

## Fairy Tale - Family of Beavers

Once upon a time there lived a family of beavers on the banks of a pleasant Midwestern river. Every morning, Mr. Beaver would go to work on his dam while Mrs. Beaver stayed at home with the four little beavers. The four little beavers loved being at home and playing in the river and surrounding woods. They would practice building their own houses and dams so they would be ready when it was time to go to school.

Mr. and Mrs. Beaver always stressed the importance of hard work. Little beaver took this especially to heart knowing that Mr. and Mrs. Beaver were always right. She worked especially hard in school and learned responsibility and dependability. But she wasn't sure if she was working hard enough. When Mr. Beaver would see her grades, he would always say, "Why isn't this one an A?"

Now, The Beaver family wasn't only in the business of building dams in the river but also at home. It was best to stay composed at home – any outbursts or loud expressions of emotion were not tolerated. So Little Beaver learned to make a mental note of these expectations and work harder. She became sensitive to the image she portrayed among other beavers and worked hard to show a unique and near perfect beaver. As a result, she built up a complex dam around herself and was afraid to show others what was behind the exterior. After all, who wants to be friends with an imperfect beaver?

Her school days passed and it was now time to venture out on her own. Along the way, she met and fell in love with an Otter. Mr. and Mrs. Beaver were not at all happy about this relationship. After all, the Otter did not build dams like they did. They tried to build a dam around Little Beaver by arguing with her and shunning the Otter. Little Beaver had a really hard time with this. She was torn between obeying Mr. and Mrs. Beaver and following her own course in life. She had observed this behavior from her parents before with her two older siblings and she knew she needed to act decisively.

Eventually, Little Beaver began tearing apart the dam she had built inside of herself and grew closer to the Otter. He became the most important source of strength and courage for her during this difficult time. He accepted and loved the imperfect parts of her she had kept hidden behind the dam. She was now able to stand her ground with Mr. and Mrs. Beaver. She began to see all of the emotions, fears, questions and insecurities she had been storing up in her heart. It was scary to show Mr. and Mrs. Beaver the part of her she had worked so hard to hold back. She was still worried she wouldn't measure up to their expectations, but they had to know she was ready to be on her own. She needed to make her own choices and stay grounded in the truth. Little Beaver and the Otter were married and over time Mr. and Mrs. Beaver have grown to accept this and gain an appreciation for the Otter.

While Little Beaver is still busy building dams in the river of life, she is now conscious of the dams she builds inside herself. She can see how her dams impact her relationships and is taking one step at a time to tear down the unhealthy barricades so she may experience life to the fullest.