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Steering Clear of Grumpiness

How one mom used her son's love of cars to teach him to how to navigate bad moods and angry moments.

By Elizabeth Pagel-Hogan

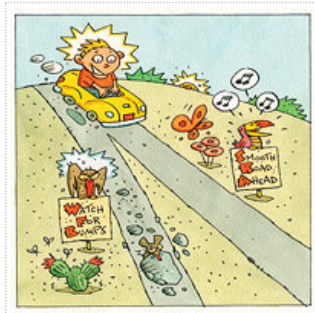
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Until recently, it seemed as if our middle son, Dylan, age 4, would come downstairs feeling out of sorts almost every morning.

"You didn't make me cinnamon rolls!" he would cry.

The next day, even if cinnamon rolls were ready and waiting, he'd still feel like something had gone wrong.

Some mornings he'd be cheerful, filling me with hope that he'd have a great day. But then the grumpiness would reappear.



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Clearly, we needed a strategy to help us tackle Dylan's unhappiness habit, and I wanted a solution that didn't involve catering to his arbitrary demands.

A short time later, Dylan and I were at the toy store to buy a birthday present for a friend.

Driving to the party afterward, I thought to myself, "We're on a highway to hell."

The thought stuck with me, and I realized that we could just as easily be on a "road to success."

I told him about a little boy driving a car down a road. When the little boy got angry, shouted, or hit his brothers, the road got bumpy and grumpy.

Dylan appeared to enjoy the story, and over the next few weeks, I brought it up gently whenever he started to get upset or angry.

Edward was skeptical about how well this approach would work in the heat of the moment.

*Elizabeth recommends the soothing tunes on Enya's Shepherd Moons as ideal calm-down music for kids.

Next: Learning to Drive Emotions

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epagelhogan wrote:

I'm happy to say "The Bumpy, Grumpy Road" still works for us & is now available to other families who struggle to steer clear of the grumps!! You can find the book at www.ThreeBirdsBooks.com.

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