

## BEING PAWSITIVE

### ABOUT:

Just as it says in this story, it's true that Winston HATES getting wet. The only water he likes is in his water dish. His next-door-neighbor dog, Hazel, is a Labrador. She loves water. It is human nature to compare ourselves with others, often forgetting our own capabilities that make us individual and special. Therefore, I used the scenario of Winston comparing himself to his friend and wrote a story about being positive, or as Winston would say...*pawsitive*.

### PURPOSE:

A negative outlook is often common in children. They may struggle in school with their studies or keeping up with their peers. They may not like what they see in the mirror. The habit of a negative outlook is difficult to overcome. I've seen first-hand how this affects relationships and self-worth. Minor incidences or disappointments are magnified into major catastrophes. I'm a positive person, but as a child, when it came to academics, I struggled. I had a negative selfimage which made me think I was a failure. This feeling followed me all through my school years. As an adult, I overcame this by recognizing and developing my strengths in communication both verbally and in creative writing.

I wrote this story in hopes that young readers will identify with Winston and use his technique to *rewire* their thinking. In all of the stories in this book, my focus is on social and emotional learning that will follow them into adulthood, giving them the skills they need to navigate through negative emotions.

### SUGGESTIONS:

Negative feelings are real. They need a safe person to express these feelings without being told they are bad. Helping them realize these feelings are temporary, and to guide them into a positive space will set the trajectory of them being able to do this on their own. In the story, Winston observes and appreciates moments of beauty, the clouds, and the gurgling creek. He also began to think about all the things he could do. Talking about things you like to do and asking children about what they feel they are good at or what they are interested in, then help them with a project they can go to when they get, as Winston calls, *bad feelers*. It could be a vision board of all the things they like, a journal to write positive affirmations and illustrate them, or a treasure box filled with things in nature that bring them happiness.

### IDEAS:

Take a nature walk and point out interesting plants, bugs, animals, and rocks.  
Talk about nocturnal animals and their habits.

Do a study on common birds in your area, their habitats, nesting, egg colors, and their songs. Look up interesting bugs, such as rhinoceros beetles, walking sticks, and the dead leaf mantis, for example.