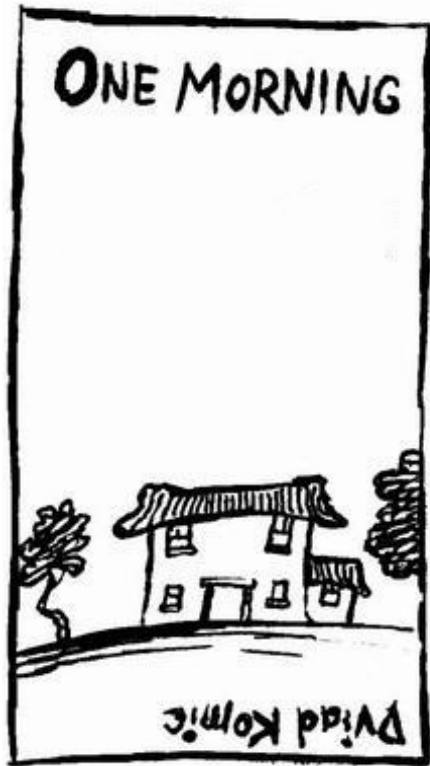
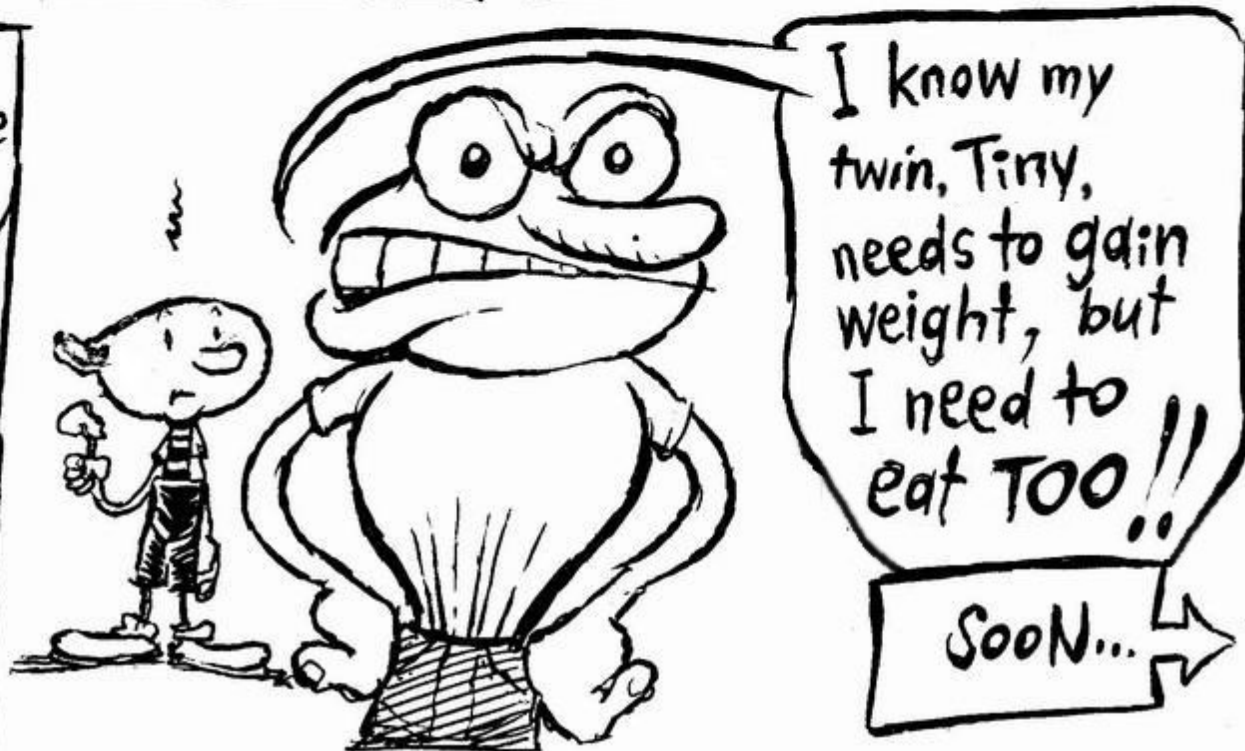
