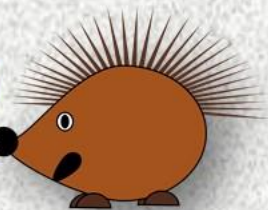
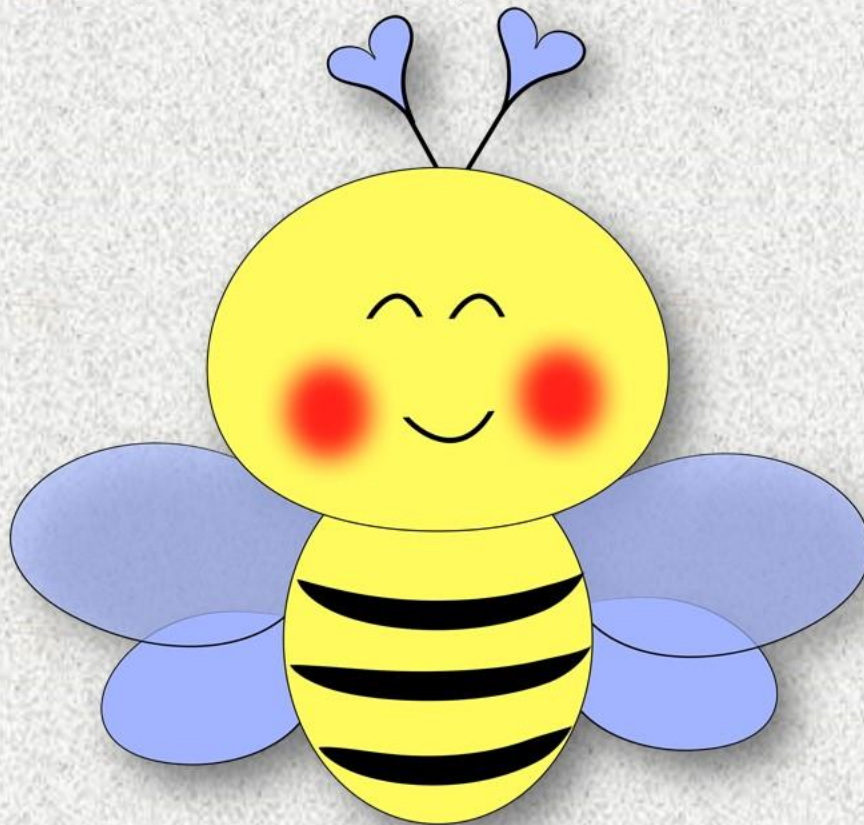


BEE *HERE!* NOW!



A story about anxiety and mindfulness



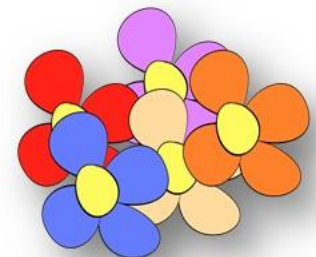
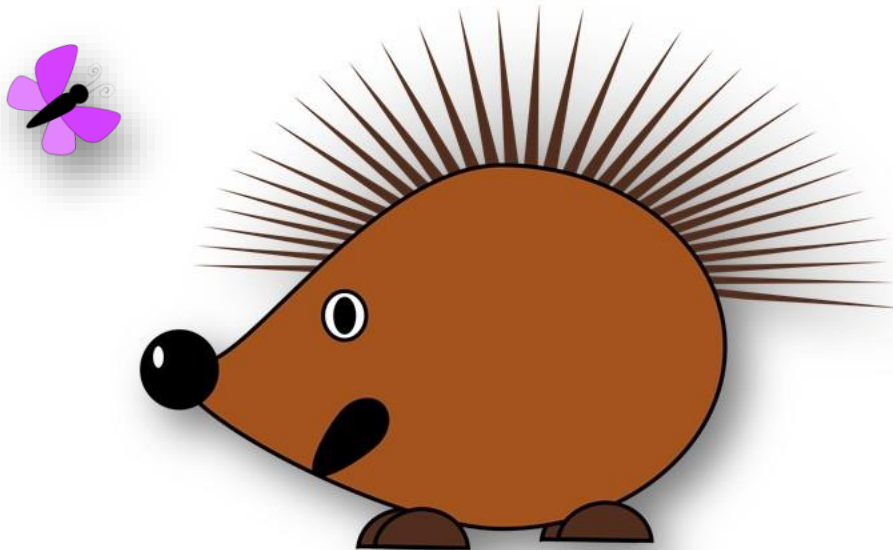
D A Palphreyman



Once upon a time in a dark, dark forest lived a hedgehog. His name was Spike. Spike had prickly spines all over his body that helped to protect him from harm. If anything spooked him his spines would stand up straight and tall.

It didn't take much to spook him. Anything from rustling leaves, loud bangs, strange creatures or even weird smells put him on full alert. His spines would stand on end, straight and sharp.

This was really exhausting for Spike because it took a lot of energy to make his spines stand on end. It took ages to make them go flat again. He constantly felt tired! He would puff and pant and he could feel his little heart beating so fast he thought it might pop out of his chest.



