

Part 1

**I have a mind?
What is that?**

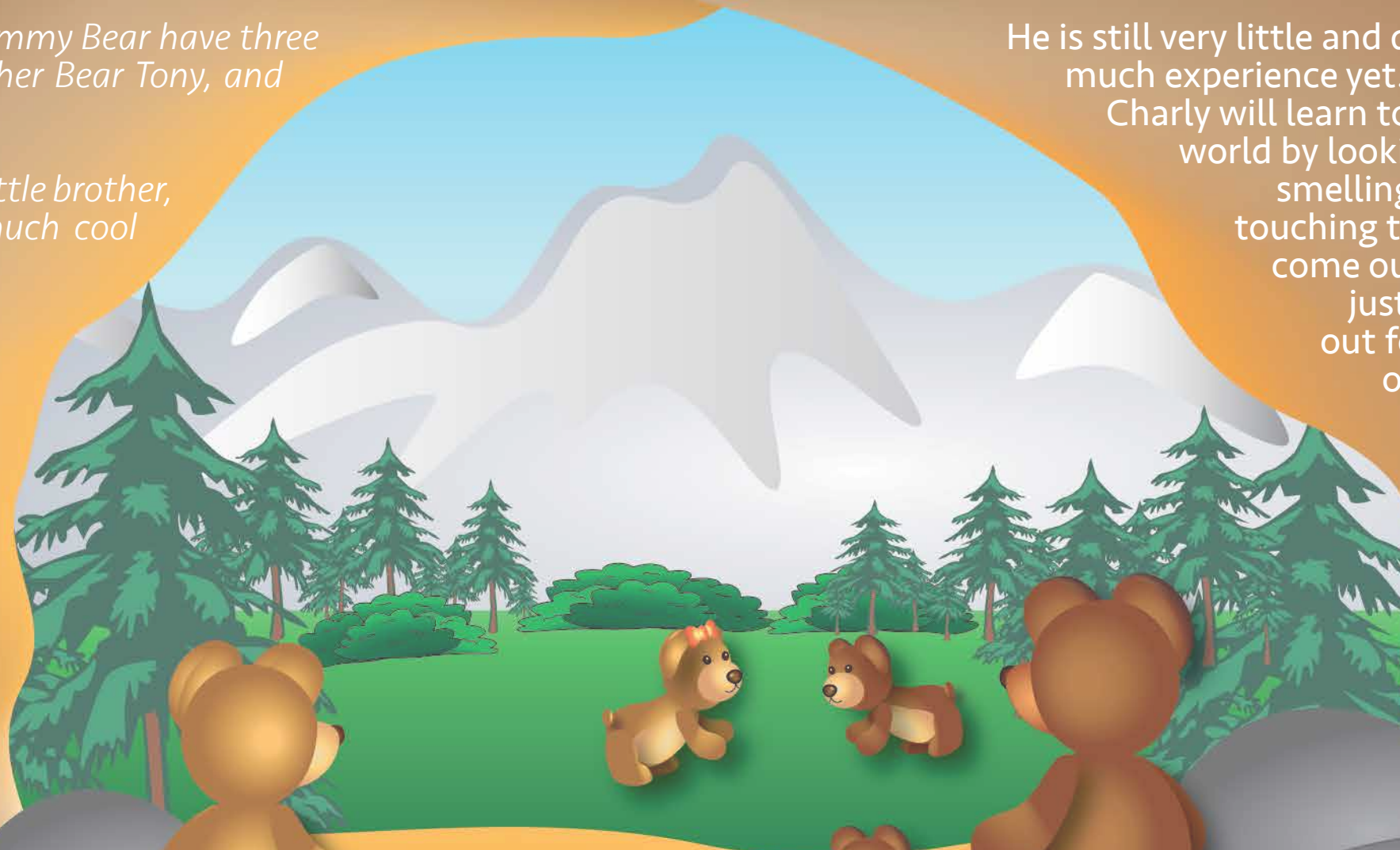


This is the Bear family. Daddy Bear and Mommy Bear have three little ones, Big Sister Bear Vicky, Little Brother Bear Tony, and Baby Bear Charly.

Vicky and Tony are very eager to show their little brother, Charly, the world out there. There is so much cool stuff to discover and learn.

