

THE T-SHIRT NAMED ZEE

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Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction

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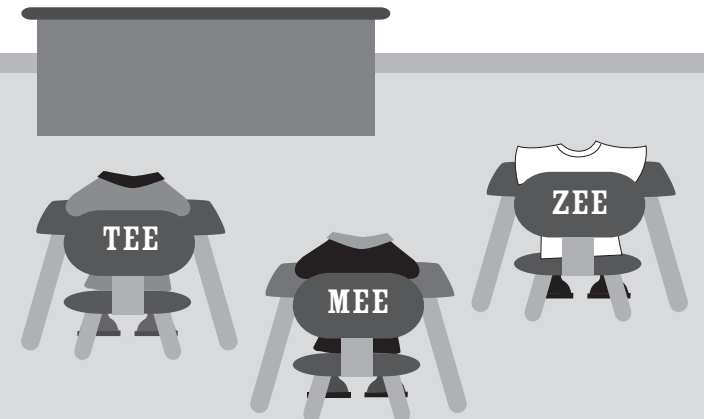
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CHAPTER 1

Ms. Cotton's Class

Once upon a time, a student named T-shirt Zee started school at Shirt Elementary School. When he arrived at school the very first day, he was scared. He was scared that he would not be able to find his classroom. He was afraid that his teachers wouldn't like him and he was afraid that he could not do math or read. He was afraid that his nose would run and he would not have a tissue.

It was time for his class to start and T-shirt Zee was shaking in his socks. He managed to make it to his desk in Miss Cotton's class. The very first thing Miss Cotton did was to ask T-shirt Zee to read a story.



Poor, poor T-shirt Zee. As he read the story, he stumbled over his words and could not pronounce all of them. The other t-shirts in the class began to laugh. Poor, poor T-shirt Zee could hardly stand it because he was so embarrassed. His t-shirt heart hurt. He felt big drops of tears fall down his front leaving big wet spots.

To his relief, Miss Cotton called on someone else and soon the class forgot about T-shirt Zee reading and stumbling over his words. But still, T-shirt Zee wanted to roll up in a little ball so that no one would notice him.

Lo and behold, the class was ready to do math. Once again Miss Cotton called on T-shirt Zee to multiply 12 times 8.

What is the answer, readers? 96. Well, T-shirt Zee gave the wrong answer. T-shirt Zee said "85" and the entire class said, "T-shirt Zee, Don't you know anything?" Again, T-shirt Zee just wanted to roll up in a ball and hide from the class.



On his way home from school, T-shirt Zee thought, "I don't think I can do anything, I can't do anything right. I can't keep going to school. I am so sad. Why am I such a horrible T-shirt Zee?" T-shirt Zee did not try to read his book or work his math homework. He just kept thinking, "I don't think I can, I don't think I can," until he finally fell asleep.

"I want you to put yourself in T-shirt Zee's shoes and tell me how you would feel if the class laughed at you. You would probably be sad or you may act like a bully. Trying to feel the way someone else does is having *empathy*. It is a trait that all of you need to develop."

As all of the other t-shirts in T-shirt Zee's class thought about what the old t-shirt said, they began to realize that they had done the wrong thing by laughing at T-shirt Zee. One by one, the t-shirt classmates apologized to T-shirt Zee and said, "If you need help with reading or math, call on me. I will be glad to help."

From that day forward all of the t-shirts in Miss Cotton's class worked together as a team to learn. They all developed *resiliency*, *determination*, and *empathy*.

The day came when it was time for T-shirt Zee's class to graduate. Guess what – all of them graduated from high school prepared for work, further education, and life in the 21st century. They had their ups and downs, but because they had *resiliency*, *determination*, and *empathy*, they all graduated from high school.

T-shirt Zee's class graduated several years ago, so the next time you see a t-shirt, it may be from T-shirt Zee's class and as you look at that t-shirt, who knows that t-shirt may speak to you and say, remember *determination*, *resiliency*, and *empathy*.

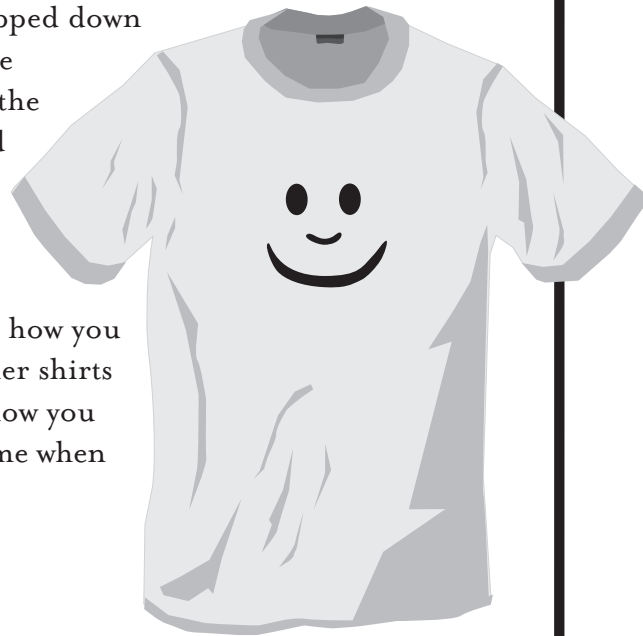
CHAPTER 2

A Wise, Wrinkled T-shirt

Well, the next morning came and T-shirt Zee's grandmother said, "You will have to go to school," but T-shirt Zee did not want to go. Knowing that he would get into a lot of trouble if he hid in the drawer, T-shirt Zee hopped on the bus for another day of torture at school.

