

Why Not?

Discussion Guide and Activities for Students and Teachers

Age range: 5–8 Grade level: K–3

Written by Kobi Yamada Illustrated by Gabriella Barouch

OBJECTIVE

Empower students to discover their potential, to live bravely, and to embrace who they are.

SUMMARY

The follow-up to Yamada and Barouch’s bestselling *Maybe*, their new book *Why Not?* expands on the themes of possibility and potential—this time inviting readers to view each day as a remarkable opportunity to experience joy and courageously become whoever they want to be.

The book follows the whimsical journey of a boy who helps a lost and frightened arctic fox find its way home. Along the way, the boy’s sense of adventure and compassion help the fox gain confidence and feel braver. Together, they venture into the unknown, try new things, discover unbelievable beauty, and meet a few friends who also need (and lend) a little help. The boy’s acts of bravery and kindness make a difference for everyone he meets, and by the end of the book, he’s made the world around him a little better.

Yamada and Barouch’s new book explores the wonder of life and how we can make the most of this miraculous gift. Readers will feel encouraged to embrace adventure and to give each day their best as they pursue the things they dream of and believe in.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

We don’t always realize just how much talent, capability, and potential we really possess. But these things exist within every one of us, along with our unique dreams and desires. *Why Not?* teaches readers that life can become thrilling when we’re brave enough to explore all the brilliance within and around us.

The book asks readers to approach life with courage and curiosity and to recognize their own amazing qualities. Yamada’s repeated “Why not...?” questions invite readers to consider big possibilities and to challenge any fears. Barouch’s illustrations of magical landscapes and creatures add to the sense of awe and wonder that Yamada describes. By showing the boy and fox duo getting lost and confronting obstacles, Yamada and Barouch also acknowledge that while life is full of beauty, it can be difficult, messy, and unpredictable. But they encourage readers to take



heart, to believe in second chances, and to keep moving toward their goals—even if it’s one small step at a time.

The key takeaway is that you can have the courage to become the person you want to be and in doing so, make the world a better place.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

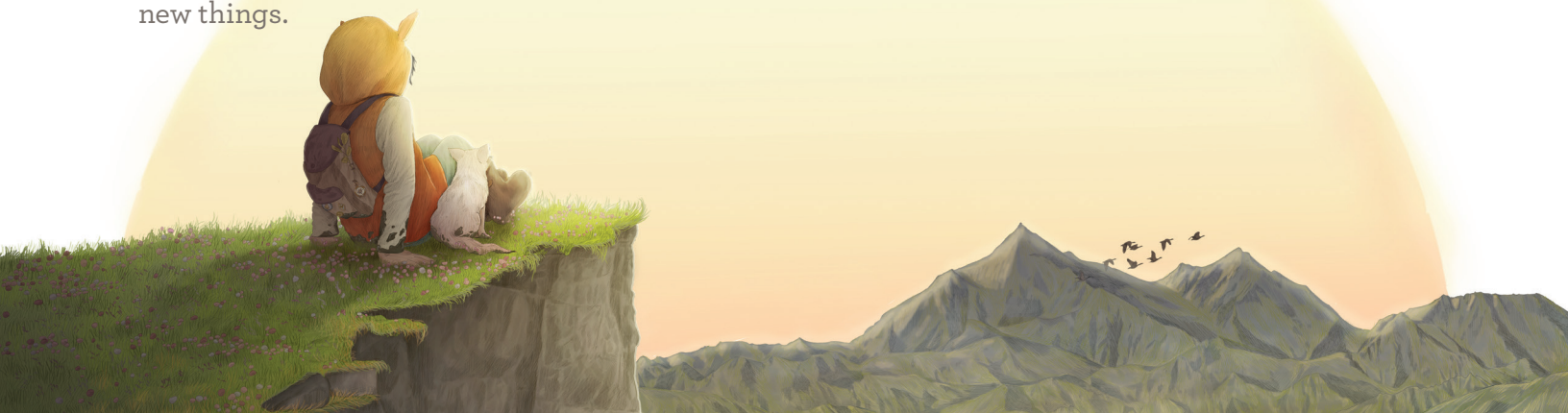
- Can you think of a time when you wanted to quit? What did you do instead? What helped you to be brave and keep going?
- Is there an adventure you’d like to go on one day? What do you want to do, and where do you want to go?
- What are some ways you can be brave in your life? For example, maybe you can be brave by saying hello to a new friend or asking for help when you need it.
- Why do you think the bird transforms after the boy finds it and plays music for it? How did the boy and the bird help each other?
- What is one way you can help to make something a little bit better in your school or community?
- What are some special things that make you, you?
- How do you think the fox feels after the boy helps it find its way home?
- Why is it important to look for the good in things and in people? Can you think of something good that you appreciate about something or someone?
- What’s something new that you’d like to try doing? How do you think you’ll feel when you do it?