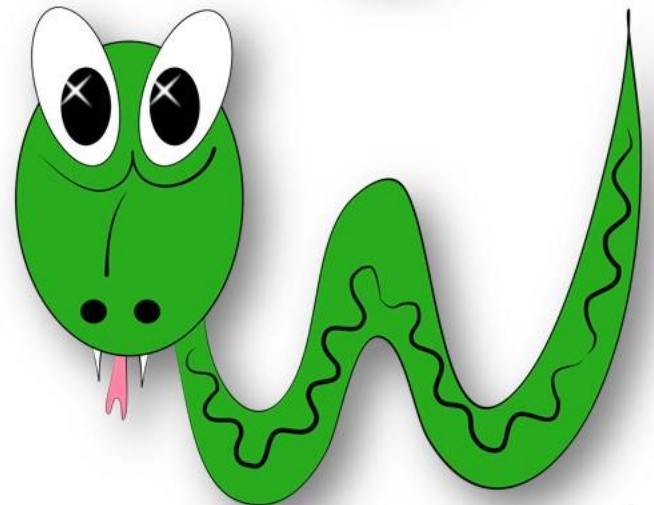
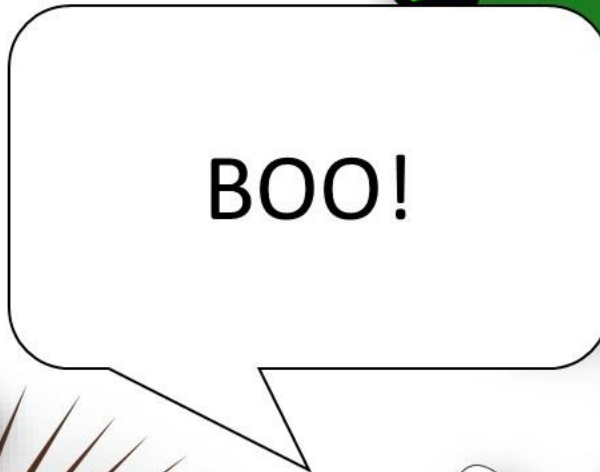
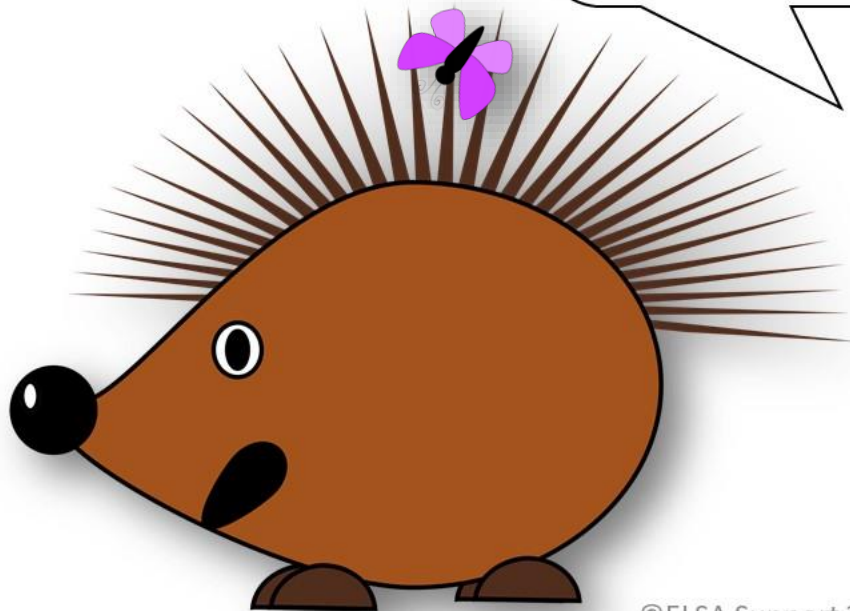
What made matters worse was that in the forest lived a snake. This snake was mean and sneaky and he would do anything at all to get a reaction from Spike. He thought it was great fun to tease him and would say anything to get Spike's spines standing straight and tall.

He thought it was hilarious! He took every opportunity to have some fun!



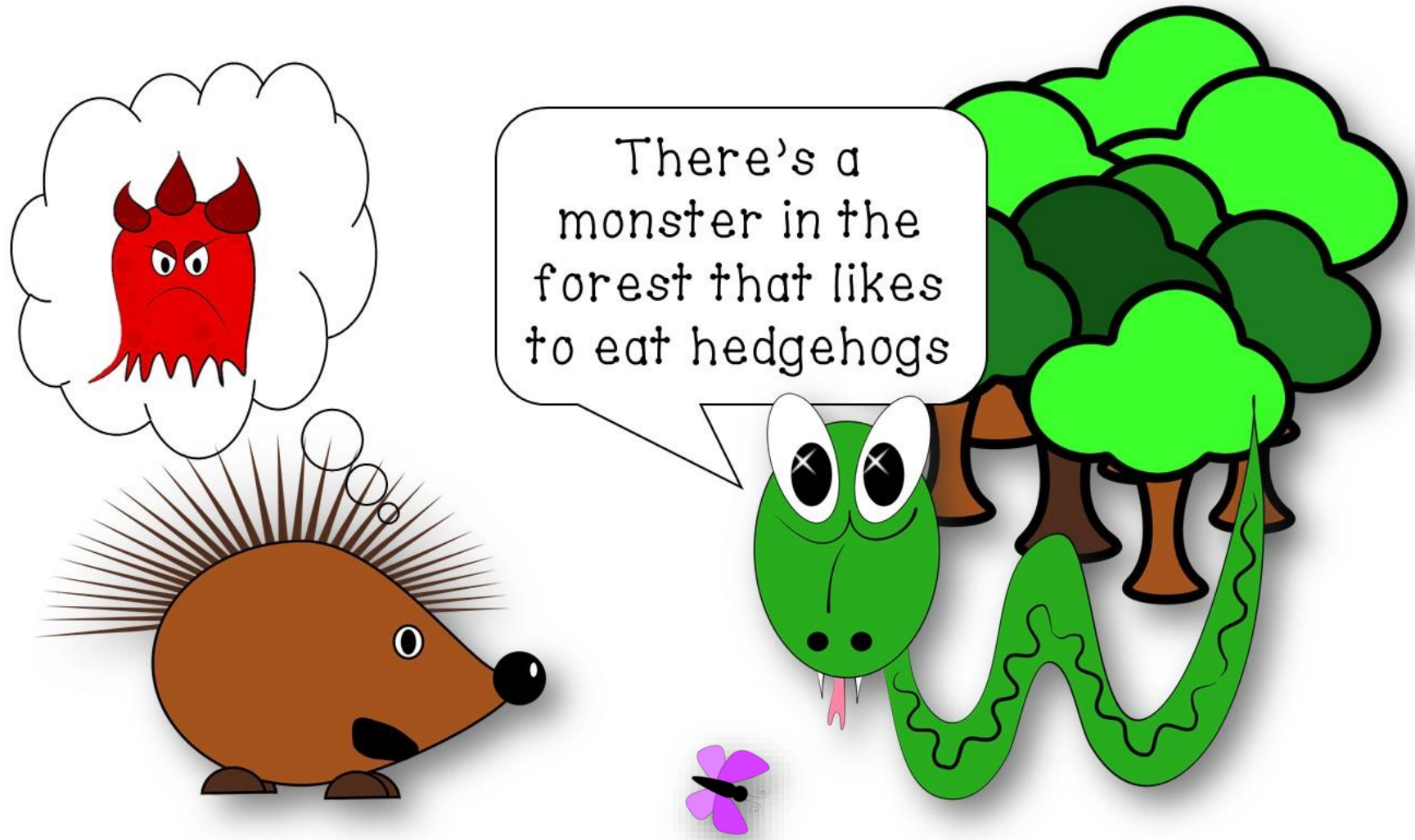
One day he slid behind Spike and yelled 'BOO!'.

