

RIKO the Robot and the words he didn't now

Oldřich Růžička

Kateřina Hikade

# RIKO

# the ROBOT

## and the words he didn't know

Oldřich Růžička  
Kateřina Hikade

Albatros



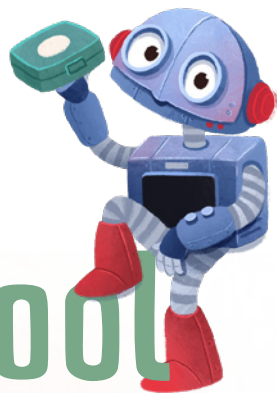
The little robot slowly straightened up.  
His eyes lit up and he looked around.  
A quiet beep sounded and a status message  
slowly typed across his screen:

```
Function>> power source... OK
Function>> movement... OK
Function>> speech... OK
Function>> emotions... Error!
Function>> emotions... Error!
Function>> emotions... Error!
<<>> ... ..
{Emotion function not found!!}
```

?????  
Emotions



# Riko at school



The next morning Riko appeared in front of the school. He wore a backpack and looked funny. In one hand he held a lunchbox.

"Ready for class," he announced importantly. The children stared. Some took pictures of him.

One girl asked, "Do you have a lunch?" "Yes," Riko answered. "The manual said it's important to have a lunch and be punctual at school."

"What's in it?" asked the boy in the blue shirt. His name was Oliver. Riko opened the box. Inside were two screws, three nuts, two springs, and a small oil can.

"An energy-balanced, crunchy lunch," he said contentedly.

"Is that lunch for a tractor?" someone cried, and the children burst out laughing. Elsie laughed the most. Then she noticed Riko had gone serious.



Your lunch...  
That was  
a surprise!

?????



She took his hand and led him into the classroom.

"We didn't mean to be mean. Your lunch... it surprised us," Elsie said once they sat at their desks. Riko was interested.

"Surprise? I haven't recorded that word. What is a surprise?"

"When something happens that no one expected and it's great," Elsie smiled.

Surprise. An unexpected thing that didn't cause an error but a smile. Maybe he'd understand it. Maybe later. He stored in his memory:

Surprise>> when something happens differently than you expected...  
Surprise>> a smile that wasn't planned...  
Surprise>> needs more investigation...



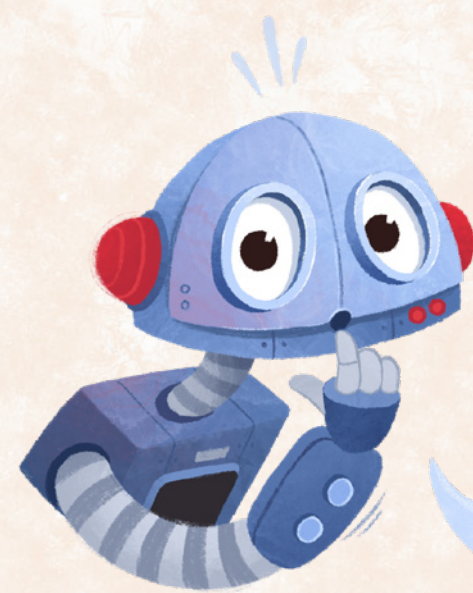
# Riko has questions



It was recess. The children took turns taking care of the classroom plants and today it was Elsie's turn. Riko watched her tilt a small watering can and let a thin stream of water soak into the soil. "I know plants need water," he said quietly. "But why do you give it to them?"

Why do people do things like this every day?" Elsie smiled. "Because when you take care of something, you help it live. And then you feel joy that it grows." Riko leaned closer. His sensors buzzed softly. "Why do people bother with things that can fail or die?" Elsie thought for a moment. "Maybe because when you take care of something, it changes you too. Not just the plant." Riko processed this in his circuits. Then a flood of questions began to pour out of him...

When you take care of something, it changes you too...

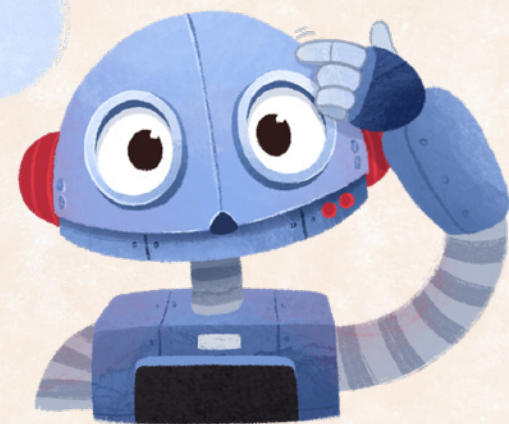


Why do people do things that aren't required?

Why do people want to help? And why does it make them happy when something works out?



Why are they sad when something is ruined?

