



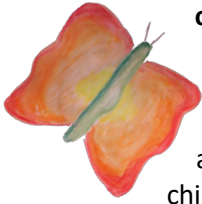
Educational material
accompanying the storytelling and activity book

The Journey of Bailey Butterfly

—
Stressregulation for children
by Kati Bohnet



Dear Parents, Grandparents, Educators, Teachers, Babysitters, Aunts and Uncles, Friends of the Small and Tall,



I am very happy you purchased or received this wonderful storytelling and activity book. Whether you are an educator, a teacher, a parent, a grandparent or a guardian, I am more than confident this book will bring you lots of joy as well as offer you and your child a tool to regulate and calm yourself in stressful moments and times.

But before you dive into the story I would highly recommend you read my accompanying educational material and watch the video in order to utilize the full potential of this book. You will notice it is far more than just a simple storytelling book.

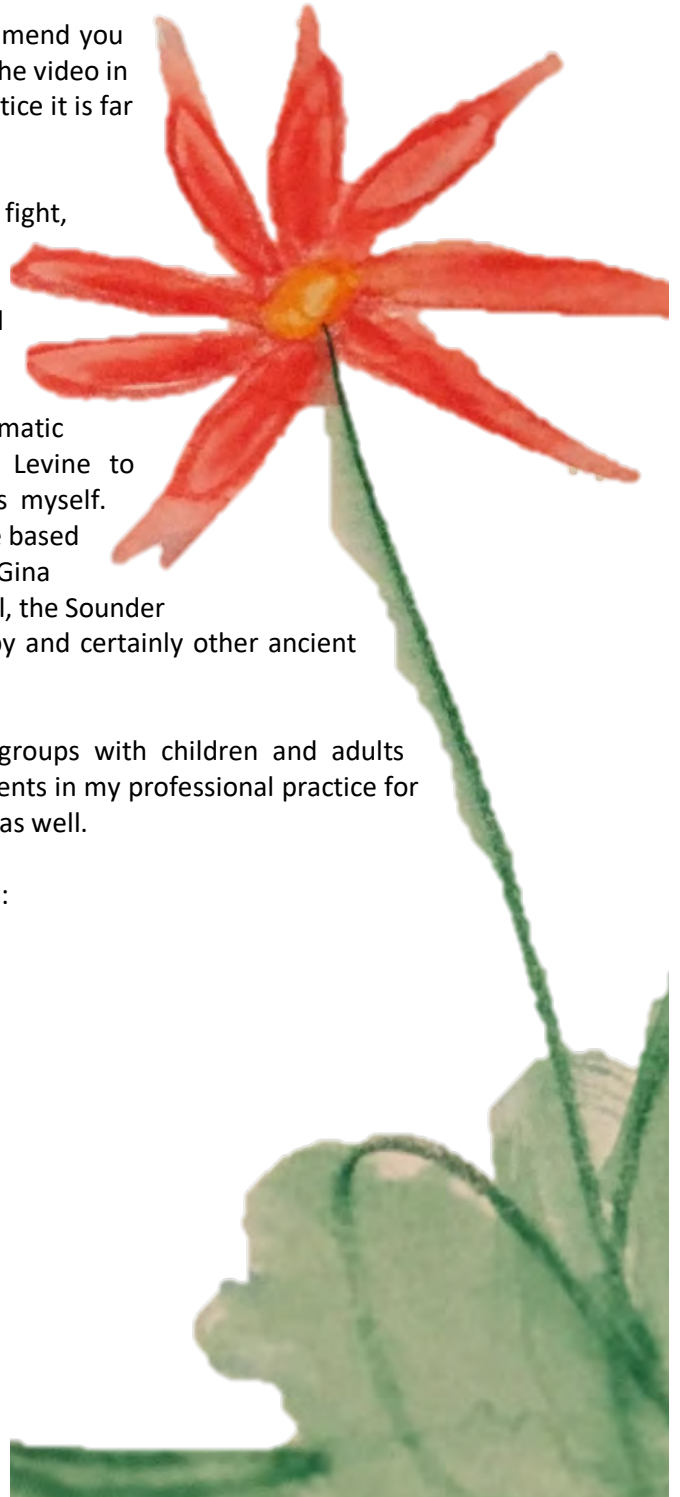
Any kind of stress can trigger our survival mechanism of fight, flight or freeze in a more or less pronounced manner. The activities suggested in this book are created to help your nervous system to return back to a more regulated and calmer state.

