

Book review



Let It Go

Emotions are energy in motion

Category: Book Reviews / Children & Youth

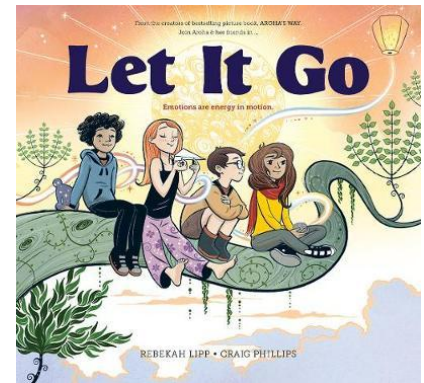
Author: Craig Phillips, Rebekah Lipp

Year: 2020

Publisher: Wildling Books, NZ

ISBN: 9780473516680

Audience: For Youth



Summary: Encouraging children to become familiar with experiencing and talking about emotions

Let it Go is a cool, new read that explores the uncomfortable emotions we all feel and face. The book will be familiar if you have read *Aroha's Way*, Lipp and Phillips' first book exploring a similar journey, but this time she has friends who may relate to a wider range of tamariki.

I'm totally in love with the illustrations in this book, as I was in *Aroha's Way*. Visually, the book brings emotions to life: they're bright or they're cold, they're fierce or they're still - and the swirling string between the pages is like a gymnast's ribbon, making the connection between our emotions - we all feel them, they live with us at times, they move and wriggle...

The illustrations help us visually roll through the emotions of the characters - fear, rage, sadness and shame. It's a gift Lipp and Phillips hold - we are reminded of the greyness of sadness, the heat of rage, the heaviness of shame, and the unpredictability of fear. We are lucky to have these two authors giving our children such real and true visuals of our feelings. They make emotions easier to talk about, exploring them with colour, similes and physicality. Therein lie huge opportunities for teachers in drama and poetry – and if we wanted to consider emotions more physically, in science too.

This book also provides great ideas for managing big, raw emotions – the illustrations give us externalisation paired with breathing, challenging our thoughts, writing things down, and this is extended in the parent and teacher notes. *Let it Go* gives us all permission to explore, kōrero and 'feel' (rather than avoid) what we feel, and for that I will always give Lipp and Phillips a double thumbs up and a loving fist pump – they have our children's best interests in their hearts.

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One wish from me is a return to the very Aotearoa feel we have in *Aroha's Way* – it felt like ‘our’ book and ‘our’ New Zealand emotions. Whilst *Let It Go* is so, so beautiful – I keep returning to the image of an exhausted Aroha curled on the lily pad and the huge carp furling in the water near her – breath-taking – though not uniquely our own.

But do I love *Let It Go*? Absolutely. I will buy it, use it and recommend it.

Anna Mowat is the project lead for Sparklers, a wellbeing website for schools. She also works across the All Right? Wellbeing campaign and co-directs Real Parents. She has a background in psychology and English and is a proud and exhausted Mum.

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