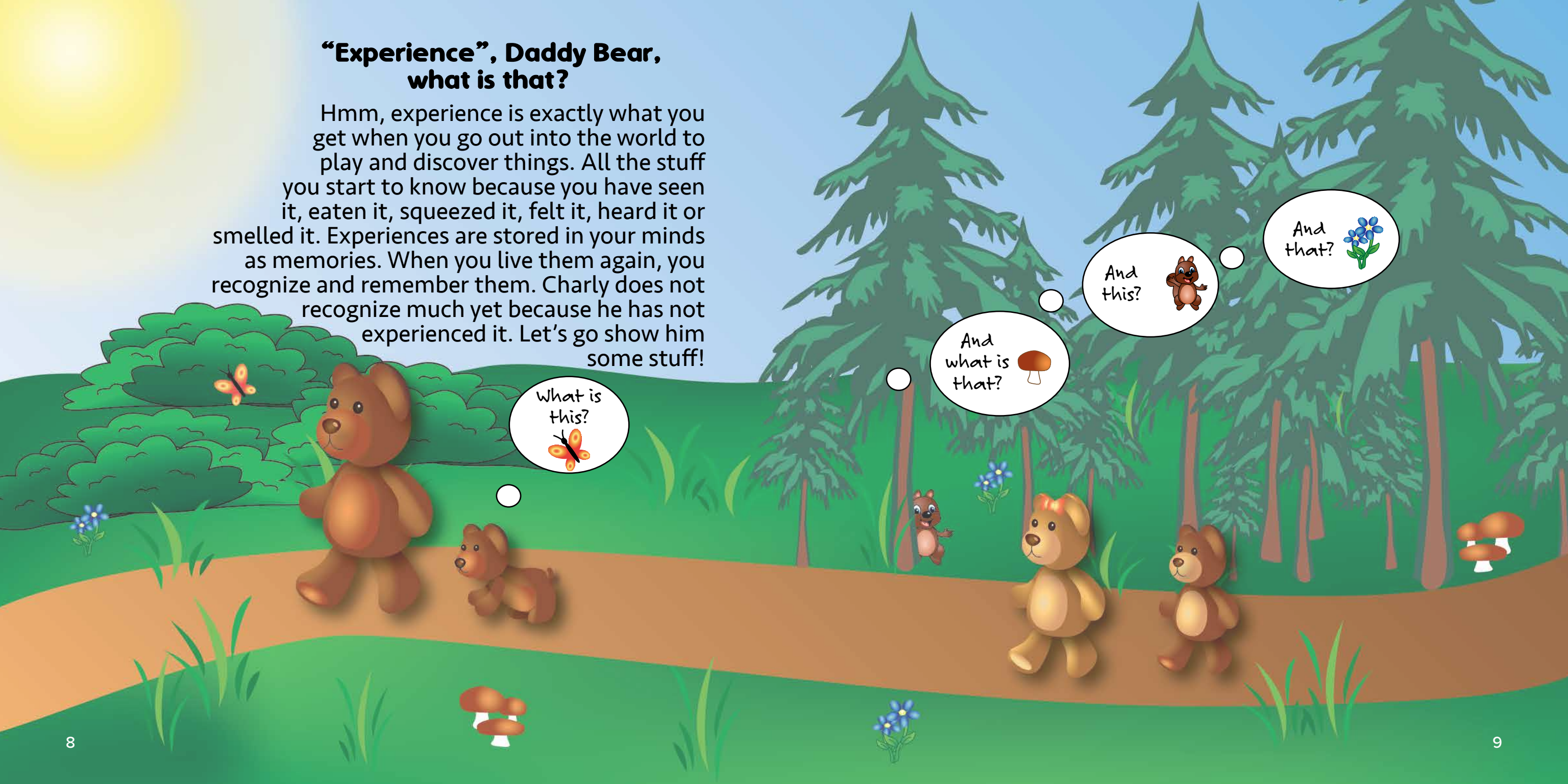
Daddy Bear, why is the world dangerous for Charly? Can he come outside with us?

He is still very little and does not have much experience yet. Just like you, Charly will learn to discover the world by looking, listening, smelling, tasting and touching things. He can come out with us, we just have to look out for him. Come on little bears, let's go!



“Experience”, Daddy Bear, what is that?

Hmm, experience is exactly what you get when you go out into the world to play and discover things. All the stuff you start to know because you have seen it, eaten it, squeezed it, felt it, heard it or smelled it. Experiences are stored in your minds as memories. When you live them again, you recognize and remember them. Charly does not recognize much yet because he has not experienced it. Let's go show him some stuff!



Daddy Bear, what's a mind?

That's a challenging question, Tony!
Let me think...

Here in this book the mind is drawn like a little yellow brain with a white thought bubble. But the mind is actually not the brain itself, it is more what your brain produces, like thoughts, feelings, and emotions.



