Hood and the Blue Bicycle

A story about patience... and "hard, but possible"

For ages 5 to 9



Child Protection Office

Prepared by Dr. Hashem



For his birthday, Mama gave Hood a shiny blue bicycle!

Hood jumped for joy: **“I’ll ride it and fly, just like Sami!”**



In the garden, Hood sat on the bike and pushed the pedal...

The bike tipped over, and he fell onto the grass: **“Ouch!”**



He tried a second time... and fell. A third time... and fell.

Then Sami zoomed past on his bike, waving, and Hood’s face turned red.



Hood kicked the bike, threw his helmet, and shouted:

“This bike is bad! I can’t! I’m never riding it again!”

Then he went inside and grabbed his tablet.



That evening, he couldn’t solve a homework problem, so he tore up the page and threw his pencil:

“Everything is hard! I can’t do anything!”



Mama Jumana sat beside him: **“It sounds like you’re feeling frustrated, Hood. That’s what we feel when something is hard and we want it to become easy, fast.”**

Then she asked: **“Remember the game of three letters? What do you tell yourself when you fall?”**



Hood said:

It should be easy! **I can’t stand things being hard!**

I didn’t do it now… so I’ll never do it!



In the morning, in the garden, they saw **Saber** the tortoise (his name means “patient”) trying to climb a step to reach a lettuce leaf.

He slipped… and tried. Slipped… and tried. Until at last he climbed up and ate the leaf!

Mama whispered: **“Saber didn’t say: I can’t.”**



Hood put on his detective hat. Question one: **Must everything be easy?**

They watched Qamar trying to roll onto her tummy... trying and trying, then laughing.

Mama said: **“And you learned to walk after a hundred falls!”** Hood said: **“So... learning is always a bit hard.”**



Question two: **Does hard mean I can’t stand it?**

Mama drew a ruler: “annoying,” then “hard,” then “impossible.”
Hood put the bike at “hard”… not at “impossible.”

And he remembered: **“I got through my vaccination shot! Hard isn’t comfortable… but I can stand it.”**



Question three: **If I didn’t do it today… will I never do it?**

Sami came over and said, laughing: **“I fell twenty times before I learned! Look at my knee!”**

Hood said: **“So falling is part of learning!”**



Hood said in a confident voice:

“Hard... but possible! I wish it were easier, but it doesn’t have to be easy. I can stand it, and I’ll try again.”



Mama drew a staircase with four steps:

Walk beside the bike… glide with my feet on the ground…
pedal while Mama holds the seat… ride by myself!

Hood said: **“Step by step… just like Saber!”**



Every day, Hood practiced. And Mama hung up a chart: **a star for every try… not for every success!**

And when he wanted to give up, he said: **“One minute of patience… then I’ll decide.”** And most of the time, he kept going!



One sunny day, Mama let go of the seat... and Hood rode off by himself! One meter, two meters, five meters!

Then he wobbled... and fell onto the grass. But he laughed, got up, brushed himself off, and shouted:

“Hard... but possible!”



In the evening, Hood opened his homework book and found a hard problem. He took a breath, smiled, and said:

“Hard isn’t impossible… step by step, just like Saber.”

A Guide for Parents & Educators

The fifth story in the series applies Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) to low frustration tolerance, one of the biggest obstacles to children's learning. The goal is not for things to become easy, but for the child to learn that difficulty is "uncomfortable" yet "bearable."

1. What is low frustration tolerance?

Ellis called it "I-can't-stand-it-itis." It shows up as giving up quickly, tantrums, and escaping to something easier (like a tablet). It spreads from the bike to homework and to every new skill. pp. 4–5

2. Thorny thoughts

- **Demanding ease:** "It should be easy."
- **Low frustration tolerance:** "I can't stand things being hard."
- **Overgeneralizing:** "I didn't do it now, so I'll never do it." p. 7

3. Disputing

- **A model from nature:** Saber the tortoise. p. 8
- **Empirical:** Qamar learns by trying, and Hood learned to walk after many falls. p. 9
- **The difficulty ruler:** "annoying, hard, impossible," plus reminders of past difficulties the child got through. p. 10
- **Evidence from a friend:** Sami's twenty falls. p. 11

4. The rational statement

"Hard… but possible," and "I wish it were easier, but it doesn't have to be." A short phrase the child can memorize and repeat when frustrated. p. 12

5. Behavioral homework

- **Breaking the task down:** a four-step staircase. p. 13
- **Rewarding effort, not results:** a star for every try. p. 14
- **One minute of patience:** putting off giving up by just one minute builds the child's tolerance. p. 14

6. Carrying it over

Hood takes what he learned from the bike to his homework. Help your child use the same phrase in different situations. p. 16

Questions to talk about after reading

- Why did Hood kick the bike?
- What did Hood learn from Saber?
- What hard thing are you learning right now?
- Let's build a staircase of small steps for it together.

Tips for parents

Don't rescue your child from every difficulty right away, and don't do the task for them. Praise trying and persistence. Model it yourself: "This is hard for me… but I'll try." If frustration with learning is intense and frequent, it may be worth having a specialist assess for learning or attention difficulties.