

CHARACTER BUILDING LESSONS

CARL SOMMER

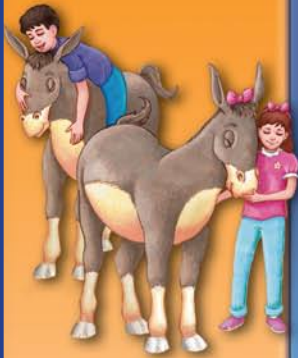
TIED UP IN KNOTS

About the Book

Benny and Sally don't mind doing their farm chores and caring for their mules, but they absolutely refuse to share. Their mules, Bossy and Stiffy, imitate their owners' selfish ways by stubbornly refusing to let anyone else ride them, and fussing whenever they work together doing farm work.

Dad needs to teach the mules a lesson. He ties them together which forces them to learn to cooperate in order to eat. After much struggling, the mules learn to work together, and teach their owners Benny and Sally that sharing brings happiness.

This delightful story by Carl Sommer shows the importance of cooperation, tolerance and respect.



Main Virtues

**Cooperation/Tolerance/
Respect**

Other Virtues

Appreciation, Caring, Cheerfulness, Compassion, Courtesy, Fairness, Friendship, Humility, Justice, Kindness, Obedience to Parents, and Patience



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Cooperation—Sharing With Others

Benny and Sally liked growing up on the farm. There were lots of things to do.

First they would work, and then they would play. But there was one thing they would not do. Benny and Sally would not share.

Only Benny could play with Benny's toys...and only Sally could play with Sally's toys.

Notice as you read this story how many problems occur because Benny and Sally refuse to cooperate and share with one another.

Being Kind and Compassionate

When Mom heard Benny and Sally yelling and fussing, she would tell them, "Be kind to one another."

Imagine how much happier Benny and Sally's home would have been if they had been kind and compassionate with each other. Instead when they were around, there was constant fussing and complaining.

Sharing Brings Happiness

Benny and Sally refused to listen to their mom when she said, "Remember, sharing brings happiness." They thought that sharing would make them unhappy.

Tolerance, Complaining and Arguing

Benny and Sally were constantly complaining and arguing with each other because they could not tolerate each other. They could have solved the problem so easily by letting the other mule go first. But they stubbornly refused. What is the end result of this lifestyle of intolerance? They are very unhappy, and they destroy each other with their words.

Listening to Parents

When Benny and Sally saw that the mules had solved their problem by sharing, Benny said, "How simple! They learned to share."

Then Sally asked, "Why didn't we think of that?"

The reason they didn't think of it was because they refused to listen to their parents.

Respecting and Loving One Another

Though the lesson came from a couple of mules, Benny and Sally never forgot what they learned that day. Being selfish and stubborn makes you sad and gets you...tied up in knots. But sharing brings happiness. Now they respected one another and were friendly.

Benny and Sally finally learned to respect and love each other instead of being selfish and stubborn. When they did that they found their happiness.

Try it, and you'll get the same results.

How to Live an Unhappy Life

Be selfish and never share your toys with anyone.

Always try to make yourself happy, and never think about making anyone else happy.

Never be kind to anyone, except yourself.

Always argue and complain.

Never listen to your parents or teachers.

Be stubborn by insisting on having things your way.

Never give in, even when you are wrong.

Think of all kinds of excuses for why you should have it your way. (Sally said, "Ladies first." Benny said, "The oldest should go first.")

Reject any advice you don't like.

Follow these principles and you will live an unhappy life.

How to Live a Happy Life

Share your toys with others.

Think of ways to make others happy.

Be kind to others.

Listen to your parents and teachers.

Don't argue and complain.

Obey your parents and teachers.

Learn to listen to others. Sometimes others are right.

Admit it when you are wrong.

Don't be stubborn by always insisting on doing things your way.

Do to others what you would have them do to you.

Follow these principles and you'll live a happy life.