Remember this? This is your brain and nerves inside your body. Your brain receives information through the nerves from all your senses. The brain is an organ, just like your heart or your lungs.

The mind is different from the other parts of your body. Unlike your hands or feet, the mind is something you can't touch. It is... your thoughts, your imagination, ideas, dreams, pictures, the voice in your head. All the things you imagine in your head, the questions you ask yourself but don't say out loud... You know what I mean?



I am not sure I know what you mean! Charly has a bunch of questions in my mind, and Vicky has . . . no mind right now? Or rather, nothing in her mind right now! This is all very confusing! . . . Oh, wait . . . All that stuff in my white bubble here. . . That's it! That's IT! My mind!

But, Mommy Bear, we are curious! How did all this stuff get into our heads or minds?

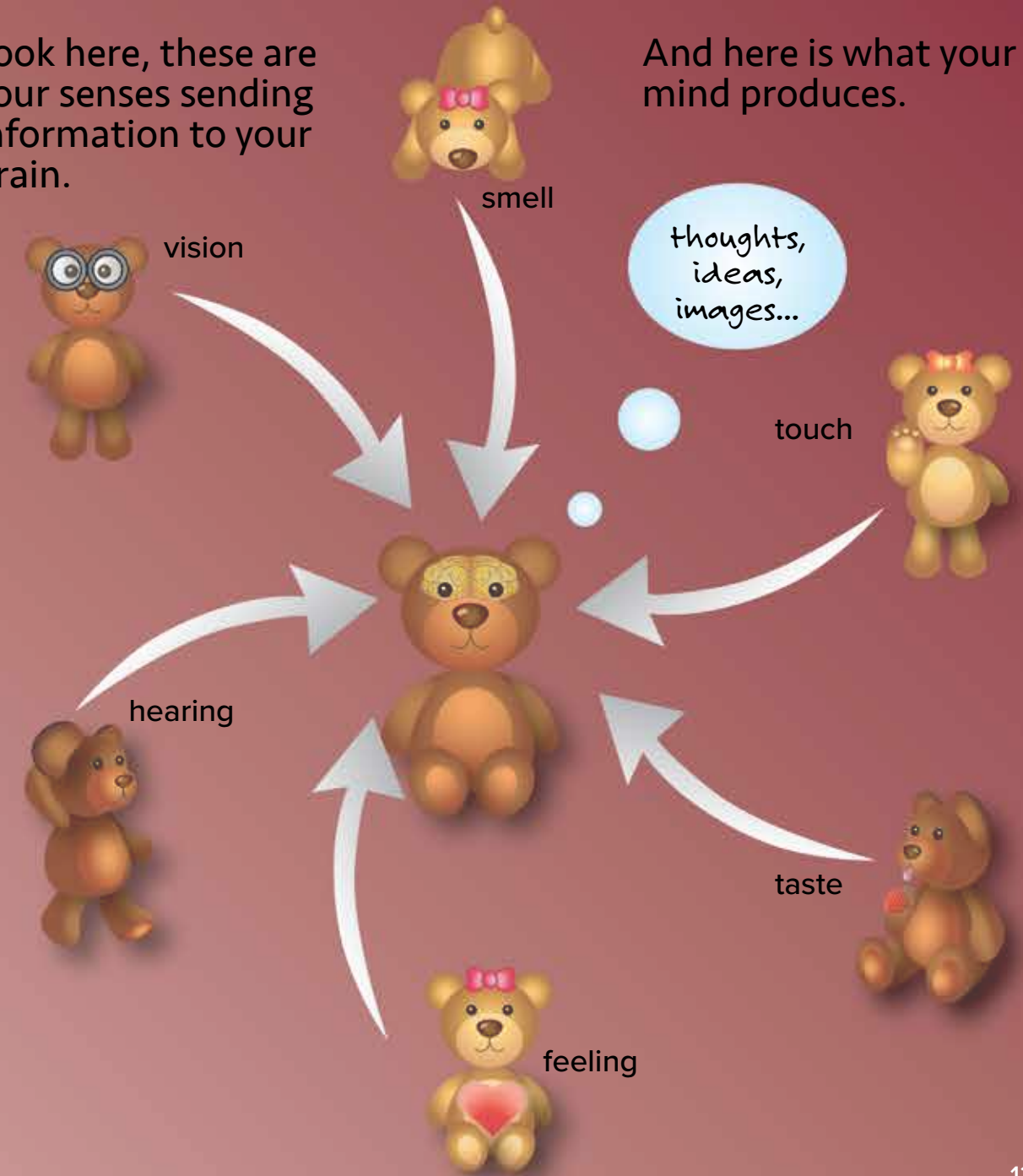
Precisely because you are curious, little bears! As a baby you were born into a world you have no experience in. The tools you use to discover the world are your eyes to see, your ears to hear, your nose to smell, your hands to touch, your mouth to taste, and your heart to feel. The nerves send all the information from your senses to your brain.

