

The Eleven O'Clock Knock

Facilitator note: The skill is the boundary between company and cargo - standing with a worried person without taking the worry home - and the story's frame is structure, not rejection. Meshulam never tells Tovia to stop being anxious, and the story never treats the anxiety as silly: the worry is real, and it belongs to Tovia. Keep the September truth visible: Meshulam LIKED being the calm one, and part of the repair is admitting the system fed something in him too. The counselor's question ("where is the worry?") is the diagnostic - use it exactly. Do not turn this into "don't help people" or "help everyone once"; the story's shape is review-yes, midnight-no, and the skill is designing the shape before the resentment builds. Students are not asked to name friends they resent or worries they carry; Activity 7 uses a made-up case. If a student is someone's eleven-o'clock knock, or someone's Tovia, the hoped-for outcome is a quiet conversation with a parent or counselor - not a disclosure here.

Teacher answer key

Activity 1: The worry starts in Tovia before the test, travels through the review - questions asked from the edge of the bed, answered from Meshulam's pillow - and ends the night on Meshulam, awake past midnight, while Tovia sleeps like someone "whose worry has been carried somewhere else." "It just changes rooms" means the review did not shrink the worry; it relocated it. That is cargo, not comfort. Activity 2: The smoke alarm signals danger; it is not the danger. The ugly thought tells Meshulam the system is on fire - his resentment has grown to the point of wishing harm on a friend. The fire is the machine itself: a ritual that feeds Tovia Meshulam's sleep and feeds Meshulam the pleasure of being needed, until both are stuck. The coat matters because the system serves him too, which is why it took so long to see. Activity 3: He learns there are two ways to hold the worry - after the review and after refusing the review - and both leave him carrying it. Refusal alone does not work because the machine is not the knock; it is the arrangement in his own head, where Tovia's peace is his job. Only a new structure (Chapter 6) stops the transfer; a locked door just reroutes the worry through guilt. Activity 4: Old system: $3 \times (45 + 60) = 3 \times 105 = 315$ minutes. New system: $3 \times 20 = 60$ minutes. Difference: 255 minutes a week. The arithmetic does not capture that the new system also ends the guilt arithmetic, gives Tovia back ownership of his own readiness, and that some costs (the coat, the friendship's warmth) have no minutes at all. Activity 5: Renting the calm means Tovia borrows Meshulam's voice as a tool - he asks himself the question, answers it, and still owns both the worry and the readiness. Moving the worry means handing the whole load over and needing the friend's presence to sleep. In the first, Tovia carries it home and gets stronger; in the second, Meshulam carries it home and gets hollow. The rented voice is a bridge toward Tovia's own. Activity 6: Drawings vary. Accept any showing only the visible: two boys, two cocoa cups, the windowsill, the night. Caption from the story, e.g. "This is not a review. This is company." Activity 7: Answers vary; require three sentences with names. Model: the system - Nechami's friend hands her the same worry every lunch and leaves lighter while Nechami carries it into every afternoon. The new shape - Nechami proposes ten minutes on the bench right after eating, then lunch belongs to both of them again. The opening sentence - "I want to hear about it at lunch, and I also want us to have lunch back, so let's make the first ten minutes yours." MESHULAM row 1 columns 1-8; TOVIA row 2 columns 1-5; KNOCK row 3 columns 1-5; WORRY row 4 columns 1-5; SLEEP row 5 columns 1-5; ELEVEN row 6 columns 1-6; CARGO row 7 columns 1-5; SUPPER row 8 columns 1-6