

The Cool Corgi

Once upon a time, there was an orange dog named Rusty. Rusty was a very unhappy dog and everyone knew it. When his mother would snuggle and tell him what a beautiful coat of orange fur he had, Rusty would growl, “Don’t call me orange—I hate my color.”

So his mother stopped mentioning the color of his fur and instead, praised him for being such a good ball chaser. Rusty snarled at her and said angrily, “I’m not a good ball chaser—most of them get away.”

So his mother stopped commenting on his ability as a ball chaser, and instead told him how happy she was that he could bark so loud. “That’s no big deal... all dogs can bark loud,” said Rusty.

His mother just shook her head. “Oh, Rusty,” she said, why can’t you accept yourself as you are? You’re a cool corgi and you can do lots of things. Sure, “there are things you can’t do, but that’s how it is for every dog. Isn’t there anything you like about yourself?”

Rusty breathed softly, “Well, I sort of like the shortness of my legs, even though I wish I had a long tail too.”

“You are right—your short legs are very special, but you can’t change the fact that your tail isn’t long. Does it make you happy to think about things like this that you can’t change about yourself?” asked Mama Corgi.

“I guess not, but I just wish I could be a great ball chaser like Daisy Dog, and I wish I had black fur like Ninja dog.” said Rusty.

“I understand that you might like to be different, but just like you can’t change the length of your tail, you can’t change the color of your fur. But, maybe you could learn to be a better ball chaser if you paid close attention to how Daisy dog does it. But even if you aren’t a great ball chaser, does that make you a bad dog?”

“I suppose not,” replied Rusty. “That’s right,” said Mama Corgi. “It doesn’t make you a bad dog, it just makes you a dog who can do some things better than others. And since you told me that it doesn’t make you happy to think about what you can’t do or how you don’t think you are as cool as other dogs, what can you do the next time you start thinking about the things you don’t like?”

“Well,” said Rusty, “I could... “

Elicit responses from the children about what Rusty could do when he starts thinking about what he doesn’t like about himself.