After a while you start to get to know the world a bit more. You remember things, you gain experience. Your mind stores these things as memories.



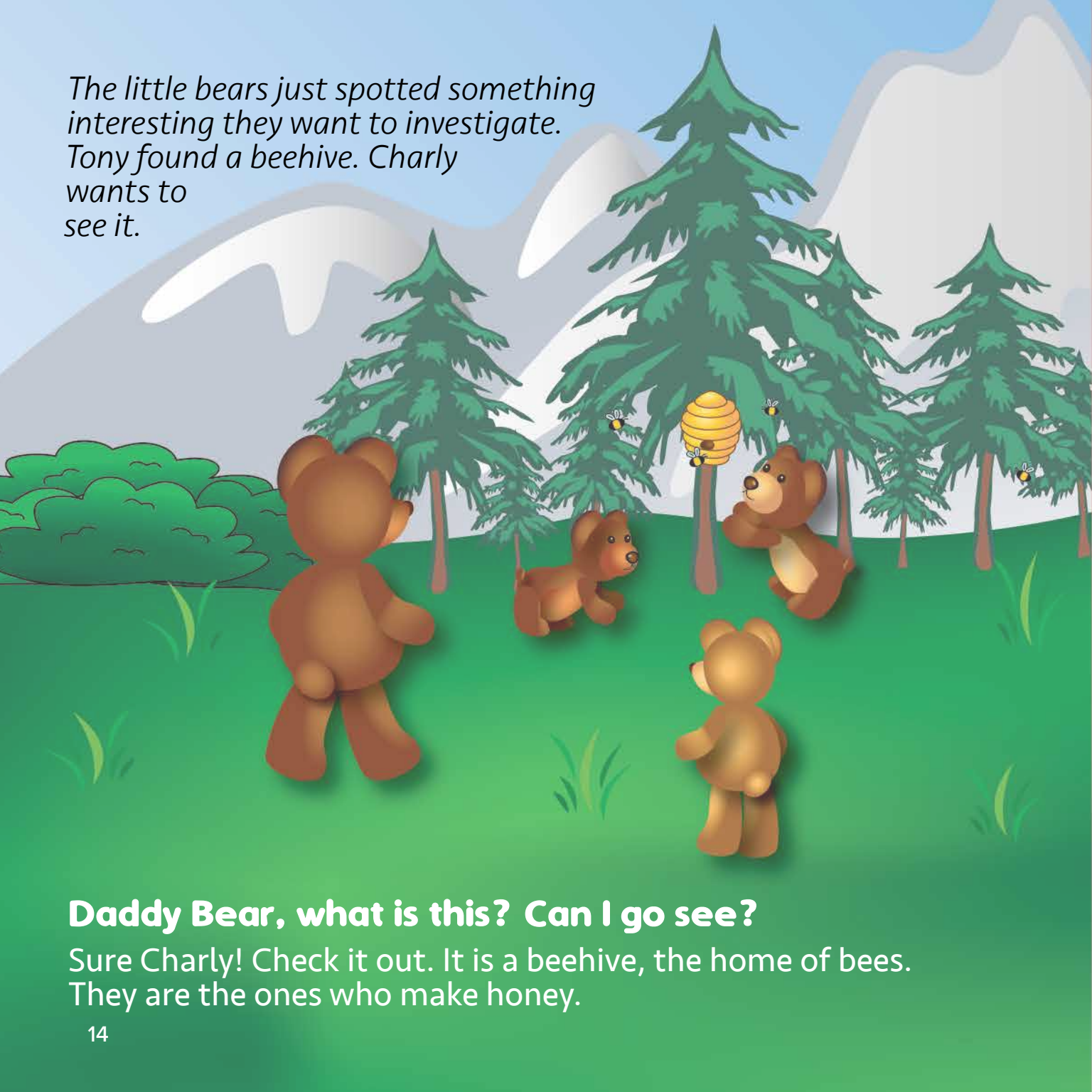
Eventually your mind will start creating thoughts with what you know, what you have lived so far, how you have understood the world, and your view of things. You will also have emotions linked to what you have lived. They are all part of your experience.

Look here, these are your senses sending information to your brain.



And here is what your mind produces.

The little bears just spotted something interesting they want to investigate. Tony found a beehive. Charly wants to see it.