Spike was all of a quiver and his spines stood up tall!



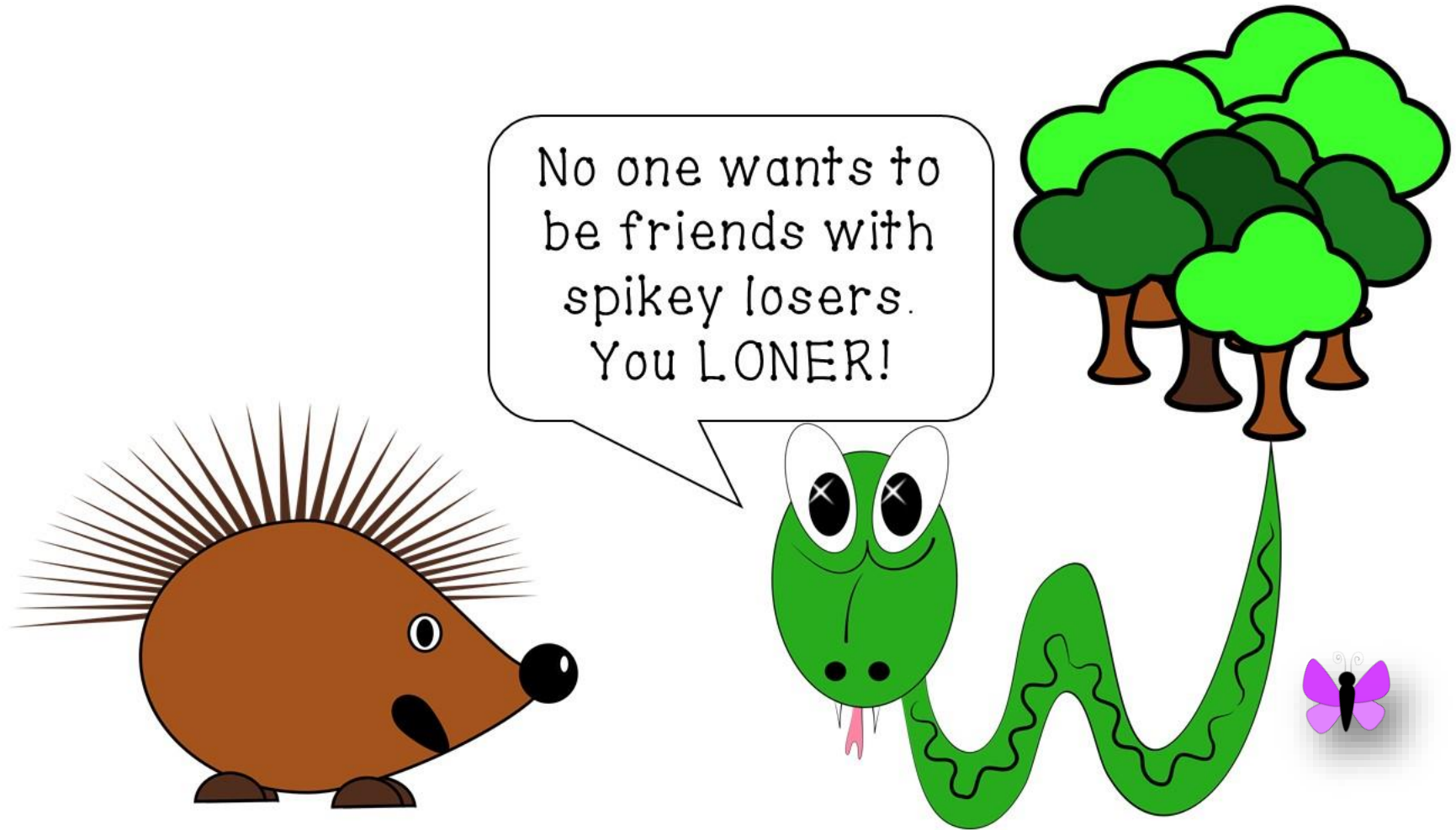
Another time he smirked as he said to Spike 'There's a monster in the forest that likes to eat hedgehogs!'

Spike was all of a quiver and his spines stood up tall!



