

A parents' guide to TEACHING KIDS TO FORGIVE

Teaching your kids to forgive each other heals hurts, keeps the peace, and gives them an invaluable life skill.



are you okay?

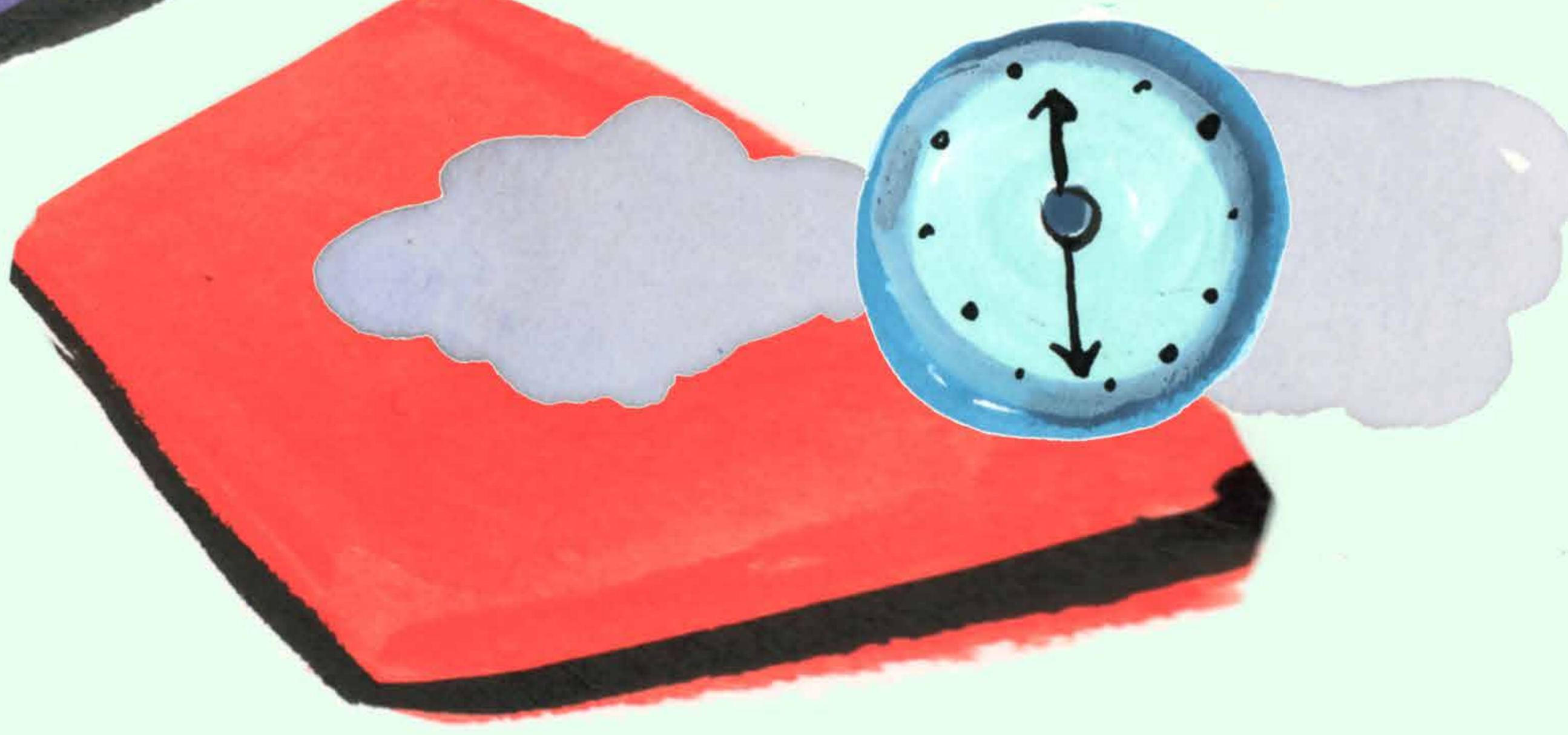
1 Ask the offended child to acknowledge the hurt. Address the offending behavior.

