

# *I Am Human*, by Susan Verde

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*I Am Human* is a book about empathy – the ability to imagine what someone else is experiencing and to act with compassion. It tells us in simple language that being human means we learn and grow, we have feelings, we connect with others, we dream and look at the world with wonder.

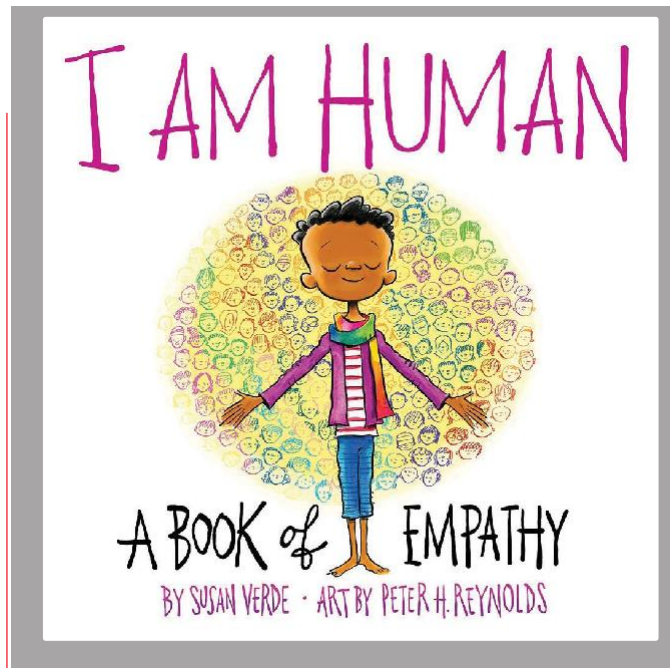
## Discussion Questions:

1. Being human means we have lots of different feelings. Can you name some of the feelings the little boy in the book experienced? Have you had those same feelings?
2. This book is about empathy and compassion. What do those words mean?  
Come up with a class definition for each and include it in an anchor chart of the big ideas that are presented in this series of books. Save the chart so that you can add to it as you work through the other books.
3. What is something the main character did in the book that showed compassion for someone else?
4. What part of the book did you connect with most? Why?

## Activities:

### 1. *Not Yet? That's OK!*

- *I Am Human* reminds us that humans make mistakes. We see that while we can't do something **yet**, we can keep trying and working to attain our goals. Give examples of things students may currently be working on – handwriting, learning to ride a bike, learning to play tennis or swim.
- Brainstorm a list of important things



the group is unable to do **yet**.

- Have each student fold a piece of paper in half. On one half, have the students write the sentence “I have not yet learned how to \_\_\_\_\_”, and fill in the blank.
- On the other half of the paper, have the students write “If I do these things, I will learn how to \_\_\_\_\_”.
- Have students draw pictures of themselves working on the goal or doing what they learned (ex: riding a bike, driving a car, playing on a team, etc.)
- Let kids take turns sharing their goals, the steps to get to the goal and their pictures.

### 2. **Human Connections**

- Divide the class into small groups. Give each group a set of dice and a sheet of prepared statements that the students will respond to, based on the book *I Am Human*. It would be easiest to have 12 statements, since two dice can add to twelve.

# *I Am Human*, by Susan Verde (Continued)

Examples of statements and questions:

1. *I am unique.* Name one thing that is unique about yourself.
2. *I am learning.* Name one thing you have learned recently.
3. *I can listen to others.* Name one time you listened to someone.
4. *I can apologize.* Tell us about a time you said you were sorry.
5. *I can make mistakes.* What is a mistake you made?
6. *I can make choices.* Tell us about a choice you made.

- Students will roll the dice, adding up the two numbers to determine which statement and questions to answer.
- Encourage students to listen to each other and to respond honestly to the statements/questions.
- Allow everyone to have time to respond, then bring the group together to summarize. Did you learn something new about a classmate? Do you have things in common with the others in your group? Were you able to make any connections with someone else in your group? Did you realize something new about yourself by doing this activity?