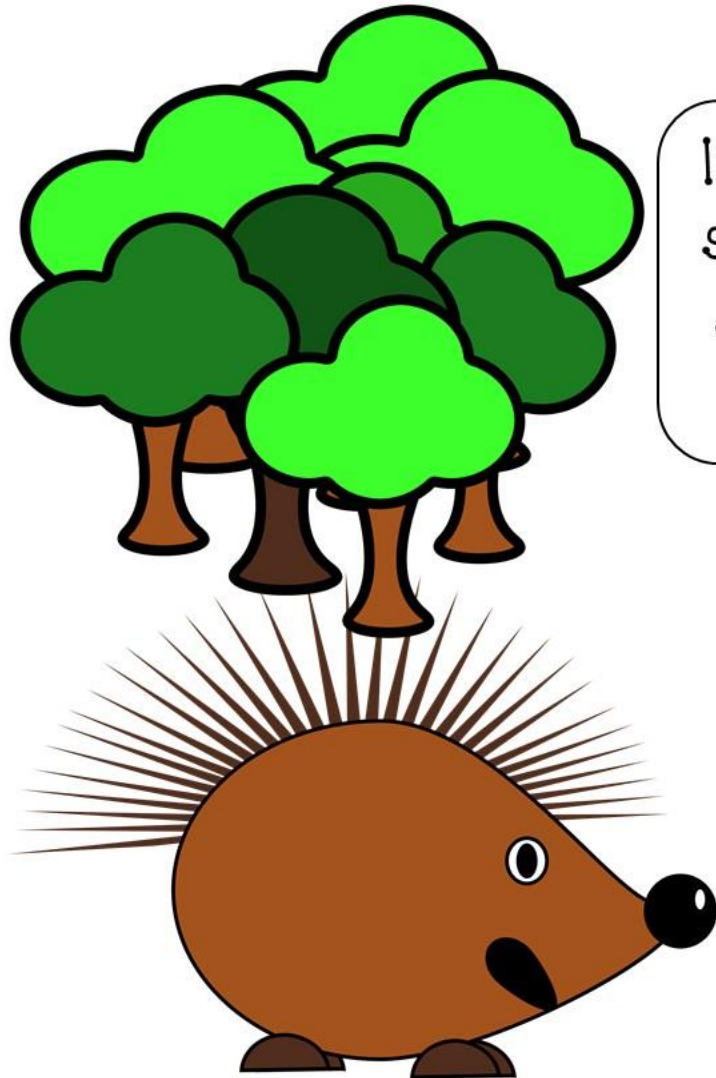
Another time he looked smugly as he warned Spike 'No one wants to be friends with spikey losers! You LONER!'

Spike was all of a quiver and his spines stood up tall!

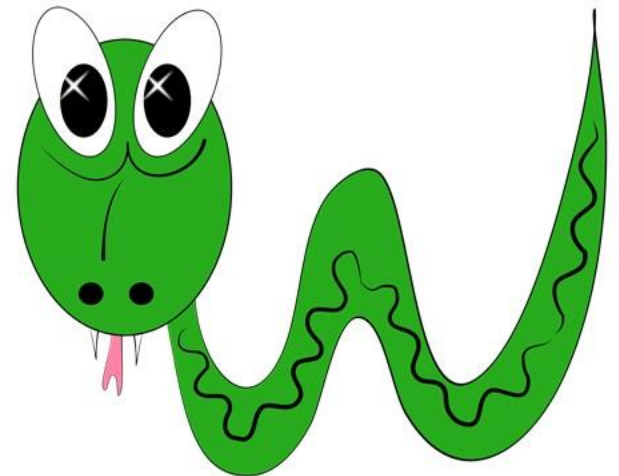
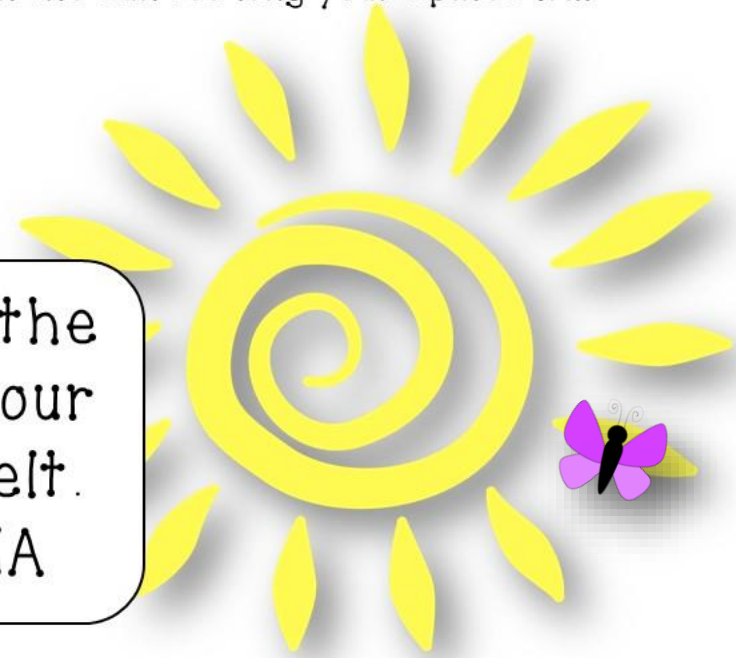


Another time he laughed as he informed Spike 'If you stay in the sun too long your spines will melt!'

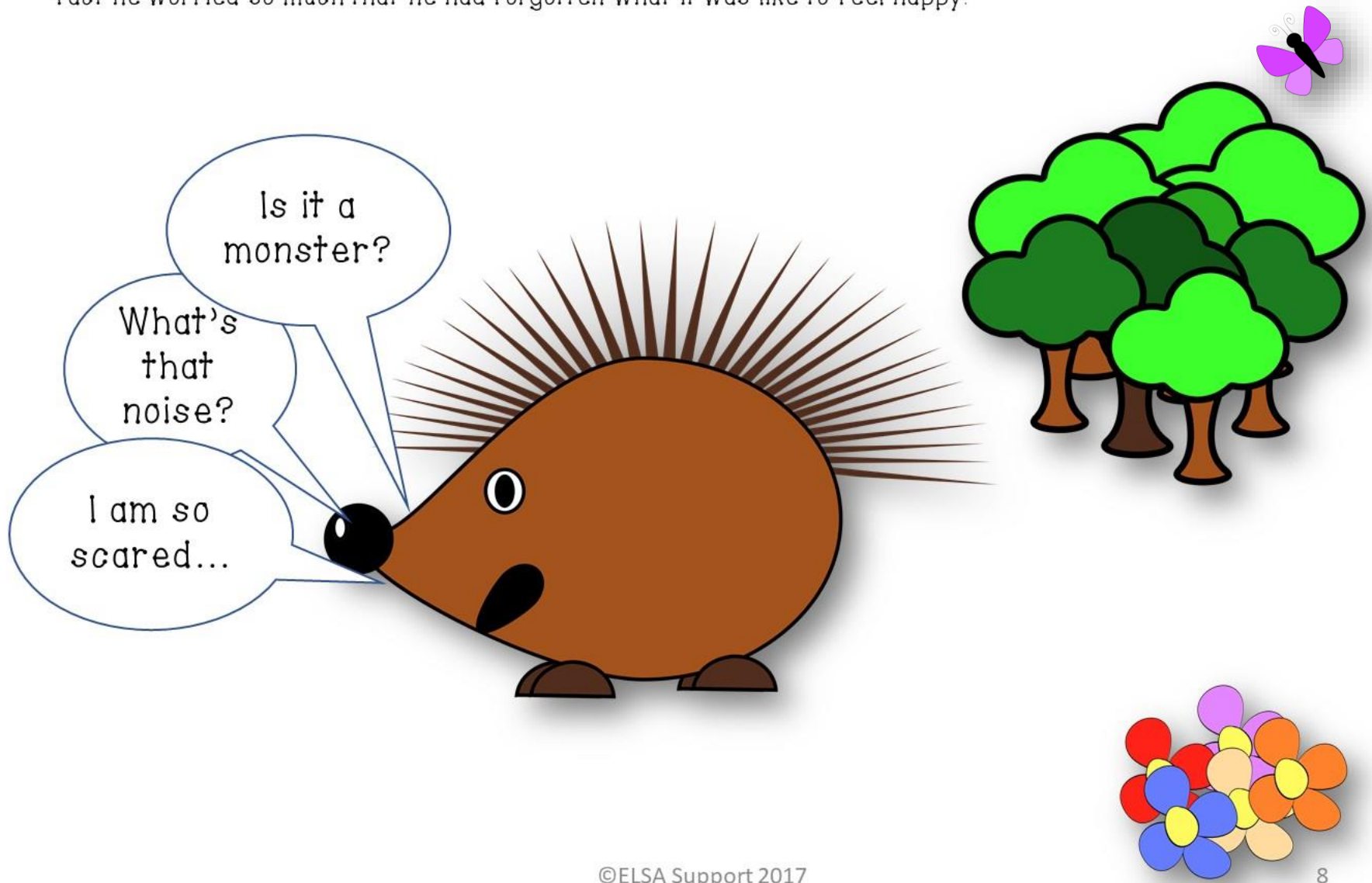
Spike was all of a quiver and his spines stood up tall!