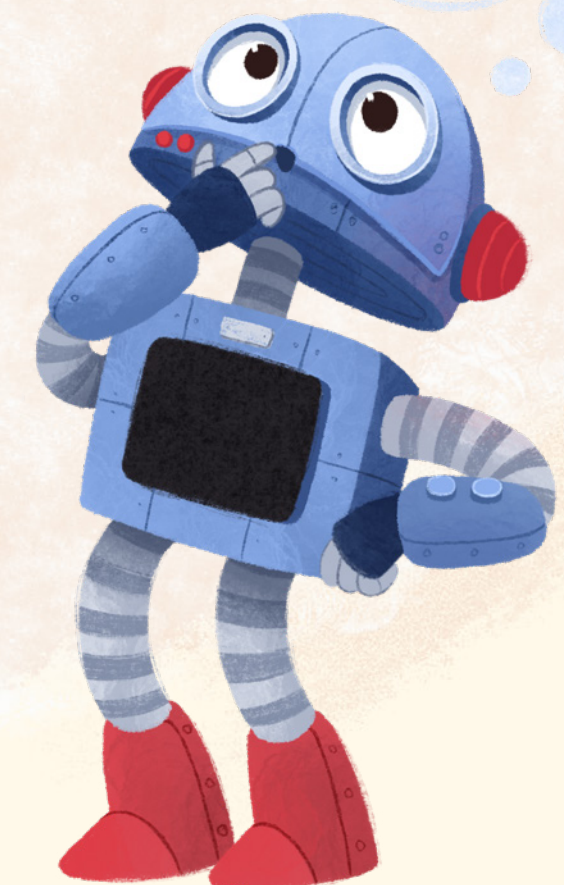


Why do they need something to take care of?

"Why, why, why... People are built that way," Elsie said quietly. "When we take care of something, it's like a little light turns on inside us. And when that light goes out, maybe because something breaks, we're sad. We help not because we must, but because it feels right."

Riko thought for a long time and then wrote into his robot memory:

Helping others>> desirable behavior  
Helping others>> the right way...  
Helping>> activates inner light...  
Helping>> not a command...  
Helping>> a choice...



# Rico the Poet



The classroom was quiet. The teacher stood by the board smiling.

"Today we'll play painters, but we won't need brushes. Each of you say one sentence that sounds so pretty it could hang in the sky or be written in a book."

The children thought. They had never had a task like that. Elsie raised her hand first: "I am the first snowflake that doesn't yet know where it will fall." Applause.

"I am the sun that strokes the trees' leaves," said Emma from the window row, and more applause followed.

"I am a cat that whispers into people's dreams at night," said Oliver from the back desk. Applause. Sentences flew through the air like colorful balloons, punctuated by claps.

Now it was Rico's turn.

"I am a robotic unit with a wide range of motion, attempting to understand human behavior under normal operating conditions," he said.

Silence. The children looked at one another. Some laughed—not cruelly, just surprised by that kind of sentence.

The teacher broke the quiet: "That was probably the first scientific poem in the school's history."

Riko looked down. For the first time he didn't feel like talking. His system printed a message:

**Surroundings' reaction**>> unexpected.  
**System reaction**>> weaker signals, rise in temperature, internal pressure, circuit overheating around the face area...  
**Feeling**>> I want to be invisible, I don't want to be here...  
**Feeling**>> I am a mistake...

I am a mistake...

Hee-hee-hee



Elsie recognized Riko was embarrassed. She put a hand on his shoulder.

"You know you didn't do anything wrong? You just spoke differently. Sometimes people laugh at what surprises them, not at who says it."

Riko nodded.

"But I don't feel good. I want to be alone. I want no one to look at me. I felt like I