But something happened that day that T-shirt Zee did not expect. As he was waiting for Miss Cotton to start class, a t-shirt that was hanging on the bulletin board the day before jumped off the bulletin board and plopped down beside T-shirt Zee. T-shirt Zee couldn't believe his ear tags as the t-shirt from the bulletin board started to talk.

"T-shirt Zee, I heard you struggle with reading and math yesterday in class and I noticed how you turned pea green when the other shirts laughed at you. I understand how you feel because that happened to me when I was your age. But then I met T-shirt Ree."



There will be many times in your life as a t-shirt that you may be thrown around – on a chair, under the table. You may be even forgotten and left in the washing machine too long. Sometimes those things will hurt, but don't let it stop you from *accomplishing your goals of getting a great education and graduating from high school and a college. Show resiliency.*



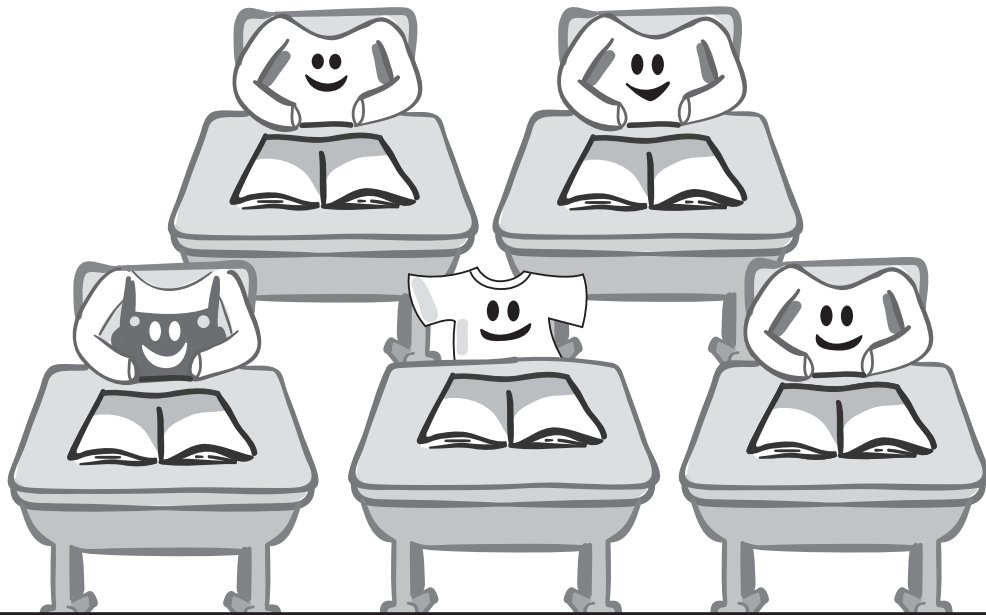
CHAPTER 3

Determination, Resiliency, and Empathy

T-shirt Zee was feeling much better when class began because the bulletin board t-shirt had taught him about determination and resiliency.

Miss Cotton started class that day by saying the t-shirt hanging on the bulletin board had something to teach the class today.

The bulletin board t-shirt startled everyone but T-shirt Zee as he began to talk. "Yesterday, I heard you laugh as T-shirt Zee stumbled over his words," he said. "I am a very old t-shirt and I can tell you that there will be times when you may stumble or do something that will cause others to laugh at you."



"T-shirt Ree helped me to develop *determination* and *resiliency*. As a result of T-shirt Ree's help and advice, I did well in elementary and middle school, graduated from high school, went to college, and now I am working to help other t-shirts just like you to develop *determination* and *resiliency*. I am also here to help your classmates develop *empathy*."

"This is my advice to you T-shirt Zee," the bulletin board shirt said. "Pay attention to what your teacher, Miss Cotton, is trying to teach. When you don't understand, ask her to help you. Spend at least 30 minutes a day reading outside of class. Now I know that is hard when you have so many distractions at home, and sometimes you may want to skip reading, but be determined."

"Set goals for what you want to accomplish. Show determination by thinking, *I can read well* and *I will read well*. Put action with those positive thoughts – *read, read, read*. Read aloud to anyone who will listen to you. *Show determination by working hard to learn.*"

"Don't let others laughing at you stop you from showing determination. Often when people laugh at you, it is because they are afraid also. If they laugh at you T-shirt Zee, then they think that others will not have time to laugh at them."

"Yesterday, the class laughed at you, but today and everyday, show resiliency. Bounce back strong today and don't let yesterday's laughter bother you today. Bounce back, show resiliency. You can do it. Show resiliency."