



# The Way of the Donkey

## DonkeyEEAW ~ Donkey Enabled Empowerment and Wisdom

Donkeys have many wonderful traits. Donkeys are very friendly and exceptionally smart. Donkeys are very laid back, but also very self-protective and they have a mind of their own. Donkeys are very intuitive and have an excellent sense of how others are feeling.

Positive psychology, also called the "science of happiness," provides insight into strategies people can use to live more happy and empowered lives and respond effectively in stressful situations. Amazingly, it appears that donkeys already know these ways.

### The Seven Ways of the Donkey

**Connect With Friends** Donkeys are known to bond very closely with a "buddy."

Friendships help you feel connected and happy. Interacting with friends requires many important skills, such as communicating, cooperating, solving problems, controlling your emotions, responding to other's emotions, and negotiating. It is also helpful to have friendships with several "trusted adults."

- Conduct a "friendship audit." Who are your friends? What is the quality of your friendships? Are you friends with several "trusted adults" who you can talk to, especially if things get tough?
- The best way to make new friends is by connecting with others doing activities that you enjoy. Focus on having fun doing what you like to do ~ and seek to connect with others who like the same things.
- Strive to understand other people's perspectives. Put yourself in their shoes. Always remember "the golden rule." ~ treating others as you would like to be treated.

**Reach Out To Be Kind** Donkeys reach out and scratch each other's back. This helps them keep positive relationships.

Being kind to others promotes happiness ~ for them and you. When you reach out to be kind to others this makes them happy and also makes you feel good about yourself. Being kind also will lead to kind responses and help you to form better relationships.

- Set yourself a daily goal of reaching out to be kind to someone who appears to be distressed, someone you don't know, or someone who is outside of your social group. Note how this person responds. Note how happy this makes you feel. Strive to reach out to be kind at least five times a day.
- If you see someone being treated badly, one of the best things you can do is reach out to be kind to them.

**Build Your Strengths** Donkeys are very curious and like to learn new things.

One of the most important things you can do is build your strengths, especially character strengths. These are important character strengths: creativity, curiosity, judgment, love of learning, perspective and wisdom, bravery, perseverance, honesty, zest, love, kindness, social intelligence, teamwork, fairness, leadership, forgiveness, humility, prudence, self-control, appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humor, spirituality. (Take the survey at: <http://viacharacter.org> to find out your personal strengths.)

- Every day strive to use your personal strengths and building new strengths.

**Be Thankful** Donkeys are thankful when they receive treats, especially carrots. ;)

Being thankful for the good things that happen in your life can help you feel happier and appears to lead to more good things happening. Gratitude makes us more resilient, strengthens relationships, and promotes forgiveness. People who practice gratitude report greater happiness in their life and more positive emotions They feel more connected to their family, school, and community.

- Whenever something happens that makes you feel happy, take the time to be thankful ~ and bring that feeling inside of you.
- Every evening, think about and be thankful for the great things that happened during the day.

If things get tough... When faced with a possible threat, donkeys stop and stay calm, stand tall, think things through, and then respond.

**Stop and Stay Calm** Donkeys do not usually act impulsively or overreact.

The practice of mindfulness helps people achieve calmness and focus. Research has documented that practicing being mindful every day results in improved well-being, social skills, emotional regulation, and academic or work performance.

- Spend a few minutes each morning and evening becoming very calm and focused. Close your eyes. Take deep breaths. Relax. Hold onto that feeling of calm. Whenever you walk into class after a break, after sitting down, take a couple of minutes to calm.
- If something happens that starts to upset you, the first thing to do is take a deep breath and focus on remaining calm.

**Stand Tall** Donkeys stand tall and have presence.

If you hold yourself tall and walk with pride, you are more likely to be perceived as successful and competent ~ and less likely to be treated badly. Simply standing tall creates a perception that you have personal power. You can actually "fake it" by standing tall even if you are feeling small. By standing tall this will help you feel more confident. Also, realize that while you cannot control what might happen to you, you always have the ability to control how you think about yourself and respond.

- Practice "feeling small" and then "standing tall." Note the difference in how you feel. Every morning, take a moment to "stand tall" before you begin your day.
- Remind yourself to stand tall throughout the day. This is especially important if you feel stressed, are challenged by another person, or have something important to do ~ like take a test.
- If something bad happens, think to yourself, "I will not allow what happened or give anyone the power to control how I feel about myself or the way I will respond."

**Think Things Through** If donkeys are in a strange or dangerous situation, they think things through to decide what to do.

If you need to figure out what to do, ask yourself these questions: What has actually happened? What is my goal in this situation? What several powerful positive actions I could take that use my personal 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?

- Know how to handle situations if something goes wrong: Stop and stay calm, and take a positive action to remove yourself. Then think things through to decide what else you might need to do.
- Know how to handle situations if you made a mistake or hurt someone: Stop and walk away, calm yourself, think things through to figure out why you did what you did and how to accept personal responsibility. Then stand tall and take steps to make things right.

## The Way of the Donkey

The Way of the Donkey is a service located in Lane County Oregon. We:

- Promote The Way of the Donkey as an approach to foster positive empowerment of kids and teens (and adults also).
- Will develop, implement, and evaluate a variety of Donkey Assisted Life Coaching activities. Take our donkeys to schools, special education classrooms, senior centers, and other places.
- Offer life affirming and caring services that can bring in income to support our Donkey Assisted Life Coaching activities ~ including Donkey Birthday Parties, Visits, Weddings, and Events!

Please visit our web site at <http://donkeyeeaw.org> to find out more!

Email: [info@donkeyeeaw.org](mailto:info@donkeyeeaw.org).

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