## **Additional books and activities from the Unified Young Readers Club guide:**

*Say Something*, by Peter H. Reynolds  
*Leo the Late Bloomer*, by Robert Krause  
*The Many Colors of Harpreet Singh*, by Supriya Kelker

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### **ACTIVITY CARD NOTES:**

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# *I Am Love*, by Susan Verde

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*I Am Love* is a book about being compassionate. The simple text and beautiful drawings remind us that you can't be compassionate without feeling empathy. It helps us understand that listening to your heart and being kind can help you as much as it may help others.

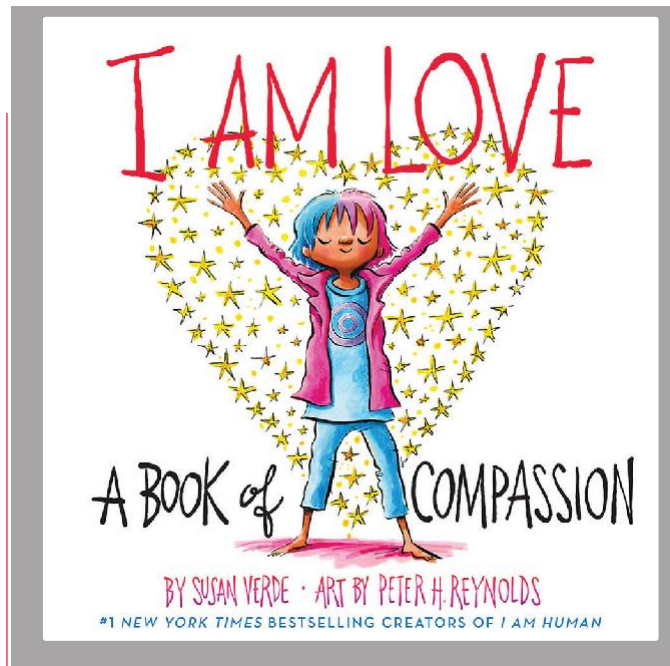
## Discussion Questions:

1. Help the class come up with working definitions for the words compassion and empathy. You may want to start an anchor chart of the big ideas that this series of books introduces.
2. Name two ways the girl in the story showed love and compassion to someone else.
3. Brainstorm with the group ways to show love to family members, friends or classmates.
4. Look at our definition of empathy (the ability to imagine what someone else may be feeling). Identify two examples from this book that you can empathize with.

## Activities:

### 1. Share the Love

- Write a short, positive note to each student before this lesson, without putting names on them. Put the sticky notes on the student's desk or hand them out as the group gathers.
- Tell the class that you wrote everyone a note just for them, to let them know how much you care for them.
- Ask students how it felt to find their note and how reading the message made them feel.
- You may want to start a list of the emotion words that are used – happy, loved, surprised, etc.



- Tell students that the challenge today will be to share those good feelings with others who may be in need of feeling loved or appreciated.
  - The students are to keep the sticky notes with them during the day, and when they see someone who may be feeling a bit down, they are to secretly leave the note for that person, if they can. Or they may just decide to hand the note to the other person, telling them that they are sharing the love by passing along good feelings.
- ### 2. Love Is...
- Reread the book, then ask the class to help you find different words to complete the phrase "Love is...". Make a list of the words on chart paper.
  - Use the book to jog memories and to remind children of other words of compassion like comfort, remembering, caring, kindness, etc.
  - Give everyone paper and crayons/markers and ask them to pick one of those words to illustrate.

# ***I Am Love,*** by Susan Verde ***(Continued)***

- Allow time for children to share their "Love is..." word and picture with the group.

**Additional books and activities from the Unified Young Readers Club guide:**

*Sky Color*, by Peter H. Reynolds  
*Your Spark*, by Lisa Leonard  
*Layla's Happiness*, by Mariahadessa Ekere Tallie

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**ACTIVITY CARD NOTES:**

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# *I Am One*, by Susan Verde

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It's sometimes hard to believe that one person can make a difference, can make change happen. The book *I Am One* is a call to action – encouraging readers to find and use their voice to make this a better world. Change starts with purpose, with one step, with one person. You.