The interactive exercises are based on the concept of Somatic Experiencing®, a technique developed by Dr. Peter Levine to overcome Trauma. I did not all invent these exercises myself. However, I have put them together in this form. They are based on videos, literature and workshops by Dr. Peter Levine, Gina Ross (EmotionAid®), Dr. Stephen Porges, Dr. Daniel Siegel, the Sounder Sleep System, the knowledge from TCM, Gestalt therapy and certainly other ancient sources.

All the exercises have been successfully explored in groups with children and adults respectively. I have been using them with a variety of clients in my professional practice for Trauma therapy and my clients love using them at home as well.

You can apply the exercises with the following symptoms:

- panic
- outburst of rage, tantrum
- (immense) grief
- (high level of) nervousness
- stage fright
- test anxiety
- internal restlessness
- excitement
- difficulty falling/staying asleep



You can use the exercises any time you want and in a very flexible way. You can either read the book out loud and follow the exercises step by step or you can do them freely. Maybe you will find that some suit you better than others, you can stick with those or create your own version of a particular exercise. You can also leave out the one's that don't agree with you or don't feel right in a given moment. No matter how you use or change the instructional material the exercises offer you and your child a tool to support each other in a moment where emotions may be running high.

If you do the exercises on a regular basis you are training your nervous system over time to regulate itself from a highly activated to a calmer state in a much quicker and easier way. Similar to learning a new movement pattern. In the beginning it may feel difficult or tedious but soon you will feel the positive effect. Your nervous system will be able to move quickly and with more ease from a stressful situation to a calmer state. At that point even a glimpse or a thought of the book may be sufficient enough for the nervous system to start regulating itself.

The exercises do not replace the work of professional therapists and doctors. If you or your child suffer from trauma symptoms or if the symptoms have persisted for a long time, please consult the relevant specialists and have the symptoms clarified and, if necessary, receive professional support.

This accompanying educational material contains a detailed description of the individual exercises to enable you to read aloud and instruct the 'Story of the Butterfly' with its integrated exercises for stress regulation. In the also available online-video you can view a demonstration on how to read this book out loud. You can get a sense of the length of the pauses, although keep in mind that these have to be individually adjusted depending on the audience. You can also watch how these exercises are being executed. This is often times much easier to follow than recreating them from a written description. In case you would like to delve deeper into the content and find out more about the neurobiological background this book is based on I would like to recommend my online course on 'Stressregulation / Emotional First Aid', that I am in the process of assembling. Here you will receive comprehensive information on the basic operation of the autonomic nervous system of the brain pertaining to these exercises. In this course I will also discuss potential ways of dealing with aggression.

The exercises are numbered. The numbering system is based on a scaling system, the scale reaching from 1 to 10. 1 = no stress and 10 = maximum stress. Since we begin with an exercise that can be used during the highest form of stress we begin with the number 10 and count down to 1.

I hope you will have a great time with the book.

Yours truly,
Kati Bohnet



Kati Bohnet, the author and illustrator, is a Gestalt- and Trauma therapist (Somatic Experiencing®) who currently works with children, teenagers and adults in her practice in Berlin. She is the founder and director of the educational centre 'helpers circle' where she continues to support 'Caretakers' (anyone in a helping and care-taking position) through seminars and workshops to foster selfregulation and selfprotection.

These stress regulating exercises are a proven method for selfregulation. Also called 'Emotional First Aid' they are an integral part of her basic seminar for 'Selfregulation and Selfprotection for Helpers'. You can find more information at www.katibohnet.de and www.helperscircle.de.

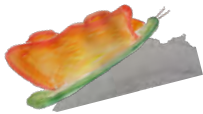
The exercises in detail

10 Butterfly-hug

Place your right hand onto your left upper arm and your left hand onto your right upper arm. The lower parts of your arms should now be crossed in front of your chest. Now let the butterfly alternately clap its 'wings' lightly on your upper arms. Continue alternately left-right-left-right- ... Experiment and find your own pace and intensity. Do about 30 or 40 butterfly claps. Give your body time to integrate the impact of the exercise. You can simultaneously move to the next step (9 – Hug yourself)



9 Hug yourself



Stay in the position of the butterfly and put one hand into your armpit. It doesn't matter which hand you choose to move to the new position. The other hand stays on the upper arm. Stay here as long as you like and as long as it feels comfortable.

You can repeat the butterfly-hug and the 'hug yourself' exercises several times if you still feel too restless to do the next one.

8 Look around and count everything that is round

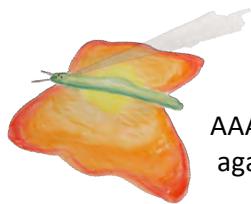
Scan the room / location from left to right or vice versa and count all things that are round.

You may do this exercise as long as you like. Instead of round things you can also count things of a particular color, vertical lines, feet (e.g. on trains and busses) or really anything you choose. You can count in your native language or any language that comes easy to you. Before you move on to the next exercise take a short break.