Daddy Bear, what is this? Can I go see?

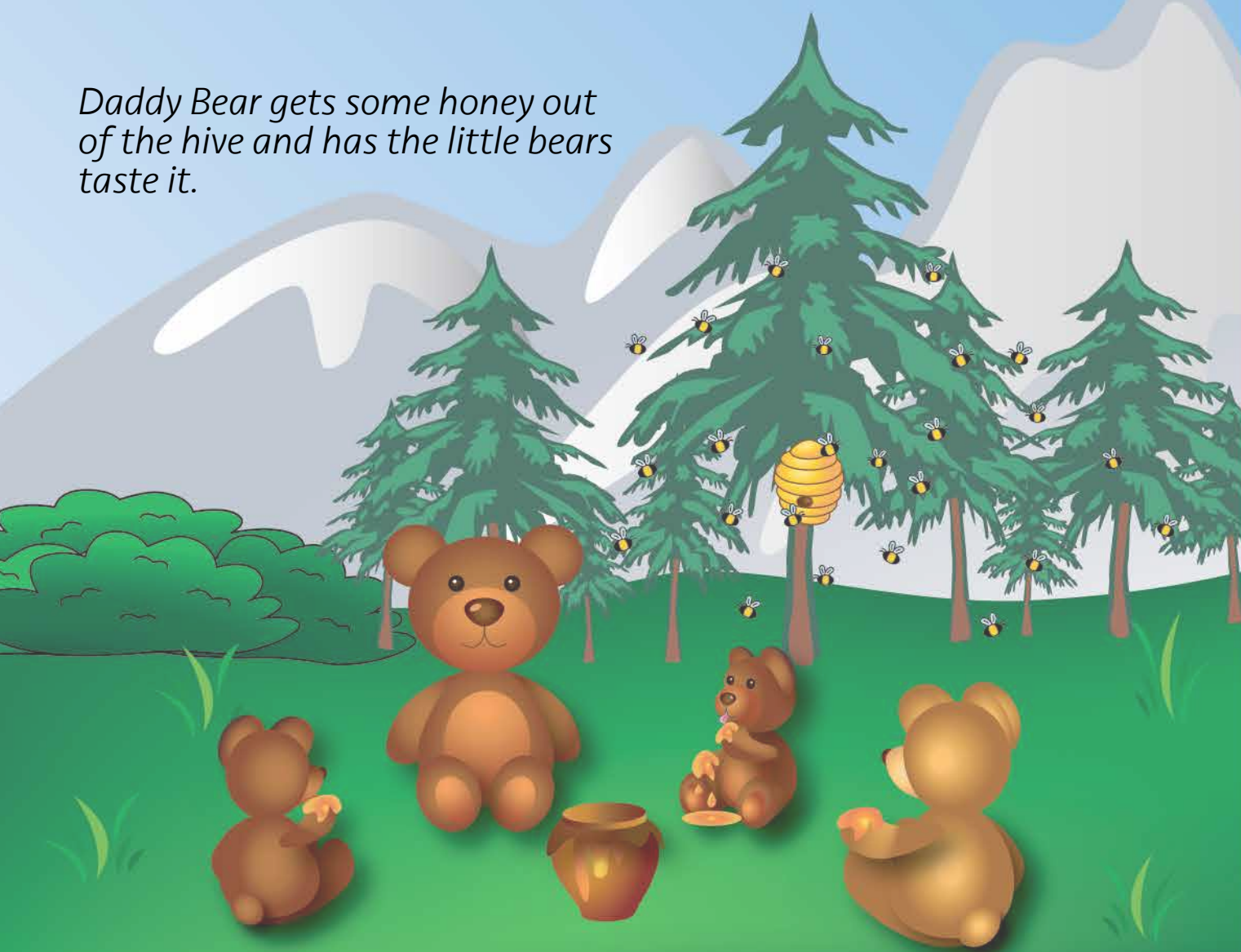
Sure Charly! Check it out. It is a beehive, the home of bees. They are the ones who make honey.

Every time you are looking at something and you ask, 'What is this?' Mommy or Daddy Bear will tell you what that thing is called, and an image with its name is stored in your mind.

We just put a picture of a beehive and bees in Charly's mind. And we told him they make honey. Next time he sees a beehive he will know.



Daddy Bear gets some honey out of the hive and has the little bears taste it.

