

# No APPLESPLATTER

## SHORT STORIES ABOUT THINKING

SOME ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW OUR THINKING STYLES CAN AFFECT ANGER, CONFIDENCE, COMPETITION, JEALOUSY AND OTHER TRICKY PARTS OF LIFE, FOR KIDS AND EVEN FOR ADULTS.



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## CHAPTER 4: CAR RACING

Did you ever wonder why people care so much about whether they win or lose a game when they are just playing for fun?

**D**AVIS AND LEO WENT TO the park with their mother. They came upon a car racing game with a spinner. The player spins the spinner and moves their car the number of spaces it lands on.

They played one game; Davis won. His mother said, “You know, when you two were much younger, we used to play this game and I would let you win.”

Davis and Leo said they didn’t remember. (People usually don’t remember most things from very early in life, even if they remember skills they learned then, like potty training.)

“Sometimes, when you weren’t looking, I would stop the spinner on the low number so I would lose,” their mother said. “If you were watching me, I would point somewhere and say, ‘Look at that!’ Then, when you turned your heads, I would stop the spinner.”



“Why did you let us win?” the boys asked.

Their mother answered, “Because when young people haven’t learned what is important and what isn’t, they sometimes get very upset when they lose a game. Very young people’s brains usually aren’t ready to learn this yet, just like they are not ready to read or write yet. When they are older, they can figure out that losing a fun little game is nothing to get very unhappy about.”

“Let’s play again,” their mother said. “I will beat you both, haha!”

Then Leo said, “Wait a minute. I know older kids and even grown-ups who get all upset about losing games. Why is that?”

“Each person might have a different reason,” their mother said, “but sometimes it is because they forget that winning or losing a fun game doesn’t make you bad or weak. Sometimes they forget because they lost something when they were younger and it hurt a lot, or someone made fun of them for losing and they still feel very bad about it. It is the fast part that keeps those memories of pain. The slow part knows that the pain happened in the past and it is over.”

“So, you are not allowed to feel bad about losing a game or happy about winning one?” Davis asked.

“For us humans, it’s natural to feel good about winning and bad about losing,” their mother said. “Feeling at least a little bad about losing helps us get better at things. But sometimes people get very upset because winning or losing concerns something more important than a game,

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like getting hired for a job or being picked for a sports team. When that happens, it is important to not get so upset that it gets in the way of other important things, like looking for a different job or practicing to make the team in the future.”

**What do you care about so much that it  
may be a problem? Does naming those  
things help you care the right amount?**