

What  
to do  
with your  
**WHIRLY,  
SWIRLY  
THOUGHTS**

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An Imprint of Thomas Nelson



*What to Do with Your Whirly, Swirly Thoughts*

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Note: This book is intended to provide helpful information about mental health. However, it is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

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*Because of Conner, Kate,  
Caroline, and Cooper.  
Being your mom is one of  
my greatest gifts.*

## A LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear parents, aunts and uncles, grandparents, teachers, Sunday school leaders, and all of you who love the next generation,

Nearly twenty years ago, I found myself smack in the middle of raising a house full of little ones. I wanted to know God for myself and teach my children about who He is. I wanted resources that caused my kids not to just know about God but to also experience His power and His love for them. My greatest prayer was that my kids would have a personal relationship with Jesus.

And as the world changed and anxiety in children continued to rise, I desperately needed a book much like the one you're holding in your hands. These days, our world craves hope and simple language to talk about negative thoughts with kids.

Romans 12:2 says to “be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” This means it’s possible.

But each person’s brain is different. I know that some children bounce back from setbacks easily, while others may ruminate in a negative loop and have to work really hard to get out of that thought pattern. And others may not be able to control their thoughts at all due to developmental impairments or more serious mental illnesses. Still, I believe this book will help most

children who struggle with whirly, swirly thoughts by providing practical and biblical tools for taking our thoughts captive. Learning how to manage our thoughts is a big part of our emotional development, and our children need to learn this before they encounter “thought obstacles” that can add to their struggles.

Sometimes anxiety, depression, or the effects of trauma are beyond our control. Please read these words with great compassion. Sometimes we need more help than redirection! Praise God for the help of counselors and doctors.

Choosing our thoughts is a whole new way to live, and it is only possible through God’s love and help.

I know that being a kid (and a parent) these days is hard. My prayer is that reading and discussing this book with your kids will bring freedom and health to their thought life and will ultimately point them to the hope we have in Jesus.

Now more than ever, kids need the freedom that Jesus offers their thought lives, and they also need the love of a safe adult who cares about them and shows up for them again and again.

I am cheering you on!  
Jennie



Oh, look at all your thoughts in that cute little head of yours!

Sometimes you think **happy** thoughts.

Sometimes you think **angry** thoughts.

Sometimes you think **silly** thoughts.

Sometimes you think **worried** thoughts.

Did you know you have thousands and thousands and thousands of thoughts every day?

**What are some of your thoughts right now?**

**Sometimes your brain fills  
with exciting thoughts!**

When you  
feel your  
parents' hugs,

when you  
remember eating  
ice cream with a  
friend,

or when your teacher tells  
you how smart you are,

happy  
thoughts  
blast in your  
brain like  
confetti!





**Sometimes your brain works to do awesome things!**

Your brain helps you solve math problems

Your amazing brain can create masterpieces.

or comfort a friend who is feeling sad.

And it helps you talk to Jesus.

**But sometimes your brain fills up with thoughts that make you feel sad or scared.**



Like when you make a mistake  
or remember how someone hurt you.  
Or how you feel lonely and like  
no one wants to be your friend.

And you know what? You're not alone!  
Even grown-ups sometimes have these thoughts.

When you keep thinking about scary things, bad things,  
the things that make you embarrassed,  
or that really special thing you wanted to happen

but *didn't*,


then those thoughts can

grow



and  
grow

and  
grow!



Those thoughts can grow so big that they get stuck in your head. They keep whirling and swirling around and crowd out other true thoughts!