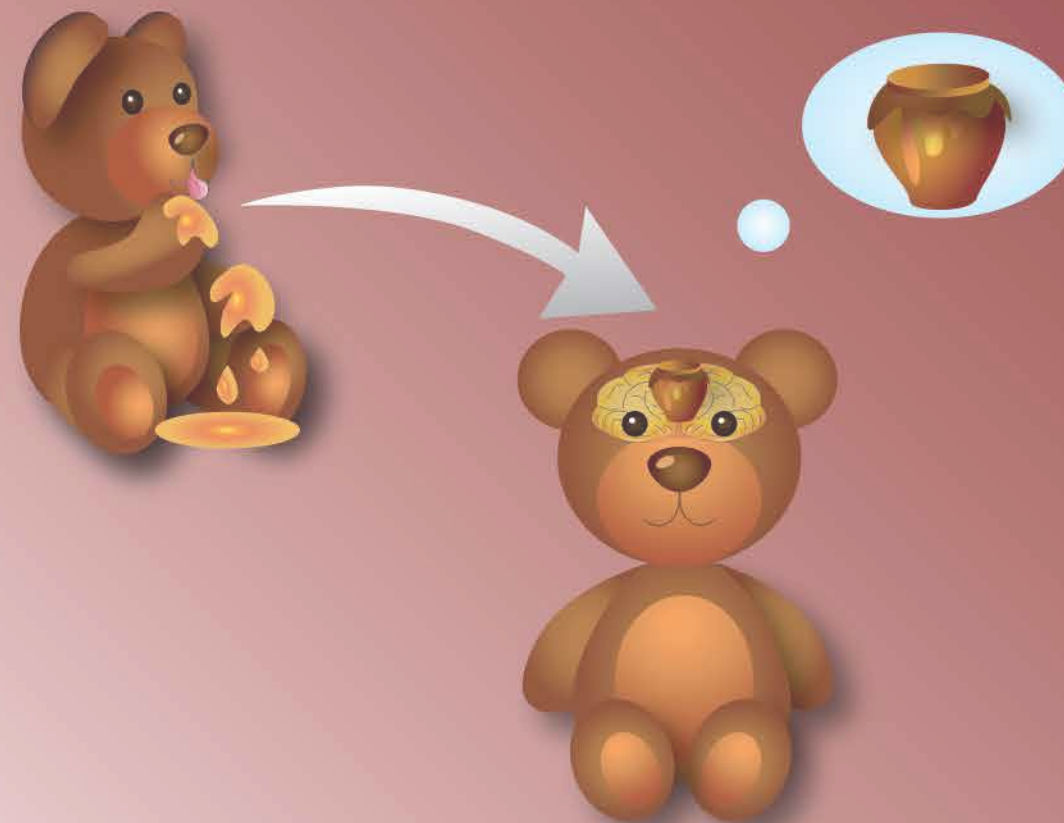


Daddy Bear, can I touch it? Can I taste it?

Sure, go ahead Charly. It is really sticky though, feel it? You already tasted it the other day in your tea when you were sick. You just did not know what it was. But now you can taste it raw. I am sure you will love it!

Every time you touch or taste something, a feeling or a taste is stored in your mind. The next time you touch or taste the same thing, you will recognize it.

We just put the experience of a sticky feeling in Charly's paw and the taste of raw honey in his mouth. Now he knows what honey looks like, what it feels like, and what it tastes like. The next time he sees a beehive or a honey pot he will remember it.



**Daddy Bear, what's that noise? Owie! That hurt!
What's on my nose?**

It's the sound of angry bees because we stole their honey. Run Charly, run! Oops, one stung you on the nose! Go jump in the lake with Vicky and Tony. They can't get us in the water!



The little bears make it safely to the lake, but Charly's nose is hurting.

Owie nose, Daddy!

Sounds and noises are also stored in your mind as memories and are recognized when you hear them again.

Charly just experienced the noise of angry bees and the feeling of a bee sting on his nose. Now he knows that bees can attack him. When he hears the sound he will start to run away from it. Charly has had another experience, which has been stored in his mind.