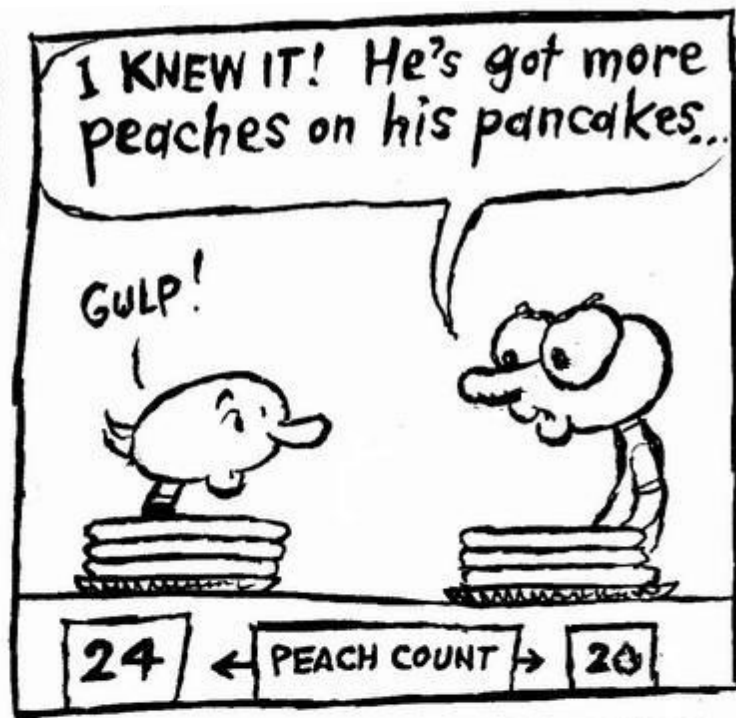
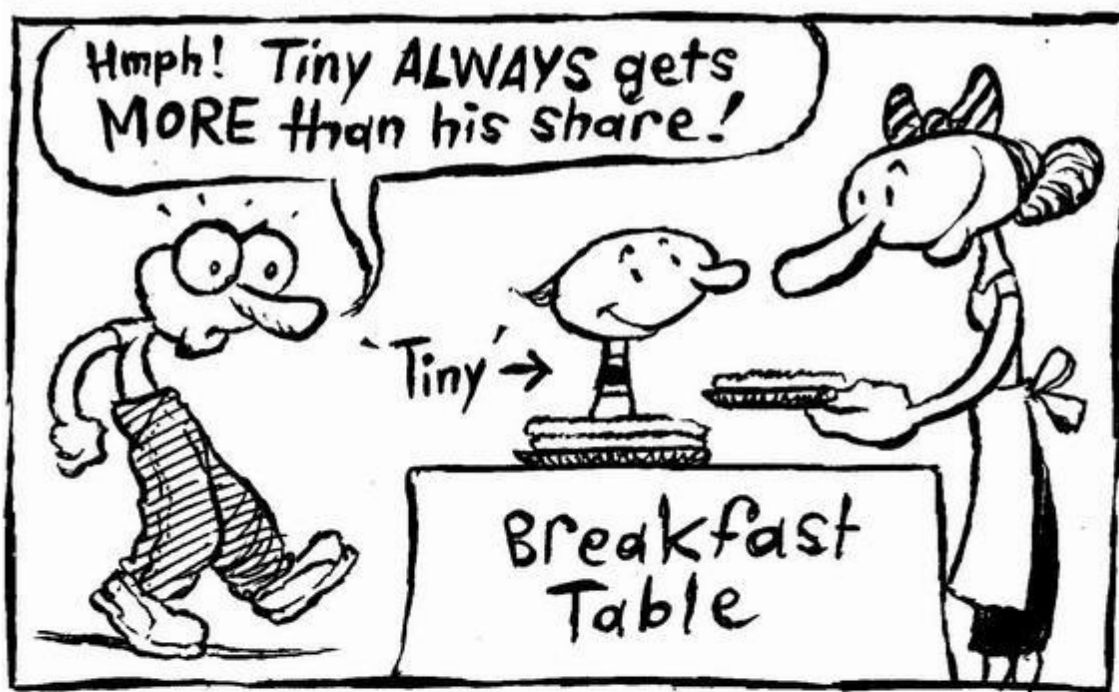


