

## **Stickability**

Jay liked it when his mum and dad both had to go to work in the school holidays because it meant that he could go to grandma and grandad's house. Today his big sister Milly went to the holiday Play Club, so it was even more special because he had grandma and grandad all to himself. ...so grandma was a bit surprised when Jay came in from the garden looking not at all happy. "Whatever's the matter?" Grandma said. "You look a bit cross."

Jay sat down on the kitchen floor and started to take his shoes off. "It's a lovely day. Don't you want to play in the garden?" She asked him.

"No I don't!" Jay sounded cross.

"Oh dear! You do sound grumpy; and you've brought your bike with you too." Jay's dad had taken the stabilisers off his bike. He'd gone with Jay to the park a few times and Jay was beginning to get his balance, but only when dad held on to the back of his saddle. He'd asked his mum if he could take his bike with him when he went to stay at grandma's because her garden had a nice long, straight path and he thought it would be great to ride his bike up and down the path. But it hadn't been such fun when he tried it. It had been so much harder to balance when dad wasn't there.

"I can't ride it by myself. I can only ride it when dad holds on. It's a stupid bike!" Jay was very cross. "I don't think bikes can be stupid," said grandma, "and you're not stupid either. It's not easy when you start learning anything new."

Jay wasn't sure about that. Everybody else seemed to be able to ride their bikes easily. Milly had told him it was easy to ride a bike. When he told grandma what Milly had said, grandma laughed. "Even Milly had to learn when she was your age. We all have to learn when we want to do something new. Just you wait there."

Grandma went upstairs. When she came back she was carrying a book. The book was a photograph album. She turned over a few pages and then she pointed at a photograph. "What do you think that is?" she asked, with a big smile on her face. Jay, still with his cross face, looked at the picture. Then he began to smile. "It's a mess!" he said.

"You're right there," said grandma. "It was meant to be a birthday cake. I made it for your mum when she was a little girl. I was very proud of that cake, with all the pink icing. After I finished it I left it in the kitchen and I was getting things ready for the party. Everyone arrived and we played games and did all sorts of things, then I went to get the cake to put it on the table. And that's what it looked like - a mess! All the pink icing had slid off the cake and it looked like a cake island sitting in a pink sea! Your grandad thought it was very funny so he took the photograph. I didn't think it was funny. I felt like crying. But just you look at this next picture."

Grandma turned over and there was another cake. This time it was a beautiful cake that looked like a basket of flowers. "I made that cake too. It was for your mum on her 18th birthday. What do you think of that?"

"Wow!" Jay said, "that's clever. Did you really make it yourself?"

"Yes I did, but only after I'd been learning about decorating cakes for a long time. I went to special classes to learn how to do it."

"Was it easy?" Jay asked. Grandma laughed "No it wasn't! Sometimes I felt like giving up because the cakes still went wrong, but I kept trying different ways to do things and I looked at how the other people were doing it and I tried to do it like them. When you're learning to do something new you need STICKABILITY! When you aren't getting on too well then you have to think about other ways to get it right."

"How can I ride my bike better then?" Jay asked. "I keep wobbling on that path 'cause it's a bit bumpy."

"Perhaps that's the problem. Why don't we go down to the park this afternoon? The paths are wider and they're flatter too. Do you think that might help?"

Jay thought that sounded like a good idea. Just then they heard a loud shout from grandad. "Aaargh! I give up!" Grandad had been trying to put together a bird table for the garden, but it sounded as though he wasn't getting on too well. "Whatever's the matter?" grandma asked.

"It's this silly bird table. I'll never get it right!"

"I don't think bird tables can be silly grandad!" Jay said. "You just need some stickability."

"That's right," said grandma, "and have you looked at the instructions? That might help, you know." Grandad had a guilty look on his face.

"No I haven't. I thought it would be easy."

"There you are then," said grandma, "that should help you get it right."

So Jay helped grandad with the bird table, and in the afternoon they all went to the park and grandad held on to Jay's bike while he practiced. By the end of the day Jay could ride all along the path by himself, without falling off, and grandma and grandad had a super new bird table in the garden.