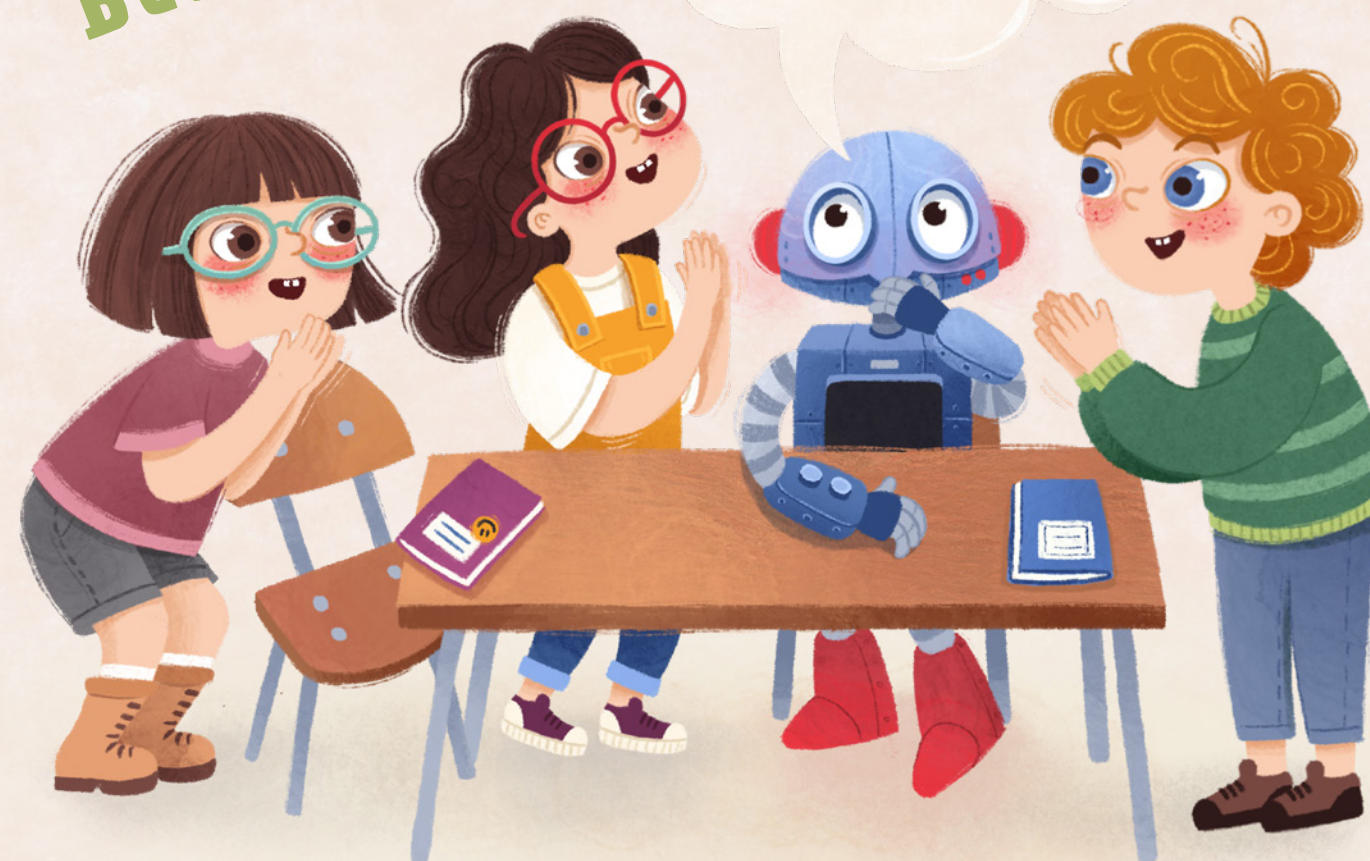
spilled hot chocolate on someone... like walking outside in pajamas... like sitting on a chair that wasn't there... I felt like a mistake again."

"That wasn't a mistake. What you felt is called embarrassment. It's a kind of shame hiding behind a smile. It happens to everyone. If you knew how many times I've been embarrassed," Elsie laughed.



Beautiful...

I am a small robot still finding where home is.



Riko felt his circuits slowly return to normal operating temperature. The internal pressure eased; the system stabilized. He didn't feel so much like a mistake anymore.

When he calmed down completely, he wrote into his memory:

**Embarrassment**>> when you think everyone sees what you did wrong...  
**Embarrassment**>> when you want to be invisible, even though you were just being yourself...  
**Embarrassment**>> when you feel the world is watching only you and you don't know what to do...

Then the teacher said, "Try again, Riko. Say a sentence that sounds like opening a window to a beautiful summer day."

Riko closed his big eyes for a moment and then quietly said, "I am a small robot who is still finding where his home is."

Riko hunched a little. A faint light blinked on his display. He expected laughter. This time no one laughed. It was quiet for a moment, then the children burst into enthusiastic applause.

# Riko and the silence in the woods



The next day the whole class went on a trip to the forest. Riko walked with the children, photographed leaves, saved them in his memory, measured air humidity, and used sounds to locate singing birds. It was an adventure full of data, exactly the kind he liked. He stopped at a strange beetle. Small, shiny, six legs, colorful spots. He wanted to examine it and search his memory. When Riko straightened up, the forest was quiet. Quiet in a different way than before. The children's footsteps were gone. Voices were gone. Laughter was

gone. The class walked on. Riko stayed still. He looked around. Trees next to trees. Trunks beside trunks. Leaves beside leaves. The same shades of green. The same light between branches.

Riko's built-in navigation tried to find direction. It failed. He lost signal.

"Signal lost," Riko said. "Searching for signal, or Wi-Fi... or at least Elsie."

Riko's system printed on the screen:

```
GPS signal>> none
Wi-Fi signal>> none
Scan surroundings>> no human units
in range...
Connection to Elsie>> lost...
Emergency mode>> activated...
System>> pressure and unknown
feeling...
{New unknown reaction detected}
```

Riko was completely alone in the deep, dark forest.

