



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. 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 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 from others 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 to another 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 and do things that make you proud to be you. Have the courage to become who you really are. Follow your interests and dreams. Keep at it, even when things get tough. Work through your problems — persevere. Welcome failure, this means that you tried. Become a little better each and every day. Break through your barriers by doing what you are afraid of doing. Remember, life is a journey, not a race. Believe you can do hard things. Keep following your dreams.

- Every day strive to do something that makes you proud, use your personal strengths, and build new strengths.

Be Thankful Donkeys are thankful when they receive treats, especially carrots, scratches or hugs. ;)

Being thankful for the good things that happen in your life can help you feel happier. Expressing your thanks 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 happy feeling inside of you.
- Every evening, think about and be thankful for the great things that happened during your 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. Do a happiness meditation. As you take the time to be calm think: I had a positive connection with ... I reached out to be kind to ... I am proud that I ... I am happy that ...
- If something happens that starts to upset you, the first thing to do is take a deep breath and focus on remaining calm. Then, stand tall and think things through.

Stand Tall Donkeys are prey animals. Other animals could eat them. They stand tall to appear more powerful.

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 an appearance that you have personal power. You can actually “fake it” by standing tall even if you are feeling small. By reminding yourself to stand 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 walk out the door to 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 give anyone the power to control how I feel about myself or the way I will respond.”

Think Things Through Donkeys are very smart. They think things through to decide what to do.

If you need to figure out what to do, ask yourself these questions: What has happened? What is my goal in this situation? What several powerful positive actions I could take that use my personal strengths? For each action, what might happen? What is my best first choice? If this does not work, what else could I do?

- If something goes wrong or of someone has teased you badly, take these steps: Stop and breathe slowly to remain calm. Stand tall to keep your personal power. Take a positive action to leave the situation. Think things through to decide what else to do. Talk with a friend or trusted adult to get support or assistance.
- Know how to handle situations if you made a mistake and were hurtful to someone: Stop and walk away. Calm yourself. Think things through to figure out why you did what you did and how you can accept personal responsibility. Not make excuses for your hurtful behavior. Stand tall and take steps to make things right by telling the person that you are sorry and will not be hurtful again.
- If you witness someone being treated badly, be a kind leader and step in to help. Depending on the situation, you can: Talk to the person treated badly later to provide them support and help them to think things through to figure out what to do. Ignore the person being hurtful and help the person being treated badly to walk away. Encourage the person being hurtful to stop and make things right. If your friend has been hurtful, strongly encourage them to stop and make things right — and consider whether you want to remain friends. Report serious or unresolved concerns to an adult who can help.

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