THE COMPARING DEBATE

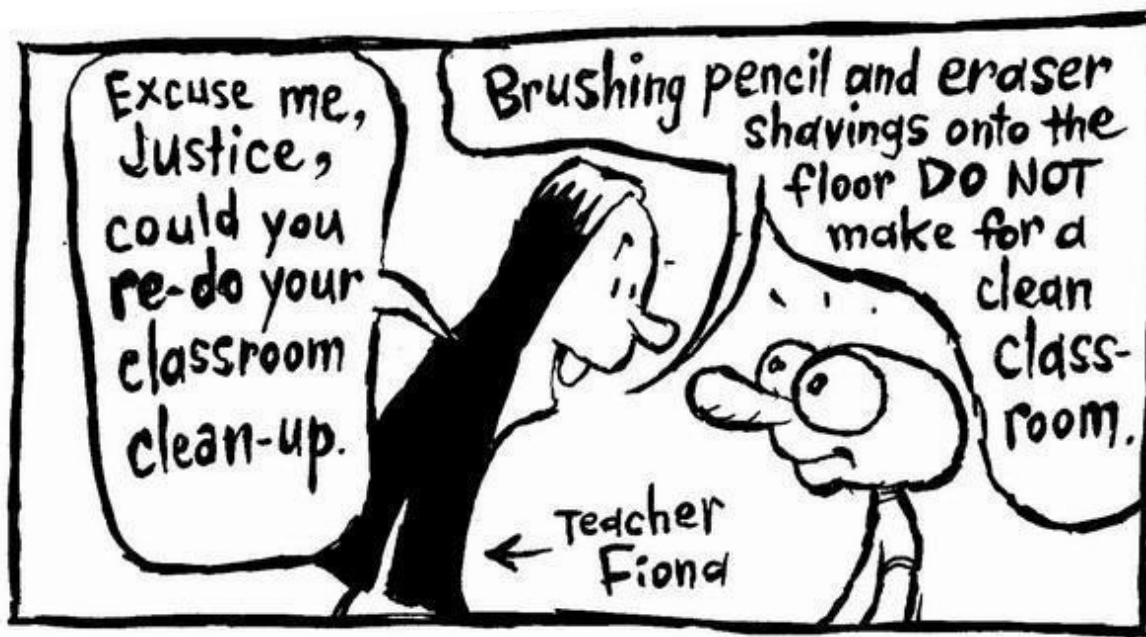


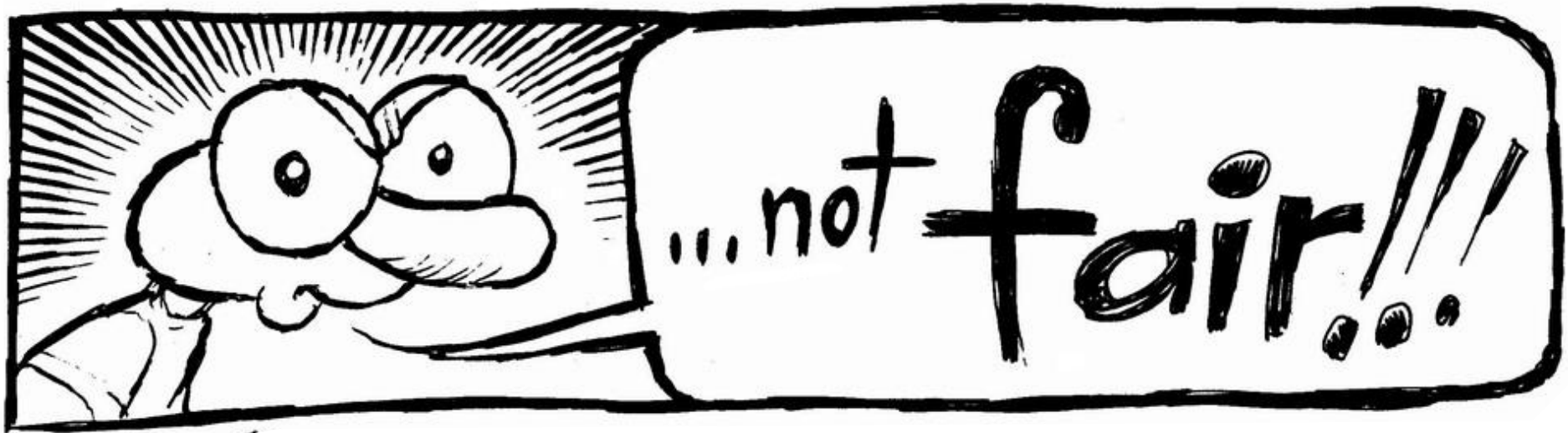




JUSTICE
COULDN'T HELP
BUT FEEL
THAT
JUSTICE
WAS BEING
NEGLECTED!







IT CAN BE EASY TO COMPARE WITH YOUR PEERS. MAYBE YOU LOOK AT THOSE AROUND YOU AND MEASURE WHAT IS EXPECTED FROM YOU AGAINST WHAT OTHERS ARE EXPECTED TO DO. OR PERHAPS A LOT OF GOOD THINGS SEEM TO BE HAPPENING IN THE LIFE OF ONE OF YOUR FRIENDS, AND YOU FEEL THAT YOU DESERVE THE SAME. COMPARING NEGATIVELY ALLOWS A LARGE CLOUD CALLED "INJUSTICE" TO BLOCK THE BRIGHT RAYS OF JOY THAT WOULD OTHERWISE FILL YOUR LIFE.

YOU ARE NOT MADE EXACTLY THE SAME AS ANOTHER. EACH PERSON IS CREATED WITH A UNIQUE SET OF ABILITIES, PERSONALITY, CHARACTERISTICS, AND IS INFLUENCED BY A DIFFERENT SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES. IF EVERYONE WERE FROM THE SAME MOLD, THEN THERE MIGHT BE A GREATER CHANCE THAT YOU'D BE GETTING THE SAME SET OF EXPERIENCES AS OTHERS. BUT ARE YOU ALIKE IN EVERY WAY TO ANYONE WHOM YOU KNOW? NO! GOD HAS CREATED EVERYONE DIFFERENTLY, WHICH INCLUDES EACH HAVING HIS OR HER OWN SET OF STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES.



