

The Assignment: Girl in a Funk

A self-help book for pre-teen and teenage girls, *Girl in a Funk* aimed to give girls ways to help themselves navigate the ups and downs of middle school (mostly the downs). My co-author provided the outline and most of the punny titles, and I wrote the text.

For Crying Out Loud

What's Going On

You trudge home after detention, with the lousiest Spanish test ever in your backpack, only to see that the girl you thought was your best friend just announced—on her blog, where everyone can see—she's now dating the guy you thought was your boyfriend. There's no way you can hold back the tears any more.

What to Do About It

Go for it. Have that cry. Flop down on your bed with a box of Kleenexes and let it all out. Feed the weeping with a tear-jerker from the video store like *A Walk to Remember* or *Romeo + Juliet*.

Why It Works

Studies show that most women feel better after crying. Why? Besides cutting yourself some slack, it turns out that tears contain stress hormones—crying gets them out of your body. And with some of the negativity out of your system, you can start planning your own blog, which will be so much better than hers ever was.

Break It Up

What's Going On

It's the lunch period that ruined your life. You spilled ketchup all over your favorite shirt, got into a major fight with your friend when she laughed at you, and now you can't find your math homework. With all of this happening at once, you feel like you might as well give up.

What to Do About It

Each one of these things is annoying, but you're going to stand a much better chance of fixing them if you tackle them one at a time. Pick one problem—the one that's bothering you the most, or the first one you think of—and concentrate on it for a few minutes until you've got a solution. Then move on to the next one.

Why It Works

Deciding which problem to focus on is a subtle way to remind yourself that you are in control. This should get you past that overwhelming feeling of helplessness that was keeping you from thinking straight.