

# BROTHER MOOSE'S SWAMP CROSSING GUIDE

Sometimes our journey towards healing can feel sticky under our feet, just like a swamp. You may get stuck many times. Your goal is to find a way to get unstuck and find better roads up ahead. Some people manage to get out of swampy terrains with relative ease, while for others it might take time, and feel frustrating. Either way, it is good to think of a good plan or strategy so you don't have to feel so helpless.



**1.** What are you trying to get yourself unstuck from?

**CIRCLE A FEW LISTED BELOW**

- |                |                 |               |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Sadness        | Stress          | Hurt          |
| Despair        | Anxiety         | Stress        |
| Hopelessness   | Grief           | Exhaustion    |
| Disappointment | Depression      | Rejection     |
| Guilt          | Anger           | Loneliness    |
| Insecurity     | Rage            | Despair       |
| Shame          | Confusion       | Sadness       |
| Numb           | Meaninglessness | Fear          |
| Addiction      | Co-dependence   | Being Bullied |
| Volatility     | Envy            | Frustration   |

*What else would you like to add?*

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**2.** What baggage (that weigh you down) do you need to let go?

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**3.** What safety measures (coping tools) have you taken to loosen the grip of the swamp on your feet?

**CIRCLE A FEW LISTED BELOW:**

- |                           |                        |                   |                          |                      |
|---------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Support group             | Therapist/counselor    | Mindful breathing | Dance                    | Journal              |
| Recovery group            | Psychiatrist           | Singing           | Sports/Physical exercise | Inspiring literature |
| Spiritual community       | Spiritual guide/pastor | Music             | Nutritious food          | Cinema               |
| Supportive friends/family | Prayer/meditation      | Art               | Furry friends/animals    | Nature & Sun         |

*What else would you like to add?*

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**4.** What other hurdles are you expecting to face?  
How will you overcome them?

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**5.** Who is Brother Moose? (That is, someone who is experienced at unsticking one's feet.) How are that person(s) helping you?

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**6.** How are you motivating yourself along the way? What are you telling yourself to keep going? Consider words, phrases, or a sentence, that will inspire you or will keep you grounded on your rewards/goals on top of the mountain.

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A spiritual care resource created by Kaseman's Spiritual Care Department

## Brother Bear (By Hans Bauman; Adapted for Spirit Play)

Far away in the north where the great sea freezes, there lived 3 brothers named Strong Bow, Shining Spear, and Chip. Strong Bow and Shining Spear were older, and they're great hunters. But Chip loved the animals of the forest too much to hunt them. The 3 brothers lived in a small wooden house deep in the forest with their grandmother Nuni, and their little sister, Bright Sun. Their parents were not alive anymore. Chip stayed home when Strong Bow and Shining Spear went out to hunt.

When they were far way, Chip would call on his other brothers, the ones nobody knew about: Bear, Beaver, and Moose. "Now it's safe for you to come out," he'd tell them.

One autumn, as the cold winds begin to blow, the 2 older brothers Strong Bow and Shining Spear said to Chip, "We must go hunting for winter's food. We will be gone for many days. Be sure to take good care of our little sister, Bright Sun."

While the older brothers were out hunting, Bright Sun was ill. Grandma Nuni tried all the remedies she knew, but bright sun got sicker. Grandma Nuni said to Chip, "Only Wise Raven has the medicine that can cure her. But between our house and his are the wild river, the wide swamp, the high mountain, and the cold, deep lake. How can we possibly get to Wise Raven? What can we do? You're just a little boy – too little for such a dangerous journey."

Chip thought to himself: "I will do it." And he slipped silently out of the house, unnoticed by his grandmother. Chip walked through the forest until he came upon the bank of the wild river. He thought, "I cannot cross this river, grandmother was right."

Then Beaver came by and said, "Don't worry, Chip. I'll help you." Quickly Beaver chopped down a tree to make a bridge, and Chip hurried across to the other side of the wild river.

"Thank you, Brother Beaver," said Chip. But there on the other side of the wild river, Chip found a wide muddy swam. He thought, "Grandmother Nuni was right, I can never get across the swamp."

Just then Moose came by and said, "I will help you." And Moose carried Chip across the wide, muddy swamp.

"Thank you, Brother Moose," said Chip.

At the other side of the swamp, Chip saw a tall, tall mountain, like a huge wall of rocks. He thought, "Grandma Nuni was right, no one could go over this mountain."

Just then Bear came by and said, "Don't worry Chip, I will help you. Just get on my back." With Chip on his back, Bear climbed right over the mountain.

"Thank you, Brother Bear," said Chip. But now Chip found himself at the shore of a wide, cold, deep lake. Chip thought, "Grandmother was right, I could never get across this wide, cold, deep lake.

But just then a black bird appeared, flew over him and called Chip, "Follow me," the bird said.

To Chip's surprise, he found himself changed to a fish. In his new form, he was able to swim across the wide, cold, deep lake quite easily. When he reached the other side, the black bird flew into the hut where Wise Raven lived. Then out of the hut came Wise Raven himself. He covered Chip in a warm blanket, who now turned back into his regular self. Chip explained that his little sister Bright Sun was ill, then Wise Raven gave Chip the special medicine Bright Sun needed, and rowed Chip back across the lake.

"Thank you, Wise Raven," said Chip.

On his way home, Brother Bear helped him go over the mountain. At the swamp, Brother Moose helped Chip cross the swamp. And brother Beaver helped him back across the wild river. When he arrived home, Grandmother Nuni scolded Chip, "Where have you been? I have been worried about you."

Instead of answering her, Chip handed Grandma Nuni the medicine for Bright Sun. And Bright Sun became well again. When Bear, Beaver and Moose came to the wooden house to inquire about Bright Sun's health, Bright Sun said, "Than you Brother Bear, Brother Beaver, and Brother Moose."

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**REFLECTION:** Reflect on the wondering questions below with a friend by taking turns in answering each question.

**WONDERING QUESTIONS with a conversation partner:**

- Which part of the story did you find most important? What resonated with you?
- Which part of the story is about you? Where are you in the story?
- Notice moments in your journey when you were overwhelmed by an obstacle to cross.
- Notice moments in your journey when someone helped you.
- What obstacle are you crossing now, and who might be able to help you cross?

Remember, keep on sharing your stories. Keep on listening to each other's stories.

