

NG NEXTGEN
LEARNERS

Presents:



THINK LIKE A BRAIN!TM

Callie the Connector and the Brain Bridge

Connection, communication & whole-brain teamwork

FREE SAMPLER

For: Parents, Educators, & Co-Regulators

Presented by NGL Press
NextGen Learners LLC
Written By Maisel McLaula



THIS BOOK IS ONE PIECE OF A BIGGER SYSTEM.

Callie the Connector is part of Think Like a Brain!™

-a structured developmental pathway that walks children (and the adults who love them) through the brain from the bottom up. Each character is a different brain region, and each book is a different layer of how humans regulate, remember, perceive, connect, and grow.

You're not meant to piece this together on your own. The pathway is designed to build in order.

The developmental arc, from the ground up:

Benny the Brainstem — the foundation. Survival, regulation, the automatic body. Start here.

Bella the Cerebellum — balance, movement, rhythm, coordination.

Amy the Amygdala — the alarm system. Big feelings, fear, protection.

Hippocampus Hal — memory, meaning, and the story of "me."

Olly the Occipital Owl — sight, images, imagination, pattern.

Tammy Temporal — sound, language, and the music of a life.

Perry the Parietal — body maps, touch, space, and belonging.

Luna Lefty & Roger Righty — the two hemispheres, logic and art, list-making and daydreaming.

Callie the Connector — the bridge that lets all of it talk. Integration. Whole-brain thinking.

Each book stands on its own. Together, they form a bottom-up, trauma-informed, neurodevelopmentally-sequenced map of the human brain — written for children who are building themselves, and the grown-ups who are building alongside them.

Why the order matters. You cannot reason with a dysregulated brainstem. You cannot bridge two hemispheres that have never felt safe. The Think Like a Brain!™ pathway follows the same sequence real children use to grow: regulation first, then relationship, then reasoning. When you read these books in order — or reach for the one your child needs in the moment — you're matching the story to the layer of the brain that's doing the work.

Callie's place on the pathway. Callie sits near the top of the arc because connection is the fruit of everything below it. Children can only build strong bridges when the brainstem feels safe, the amygdala trusts the room, and the hemispheres each have something worth saying. That's why Callie works best after a child has met Benny, Amy, and the twins — and why she's the pathway's quiet culmination, not its starting line.

Disclaimer

A gentle note. The Think Like a Brain!™ series is an educational and emotional literacy companion, not a replacement for medical, psychological, or therapeutic care. These books are grounded in developmental neuroscience and trauma-informed frameworks but are not diagnostic tools, treatment plans, or clinical interventions. If a child in your care is struggling with regulation, mental health, trauma, sensory processing, or development, please reach out to a qualified pediatrician, therapist, occupational therapist, or school counselor. The grown-ups who love a child are always the first and best line of support — and the grown-ups who get trained help are the ones who keep getting stronger at it. Trust yourself. Trust your team. Trust the pathway.

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A QUIET NOTE FROM Maisel McLaula

These free pages are a small taste of something much bigger. Think Like a Brain!™ began as a love letter – to the children I’ve held, taught, and grown alongside, and to the grown-ups who stay up late worrying whether they’re getting it right. Every character, every printable, every breath script, every line of read-aloud guidance was built by hand, tested with real kids, and poured full of the thing I wish every child had: someone who believed their brain was not broken, just building.

Two ways to walk the full pathway:

The books.

Each Think Like a Brain!™ title is a complete story with its own resource pages in the back – read-aloud prompts, age-by-age questions, regulation tools, and the science behind the character, all tucked into the final pages. The books alone are enough. They’re available wherever books are sold

The Activity Packs (like this one).

These 24-page learning expansion packs are a deeper, classroom-and-clinic-ready companion to each book – role-play scripts, sorting mats, body-scan scripts, neurodivergent-affirming adaptations, parent and educator notes, and printables built to be hung, folded, and loved. The Activity Packs are exclusive to online customers at NextGenLearners.com and are not available anywhere else right now.

If this sampler was useful to a child you love, the full **Callie** Activity Pack is \$3 at NextGenLearners.com – and every pack you purchase keeps this small, independent press making more.



With so much love, Maisel McLaula NGL Publishing · NextGenLearners.com



CHARACTER CARD

About Callie

Callie is the corpus callosum – the sparkling, arched bridge of nerve fibers that connects the two sides of the brain. She has silver-white cascading hair that looks like flowing rivers, wears a shimmering gold cape, and carries a messenger bag full of letters, sticky notes, and tiny envelopes. Her job is to carry messages between Luna Lefty (the left side) and Roger Righty (the right side) so they can work together. Without Callie, the two halves wouldn't know what the other was thinking! She's quiet but essential – the brain's connector, translator, and peacemaker. When Callie is strong, ideas flow easily, emotions and logic can meet, and whole-brain thinking happens.

CALLIE'S



READ-ALOUD GUIDE

Before reading: Ask your child, “Have you ever known what you were feeling but couldn’t find the words? Or had the words but not the feeling?” Tell them Callie is the brain bridge that helps us find both.

During reading: Each time Callie carries a message, pantomime a little delivery motion with your hands. Let your child “receive” the message. Pause on connection moments and ask, “Who’s talking to whom right now?”

After reading: Ask, “What’s a message your head sends to your heart? Or your heart to your head?” Draw a bridge with a message traveling across it. Put your child’s own name on both sides.



Callie's Quote of the Day

Between your head and heart, a bridge runs true – when they talk to each other, the whole you shines through.