If you stay in the
sun too long your
spines will melt.
HAHAHAHAHA



Spike was in a constant state of worry, fear and anxiety. He was on full alert to what dreadful things might happen to him. He worried from the time he got up to the time he went to bed and he even worried in his sleep because he had bad dreams. His thoughts were constantly looking for things that might hurt him in some way. In fact he worried so much that he had forgotten what it was like to feel happy.



Then one day a new creature came to the woods. It was a Bee called Bee-linda. She was the coolest, calmest Bee that Spike had ever seen but Spike was spooked and up came his spines. Bee-linda looked at Spike who was all of a quiver and said, 'Young man I think we need a chat...'.


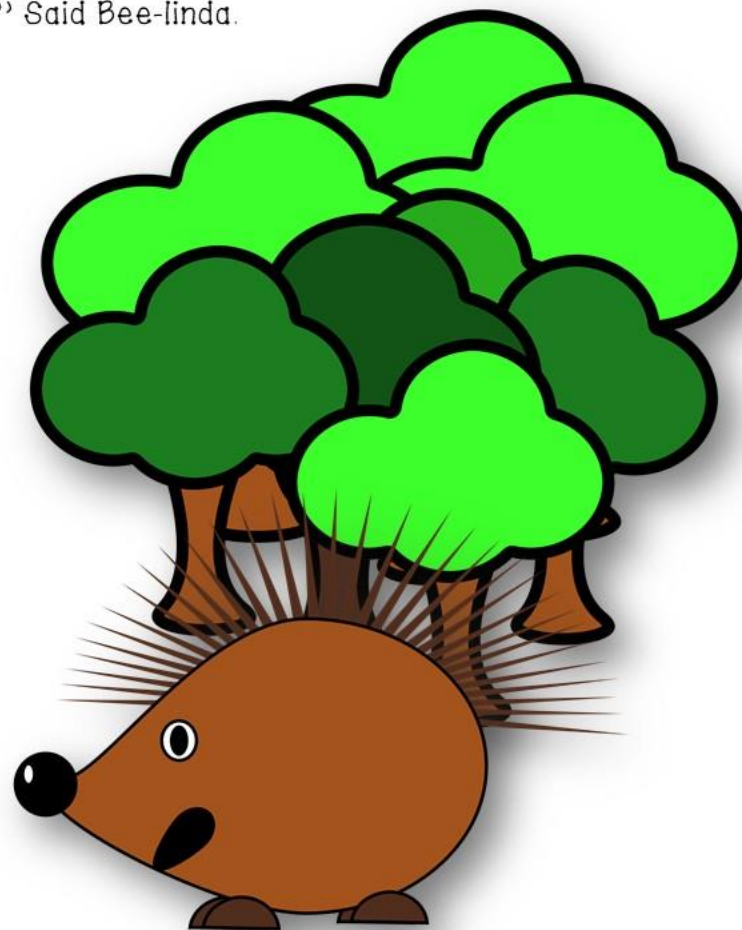
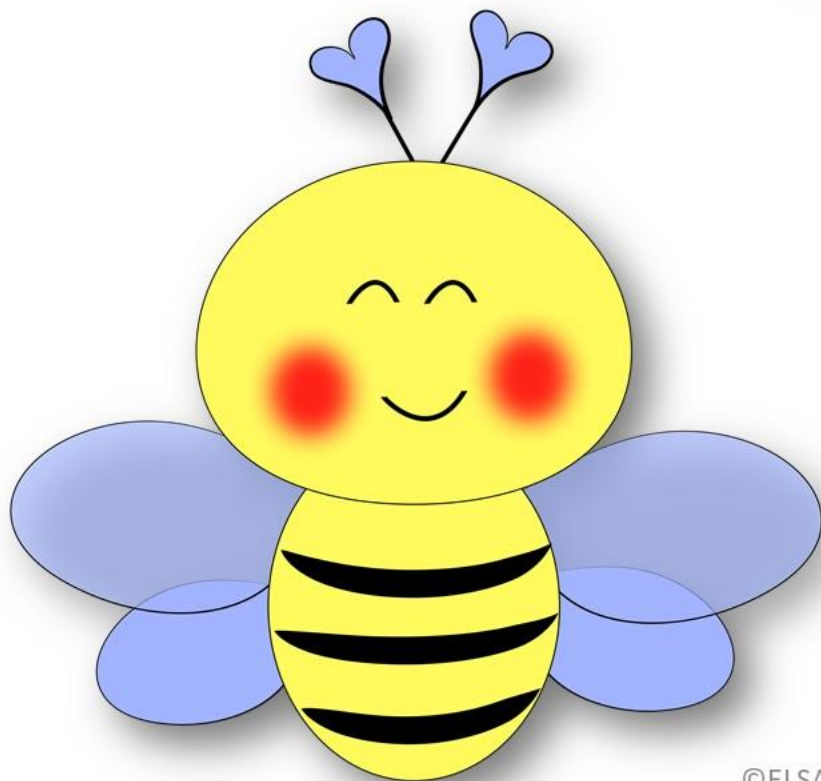
'What ever is the matter?' 'I won't hurt you!' Said Bee-linda.

