

Find Good On A Very Bad Day with 'The Best Good Thing'

Playful story from Author Anna Housley Juster teaches children to look for the good things and share about big feelings even when it feels impossible.

BROOMFIELD, CO, UNITED STATES, August 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On bad days, when all you feel is "smad" (sad + mad), finding good things can feel like an insurmountable challenge. [THE BEST GOOD THING: DISCOVERING JOY ON A VERY BAD, SMAD DAY](#) (Free Spirit Publishing, August 11, 2026), a new picture book from award-winning author, child and adolescent mental health clinician, educator, and mom [Anna Housley Juster](#), inspires children and their grown-ups to look for joy in their everyday lives.

In *THE BEST GOOD THING*, a young girl is having a very, very, very bad day. She shares with her mom that she is feeling both sad and mad, smad. Together, they walk through their vibrant neighborhood, searching for just one good thing.

Speaking directly to the reader, the girl doubts that she can find anything good in her day, but then she discovers a single yellow flower reaching toward the sun. She begins to shift her attention and finds several more good things, ultimately discovering the best



THE BEST GOOD THING by Anna Housley Juster, PhD, LICSW



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good thing of all. The book becomes an “I Spy” of sorts, where readers will find many good things in the playful, bright illustrations by Andrea Onishi, including in the ways the diverse community is supporting one another.

The story highlights important evergreen topics such as emotion identification and expression, as well as the mother’s mirroring of her daughter’s feelings. However, THE BEST GOOD THING strikes a unique balance of feeling validation with action towards change. These skills are especially important for children and families today when rates of stress, anxiety, depression, and emotional dysregulation are increasing even in very young children.

“Parents, teachers, and counselors are seeking resources on how to balance negativity and conflict with stories of hope, community, and connection,” said Housley Juster. “I wrote THE BEST GOOD THING to share an important, therapeutic strategy called cognitive restructuring in the form of a simple, accessible idea—looking for just one good thing.”

Cognitive restructuring is a core component of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), an evidence-based treatment model for children, teens, and adults. The child-centered and character-led story showcases a curious and careful approach to feeling validation, mirroring others’ emotions, and taking action.

“Humans have the unique power to change our thoughts and behaviors to change how we feel,” continued Housley Juster. “All feelings are okay. It’s what we do with our feelings that matters most.”

“But we don’t do this work alone. For humans, there is no ‘I’ without ‘we,’ no ‘me’ without ‘us.’ From minute to minute, we co-construct an understanding of who we are in the world and who we can be. Connection and community are everything.”

Many children begin the transition back to school just as summer break ends—a shift that can usher in many big feelings and challenges for children and adults alike. THE BEST GOOD THING will be released August 11, 2026, offering a valuable resource for families and schools to help navigate these emotions during a potentially challenging time. Early reviewers praise the empathetic tone of the narrative, the way the mother gently guides her daughter without forcing or directing, the gorgeous illustrations, as well as the additional tips and activities at the back of the book.

"Highly recommend! THE BEST GOOD THING is just right for parents who want to both validate their kids' feelings and encourage them to see the good in the world. It can be tricky to hold both

in mind (and implement as a parent), but Anna Housley Juster threads the needle just right." — Hunter Clarke-Fields, bestselling author of *RAISING GOOD HUMANS*

THE BEST GOOD THING is available everywhere books are sold. For more information about author Anna Housley Juster, including her first picture book, *HOW TO TRAIN YOUR AMYGDALA*, please [visit the author's website](#).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anna Housley Juster, PhD, LICSW, is a child and adolescent mental health clinician, education consultant, award-winning author, and mom with over twenty-five years of experience supporting children and families. She began her career as a Head Start teacher and spent many years in early childhood education across formal and informal contexts, including serving as director of content for *SESAME STREET*, where she oversaw content development for the series, interactive technology, toy/product design, and publishing.

As senior director of child development and community engagement at Boston Children's Museum, Dr. Housley Juster developed and managed teacher trainings and parent workshops. After several years working with children and families at a community mental health center, Dr. Housley Juster now merges child development and mental health expertise as a consultant, provides clinical treatment in private practice with expertise in childhood trauma, anxiety, attention, and behavioral challenges, supports extensive parent guidance, and develops and facilitates trainings for teachers, counselors, and social workers.

She has written hundreds of curricula and early childhood activities, and her first children's book, the award-winning *HOW TO TRAIN YOUR AMYGDALA* (Free Spirit Publishing, 2024), has been translated into French, licensed by the Ministry of Education for Indonesia for translation, print, and distribution, and is available as a bilingual English/Spanish hardcover. The book is also included in the *How to Train Your Amygdala Calming Kit* developed in partnership with Lakeshore Learning, which has been distributed to thousands of families.

Dr. Housley Juster grew up exploring in sand, mud, and snow, surrounded by stories, and is a firm believer in the power of play. She lives near Boston, MA, with her husband, two daughters, and one very soft dog.

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