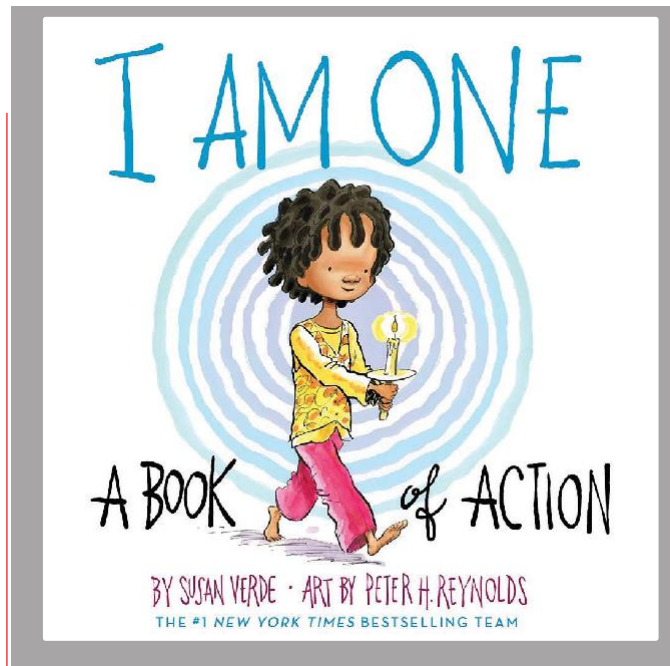
## Discussion Questions:

1. The book starts with the question, "How do I make a difference?" What do you think that means?
2. Think about a time someone – maybe a friend or family member – made a difference. What did they do? How did they start?
3. Name two things the little boy did as he began to make a difference. Have you planted a seed? Started a drawing? Made a new friend?
4. What do you think it means when someone says, "No act is too small"?

## Activities:

### 1. "It Just Takes One!" paper quilt

- Brainstorm a list of actions the little boy in the book *I Am One* takes that make things better.
- Now, take a few minutes to add other things that start with one person's actions – asking someone to play, putting things away, smiling at someone, etc.
- Have paper, pencils, crayons or markers available and tell the class that they will each pick one of the actions on the list and draw a picture of themselves as the one who starts to change things for the better.
- When sufficient time has passed, let students share their actions and



pictures with the group, attaching the individual action picture onto a larger piece of bulletin board paper or onto a bulletin board to form a quilt with the caption "It Just Takes One!"

### 2. Friendship mini book

- Use paper, pencil, crayons, etc. for pairs of students to write and illustrate a mini book describing each other.
- Let the pairs of students take a few minutes to talk about themselves, getting to know each other a little better or in a different way.
- Have each student fold a piece of paper in half like a hot dog bun, then fold that in half again so that there are 4 pages to the mini book.
- Have the students write and illustrate a book about their partner, using ideas of things said for the illustrations.
- Encourage each to put some type of title on the mini book.

### Extended Learning:

Let students research people who have

# *I Am One*, by Susan Verde (Continued)

taken action to make things change, to make the world a better place. Examples: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Greta Thunberg. You may send students to this link to read about 8 young persons who are changing the world right now: [8 young people who are changing the world - More than Motivation: Study, Career and Life Inspiration \(open.colleges.edu.au\)](https://open.colleges.edu.au/more-than-motivation-study-career-and-life-inspiration)

**Additional books and activities from the Unified Young Readers Club guide:**

*All My Stripes*, by Shaina Rudolph  
*The Perfect Square*, by Michael Hall  
*Stand Tall*, Molly Lou Melon, by Patty Lovell

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**ACTIVITY CARD NOTES:**

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# *I Am Peace*, by Susan Verde

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Sometimes children need help identifying their feelings. While all the books in this series deal with social emotional learning, *I Am Peace* focuses on being mindful – being present in the moment. It gently gives children tools to use when they start feeling “like a boat with no anchor”.