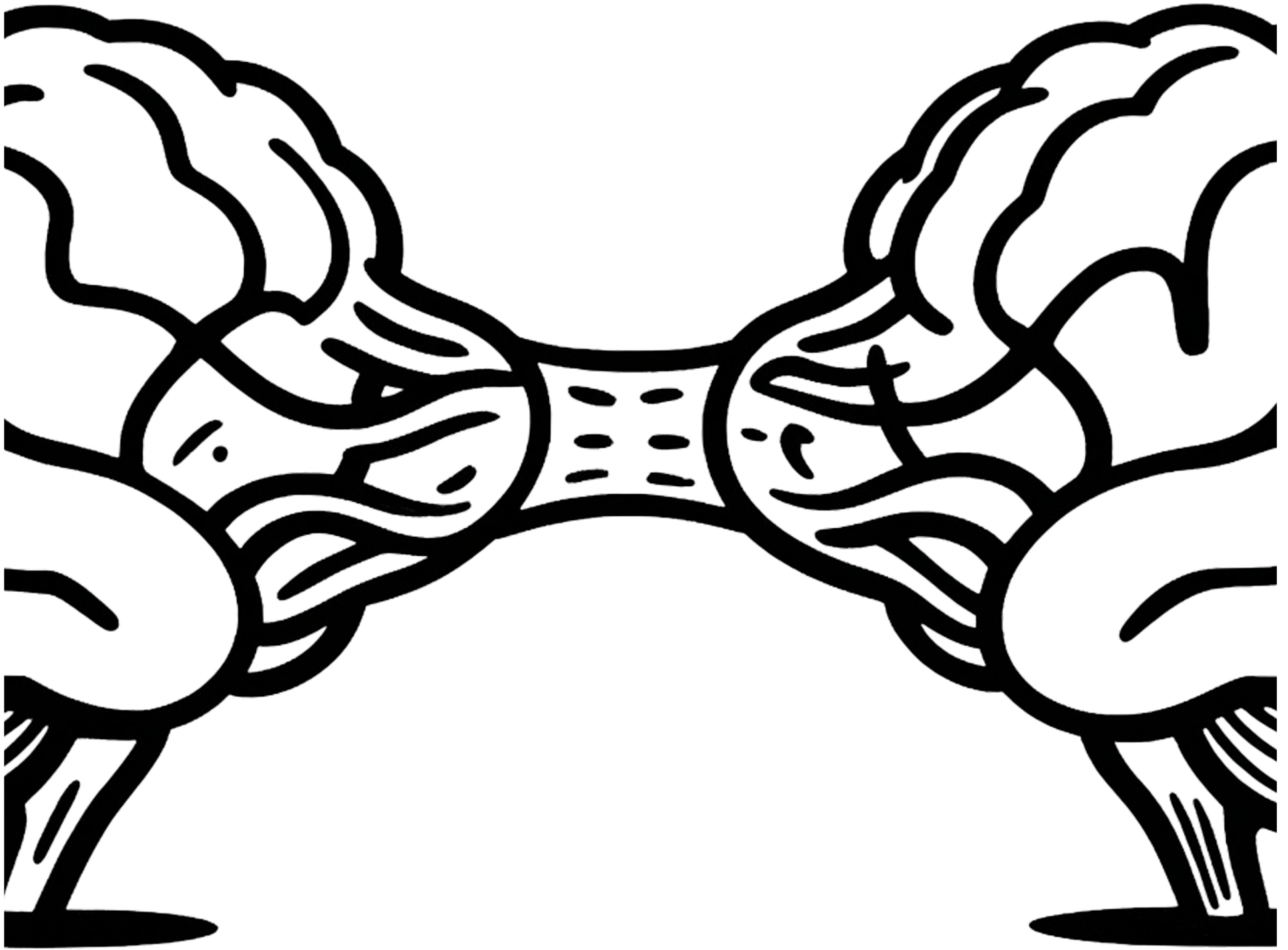
Callie's Promise



Every child who meets Callie gets the same gift: the knowledge that the space between their head and heart is not empty – it is bridged. That feelings and words can reach each other. That no part of them is alone on one side. That connection, inside and out, is a skill worth practicing their whole life long.

Callie's Brain Bridge

Color in the shimmering arch where Callie carries every message between the two sides.



What message is Callie carrying right now?

THANK YOU



WRITE TO US:

Inspire@NextGenLearners.com – suggest a future book topic. Tell us what story a child in your life is waiting for.

Press@NextGenLearners.com – for authors and creators who'd like to publish their own books with NGL.

Info@NextGenLearners.com – general questions about other collections, products, or the NextGen Learners ecosystem.

Create@NextGenLearners.com – send us your reviews, kid art, drawings, and creations inspired by the books. This is the “show us what you made“ mailbox, and it is our favorite one to open.

MaiselMcLaula@NextGenLearners.com – write directly to the author. Maisel reads every message.

STAY CONNECTED

Visit the Learning Realm at NextGenLearners.com – free printables, book news, and the full *Think Like a Brain!*™ collection live there. Sign up for the newsletter while you're there for new resources, release dates, and the occasional gentle reminder that your brain is doing just fine.

A NOTE FROM MAISEL

Thank you.

For choosing Callie. For sitting beside a child while they learned that the space between their head and their heart is crossable – that every feeling deserves a word, and every word deserves a listener. For reading slowly. For pausing when they asked questions. For trusting that stories can carry real science into a child's heart.

NGL Publishing is a small, independent imprint. Every book, printable, and free resource is made because a real child – somewhere – needed it. Your support is what keeps that going.

Share the Love

If Callie helped a child you love, tell a friend, a teacher, a therapist. Word of mouth is how small presses grow big hearts. And if you'd like to leave a review – it truly does make all the difference.

– With gratitude,

Maisel McLaula