



CHARACTER BUILDING LESSONS

SOMMER-TIME STORIES

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THE DONKEY, THE FOX, AND THE LION

Story Description

Mom and Dad Fox try to set a healthy example for triplets Freddy, Fay, and Flip. Even though Mom cooks nutritious meals, Freddy prefers to stuff himself with sugary treats and refuses to participate in healthy family exercise. One bad choice leads to another, and in spite of Dad and Mom's efforts, Freddy finds himself part of a crooked gang of foxes. When the leader recruits Freddy as a decoy to help him outwit a lion and a donkey, the plan backfires.

Is Freddy too chubby to get away? This retelling of Aesop's classic fable reminds readers that parents always have their children's best interests at heart.



Main Character Traits

Healthy Living / Respect for Parents / Picking Good Friends

Other Character Traits

Listening to Good Advice, Courage to Stand for What's Right, Following Rules, and Honesty

Contents

Healthy Eating	Honesty, Courage to Stand for What's Right
Exercising	Lack of Exercise
Picking Good Friends	Listening and Respecting Parents

Healthy Eating

The triplets, Freddy, Fay, and Flip, had lots of fun as a family. Dad and Mom loved their children and taught them how to be good, healthy, and strong. Dad provided meat for the family and Mom took care of the vegetable garden. Mom liked to give her children meat and vegetables so they would be strong and healthy. Fay and Flip loved Mom's cooking, but Freddy often complained, "I hate eating vegetables."

"If you want to grow up and be as fast as Dad," warned Mom, "you need to eat your vegetables."

But Freddy did not listen. One night when Dad walked into his room, Freddy had almost eaten a whole box of cookies. "Look at me," Freddy said, "I'm bigger than Flip and Fay, and I don't eat vegetables."

"Yes, you're bigger," said Dad, "but not stronger. You're overweight because you eat lots of cookies, cake, and candy. If you keep eating like that, you'll never be strong and healthy."

Fay and Flip were healthy because they ate Mom's meat and vegetables. However, Freddy refused to eat healthy and instead ate cookies, cake, and candy. Not only does healthy eating keep people from being overweight, it helps them not to have heart problems, diabetes, strokes, and other health issues.

Exercising

"We need to learn how to run fast to get our food and to run from our enemies," Dad warned his children. To help his children run fast, Dad often had races in the forest. Fay and Flip ran fast with Dad.

However, Freddy always groaned, "Ohhhhh! I'm tired. I want to sit down and rest." But Freddy did not know that what he was doing would one day get him into lots of trouble.

In order to be healthy, it is also important to exercise. Lack of exercise leads to many health issues.

Following Rules and Healthy Living—Not Smoking

One day Mom got a note from school that Freddy was smoking in the restroom. When Dad came home, he asked Freddy, "What happened at school today?"

"Honest Dad, I didn't smoke. My friend was smoking in the restroom. When a teacher came in, he quickly gave me the cigarette to put into the toilet. I didn't smoke."

Dad and Freddy went to the school. Dad told the principal what Freddy had said. The principal called in the teacher who had reported him.

When the teacher came in, he said, "I went into the restroom and found Freddy and his friend with cigarettes in their hands."

"But I wasn't smoking," insisted Freddy.

"Then why was there smoke in the restroom and smoke on your breath?" asked the teacher.

Freddy looked down and never said a word.

“Thank you for letting me know,” said Dad. “He will be punished when he gets home.”

That night Dad said to his children, “I’ve warned you many times that smoking is bad for your health. Often children who begin smoking end up drinking, taking drugs, and doing other things that harm their bodies.”

Mom added, “Some of those children will suffer their whole lives because of the foolish things they did when they were young.”

But Freddy did not listen.

Freddy did not respect or obey his parents’ advice not to smoke. Freddy did not think about the harmful effects that smoking has on people. If he continued to smoke, he could get lung cancer. In addition, smoking cigarettes often often leads to a lifestyle of drinking alcohol, taking drugs, and doing other harmful activities.