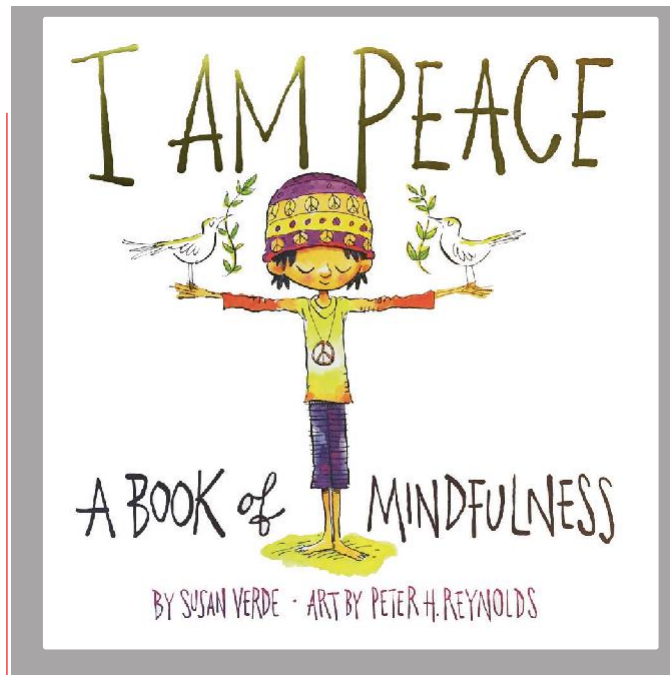
## Discussion Questions:

1. This is a book about mindfulness – being fully present in the moment. What does that mean?
2. What is one thing you could do every day to be mindful?
3. What did the boy in the story do when he felt himself getting carried away?
4. How could you find your anchor?

## Activities:

### 1. Breathing Bracelet

- Materials needed for this activity: 1 pipe cleaner and 10 beads per student. Make an example of the bracelet for yourself before starting.
- Students will string 10 beads onto their pipe cleaner and make a bracelet to use for purposeful breathing.
- When all bracelets are completed and being worn, teach the group how to do purposeful breathing (in through the nose, out through the mouth). Do several purposeful breaths as a class.
- Model how to sit, with eyes closed and touch one bead at a time as you breathe, moving the bead along the pipe cleaner.
- Repeat this with each bead, breathing slowly and purposefully as you move the bead along the pipe cleaner, until all the beads have been moved.



- Discuss times we may need to use the breathing bracelet.
- Would this be a loud activity or a quiet one?
- Where could you go if you feel you need to use your breathing bracelet?
- How do you think using the breathing bracelet may help you find your center?

### 2. Emotional Ruler

- Having a concrete way of looking at problems may help students when their emotions are running high. A simple ruler does the trick, by pointing out how big or small the problem is compared to the reaction to it.
- Using a ruler, ask students to help you gauge the size of several problems, doing your thinking out loud. For example: “I didn’t like the way my drawing turned out” – the size of that problem may be a 1 or a 2. “I reacted by tearing up my drawing and throwing the pieces on the floor”. That reaction is way above 5 on the ruler.

# *I Am Peace*, by Susan Verde (Continued)

- Tell the group that when the size of your reaction doesn't match the size of your problem, then it's time to re-think how you handled the situation and come up with different choices.
- What are some ways you could have reacted that would match the size of the problem?
- Have several different problems to present to the group and encourage them to classify both the problem and the reaction using the ruler. Help them to understand that a size ten problem would be a true tragedy or dangerous situation, which would call for a size ten reaction. However, a size 2 problem, like forgetting your library book at home, calls for a size 2 reaction like writing a note to a parent asking for help remembering your books in the future.
- Over time, by returning to the idea that the size of one's problems should match the size of one's reactions, children will start identifying the size of the problem and react more appropriately.

### 3. Problem Pop!

- You will need bubbles for this quick activity.
- Ask the group to brainstorm things that they see as problems or worries that they have.
- Show the page in the book where the boy says, "I can watch my worries gently pop and disappear".
- Instruct the children to pick one worry or problem and picture that in their heads.
- Walk around and blow bubbles toward the children, letting them gently pop the bubble that represents their worry, just like the boy in the book.

### Additional books and activities from the Unified Young Readers Club guide:

*Since We're Friends*, by Celeste Shally  
*The Dot*, by Peter H. Reynolds  
*Red, A Crayon's Story*, by Michael Hall

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#### ACTIVITY CARD NOTES:

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# *I Am Yoga*, by Susan Verde

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*I Am Yoga*, another book in the *I AM* series, inspires children to use yoga techniques to strengthen bodies and calm minds and, with some imagination, realize that anything is possible. With pages of child-friendly yoga poses in the back of the book, your class can learn to take meaningful, mindful brain breaks, as they learn about self-expression.

