



# Climbing Monster Mountain

The objective of this activity is to provide a visual reference or tool for the child to use in order to see the possibility of **facing their fear** not as one, enormous “monster” to fight, but **as a series of little steps**.

They’re not being forced to do something scary- they’re choosing to walk the mountain and they’re in control of every part of the process. This is not designed as a whole class activity, but as a private, one-to-one activity for children who are struggling in one aspect of their school experience because of anxiety.

## How to climb Monster Mountain...

- **With the child, think about the situation that triggers anxiety**

*For example:*

Doing tests; Speaking in front of class; Making friends; Joining in sports games; Reading aloud

- **Chat with them to help them to pinpoint what exactly what it is that they are afraid of.** For example, if it’s swimming, the child might be scared of going in the deep end where they can’t touch the bottom, scared of looking stupid as they’re slow or awkward in the water, or they are actually scared of the swimming coach!
- **Introduce them the Monster Mountain and name the monster**, e.g. “the swimming pool monster” (*please note: It probably is not a good idea to name the monster after the swimming coach, even if the resemblance is uncanny*). **Reassure** them that they’re not just going to be forced into the scary situation (thrown in the deep end). Together, you are going to think of little steps toward the goal of facing their fear monster.
- **Write out some steps toward the goal.** These are situations with props and supports that help them to deal with the threat, that can be gradually removed.

*For example, if the fear is speaking in front of the class:*

Stand up & hold stuff for a friend who is doing their talk

Reading it to a friend or teacher

Standing up with a group and each saying a few lines

Doing my talk to a small group of kids I choose

Doing a presentation with one friend

Doing a presentation on my own!!!

- **Write them in order from bottom to top on the slope of the mountain**, with the easiest/ least threatening scenario on the bottom, and the main goal right beside the monster.
- **Discuss with the child how they will celebrate each win** (work out a series of rewards)
- **Write down the reward in the area beneath each goal.** Some steps may need to be repeated a few times before the child is ready to step up to the next level. Let them know that's okay.

*Each step is a goal, complete in itself, therefore celebrate each goal achieved.*

- **Debrief after attempts-** how they felt, what helped them, (if they need to try it again) is there something they plan to do differently, etc.

*Praise specifically. "I love the way, when you lost your place, you just smiled and made a joke. You handled that really well" "yes, you were really nervous, but you stuck it out. Well done".*

- **Print out and laminate the "Fear Monster Slayer" certificate** for reaching the top of the mountain and make a "big deal" presentation for the achievement.

**Facing a big fear is no small feat, and deserves recognition.**

At EVERY step...

**the goal is actually to  
DO it,**

**not to stop FEELING  
afraid**

**or even to do it well.**

**HAPPY MONSTER HUNTING!!!**

