

## The Way of the Donkey



## Donkeys Are Kind

- Donkeys scratch each other's back



## The Way

- Donkeys have many traits that social scientists tell us help people
  - Feel happy
  - Feel empowered
  - Respond effectively in stressful situations

## Donkeys Use Their Strengths

- Donkeys like to learn new things



## Donkeys have Good Friends

- Donkeys bond with “special friends”



## Donkeys are Thankful

- Especially if you bring carrots



## If Unsure, Donkeys Stop

- And stay focused



## The Way of the Donkey

- Connections
- Kindness
- Strengths
- Gratitude
- Self-regulation
- Presence
- Problem-solving

## They Hold Themselves Tall

- Because this is how they show strength



## Positive Psychology

- The Positive Psychology Center
  - Positive Psychology is the scientific study of the strengths and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive. The field is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play.

## They Think Things Through

- “I don’t want to jump”



## Trauma Informed Care

- Critical for any young person who has experienced trauma or Adverse Childhood Experience
  - Important for all young people
- Resilience ~ “staying calm and in control when faced with a challenge” ~ can help to ameliorate the negative impact of adverse childhood experiences

## Bullying Prevention

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- Internationally recognized expert in bullying and cyberbullying prevention



- <http://embracecivility.org>

## Those Who Witness

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- To increase stepping in to help
  - Positive connections with others
  - Encourage acts of kindness
  - Build personal strengths
  - Gain personal power by standing tall
  - Problem-solve to determine best strategy

## Those who are Bullied

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- One close friend reduces negative impact
- Engaging in kind acts increases acceptance
- Are perceived to be weak
  - Building strengths and gratitude supports positive energy
  - Standing tall is critically important
- Self-regulation and problem-solving if treated badly is essential



Connect with Friends

## Those Who Are Hurtful

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- Impulsive retaliation is a key source of bullying behavior
  - Self regulation reduces impulsivity
  - Problem-solving can reduce retaliation

## Connect with Friends

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- Donkeys love their best “buddy”
  - To be a good friend think about how the other person feels and treat the person the way you would like to be treated
- Who did you connect with today?

## Connections

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- Important for healthy development
  - Gain social skills
  - Learn to control emotions
  - Recognize and respond to emotions of others
  - Negotiate different situations
  - Reduced distress if hurtful situations occur

## Reach Out to be Kind

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- Donkeys scratch each other's back
  - When you reach out to be kind to others this makes them feel great ~ and you also!
- How did you reach out to be kind today?

## Mentor Tips

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- Provide opportunities to get together in person with friends
- Encourage focus on "The Golden Rule"
- Help take other people's perspectives
- Support to explore their interests
- Set clear expectations for how they will interact with others

## Kindness

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- Giving to others increases happiness
- Reaching out to be kind to others can increase peer acceptance
- Being kind to others generally results in a positive response



Reach Out to be Kind

## Mentor Tips

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- Adult modeling of kindness to others
- Encourage acts of kindness to others
  - May require private practice or discussion
- Pocket Full of Pennies
  - 5 pennies in left pocket, do act of kindness, transfer to right pocket, discuss at end of day



Build Your Strengths

## Mentor Tips

- Complete survey on character strengths
- Pay attention when using strength
- Daily practice of using strength
- Discuss how they used strength
- If a challenging situation, discuss how to respond using a strength
- Develop new strengths

## Build Your Strengths

- Donkeys like to learn new things
  - When you use your personal strengths to do new things this makes you feel empowered
- What did you do today that you are proud of?



Be Thankful

## Character Strengths

*Creativity* *Curiosity* **Judgment** *Love of Learning*  
**Wisdom** **Bravery** *Perseverance* *Honesty* *Zest*  
 LOVE *Kindness* *Social intelligence*  
**TEAMWORK** **Fairness** *Leadership* *Forgiveness*  
*Humility* *Prudence* **SELF-CONTROL**  
*Appreciation of Excellence* *Gratitude* **HOPE**  
*Humor* *Spirituality*



## Be Thankful

- Donkeys are thankful when they receive treats ~ especially carrots
  - Being thankful for the good things makes you feel happy
- What happened today that you are thankful for?

## Gratitude

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- Social, physical, and psychological benefits
  - Brings happiness and reduces anxiety
  - Good for physical well-being
  - Resilience, strengthens relationships, encourages forgiveness
  - Greater life satisfaction and positive emotion
  - Greater feelings of connectedness



## Mentor Tips

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- Regularly ask what good things happened
- Encourage them to be grateful

## Stop and Stay Focused

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- Donkeys don't run or fight or freeze
- Spend a few minutes each day becoming very calm and focused
  - Close your eyes, take deep breaths, and feel your body relax
- If something happens that upsets you, take a deep breath and calm yourself

## If Things Get Tough

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- If donkeys become unsure or afraid, they do these things ...

## Self-Regulation

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- The practice of mindfulness helps people achieve calm and focus
- Documented effectiveness in addressing stress related concerns
- Regular practice increases skills for situations of stress

## Mentor Tips

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- Kindergartners explain mindfulness



"Just Breathe" by Julie Bayer Salzman & Josh Salzman (Wavecrest Films)

## Stand Tall

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- Donkeys stand tall and look powerful
  - Making yourself stand tall will help you feel strong
- Practice "feeling small" and then "standing tall" and feel the difference
  - Always remember to "stand tall," especially if you are facing a challenge or are upset

## Mentor Tips

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- Encourage daily practice
- Discuss the importance of calming before acting in stressful situations

## Presence

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- Hurtful situations generally involve a difference in social power
  - Those perceived as weak are targeted
- Adopting a physical pose of "power" communicates personal power
  - And helps the person feel more powerful
- You can "fake it" to "make it"



Stand Tall

## Mentor Tips

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**Your body language shapes who you are**

TEDGlobal 2012 - 21:02 - Filmed Jun 2012



Disney's Frozen "Let It Go"



## Mentor Tips

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- Have young people practice “feeling small” and then “standing tall”
- Remind them to “stand tall”

## Problem Solving

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- Young people who have problem-solving skills are less likely to engage in risk behavior and more resilient in figuring out how to respond to challenges
  - Assess situation and identify objective
  - Identify strategies and consider possible outcomes
  - Implement strategy and evaluate effectiveness



Think Things Through

## Mentor Tips

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- Rather than step in to solve problems, assist young people in figuring out how to resolve the situation by themselves
- Integrate with character strengths

## Think Things Through

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- Donkeys think things through
  - They figure out what is best to do
- Ask yourself these questions
  - What has actually happened? What is my goal in this situation? What powerful positive actions I could take that use my strengths? Is each action in accord with my values? For each action, what might happen? What is my best first choice? If this does not work, what else could I do?

## Mentor Tips

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- What has actually happened?
- What is my goal in this situation?
- What powerful positive actions I could take that use my strengths?
- Is each action in accord with my values?
- For each action, what might happen?
- What is my best first choice?
- If this does not work, what else could I do?

# Journal

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- What fun thing did you do with a friend today?
- How did you reach out to be kind?
- What did you do to build on your strengths?
- What were you thankful for today?
- Did you need to focus on stopping yourself and thinking things through? What happened? How did you respond? How do you think this worked?