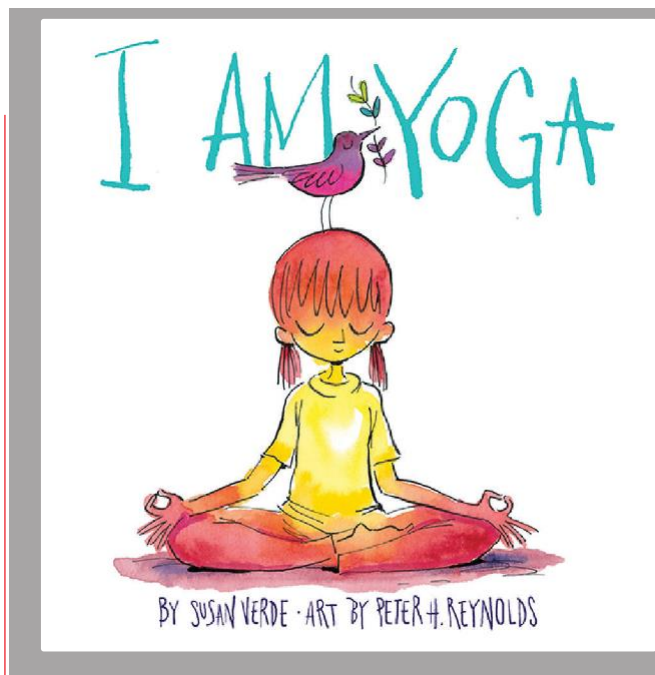
## Discussion Questions:

1. Do you have a favorite yoga pose from the book? Which one? What did the girl think about when she was doing that?
2. Can we all do that pose? Let's try it. What were you thinking about?
3. What cues did the girl listen to that let her know it was time to practice yoga?

## Activities:

### 1. We Are Yoga

- After reading and talking about the book *I Am Yoga*, lead the class through various yoga poses, as described in the back of the book.
- List the name of each pose on chart paper as you learn them. Save this to use throughout the year for those mindful brain breaks.
- Once the group has had a chance to practice each pose over several days, ask for suggestions for poses to do each day to start off the morning, to calm the group, or to focus thinking. Keep referring to the chart and work toward getting the class to do some type of yoga on a regular basis.
- Encourage students to share their yoga practice with others, or to share how doing yoga makes them feel.



### 2. Yoga Pictures

- As the class practices different yoga poses, ask them to think about the girl in the book and what she imagined she became as she did each pose. A cloud? A tree? A warrior?
- Let each child pick his/her favorite pose and draw self-portraits showing that pose. Label it and post it around the chart with the list of Yoga poses.

### 3. Yoga Task Cards

- Create a set of yoga-like task cards to use when someone feels overwhelmed or needs to cool down. Make the cards easily accessible so that children will be comfortable using them to regain control or to refocus.
- The yoga poses at the back of the book *I Am Yoga* are a good place to start. You don't have to write out the instructions – your class will know the poses by now. Just have the name of the task and stick figures or photos of your students doing the poses.

# *I Am Yoga, by Susan Verde (Continued)*

- Make sure you have one or two cards with some type of breathing task. The following links go to sites with yoga breathing exercises for kids that they will love – all inspired by animals. There is Lion Breath where the kids get to roar out their frustrations, or Bumble Bee Breath, where kids hum like a bumble bee.

[Playful Poses - 20-minute Workout](#)

[YogaBugs | KS1 Finger Breathing for 3 - 7 years | Kids Yoga-](#)

[Pufferfish Breaths | Breathing Exercises for Calm Kids Self-Regulation](#)

[Crab Breaths | Mindful Breathing Exercises for Kids | Calm Summer](#)

[Bear Breaths | Breathing Exercises for Kids Mindfulness \(Children Anxiety Relief Meditation\)](#)

[Guided Square Breathing for Children](#)

## **Additional books and activities from the Unified Young Readers Club guide:**

*I like Myself*, by Karen Beaumont

*A Normal Pig*, by K-fai Steel

*Ish*, by Peter H. Reynolds

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### **ACTIVITY CARD NOTES:**

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