YOU'RE DIFFERENT AND UNIQUE.
WHEN GOD LOOKS AT YOU, HE DOESN'T
COMPARE YOU WITH ANYONE ELSE, SO
NEITHER SHOULD YOU.

SO HOW DO YOU GET THAT CLOUD
OF COMPARING TO DISAPPEAR? DON'T
COMPARE NEGATIVELY! DON'T TRY TO

MEASURE WHAT YOU'RE BEING ASKED
TO DO AGAINST WHAT YOUR PEERS
ARE DOING, OR WHAT YOU ARE GIVEN
COMPARED TO WHAT OTHERS ARE GIVEN.
DOING THAT IS A PATHWAY TO FEELINGS
OF NEGATIVITY AND SADNESS.



THE NEXT TIME YOU'RE TEMPTED WITH THOUGHTS OF "IT'S NOT FAIR," TRY TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

1. SAY, "I'M NOT GOING TO COMPARE WHAT I HAVE OR DON'T HAVE WITH ANYONE ELSE, BECAUSE GOD LOVES ME, AND IS TAKING CARE OF ME IN THE WAY HE KNOWS IS BEST."

2. IF YOU ARE STILL TEMPTED TO COMPARE, DO SOME POSITIVE COMPARING INSTEAD. COUNT ALL THOSE MANY BLESSINGS JESUS HAS GIVEN YOU PERSONALLY. POSITIVE COMPARING IS GOOD, AS IT ENCOURAGES YOU AND STRENGTHENS YOUR MUSCLES OF PRAISE AND POSITIVENESS.

IF YOU'RE FAITHFUL TO LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE OF THINGS, YOU'LL SOON FIND THAT THOSE CREEPING CLOUDS OF COMPARING HAVE BLOWN AWAY, AND YOU CAN ENJOY THE SUNNY SKIES OF HAPPINESS AND CONTENTMENT ONCE AGAIN.