

TRUDY LUDWIG

MIKE CURATO

the POWER of ONE



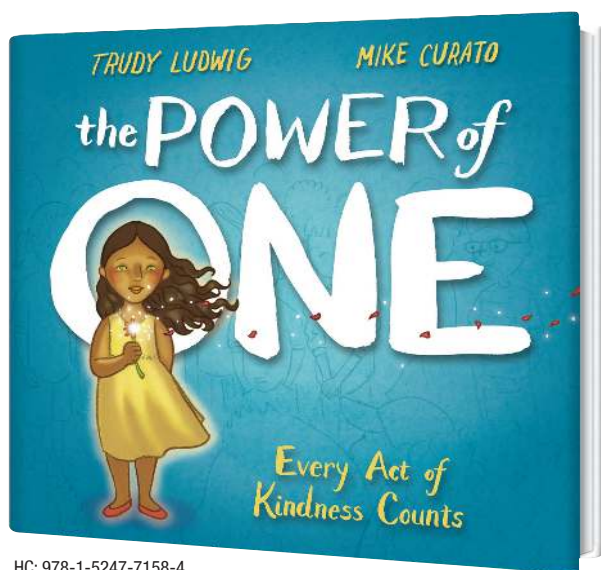
Every Act of
Kindness Counts

COMMUNITY & EDUCATOR GUIDE

About the Book

One small act of kindness can make a big difference. From Trudy Ludwig, bestselling author of *The Invisible Boy*, and Mike Curato, author and illustrator of *Little Elliot*, comes a tale as simple—and simply inspiring—as the golden rule.

When one child reaches out in friendship to a classmate who seems lonely, she begins a chain reaction of kindness that ripples throughout her school and her community. One kind act begets another, small good deeds make way for bigger ones, and eventually the whole neighborhood comes together to build something much greater than the sum of its parts. From acclaimed bullying expert Trudy Ludwig, *The Power of One* not only conveys a message



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of kindness, it offers concrete steps that kids can take to make a difference in their own communities.

About the Author



TRUDY LUDWIG

is a nationally acclaimed speaker and author of ten books, including *The Invisible Boy*, a *School Library Journal* Best Picture Books Selection and was recommended

by *USA Today* and *Scholastic Instructor* as a back-to-school book. Through her work with the International Bullying Prevention Association, Sesame Workshop, Committee for Children, and ConnectSafely, Trudy is committed to helping kids connect with their peers in kinder, more inclusive ways. She lives in Portland, Oregon. Visit her at trudyludwig.com. Follow her on Twitter at [@TrudyLudwig](https://twitter.com/TrudyLudwig).

About the Illustrator



MIKE CURATO

is the award-winning author and illustrator of the beloved polka-dotted elephant, Little Elliot, who appears in his books *Little Elliot, Big City*; *Little Elliot, Big Family*; *Little*

Elliot, Big Fun; and *Little Elliot, Fall Friends*. He is also the illustrator of *What If . . .* by Samantha Berger, *All the Way to Havana* by Margarita Engle, and the graphic novel *Flamer*. Mike lives in Northampton, Massachusetts. Visit him at mikecurato.com. Follow him on Twitter at [@MikeCurato](https://twitter.com/MikeCurato).

“Do your little bit of good where you are; it’s those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.”

—Desmond Tutu

Over the years, I’ve often been asked by students and adults alike: “Why do you write stories that focus on kids’ friendship and bullying issues?”

For young readers, my answer is simple: “Your words and actions have the power to break down or build up the human spirit. It’s all about choice—your choice. I want my stories to show how positively powerful you can be when you choose to connect with others in kinder, more caring ways.”

For parents and educators, my response is more comprehensive, wherein I share research findings from neuroscientists and social scientists on the use of well-written literature as an effective supplemental tool to help instill critical-thinking skills; build social-emotional learning (SEL) skills (i.e., self-awareness, social awareness, self-regulation, relationship skills, decision-making/problem-solving skills); and foster empathy in young readers.

Empathy, according to renowned research professor and author Brené Brown, is about feeling with people—feeling compassion for another person’s pain and suffering. Kindness, in turn, is a call to action, propelling us to rise up, reach out, and connect with others in caring, supportive, and collaborative ways.

So keep on sharing with your readers wonderful, thought-provoking stories that help shine light on themselves and others. Use them as your kindness call to action to motivate the youth in your life to be positive changemakers in our world!

Trudy Ludwig



The Power of One at School

This simple, lushly illustrated book shows the power of one person to reach out in a kind way to make a positive difference in someone else's life. As an educator, you are already giving of yourself—to your students, their parents, and the community—every day. Use *The Power of One* and the resources in this kit to introduce and encourage the planting and nurturing of more seeds of kindness in your school and community, starting with seeds that you sow.

Model kindness: Show your students what kindness looks and sounds like through your everyday actions, and show them that you notice their kindness. Make sure they see you apologize on occasions when you've been less than kind, and help your students understand how to take responsibility for mistakes and make sincere apologies.

