

STICKETS

By Steve Heron

Stirling Tucker had tickets on himself, so said his grandad.

‘I’m the best!’ Stirling puffed out his chest.

Illustration - Stirling putting ‘I’m the best!’ tickets on himself

While playing football with his friends Stirling stretched high to mark the ball, but it slipped through his butter fingers. A ticket fell off.

At school, Mrs Thistle asked the class a question. Stirling was first to put his hand up, ‘I know, I know everything!’ But he got the answer wrong. Another ticket fell off.

He played checkers with his grandad and outsmarted him.

‘I won, I won, I am the checkers champ,’ he skited.

‘Looks like you’ve got tickets on yourself,’ said Grandad.

They played again, this time Grandad won. Another ticket fell off.

Stirling was playing *Zombie Aliens* on his computer with his sister.

‘I’m better than you,’ he bragged.

The *Zombie Aliens* took all his lives. Another ticket fell off.

Stirling trudged to his room and lay on his bed. He placed all the tickets that had fallen off on his chest.

His mum peeked in the doorway. 'I see you have tickets on yourself.'

'That's what Grandad said, but they keep falling off.'

'Maybe you need STICKETS, not tickets,' said Mum

'What's a TICKET?'

'One that stays on.'

'How do I get them to stay on?'

'That's something I want you to work out for yourself.' Mum winked.

At bedtime, Stirling wondered himself to sleep thinking about STICKETS.

The next morning, he tried sticking the tickets on with sticky tape. They fell off.

He tried glue. It just made a mess.

A safety pin. The tickets ripped.

He even tried a stapler but put a hole in himself.

No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't turn his tickets into STICKETS.

At school, Stirling was still wondering about STICKETS when he saw Mrs Thistle tidying the bookshelf.

'Would you like a hand?' He asked.

'Thank you Stirling, you're so helpful.' Stirling felt the word *helpful* stick in his heart.

At football, Stirling darted a great pass to his mate Tommy.

‘Great kick,’ Tommy said as he marked the ball. Tommy’s words stuck.

After school, his sister was having trouble with her homework. Stirling offered to help.

‘You’re a kind brother,’ she said. More words stuck.

He challenged his grandad to another game of checkers.

‘You’re an awesome granddad and the best checkers player.’

‘You’re pretty good yourself for a young whipper-snapper.’ Granddad’s words stuck to his heart like a STICKET.

‘Thanks, Grandad.’

Later that day Stirling was in his room. His mum came in.

‘Mum, I know how to make a ticket into a STICKET.’

‘How?’ Mum asked.

‘Whenever somebody says something kind about me, the words stick to my heart like a STICKET, and whenever I brag about something, the ticket falls off.’

‘Nailed it! Mum replied.

‘It’s better to have STICKETS, not tickets on yourself,’ Stirling said as he gave his Mum a smoochy hug and said, ‘Love you.’

‘Love you too.’ Mum’s STICKET would stay in his heart for a long, long time.

When his mum left the room, Stirling made a new STICKET.

‘I’M OKAY.’ He said to himself.

It stuck fast!

END

10 Rules for Stickets

1. Stickets may only be positive. (Build ups)
2. Any age may give or receive a sticket.
3. It's best to give a sticket in private.
4. It's okay to give a sticket in public but not to make others feel they are missing out.
5. Stickets can't be earned or given as a reward.
6. It is not respectful to remove a sticket from yourself or others once received.
7. The word, 'BUT' may never be used after a sticket is given.
8. Stickets are limitless and unconditional.
9. It's okay to give yourself a sticket.
10. Stickets are cool.