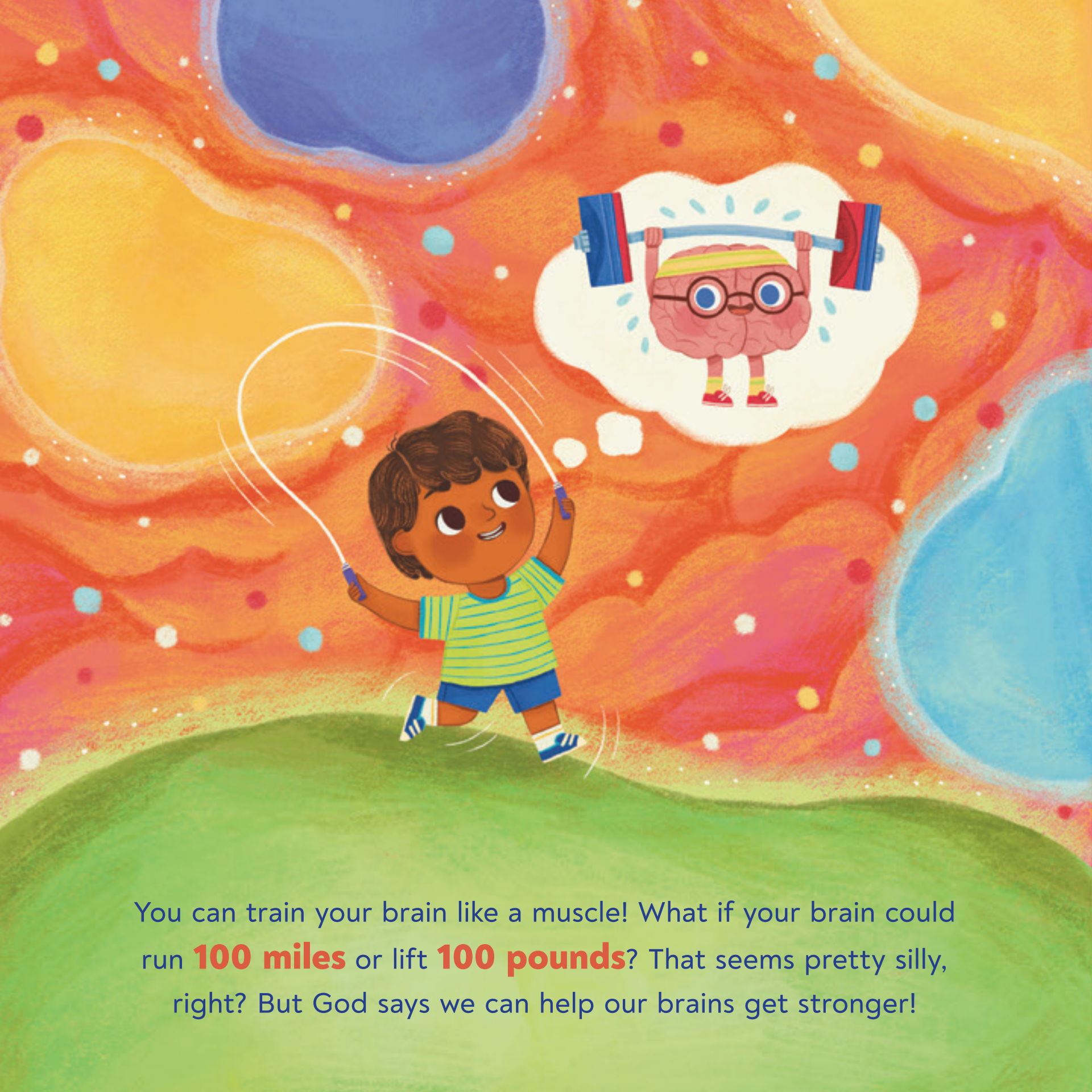
You can't finish your art project.

You can't sleep.

And you even get a little cranky!

You don't want to play with your friends.


**So what do you do with your whirly, swirly thoughts?**



You can train your brain like a muscle! What if your brain could run **100 miles** or lift **100 pounds**? That seems pretty silly, right? But God says we can help our brains get stronger!

Your brain is a wonderful, powerful gift from God. Your brain tells your body how to **move**, your feelings how to **feel**, and your mouth what to **say**. Your brain is the control center for who you are and all you want to do.





And God made  
**YOU** the boss of  
your brain!

You can help train  
your brain how and  
what to think.

So whenever your  
thoughts grow BIG and  
start to spiral down the way  
you whirl and swirl down a  
slide, remember . . .

**YOU** can tell your  
thoughts who's boss.

**Tell your  
brain . . .**