Picking Good Friends

Mack, the leader of a gang, asked Freddy, “How about joining our gang?”

“I’d love to,” said Freddy as he turned his cap around to look like the other gang members.

When he came home, he bragged to Flip and Fay, “Mack picked *me* to be one of his friends.”

“Mack is the leader of the gang,” said Fay. “You know what Dad said about joining gangs.”

“I’m not going to do anything bad,” said Freddy.

Two weeks later, Mack asked Freddy, “Would you go with me? I’d love to get some meat to eat.”

“Sure!” exclaimed Freddy. Freddy felt it was a great honor that only *he* was picked out of all the gang members.

Mack said to Freddy, “Yesterday I met a donkey on the other side of the hill. I asked him, ‘How’s it going?’

“‘All I get to eat is dried hay,’ complained the donkey.”

“What did you say?” asked Freddy.

“I told the donkey that we have lots of green grass where we live. When the donkey heard that, he let out a loud groan, ‘Ohhhhh! How I wish I could eat that green grass. But I can’t go over the hill. There’s a big lion that lives there, and he’ll attack me.’”

“But how can we get that donkey?” asked Freddy.

“I asked the donkey, ‘If I find a secret way for you to get to the green grass where you can be sure the lion will not catch you, would you go?’

“‘I’d leave right away!’ the donkey exclaimed.”

Freddy scratched his head and said, “I still don’t understand.”

“We’ll go to the lion and say, ‘If we help you get a donkey, would you give us one of his legs?’”

“Lions eat foxes, too,” said Freddy.

“But we’re so little compared to a donkey. If we get him a big donkey, I’m sure he’ll give us a leg.”

“Let’s go,” said Freddy. “I’d love to have a donkey feast.”

Going against the warnings of his parents, Freddy chose friends who smoked and who were in gangs. The leader of the gang even chose Freddy for a special undertaking. Freddy allowed himself to be fooled because of being specially chosen. Many people get involved in crimes and drugs because they want to be part of a group. It is important to refuse to go along with the group if they are doing something wrong.

Honesty and Courage to Stand for What's Right

Early the next morning, Freddy and Mack went to the donkey. "Are you ready to eat the rich green grass?" asked Mack.

"Let's go!" exclaimed the happy donkey.

"Just follow me along my secret way. You can trust us. There'll be no lion."

As they walked, the donkey said, "This is wonderful! Today I'll eat rich green grass. Thank you so much! You're such a good friend."....

When they got close to the rock, suddenly there was a loud, "Roarrrrr!"

"Quick!" shouted Mack to the donkey. "That's a lion! Jump into the pit! We'll get you out later."

Quickly, the scared donkey jumped into the pit.

"Great!" shouted Mack. "Everything worked just as I had planned."

When the lion came to the pit, Mack stuck out his chest and boasted, "There's the donkey we promised. Now give us a leg."

When the lion saw the donkey in the pit, he said, "Mmmmm! This is good. I see the donkey can't get out of the pit."

Freddy should have had the courage to be honest with the donkey instead of helping to trick him. By participating in this deception, Freddy put himself in great danger. Many times participating in dishonest endeavors will lead to dangerous situations.

Lack of Exercise

When Freddy and Mack heard that, they knew the lion was going to eat them first. They dashed away as fast as they could. Seeing that Freddy was the slowest, the lion ran after him.

"Ohhhhh!" groaned Freddy as he dashed away. "How I wish I had listened to Dad so I could run faster."

Just as the lion was about to get Freddy, Freddy saw a deep hole. He quickly jumped into the hole. Freddy was scared. Then he remembered what Dad had warned him over and over again, "You need to eat right and learn to run fast so you can get away from your enemies."

When the lion could not get Freddy, he turned around and searched for Mack. But the lion could not find him. Meanwhile Mack raced home. When Mack got back to his friends, he boasted, "I was so fast that even a big lion could not get *me*, but he did get slowpoke Freddy."