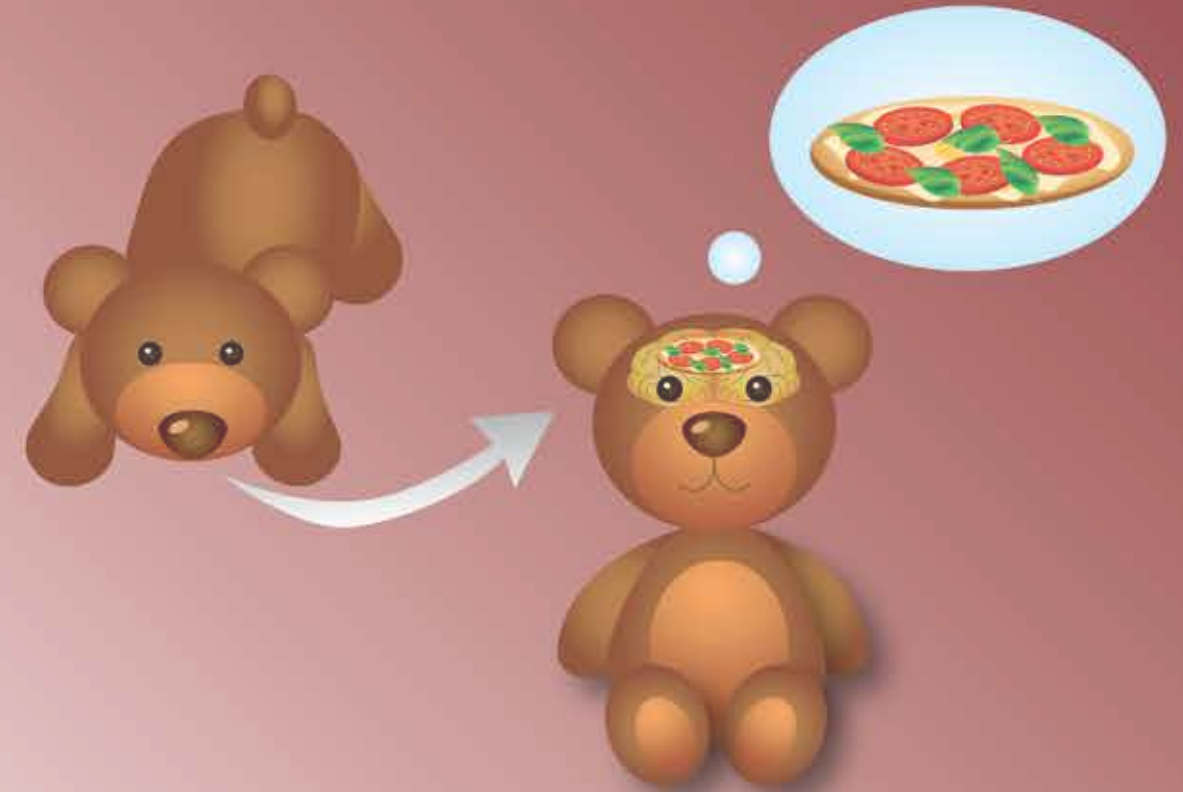
The little bears go back home where Mommy Bear is waiting for them with a picnic she set up in front of their cave.

Hey Charly, can you smell Mommy's pizza? She made it with fresh tomatoes and basil.

Yummy pizza! Yes, owie nose can still smell.



Charly already knew the smell of Mommy's pizza because it was not the first time he had smelled it. He was very happy and ready for lunch, and he forgot all about the owie on his nose.



While Charly is napping, Tony and Vicky are still trying to understand the mind.

So, Daddy Bear, what does the mind do?

The mind can do a lot of things. For example it likes to know and understand what is going on around you.

Why?

That's how the mind works. It doesn't like not knowing. Knowing causes peace of mind.

Why?

It tries to understand the world around you to keep you safe and make you feel good.

Why?

So that you can function in this world because you start to remember and recognize things. With your experience and memories you know what to do and what not to do.

Why?

Because you have experienced it before and you know that some things won't feel good. You will be happy and excited to do the fun things and scared to do the things that hurt.

Why?



Why do you always say "why", Tony?

Right, but why?

Why?

Why?

I don't know . . . Maybe because my mind wants to know.

