

DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF IF YOU GIVE A MOUSE A COOKIE

One Yes Leads to Another
and Why It Is So Hard to Stop



BEFORE YOU BEGIN



This story is more than silly fun. It opens the door to real conversations about decisions, boundaries, and self-control.



There are no right or wrong answers. Listen with curiosity and respect.



Let kids lead the conversation. Follow their ideas and ask follow-up questions.



Aim for connection, not correction. The goal is understanding and learning together.

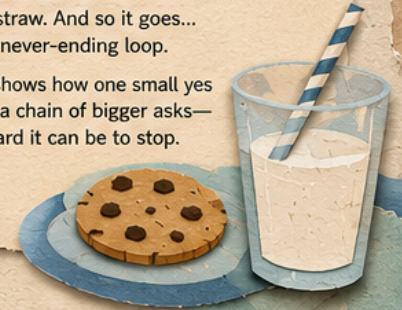
“Big changes rarely arrive all at once. They arrive one small, reasonable step at a time.”



ABOUT THE STORY

A cookie leads to milk. The milk leads to a straw. And so it goes... in a funny, never-ending loop.

This story shows how one small yes can set off a chain of bigger asks—and how hard it can be to stop.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 THE CHAIN REACTION

One thing leads to another.



- What was the first thing the boy gave the mouse?
- What came next? What came after that?
- How did the list keep growing?
- Can you think of times when one small thing led to many more?

2 THE POWER OF “YES”

Why is it hard to stop once we start?



- Why do you think the boy kept saying yes?
- Have you ever started with one small yes and then kept going?
- What makes it hard to stop?

3 THE FOOT-IN-THE-DOOR

A small yes can open the door to bigger ones.



- Why do you think the cookie made it easier to say yes to the next thing?
- Can you think of another time this happens in real life?
- How can we pause before the next “yes”?

4 WANTING VS. NEEDING

The mouse wants a lot of things.



- Which things did the mouse really need? Which did he just want?
- How can we tell the difference between a want and a need?
- Why do wants keep growing sometimes?

5 THE BOY’S CHOICES

The boy could have made different choices.



- At what point could the boy have said no?
- What might he have said?
- Would it have been hard to say no? Why?

6 ENDING THE LOOP

How can we break the cycle?



- How did the story end?
- What helped the loop stop?
- What could help us stop a chain of requests in real life?
- Who can help us set limits?

GO DEEPER (FOR OLDER KIDS)

- What is the “cost” of saying yes too many times?
- How does this story relate to advertising or social media?
- How can we balance being kind with taking care of ourselves?



REFLECT (FOR YOU)

- When do I tend to say “yes” when I want to say “no”?
- What small “cookies” open the door for bigger commitments in my life?
- What helps me pause, check in, and choose what matters most?



TAKE IT INTO REAL LIFE

- Set clear limits early and kindly.
- Use simple, direct language: “No, that’s not happening right now.”
- Offer choices within the limit: “Would you like milk or water?”
- Praise flexibility and respect for boundaries.



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Understanding minds.



Strengthening connections.

