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# Reprogramming our racing cars

**Age range: 7 - 10 year olds**

This was written to help a boy struggling with feelings of anxiety and self-doubt following a road traffic accident.

## **Adaptations:**

Change the details of the crash and the feelings and beliefs in the story to reflect your child's personal experiences and difficulties.



## REPROGRAMMING OUR RACING CARS

Once upon a time, in a town called Modena in Italy, there lived a man called Enzo Ferrari. He was no ordinary man! He was a very clever man who designed and built one of the best racing cars in the world. The Ferrari racing team is one of the oldest and most successful racing teams in Formula One.

I am guessing Enzo died a pretty rich and happy man! There was a car named after him called The Enzo. Did you know that one of his cars sold in 2018 for \$70 million, making it the most expensive car in history???

Anyway, I need to stick with the story. I really want to tell you about a story of a very beautiful and perfect Ferrari. I wonder if you can guess what colour it was? Of course, it had to be **red!!!**

Now our little Ferrari was part of the new modern range. These Ferraris used modern technology which included fancy computers. These computers helped the mechanics know how to look after them. It could scan the car and check the oil, the brakes, the suspension and all the other things a race car needs. But these computers did even more! They also collected information about all the trips, speed, races and manoeuvres the car made. This meant that the car could become better and better at racing. For example, it could work out the best speed according to the weather conditions or racetrack.



The Ferrari I want to tell you about was called Alberto. Alberto started off in a factory in Italy with a brand new computer and brand new shiny red paintwork on his body. Alberto liked life in the car factory with all his friends. The factory was very proud of Alberto. His unique computer meant that he was excellent at remembering and analysing things. He noticed tiny little details about the weather or roads and started to store them away in his memory, ready for when he would one day need them when he was old in the real world, racing hopefully...

Then Alberto's time came. He was to be shipped to England. Alberto was so excited to be starting his adventures. **This was the beginning of a proper racing car!**



One fine sunny day, Alberto was stacked up on the special lorry used to transport cars to other countries. He was going to arrive in England in the perfect condition. The Ferrari factory chose their very best lorry driver to drive Alberto and his friends. The lorry driver was a kind and sensible man that would take care of his precious cargo. Their best mechanic was also going too because he wanted to make sure Alberto grew up to be the best racing car ever.

The mechanic and the lorry driver sat in the front and the Ferraris in the back. They drove the whole way across Italy and France and got on the ferry to England. They had to stop for ice cream and drinks because it was such a hot day. Alberto was very happy on that journey.

But then something unexpected happened.

Suddenly, there was the loudest bang you've ever heard. Alberto had no idea what was going on. He heard the kind lorry driver shout and swear which made him very very scared. He noticed that there was glass everywhere and some of it had even scratched his red paint.

The lorry behind had crashed into them.

For about 10 minutes, Alberto was trapped inside the lorry. It felt like forever! Alberto was terrified. His heart pounded. He felt sick. He couldn't think properly. He said to himself,

*“What use is my fancy computer if I don't know what to do or how to get out? I need the lorry driver. I need the mechanic. I am only a little car!”*

And Alberto was right. He was only a little car.

His computer only had a few memories on it. He did not know what to do. He did not realise that his mechanic and lorry driver would never leave him forever. He did not realise that they would work hard to get him and his friends free, no matter the effort it took. Alberto really did think he might be stuck in the lorry forever. He thought he may never see the lorry driver or mechanic again. He felt so useless and scared. He thought,

“*I am useless. I am stuck here and can't do anything.*”

But, bit by bit, the lorry driver and mechanic got all the cars out including Alberto. Alberto and all the other cars were safe. The mechanic checked them over, their paint was redone and they got into a new lorry to continue their journey.

Alberto arrived safe and sound at his new garage and began his racing car training. The mechanic worked carefully with Alberto for over a year and Alberto started to build up his memories in his computer. He learnt lots of facts about the weather and roads. He raced the tracks over and over until he knew them inside out. He was able to scan himself to see what help he needed. He worked out a lot of things about how to race fast. He didn't even like messing around or being silly with some of the other cars. He just wanted to spend all his time learning to race.

**The mechanic was very pleased with Alberto's training.**

But there was a problem. Alberto was scared to zoom ahead to the front of races. He thought,

“*What if I am in the lead, and something happens, I will be too far away from help and I won't know what to do. I am just a useless little car. I can't do anything.*”

**This meant, he couldn't win any of the races!**

The wise mechanic understood. He knew Alberto did not see how strong and clever he had become. It was like the accident on the way to England had caused a glitch. This meant that Alberto was stuck in a loop of feeling trapped and alone. He couldn't see how much new knowledge he had stored. He couldn't see how strong and fast he had become. The mechanic knew he needed to find a way of showing Alberto how amazing he really was.

So the mechanic arranged for something to happen. He took Alberto out to the racetrack for his usual training. But this time, he had arranged for a tiny little crash to happen.



That wasn't so hard to organise really. They were racing cars after all and racing cars crashed sometimes - it came with the job! Sure enough, as Alberto was working out his speed and braking distance based on the weather conditions while zooming around the track, there was a bang and Alberto bumped into the crash barrier.



For a moment, Alberto felt a rush of fear. But then something happened. His computer and knowledge kicked in. He noticed his strong body and engine. He did a scan of his engine and body. He then gave the mechanic instructions,

*“I need some extra oil.”*

Then,

*“Just ease me slowly back, only a few centimetres. Then my engine will be able to restart itself.”*



The mechanic did as Alberto instructed and Alberto eased back onto the race track.

Alberto told the mechanic,

*“You will need to book me in for some extra maintenance work tomorrow. There are a few bumps that I need your help with. But for now, I just need some time on the track. I need to programme in all the information about the crash. There is a lot for me to learn.”*

The next day while the mechanic repaired the bumps, Alberto announced,

*“I think we should enter the races this year. I will always need your help, wise mechanic. But I know I am able to look after myself now. I am ready. I know how to handle situations now. I can trust myself even when things are scary.”*

The mechanic beamed from ear to ear. The glitch seemed to have gone! He was so proud of Alberto.

“ Well you know, I am always here to sort any bumps and scratches. Or help you work out a race strategy when you need help. ”

Said the mechanic.

“ **Let's get ready to win races!!** ”

They shouted together.

