them, express yourself with less stress."

Amal nodded as she thought of Ms. Lina's words carefully "Express less stress."

"I will not quit, I can do it, people are good, and they will accept me, I don't want to stay lonely forever." Amal said to Ms. Lina.

Ms. Lina smiled and encouraged her to go to the stage.

"The next participant is Amal" Ms. Lina said on the stage and everyone clapped for her.

Amal stood on stage. She felt scared again. She wished she could quit because she started shaking. However, the audience clapped for her, and her mother told her "You can do it Amal, we love you!"

Amal opened her eyes; she saw how everyone was smiling at her as they were excited to hear her speech.

"Le...Lebanon is the land of the free" Amal said, then she noticed how saying this sentence made people happy as there was nothing worth to be afraid of.

"Lebanon is the land of the free" Amal said in a loud voice while feeling confident. She continued performing her speech and everyone was cheering for her. Amal's mom, Ms. Lina, Amal's classmates, they were all happy and enjoying her speech. Amal felt happy, she was finally able to express her thoughts through talking!





After one hour, Ms. Lina announced the winner.

“Congratulations Amal, you won the prize!” Everyone was proud and happy because Amal didn’t only win the money to buy a gift for her mom’s birthday, but also won the ability and a precious lesson about expressing herself.

All her classmates asked her to be friends with them, especially Elie the boy that Amal wished to be friends with. “You were great!” Amal’s classmates said.

Amal had always thought that people are mean, and they make fun of her, however she realized that she’s surrounded by people that love her and want to listen to her amazing ideas that she can write and read them out loud at the same time. Expressing yourself is good and important, there’s nothing to be afraid of.

Express less stress!



**The End!**