7 Breathe out as long as you can

Exhale as extensive as possible. It doesn't really matter how you accomplish this. You can (imagine to) blow up a balloon, you can blow bubbles, you can blow up your cheeks and slowly let the air leak out of your compressed lips, you can blow out the air fiercely and loud. You can also combine the exhale with a sound. Some people like to make a hissing sound, like pressing the letter S through their teeth, some like sounds like AAAHHHHH, some prefer WOOOOO. Find out for yourself what you like best. And again, before you proceed to the next exercise take a short break.



6 Massage your ears (with your fingers wet)

When you feel tired or exhausted and need a little boost to help you to concentrate then do this following exercise with dry hands. If you feel more wild and fierce then get your fingers wet before doing this exercise. I would recommend you skip this exercise entirely before going to bed. Just try for yourself. You will find out on your own what kind of effect this particular exercise will have on you.



Start at the earlobes and massage them in a way that feels most comfortable to you. From here on move on up towards the top of the ears. You can stay at the outer rim of the ear or you can also incorporate the inner area of the ear. For the people who dislike this exercise you can vary it or skip it altogether. And again before you move on to the next exercise take a short break.

5a Mudra: centered butterfly

Put your hands together in a way that all fingers cross like you may do during a prayer. Now extend both index fingers, so they both point up like an arrow. Now alternate the position of your thumb back and forth, so that at one time the right thumb is on top of the left and the next time the left is on top on the right.



Repeat this about 10 times or as long as it feels comfortable. Then take a short break from alternating your thumb's position. Now repeat this exercise two or three more times or as long as you like. Before you move on to the next step take a short break.

5b Mudra: Hidden finger

Place both hands with palm down on your lap with your thumbs extended away from your hands / pointing towards the other hand. Put them close together so that both tips of the thumbs are touching. Now grab one thumb with the other hand (as if you were holding on to a handlebar of a bicycle). Extend the index finger of the hand that is holding on to the handlebar. Now grab the indexfinger with the other hand. You can certainly decide which hand is holding on first.



Upon the next inhalation squeeze your thumb with the other hand. When you begin to exhale let go of the thumb and press the indexfinger with the hand surrounding it.

Your breathing pattern decides the rhythm of this exercise. Just keep on breathing naturally, there is no need to forcefully change its pattern. Change is ok if it happens naturally.

If it feels too hard or complicated to adjust the movements to your breathing pattern then feel free to go back to the last exercise of the centered butterfly (5a) and repeat this a few more times. When you then come back to this exercise you might find it much easier to accomplish. If not, that's fine, too. You can always skip it and move on.

Repeat this exercise for about 5 or 6 breathing cycles or as long as you like. Then take a short break for 3 to 5 brathing cycles. Repeat as often as you like. Before moving on to the next exercise take a short break.

**4 Hand on forehead and chest – what do you sense / feel?
Hand on chest and belly – what do you sense / feel?**

Place one hand on your forehead, the other one on your chest. What do you notice between your hands? Some people take note of their heartbeat or their breathing, others may become aware of the chaos in their head, the velocity of thoughts entering and leaving. Some people may feel their body temperature, others may not notice anything at all. All of it is normal. This exercise is not as much about what you feel but more about the process of listening.



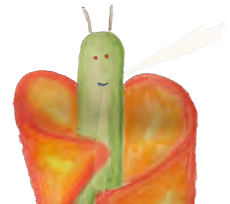
Now simply move your hand from your forehead to your belly. Again, what do you notice between your two hands? Sometimes you can feel your tummy growl, rumble or gurgle. These are all good signs.



From this exercise on you no longer need to take a break inbetween. From now on it is more like a flowing transition from one exercise to the next.

3 Keep your hands on your chest and belly and observe your breath

Keep your hands on your chest and belly and observe how the air enters and leaves your body with every breath you take. Do this as long as you like.



2 Observe a body sensation – does it change?

Is there a physical sensation that you experience as positive in this moment? You may place one or both hands on that particular part of your body and simply observe that sensation. You can try to describe what you feel in more detail. Maybe there is a color to it, a shape, a consistency, a surface structure, a temperature or the like. While you are observing this sensation do you notice a change or does it stay the same? Don't try to change it intentionally. Simply observe what happens on its own.



1 Envision one of your resources. What do you perceive?

Imagine an entity of support. This can be a human being, an animal, a mythical creature or a spiritual being, a light, energy, a blanket ... anything that would support you in this moment. Try to get a sensation of that support. What does it feel like? How do you recognize the existence of your supportive entity?