Some students will also need help recognizing the opportunity to be kind. Show your awareness of others and the opportunities it provides to demonstrate kindness. When everyone agrees that kindness is the expected behavior, your students can take responsibility for maintaining a classroom and school environment that is kind to all.

Give kindness your full attention: Morning meeting or circle time provides a great opportunity to ask students about what they did to help others and to share good things that have happened to them. You can also bring those conversations into staff meetings. Integrate questions about kindness into your daily routine in both the classroom and the teachers' lounge. Share your experiences with planting seeds of kindness with your students and colleagues, and make a point to include moments of regret or failure.

**Be kind to yourself: Treat yourself as kindly as you treat others.
Recognize that you are giving of yourself every day and celebrate it!**



Read-Aloud

Before Reading

- Let students know that you will be reading *The Power of One* more than once.
- Show the book cover and read the title aloud. Ask students what they think the title means. Then ask: What can one person do? Can one person make the world a better place? How could they do this? List student responses on a chart. You will come back to it in later conversations about kindness.

As You Read

- The first time you read *The Power of One*, read for pleasure.
- Read it again, and ask students to share what they notice as you read. Or, after the first reading, pass the book around and ask each student to talk about what is happening on the page when it is their turn to hold the book.
- Explore the events of the wordless scenes in the first few pages carefully. Ask students to look closely at the first illustration. What is happening between the boy and girl? What do you notice about them? Look at the drawing next to the first one of the boy and girl. What's happening? Who in the picture notices what's going on between the boy and girl? What does her expression tell us about how she is feeling?
- In the next drawing, the boy walks off and the girl is crying. What else do you notice in these pictures? Do you think someone will help the girl who is crying? What would you do?
- As the text begins, the pictures continue to tell the story of the crying girl. Ask students what changes they notice in the girl and what other transformations they see in the illustrations as the girl receives kindness.

Questions for Discussion After Reading

- We don't know what the boy says to the girl, but it is something that makes her cry. What do you think the boy is feeling? What do you think the girl is feeling?
- How does it feel if someone says something unkind to you? How could you respond if someone says something unkind to you? What could you do if someone says something unkind to someone else?
- How does the girl who offers kindness know what to do? If you were in a similar situation, what would you do? Who could help you figure out what to do?
- Why is it important to be a good listener? How is being a good listener related to being kind?
- What words would you use to describe the girl who was kind?
- The boy apologizes to the girl who was crying and she responds with a hug. What makes an apology sincere? Should the girl still be unhappy with the boy? How would you respond to his apology?
- Do you think it can be hard to apologize? Why or why not?
- Do you think small acts of kindness can make a difference in someone's life? Talk about how one small, generous decision resulted in a big, beautiful garden and a shared meal.
- How do you feel when people are kind to you?

Conversations and Classroom Activities

- Do your students think their acts of kindness count? Get students thinking about why small kindnesses matter and how anyone can make them happen. Ask them if they think anyone of any age can make a difference. Help students search online for some news stories and other examples of kids making a positive difference in their communities. (Everyday Young Hero from YSA is a good resource: leadasap.ysa.org/stories.) Talk about how and why those kids got involved in helping others. How did they know that help was needed? Why did they help? Ask students to think of and share what they want to do to make their community or the world a better place, including one thing they could do that would help somebody have a better day.
- Do your students feel recognized by their peers? Do they recognize others? In Trudy Ludwig's *The Invisible Boy*, young readers learn that it doesn't take superhuman effort to make others feel seen, acknowledged, and accepted. And in *Quiet Please, Owen McPhee!*, readers learn from Trudy Ludwig's chatty character Owen that listening is the foundation of understanding and essential to building empathetic, collaborative relationships. Read these titles along with *The Power of One*, and have a conversation about the different social interactions in the books and how they compare with your students' experiences. Work together as a class to come up with ways to support and strengthen social interactions, such as ideas for questions that encourage people to talk about what is important to them or tips for being a good active listener.
- Do your students understand the relationship between kindness and social justice? Broaden student thinking about kindness and helping others through a conversation about taking action to correct the inequalities and injustices that exist in our society. Acts of kindness are different from taking social action. One person can make a difference with a kind act. Big change—such as transforming a lot full of trash into a beautiful garden—requires a group to work together. Ask students to choose an issue they care about and a change they would like to bring about regarding that issue. Then have them come up with and describe some specific actions they could take to try to help make positive, lasting changes. Encourage your students to take action.