'Err it's my spines they stand up tall all the time and I can't get them to go flat', replied Spike.

'Well I think I can help you, have you ever heard of mindfulness?' Said Bee-linda.

'E E E rr that sounds scary,' stuttered Spike.

'Let me explain,' said Bee-linda...



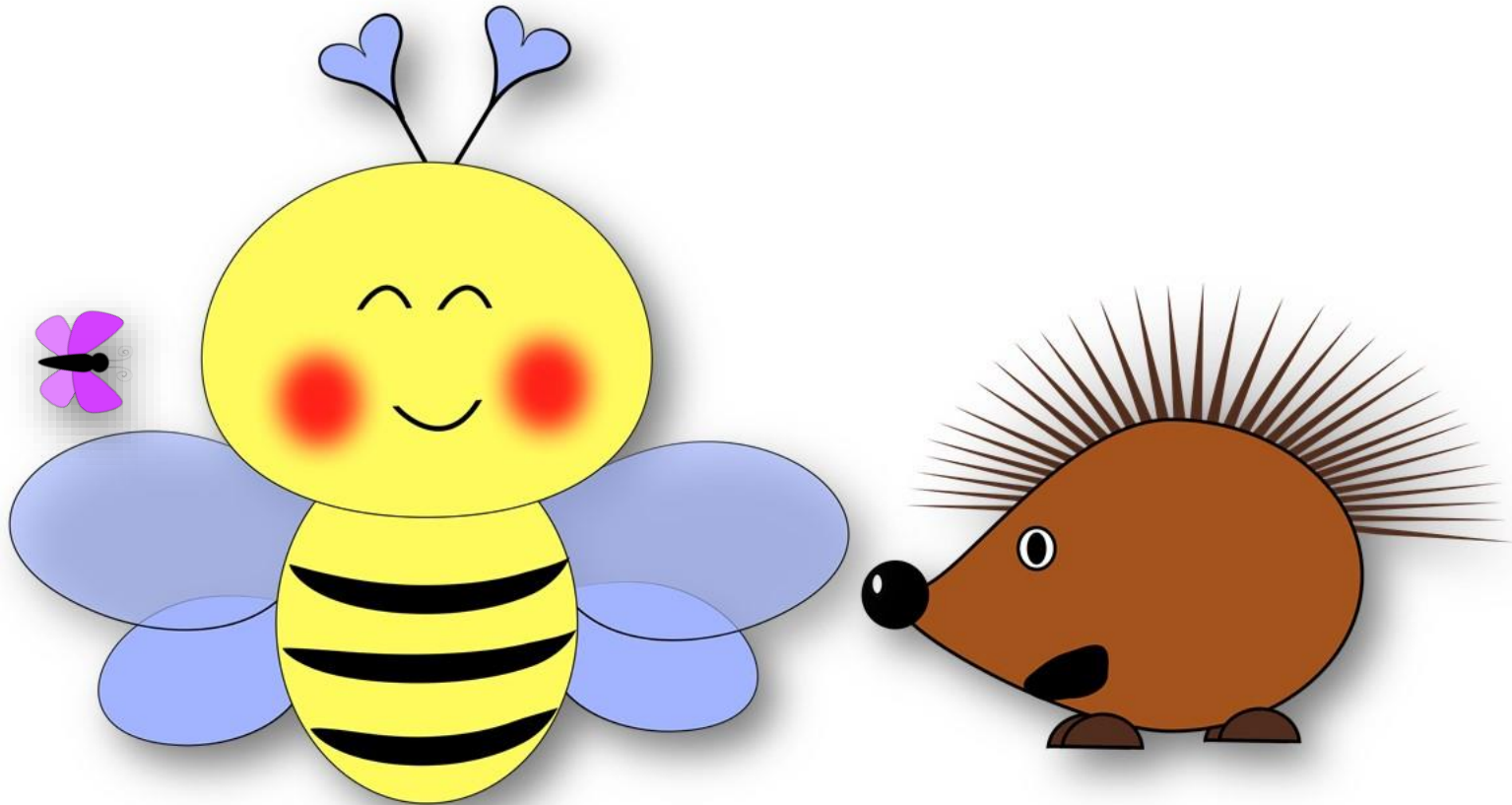
'When your mind is full of what is happening right now, in the present moment, then you can't be worried about other things', said Bee-linda wisely.

'It's MAGIC! Honestly!'

'You need to **'BEE HERE! NOW!'** said Bee-linda..

'Using your senses to fill your mind right here, right now, but don't worry I will explain...' said Bee-linda.

'Tell me about one of your worries', asked Bee-linda encouragingly.



‘Well’, said Spike. ‘When Snake sneaks up on me and shouts BOO! All my spines stand on end.’ As he talked about this his spines rise right up in the air.

‘Ok well let’s try this...’ said Bee-linda.

Bee-linda chants...