2 Have a cooling off period. (It's hard to forgive when you're upset.)

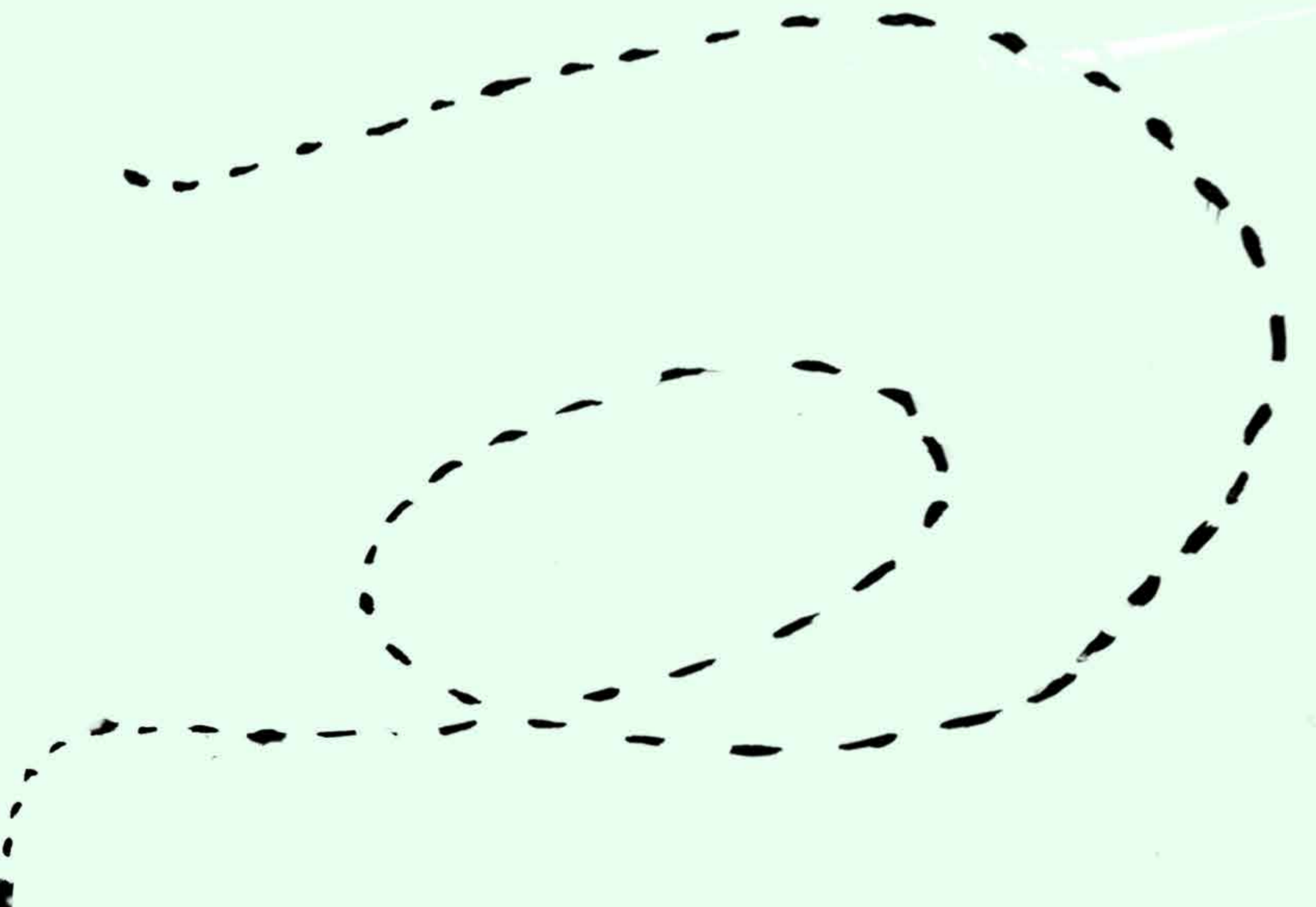
Sorry!

3 Ask your child, "Are you ready to consider forgiving?"

4 Assure your child that forgiving is NOT saying what the other person did is OK. It's saying, "I'm going to change my hurt, angry feelings toward him."



5 Make sure your child knows it's his decision and it's ok not to be ready! "I understand you're still hurt/angry and maybe you need a little more time."



6 If there's lingering hurt, ask again - but let your child know it's up to him. (If your child has moved on, there's no need to force forgiveness!)

7 If your child is ready, suggest he put on "forgiveness glasses" that help him see the offender beyond the offending action. Ask, "Can you think of your brother in a way that's bigger than this offense? Can you see the goodness in him?"



8 Now ask your child to notice how this changes how his heart feels. "Does it feel softer? How are you feeling inside now toward your brother?"



9 There are no magic words to say. Your child can show forgiveness with a smile or an offer to play. Ask, "Is there anything you want to say? You don't have to." (It may come out as "Want to go play?")



* Based on the research of Dr. Robert Enright, founder of the International Forgiveness Institute (internationalforgiveness.com).