

# Moishy and the Thing He Said

A story about words, regret and making it right

It was a small joke at first. Moishy was playing basketball at recess when Avrumi missed an easy shot, and the ball bounced off the rim and hit the fence. Moishy laughed, and then he said, loud enough for everyone to hear, "That is why nobody picks you."

The words were out before Moishy knew he was going to say them. Avrumi's face went still. The boys nearby looked at the ground. Avrumi picked up the ball, put it down, and walked toward the school building without a word.

For the rest of the day, Moishy felt a hot, heavy feeling in his chest. He tried to push it away. He told himself, "It was only a joke. He is too sensitive." But the heavy feeling did not leave. It followed him into class, onto the bus and all the way home.

At supper he barely touched his food. His father, Totty, put down his fork. "You are quiet tonight." Moishy said, "Nothing." Totty waited. Sometimes waiting is better than asking again. After a minute, the whole story came out in a rush.

"I feel terrible," said Moishy. "But if I say sorry, it will be so embarrassing." Totty nodded slowly. "That feeling in your chest is not your enemy. It is telling you that you care about how you treated Avrumi. That is a good thing to know about yourself."

Totty did not tell him what to do. He asked questions. "What did you want when you said it?" Moishy had to think. He had wanted the boys to laugh. He had wanted to feel big for a second. "And what do you want now?" Moishy looked at his plate. "I want Avrumi to know I did not mean it. Actually, I did mean it for one second, and I do not mean it now."

That night, Moishy wrote down what he wanted to say. Not a long speech. Three parts. I said something unkind. I am sorry. I will not do it again, and I would like to



play together if you want to. He practiced it twice, quietly, so that his voice would not shake.

In the morning, Moishy found Avrumi by the lockers. His stomach flipped. He took a breath, the slow kind. "Avrumi, can I say something? What I said yesterday was mean. I am sorry." Avrumi looked at him for a long moment. "It hurt," he said. "I know," said Moishy. "I will not do it again."

Avrumi did not forgive him right away, and Moishy did not demand it. At recess Avrumi played on the other court. But on Thursday, he passed Moishy the ball. Moishy learned something that week. A sorry that is honest is not magic, but it is a beginning, and it is worth the hard feeling of saying it.

## **Moishy's Make-It-Right Tool**

Listen to the heavy feeling. Guilt can be a sign that you care about how you treated someone.

Say what you wanted. Understanding why you said it helps you choose better next time.

Say it plainly. What I did, that I am sorry, and what I will do differently.

Give them time. A person can accept your apology slowly. You can keep being kind.

A real apology is hard to say, and it is worth it.