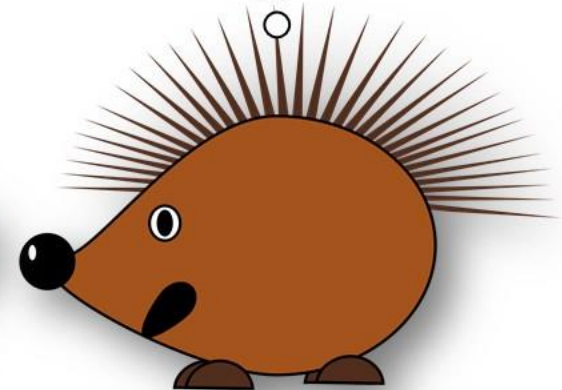
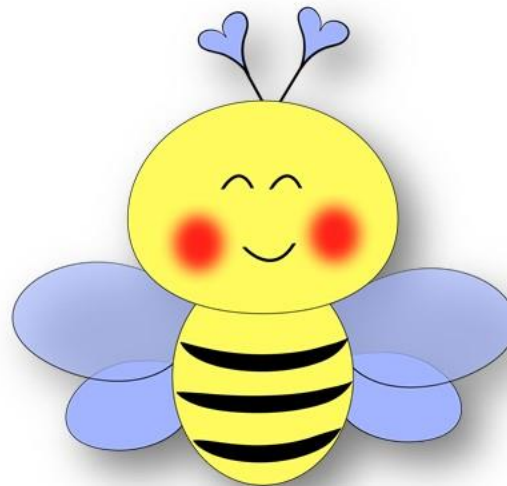
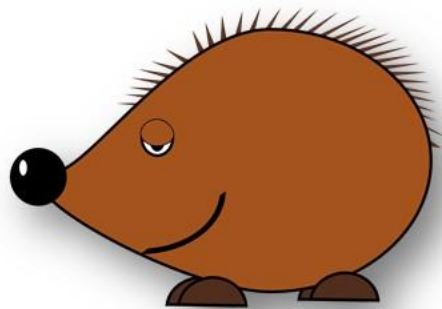
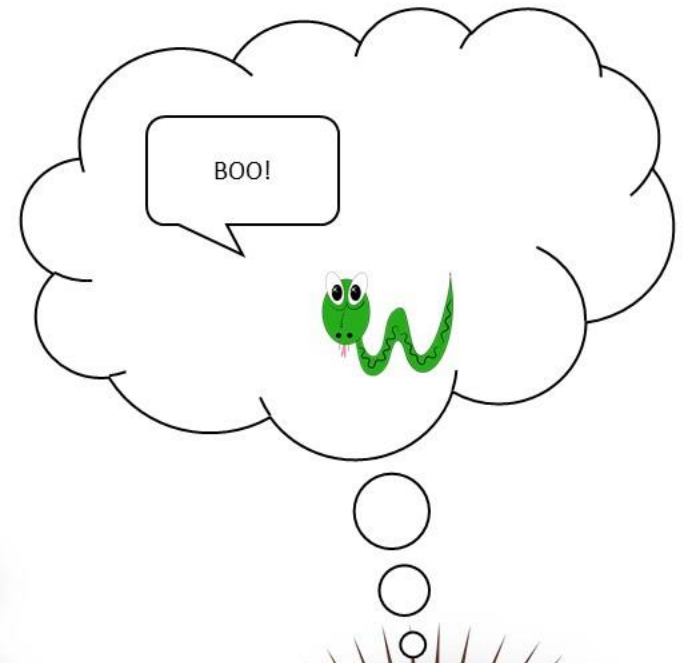
*‘BEE HERE! NOW!, is what you need to do.
Take 5 deep breaths, bring your spines right down
And cast away that frown’.*

‘What does that mean?’ said Spike?

‘It means that when something scares you, you need to take five big deep breaths, fill your mind with your breathing and it really will make you feel better. Try it!’ Said Bee-linda.

Spike takes five big deep breaths and low and behold his spines
Come right down. **And he smiles!**

‘See it’s MAGIC!’ smiles Bee-linda.



'Tell me another one', said Bee-linda.

'Well', said Spike. 'When Snake says there is a monster in the woods that is going to eat me! All my spines stand on end'. As he talked about this his spines rise right up in the air.

'Ok well let's try this...' said Bee-linda.

Bee-linda chants...

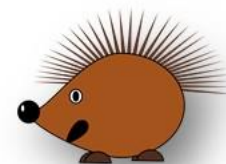
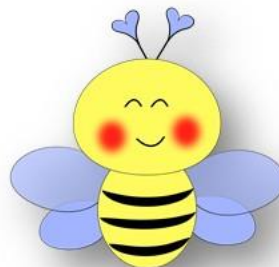
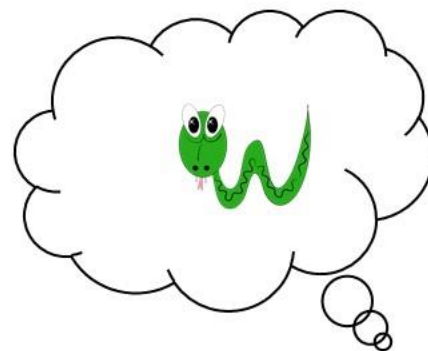
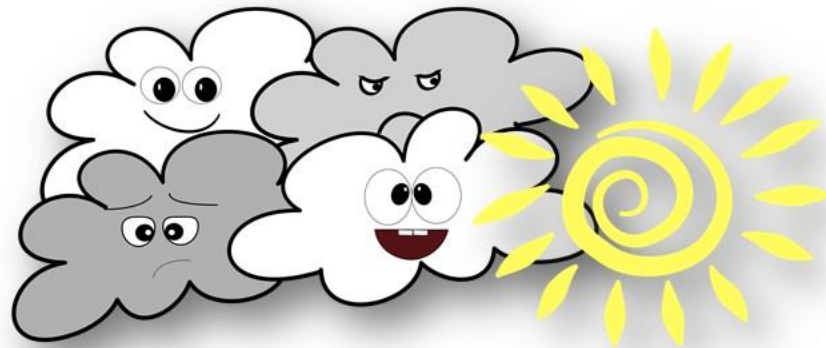
*'BEE HERE! NOW! is what you need to do
Look at the clouds up in the sky
And watch them float on by'.*

'And what does that mean?' said spike.

'It means that you concentrate on looking at something, fill your mind with what you can see, for example the clouds. Watch them, see the shapes, fill your mind with what you can see. Watch them floating away just like your worries. Try it now'. Said Bee-linda.