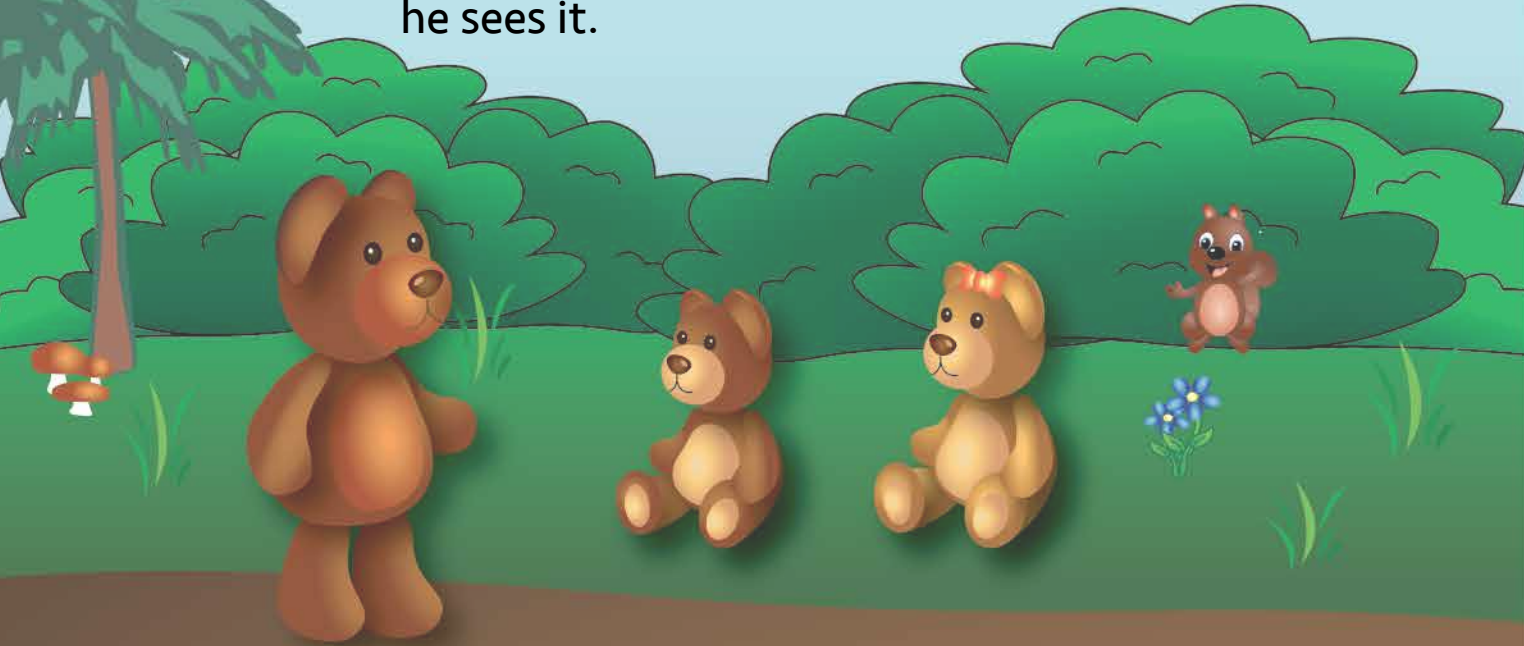
Because my mind likes to understand the things that are going on around me.

To keep me safe and make me feel good..

Just because, Vicky. I am the one who is asking the questions here!

So, Daddy Bear, you said my mind makes me feel good?

Yes, all these things in your mind . . .
your memories, your ideas, your thoughts . . .
whatever you experience can create emotions.
Not just good ones, but any kind of emotions.
Good experiences result in emotions like
happiness, excitement, and joy. Remember Charly
getting all excited and happy when he smelled
Mommy's pizza? That's because his mind recognized
something he likes. And from now on he will also
recognize the honey pot and feel excited when
he sees it.



Bad experiences will lead to emotions like fear, anger, anxiety, and worrying. Today, Charly learned that bee stings hurt. He will be afraid of bees now because of what he experienced. His mind will store this memory, and every time he sees or hears a bee he will get scared and run away.



What you need to know though, little bears, is that whatever happened that makes you feel good or bad is just good or bad in your mind. Other minds - and your own mind - can live or see the same thing differently another time, so it is important to know that a bad experience can be good another day. Check out this situation for example. What are we all seeing or feeling here?



Who is right, Daddy Bear? I am right, right?

Not just you, Tony. But yes, you are right, just like everyone else! One thing can be seen in different ways. What you see is not necessarily true for everyone. It is just your point of view, your reality.

And what about our emotions, Daddy Bear?

Well, the worm is scared that his home is going to be eaten. The squirrel might be afraid that the horse will take the apple from him. Tony, you are disgusted because you see the worm. The horse won't mind the worm and is just excited about getting a snack. And Vicky and I are seeing a good looking apple and may be worried that someone else gets it. See, everyone has a different point of view and different emotions about that same apple.

Meanwhile, Charly woke up and wants to go back outside with his older siblings. But he is not sure what to expect. Is he going to have fun and discover new exciting things, or is he going to get hurt again?

Mommy Bear, can I come out again? What's going to happen?

Yes, come on out, Charly.
Don't worry, you are fine. Things are never exactly the same. They always change, and that's okay.

It is normal to be a little afraid because you don't know what is going to happen. Try thinking of something or some place you really like. Keeping your mind busy will help you feel good again. But it's still ok to stay cautious. Being careful is always a good idea.