ACTIVITIES

Try new things

Make a “courage jar” by filling an empty jar with popsicle sticks. On each popsicle stick, have students write something they’d like to do that might feel challenging or scary, or a new activity that they want to try. Students can pull a new popsicle stick each week and set that activity as their goal. This exercise is meant to encourage bravery and help kids to step out of their comfort zones to try new things.



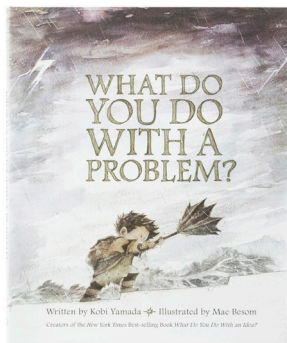
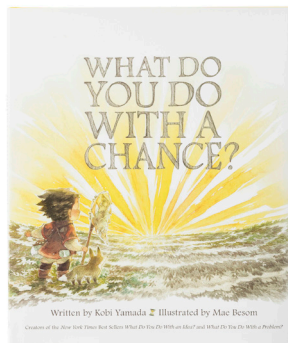
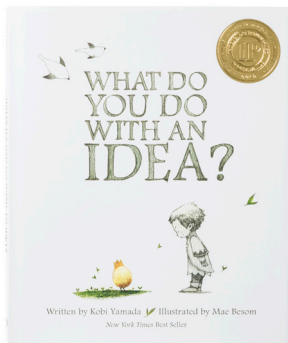
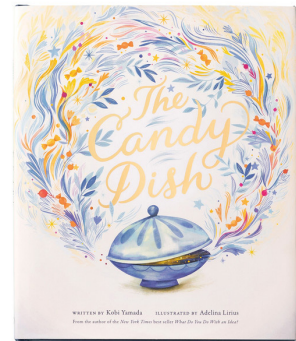
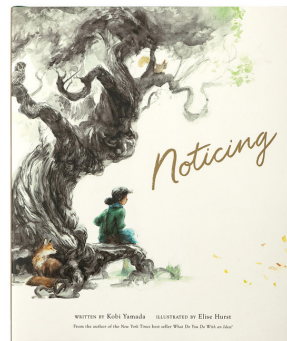
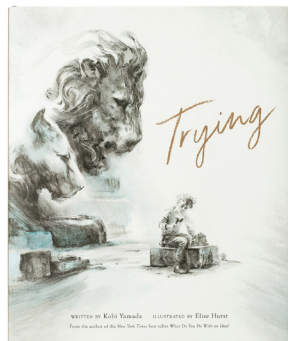
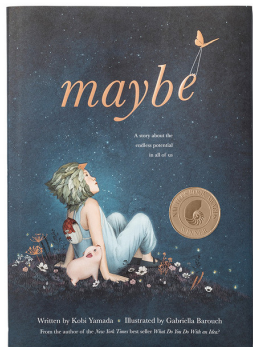
Perform acts of kindness

On a sheet of paper, create two columns: In one, list different acts of kindness for kids to try. In the other column, list potential recipients of the acts of kindness, for example, a parent, classmate, neighbor, pet, etc. Each day or week, ask students to choose a selection from each column by drawing a line from one to the other, or circling each selection in the same color. Students could also place matching stickers or stamps next to each. As an optional bonus, make this a “Kindness Challenge,” awarding students a small treat or gift for completing their entire sheet. This activity is meant to provide kids with tangible examples of kindness and encourage them to extend kindness to others.

See the good

Referencing the page from the book where the boy sees his reflection with butterfly wings, ask students to draw their own “reflection.” Encourage them to include elements that represent who they are on the inside, things they hope or dream of, or their favorite qualities about themselves. To begin, you could pose the question, “If you were to look at your reflection and see something magical reflected back (like how the boy sees butterfly wings in the book), what would you want to see?” This activity is meant to build self-confidence and foster creative thinking.

Interested in more stories from Kobi Yamada? Check out his other books:



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