Spike looks upwards to the fluffy clouds and watches them for a few minutes floating by. He sees the strange shapes, the light and dark bits, the bits that look like faces, the sun shining through the clouds and would you believe it? His spines come right on down.

'See it's MAGIC!' says Bee-linda.



LOOK



'Tell me another one', said Bee-linda.

'Well', said Spike. 'When Snake says that no one wants to be friends with spikey losers! All my spines stand on end'. As he talked about this his spines go right up in the air.

'Ok well let's try this...' said Bee-linda.

Bee-linda chants...

*'BEE HERE! NOW! is what you need to do
Focus on the sounds you hear
And let them hush the fear'.*

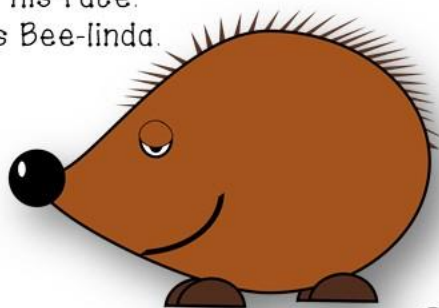
'And what does that mean?' said spike.

'It means that if you stop what you are doing and fill your mind with the sounds you can hear in the forest it will relax you. If you are thinking about the sounds you are hearing you can't be thinking about the mean things that Snake is saying. What can you hear now?' asked Bee-linda.

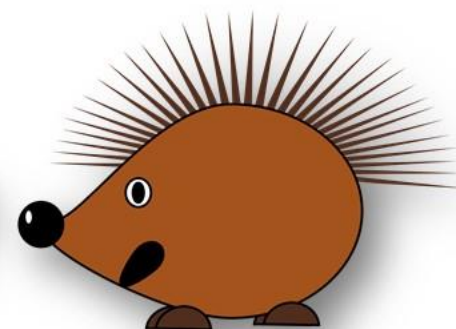
'I can hear the leaves rustling on the trees, and the raindrops splashing in the puddles', said Spike.

And would you believe it Spike's spines went flat again and he had a dreamy look upon his face.

'See it's MAGIC!' laughs Bee-linda.



LISTEN



'Tell me another one', said Bee-linda.

'Well', said Spike. 'when Snake tells me that my spines will melt in the sun. That really does scare me!'

Bee-linda chants...

*'BEE HERE! NOW! is what you need to do
Feel the warm and calming sun
and your worries will be done!'*

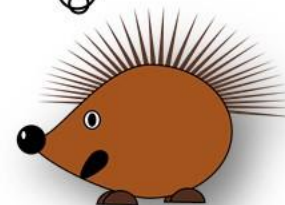
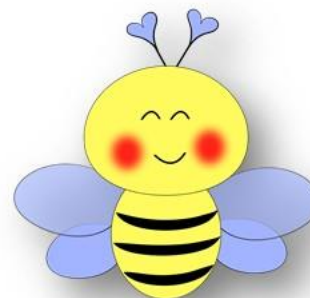
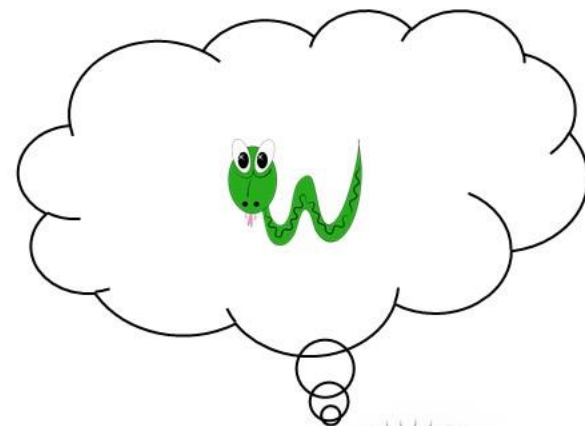
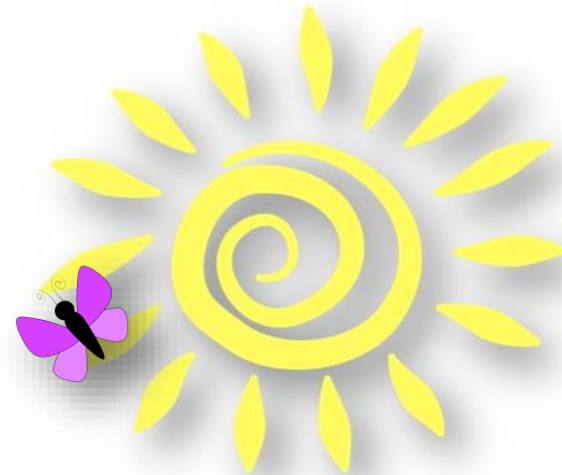
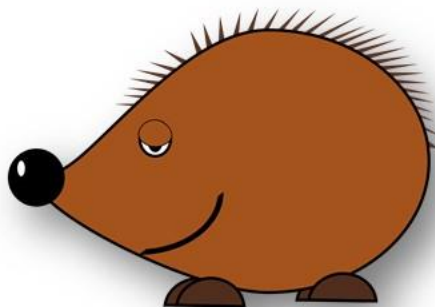
FEEL

'What does that mean'? Asked Spike.

'It means that if you concentrate and feel things around you and fill your mind with what you are feeling then your worries will be gone. Concentrate now Spike and feel the sun on your spines, let the lovely warm feeling wash over your spines'. Said Bee-linda. 'They won't melt, I promise you!'

And would you believe it, Spike's spines went flat again and he had a calm and sleepy look on his face.

'See it's MAGIC!' smiles Bee-linda..



Spike felt elated with all this knowledge given to him by Bee-linda. He felt confident and calm. He even felt happy for once in his little life.

But then SNAKE appeared again.

'AH SILLY SPIKE! DON'T YOU KNOW THAT WHEN THE MONSTER SMELLS HEDGEHOGS HE LICKS HIS LIPS AND HE WILL COME AND FIND YOU', shouted snake.

Spike remembered what Bee-linda had taught him...

BEE HERE! NOW! ...

And he looked up to the fluffy clouds above, as his spines lay flat against his skin, and a calm and restful smile spread across his face...

(And as for Snake, he slithered off into the forest, never to be seen again).