Questions

1. What was the first thing Benny and Sally would do on the farm?

The first thing Benny and Sally did was work.

2. What did Benny and Sally do after they had worked?

Benny and Sally would play.

3. A. What was one thing that Benny and Sally would not do?

Benny and Sally would not share.

B. Why did Benny and Sally not share?

Benny and Sally did not share because they were selfish.

Benny and Sally thought only about themselves; they did not think of others. Notice in this story how many problems occurred because Benny and Sally refused to share.

4. Who could only play with Benny's toys?

Only Benny could play with Benny's toys.

5. Who could only play with Sally's toys?

Only Sally could play with Sally's toys.

6. What would Sally cry out if Benny asked to ride on her mule?

Sally would cry out, "No! That's my mule! I'm not sharing!"

7. What would Benny do and say when Sally had one of his toys?

Benny would grab the toy and yell, "Give it to me! That's not your toy!"

8. What did Benny and Sally's mom tell them when she heard them yelling and fussing?

Benny and Sally's mom told them, "Be kind to one another. Remember, sharing brings happiness."

9. When Benny and Sally heard their mother say, "Sharing brings happiness,"

A. What did Benny and Sally do?

Benny and Sally would not listen.

B. What did Benny and Sally think that sharing would do to them?

Benny and Sally thought that sharing would make them unhappy.

C. Why does sharing bring happiness?

When we share we make others happy. This in turn makes us happy.

10. How did the mules Bossy and Stiffy begin to act compared to their owners?

Bossy and Stiffy had become just like their owners—not very friendly, and not very kind.

The mules began to imitate their owners. Your action influences others.

11. How did the mules act when Dad tried to use them?

The mules acted just like Benny and Sally—they would only fuss and fight.

12. Why did the mules fuss and fight?

The mules fussed and fought because they did not want to work together and share the load.

13. What did Dad say when Mom asked, "Haven't those mules learned yet that sharing brings happiness"?

Dad said, "I guess not. But I think it's time to teach them."

14. What did Dad do with the ropes?

Dad quietly tied the ends of the ropes together around the sleeping mules.

15. What happened to the knots on the rope as the mules pulled harder and harder to get their food?

The knots got tighter and tighter.

16. Why could Benny not untie the knots?

Benny could not untie the knots because they were too tight.

17. What did Benny say when Sally said, “Get Bossy to come to the middle so Stiffy can eat”?

Benny said, “Why should your mule eat first?”

18. What did Sally say when Benny asked, “Why should your mule eat first?”

Sally said, “Ladies first!”

19. What did Benny say when Sally said, “Ladies first!”

Benny said, “But my mule is older. The oldest should eat first!”

Benny and Sally are constantly complaining and arguing with each other. They could have solved the problem so easily by letting the other mule go first. But they stubbornly refused. What is the end result of this lifestyle? They are miserable and very unhappy—they are destroying each other with their words.

20. Why are people unhappy when they are fussing and fighting with one another?

People fussing and fighting with one another are unhappy because they are trying to get the other person angry. The other person they are arguing with is also doing the same. So a battle goes on.

21. What did Benny get from the barn?

Benny got cutters from the barn.

22. What was Bossy and Stiffy doing when Sally yelled, “Look”?

Bossy and Stiffy were tied up in knots and eating.

23. What did Sally ask when Benny said, “How simple! They learned to share”?

Sally asked, “Why didn’t we think of that.”

24. Why didn’t Benny or Sally think of sharing?

The reason Benny and Sally didn’t think of sharing was because they didn’t

listen to their mother.

If Benny and Sally had listened to their mother they would have learned that sharing brings happiness.

25. What did Benny and Sally share when the two mules were untied?

Benny and Sally shared a swing.

26. What lesson did Benny and Sally learn that day?

That day Benny and Sally learned that being selfish and stubborn makes you sad and gets you...tied up in knots. But sharing brings happiness.

Aim to make others happy, and you'll discover it will make you happy.