After the lion was gone, Freddy climbed out of the hole. On the way home, he met a friend who told him what Mack had said about him being a slowpoke. Freddy was furious. "How stupid of me!"

Freddy's lack of exercise had made him a very slow runner which was

why Mack wanted Freddy to go with him. If the lion chased them, Freddy would be the one to get caught. Freddy finally realized that Mack was just using him, but it was almost too late. The lion almost caught and killed Freddy. A true friend sticks by a friend who is in trouble and does not try to get the friend into trouble.

Listening and Respecting Parents

When Freddy saw Dad and Mom, he gave them a big hug and said, “I’m so sorry for not listening.”

From that day on Freddy ate right, exercised, studied hard, and picked good friends. He finally discovered that it’s always best to listen to Dad and Mom, even when you think they are wrong.

Freddy finally learned his lesson and learned that his parents gave good advice. After his encounter with the lion, Freddy decided to eat healthy, exercise, study hard, choose good friends, and always listen to his parents! He knew that this was the only way to live a healthy, happy, and successful life!

Questions

1. What did Mom feed the triplets so they would be strong and healthy? *She fed them meat and vegetables.*

2. How did the triplets like the meat and vegetables? *Fay and Flip loved Mom’s cooking, but Freddy complained about eating vegetables.*

3. What did Freddy eat one night? *He ate almost a whole box of cookies.*

4. Why was Freddy overweight? *He mostly ate cookies, cake, and candy.*

5. How did Dad help the triplets learn how to run fast to get food and to run from enemies? *They had races in the forest.*

6. What did Freddy do instead of racing? *He sat down and rested a lot.*

7. Why do you think Freddy insisted that he wasn’t smoking in the restroom? *He didn’t want to get in trouble. He also may not have had the cigarette in his mouth when the teacher caught him, so he considered that not smoking, but he really was.*

8. At the park, Freddy told Dad something that shocked Dad. What was it? *Freddy said that all of his friends smoked.*

9. What did Dad and Mom remind Freddy about picking good friends? *Dad said, “How many times have I warned you to pick good friends? Good friends will help you. Bad friends will lead you into trouble.” He also said, “They’re having fun now, but some will become drug addicts and alcoholics because of what they are now doing. We want you to choose good friends so you’ll have a successful life.” Mom said, “The friends you pick often show*

what you will become.”

10. What do you think Dad had told Freddy about joining a gang? *He probably told him that gangs will get you into trouble and maybe even into prison.*

11. When Mack, the gang leader, asked Freddy to go with him to get meat, what did Freddy think about it? *He felt honored that Mack had picked him out of all the gang members.*

12. Did Freddy realize that he might be in danger when he went with Mack to make a deal with the lion? *Yes, because he said that lions eat foxes, too.*

13. Why did Freddy ignore the danger? *He wanted to eat some of the donkey and he wanted to please the gang leader.*

14. Why do you think the donkey trusted Mack and Freddie? *He was probably so focused on the green grass he wanted that he ignored the danger.*

15. How did Mack and Freddy realize that the lion was going to eat them first? *They realized it when the lion said, “Mmmmm! This is good. I see the donkey can’t get out of the pit.”*

16. How did Mack get away from the lion? *He ran fast and got away. When the lion saw how slow Freddy was, he went after Freddy.*

17. What did Freddy realize when he was running from the lion? *He realized that he should have practiced running fast and should have eaten the right foods to be strong.*

18. How did Freddy get away from the lion? *He jumped into a deep hole.*

19. What was the reason Mack had chosen Freddie? *Mack knew that Freddie was a very slow runner and if the lion chased them, it would catch the slow one—Freddie.*

20. How did this incident change Freddie? *He apologized to his parents for not listening. From that day on he ate right, exercised, studied hard, and picked good friends.*