TOM TOM UNIVERSE

# Discovering My Brian’s

A handbook for getting to know my thoughts and feelings



**Hello, Star!**

This book is a gentle place to meet the different Brians that may visit you. You can read, draw, talk, point, choose a page or come back whenever you like.

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# Welcome to your handbook

In the Tom Tom Universe, we use the word "Brian" as a friendly way to talk about thoughts, feelings and different ways our minds respond. Curious Brian may ask questions. Worrying Brian may look for what could go wrong. Happy Brian may help us notice what feels good.

**A Brian is not a separate person**

Brians are an imaginative way of describing experiences that belong to you. They are not separate people inside you, and no Brian makes you bad. You are the person noticing your thoughts and choosing what you want to do next.

## Use this book your way

[ ] Read it with a grown-up or explore it on your own.
[ ] Write, draw, point, use AAC, talk or just think about the questions.
[ ] You can skip any page or change the words to fit you.
[ ] You do not need to share private thoughts unless you choose to.
[ ] There is no right answer and no test at the end.

| My name / the name I want to use |
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| One thing I hope this book helps me discover |
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**Remember**

Every thought and feeling is allowed to visit. If a feeling is too big, confusing or frightening, tell a trusted grown-up who can help you.

# What are my Brians?

A Brian can be a thought, a feeling, a question or a helpful signal. Naming a Brian can make it easier to notice what is happening and decide what might help.

## For example...

**Curious Brian**
**Might say:** "I wonder what will happen if I try?"
**Might need:** time to explore, ask questions or find out more.

**Worrying Brian**
**Might say:** "What if something goes wrong?"
**Might need:** reassurance, information, a plan or a trusted person nearby.

**Happy Brian**
**Might say:** "This feels good!"
**Might need:** time to enjoy, share or remember the moment.

You may notice a Brian in your thoughts, body, feelings or actions. You can say "I notice Worrying Brian is here" without needing to make the feeling disappear.

# Meet the wondering Brians

### Curious Brian

**Might say:** "I want to know more!"
**Might need:** a chance to look closely, investigate or ask an interesting question.

### Questioning Brian

**Might say:** "Why is it like that? What happens next?"
**Might need:** honest answers, time to think and permission to keep asking.

### Imagination Brian

**Might say:** "What if I made up a whole new world?"
**Might need:** space to pretend, create, build, draw or tell stories.

| Which of these Brians do I notice? What does it enjoy? |
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# Meet the feeling Brians

### Happy Brian

**Might say:** "I like this. I feel good."
**Might need:** time to enjoy the moment and share it in your own way.

### Sad Brian

**Might say:** "Something matters to me. I need care."
**Might need:** comfort, time, a safe person or space to express sadness.

### Excited Brian

**Might say:** "This is wonderful! I can't wait!"
**Might need:** room for energy, clear next steps and a break if it gets too much.

| How might I know these feelings are visiting? |
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# Meet the watchful Brians

### Worrying Brian

**Might say:** "I'm trying to think ahead and keep you ready."
**Might need:** clear information, a small plan, reassurance and help checking what is happening now.

### Fear Brian

**Might say:** "This feels unsafe or too much for me."
**Might need:** protection, space, support and an adult who listens.

### Safety Brian

**Might say:** "Let's notice what helps us feel secure."
**Might need:** trusted people, known routines, clear boundaries and a way to ask for help.

### A helpful question

Is something unsafe happening right now, or is my mind imagining what could happen? Either way, I can tell a trusted grown-up and ask for support.

# Meet the careful and comfort Brians

### Sensitive Brian

**Might say:** "I notice a lot. This sound, touch or change feels strong."
**Might need:** sensory choices, understanding, recovery time and permission to step away.

### Freeze Brian

**Might say:** "I can't find my next step right now."
**Might need:** less pressure, more time, a calm prompt or someone to help with one small step.

### Comfort Brian

**Might say:** "I know what helps me feel settled."
**Might need:** familiar things, routines, a favourite interest, movement or a quiet place.

| What helps my body feel comfortable? |
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# Meet the growing Brians

### Learning Brian

**Might say:** "I'm practising. I may need another try."
**Might need:** small steps, useful feedback, patience and a chance to learn in your own way.

### Hope Brian

**Might say:** "Maybe something good can happen, even if I don't know how yet."
**Might need:** encouragement, realistic choices and someone who can imagine possibilities with you.

### Kindness Brian

**Might say:** "Let's be gentle with ourselves and other people."
**Might need:** care, fairness and words that help rather than shame.

| What is something I am learning or practising? |
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# Meet Guilt Brian

**Guilt Brian**

**Might say:** "I think I may have done something wrong."
**Might need:** help to understand what happened, make a repair if needed and remember that a mistake does not define you.

Guilt can sometimes remind us to check our choices and make things right. Feeling guilty does not automatically mean you are a bad person or that everything was your fault. Talk it through with a trusted grown-up.

## If Guilt Brian visits, I can ask...

[ ] What happened, as clearly as I can remember?
[ ] Did I mean to hurt someone, or was it an accident or misunderstanding?
[ ] Is there something kind or fair I can do now?
[ ] Would it help to talk to an adult I trust?

| What kind words would I say to a friend who felt guilty? |
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# More than one Brian can visit

Sometimes Brians arrive together. You might feel excited and worried before a new activity, or happy and sad when something lovely comes to an end. Mixed feelings are allowed.

## Try this example

**A busy birthday party**

Excited Brian loves the music and games. Sensitive Brian notices the noise. Worrying Brian wonders what will happen next. Comfort Brian remembers a quiet place and a favourite toy.

