There are 8 x 3 Sides to Every Story

By: Elliot Jackson
Sam’s birthday finally arrived. His pile of presents filled the dining room. A bike, an iPhone, and a computer lay among the scraps of wrapping paper. Expectedly, Aunt Sally gifted him with a small puzzle: a 3x3 cube called a Rubik’s cube. She explained that they were wildly popular during the 1980s when she was a 5th grader.
Sam didn’t think much of the cube, but, soon, he couldn’t put it down. He showed it to his friends, and, soon, they all had cubes, too.

Sam loved it so much that he decided to form an exclusive club: the Cube Club. His rules were simple: members must have a 3x3 cube and be able to solve it, and the club must have exactly nine members. As his friends learned to solve the cube, Sam invited them to join the club.
Yuki was new to the school and watched his classmates with their cubes at recess. He wanted to join the club, but he didn’t own a 3x3. Yuki thought of asking for one for his birthday, but his family couldn’t afford one.
One day, Yuki and his mom were shopping at garage sales when Yuki spotted a box of brightly colored puzzle cubes, including a 2x2, 4x4, 5x5, pyraminx, and many more. He used $5 of his savings to buy the box.

At school, he showed the club his new cubes, but they still wouldn’t let him join because he didn’t have a 3x3.
Yuki hung his head, and, at recess, Yuki cubed alone. He noticed though that Sam was distraught. Sam’s friends decided to participate in a speedcubing competition, and Sam was terrified that his secret would be revealed: he couldn’t actually solve a 3x3! As Sam walked past Yuki, he accidentally dropped his cube on the ground, and, in the seconds that it took for Yuki to return it to Sam, Yuki solved it.

“How did you do that?” Sam inquired.
“Well, it’s easy if you understand algorithms,” Yuki explained.
“Can you teach me how to solve it?”
“Don’t you already know how to solve it?” probed Yuki, puzzled.
“Well...yeah...but I just wanted to see your method,” Sam fibbed.
“Sure,” Yuki agreed, suspiciously, and, soon, Sam could solve the cube using Yuki’s method.
At the competition, Sam’s teammates were amazed when the results were announced: Sam had come second. The team was thunderstruck that Yuki had won first place. Sam explained that the team needed Yuki for the next competition. The team wasn’t happy with the idea and argued that the rules of the club would have to change. Sam eventually persuaded them to let Yuki join, and, amazingly, also convinced them to play with all kinds of puzzles.

Yuki was overjoyed to be part of the team, and Sam felt ecstatic that his team was stronger. Sam realized that his true gift was learning that making others feel accepted was more satisfying than solving a Rubik’s cube.