Writing Activities

- Ask students to write and share their own narrative to go with Mike Curato's illustrations. This could include what the children are saying or imagining or even what the flowers are thinking. For those who need help getting started, prompt with some concrete questions: Who is the girl? What is her name? Who is the boy? What is his name? Where are they? What do you see? What is happening?
- Have students offer different perspectives on what takes place in *The Power of One* by creating a short journal entry from the point of view of anyone pictured in the story. Challenge students to think deeply: What did that person experience? What is their reaction or response to other characters' actions? How do they feel about the other characters? Ask students to read their entries to the class and discuss.
- Everyone has the power to do good things. Have students create an acrostic poem about their qualities and personal strengths. Students should write their first name vertically down the left side of a sheet of paper. Have them think about their strengths, skills, knowledge, interests, and character, and what good acts they could do with those qualities. They should include at least one quality for each letter of their name, along with an example of how they use that quality to do kind acts. Students can illustrate their poems. As an alternative, students can create a collage that shows their personal strengths and ways they use these to be kind and make a difference. Combine collages and poems to create a fabulous bulletin board display.

The Power of One in Your Community

Getting outside can bring the whole community together. Create a Kindness StoryWalk® for *The Power of One*, and get families in your community to take steps toward kindness! Developed by Anne Ferguson in Montpelier, Vermont, a StoryWalk combines reading a children's book aloud with taking a walk. To make a StoryWalk, you'll need two copies of *The Power of One* so that both sides of the books pages can be displayed. Mount each page spread on cardstock and laminate.

You should also create a "Welcome" page that includes the front cover of the book and explains how the StoryWalk works. Depending on where you set up your Kindness StoryWalk (library, school grounds, park, trails, or storefront windows along main street or in the shopping mall), you'll also need wooden stakes for each laminated page spread and heavy-duty adhesive-backed Velcro to attach them. Indoor or window installations can be secured using suction cups with clips or removable wall-safe tape.

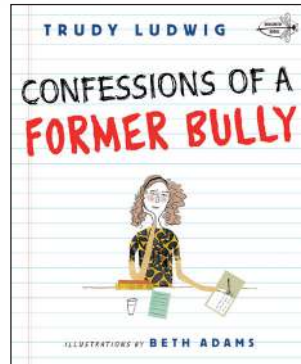
Alternatively, you can get the community involved and have volunteers holding each page spread! Space the pages in the story about 100 feet apart. End your Kindness StoryWalk with a booth at which families can receive information on different opportunities to help others in your community or a table where children and families can plant seeds for a community garden plot or sign up to volunteer at a senior center or food bank.

RACHAEL WALKER (belleofthebook.com) created this guide. She consults on a wide variety of educational programs and multimedia projects, and develops educational materials and reading resources for children, parents, and teachers.

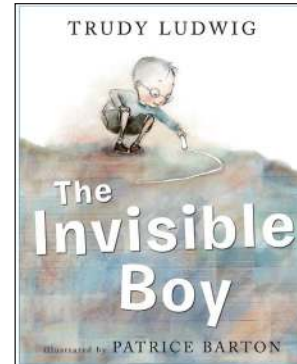
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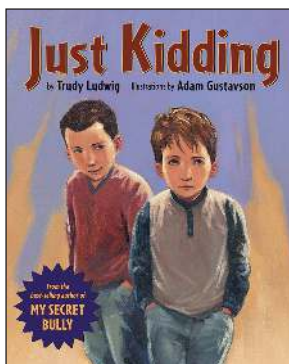
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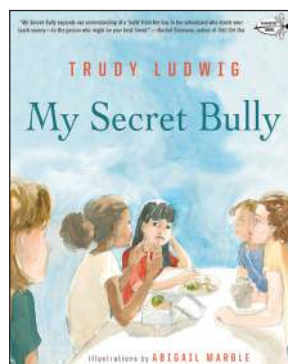
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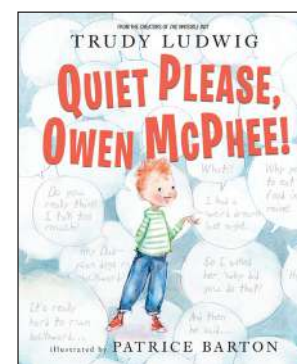
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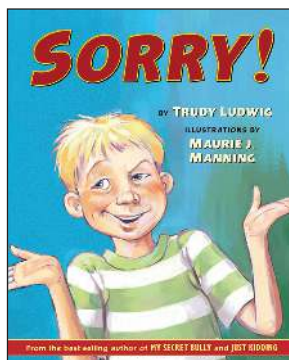
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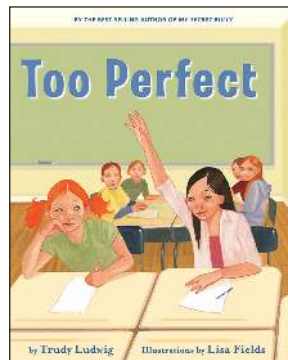
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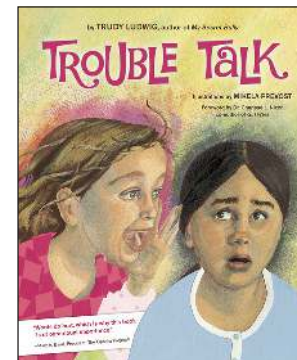
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