You can notice each part without needing to pick just one.

| Which Brians might visit me in a situation I choose? |
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*Draw the Brians together. How could each one be supported?*

# Notice your clues

A Brian may give clues in different ways. You can notice without judging yourself. You do not have to notice every clue.

## Thought clues

What words, pictures, questions or ideas are in my mind?

| My thought clues |
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## Body clues

Do I notice warmth, tightness, a flutter, heavy limbs, wiggly feet or something else?

| My body clues |
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## Action clues

Do I want to move, talk, hide, ask for help, keep going or pause?

| My action clues |
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# My Brian weather check-in

Choose the picture or word that fits right now, or invent your own. You can mark more than one, or leave this page blank.

[ ] Sunny: one or more Brians feel settled or happy.
[ ] Cloudy: I feel unsure, quiet or thoughtful.
[ ] Rainy: I feel sad, tired or in need of comfort.
[ ] Windy: I feel wiggly, excited or full of energy.
[ ] Stormy: feelings feel very big and I may need help.

| The Brians I notice right now |
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## What might help me next?

[ ] Keep doing what I am doing.
[ ] Take a break or move somewhere quieter.
[ ] Ask for comfort or information.
[ ] Talk, draw, point or write to someone I trust.
[ ] I am not sure yet.

*Draw your Brian weather*

# My Brian profile

Use this page for any Brian. You can fill in a little or a lot.

| My Brian's name |
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| **This Brian often visits when...** |
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| **This Brian might be saying or asking...** |
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| **I notice this Brian in my thoughts, body or actions when...** |
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| **This Brian might need...** |
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*Draw or describe this Brian*

# Make a "what helps me" menu

Different Brians may need different kinds of support. Choose ideas that work for you. You can change your mind.

## I might like...

[ ] A trusted person to listen without rushing me.
[ ] A clear explanation or a small plan.
[ ] A quiet place, headphones or softer lighting.
[ ] Movement, a stretch, a walk or a fidget.
[ ] A familiar object, interest, routine or activity.
[ ] A choice: talk, draw, write, point or take a break.
[ ] Time to try again later.
[ ] Something else: _____

| The three things that help me most |
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**My helpful words**

I notice _____ Brian is here. I think I might need _____. Could you help me by _____?

# A moment I want to understand

Choose an everyday moment. You can leave out anything private or upsetting. You can draw instead of writing.

**What was happening?**

**Which Brian or Brians might have been visiting?**

**What did I notice in my thoughts, body or actions?**

**What helped, or what could help next time?**

**Be gentle with yourself**

This page is for noticing and understanding. It is not about blaming yourself or proving that you should have felt differently.

# Discovering Brians with the Four Pillars

The Four Pillars are a way to explore what may be happening and what support could help. You can use one pillar or mix them together.

**Brian's - thoughts and ways of thinking**

What might my Brian be wondering, remembering or trying to tell me?

**Waves - feelings and body signals**

What feelings or body clues might be rising or settling?

**Circles - routines and familiar supports**

Would a clear next step, a familiar routine or a little predictability help?

**Bridges - connection and communication**

Who could I connect with? What is my way of asking for help or sharing an idea?

**Which pillar might help me right now?**

# Sharing with a trusted grown-up

You get to choose how you communicate. You can talk, write, draw, text, use AAC, point to a choice or ask someone to sit with you.

## You could say...

**Words to borrow**

"I think Worrying Brian is here."
"I need a little more time."
"Can you explain what happens next?"
"I don't want to talk yet, but please stay nearby."
"Could we draw it instead?"

A grown-up can help by listening, believing your experience, offering simple choices and helping you feel safe. You do not have to share more than you want to.

| A person I can talk to / a way I like to communicate |
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**If a feeling feels frightening or too big**

Tell an adult you trust. You deserve help and care, even if you are not sure how to explain what is happening.

# A guide for parents and carers

"Brians" is a story-based language children can use to describe thoughts, emotions, sensory experiences and responses. Invite the child to use it if it helps; do not insist on labels or assume you know which Brian they mean.

## Helpful ways to respond

[ ] Ask open, gentle questions: "What do you notice?" or "What might help?"
[ ] Accept the child's words, gestures, AAC, silence or need for time.
[ ] Validate the experience before problem-solving.
[ ] Offer choices and practical support: reduce demands, explain what happens next or make a quiet space available.
[ ] Treat the child as the person with agency; Brians are metaphors for experiences, not separate people.
[ ] Avoid calling a Brian bad, silly or something the child must get rid of.

## A simple conversation

> **Listen - reflect - offer**
> "I hear that Worrying Brian is thinking about the change. That sounds hard. Would you like to know the plan, have a break or talk more?"

This handbook is a creative reflection resource. It is not a diagnostic tool. If a child's distress is ongoing or you have safety concerns, seek support from an appropriate trusted professional.

# My Brian map

Add any Brians you know. Make your own names, colours, symbols or characters. One person may have lots of Brians, and every map can change.

*Draw your Brians, what they might say and what helps them*

| A Brian I want to understand better |
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| **Someone who can help me** |
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# My Discovering My Brian's certificate

I have taken time to notice my thoughts, feelings and what may help me. I can keep discovering more about myself whenever I am ready.

## This handbook belongs to:

| My name |
| --- |
| |

A Brian I have met: _____

Something helpful I discovered: _____

# CURIOUS AND COURAGEOUS STAR

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Every Brian belongs. Every Star is still wonderfully you.