



CHARACTER BUILDING LESSONS

SOMMER-TIME STORIES

THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE



Story Description

Harry the Hare never stops bragging that no one can beat him in a race. The animals go to Mr. Wise Owl to find out how to stop Harry Hare from boasting. They vote to have a race, but everyone declines to race Harry Hare except Teddy Tortoise, the slowest of them all. It's utterly foolish to the forest animals to expect Teddy Tortoise to win.

Harry Hare bolts from the starting line like a flash of lightning. Since Harry Hare is so far ahead, he decides to eat and rest awhile. Teddy Tortoise keeps plodding along. The shouts of the forest animals wake up Harry Hare—and the race is decided by a fraction of a second. Through Teddy Tortoise's perseverance, he wins the race and puts the bragging hare to shame. This retelling of Aesop's classic fable shows that preparation and perseverance lead to success.

Main Character Traits

Perseverance/Humility/Self-Discipline

Other Character Traits

Appreciation, Assertiveness, Courage, Diligence, Proper Work Ethic, Respect for Parents, Responsibility, and Sportsmanship

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Humility

The forest animals were having a good time playing together until Sammy Skunk yelled, "Harry Hare is coming!"

"Oh, nooooo!" groaned all the forest animals.

As Harry Hare strutted up to them, he put up his arms, stuck out his chest, and boasted, "I bet no one can beat me in a race!"

"We don't want to race you," Daisy Duck said.

Harry Hare hit his chest and boasted, "You don't want to race me because I'm too fast for you. I am the champ!" As Harry Hare strutted away, he bragged, "Whenever anyone is ready to race me, just let me know. I'll race anyone in the forest. No one can beat me!" That was how Harry Hare always acted when he met the forest animals.

When Harry Hare left, Bucky Beaver said, "We must stop Harry Hare from boasting!"

Harry Hare was always bragging on himself, so none of the forest animals wanted to be around him, let alone be friends with him. If you want to have friends, then don't brag or boast. Instead, compliment people and let them have a turn in talking.

Assertiveness and Courage

Teddy said, "If no one else will, then I'm willing to try my best to race Harry Hare."

"Oh, nooooo!" moaned all the forest animals.

"There's no way for Teddy to win a race against Harry Hare," said Bucky Beaver.

Teddy Tortoise wasn't afraid to race Harry Hare. He said that he would do it if no one else would. Even though Teddy Tortoise was the only one who agreed to race Harry Hare, he didn't let being the only one make him afraid. You need to say and do what is right even if you are the only one. He also didn't get discouraged over what the other animals said about him.

Respect for Parents

Teddy said, "I know I'm not fast. However, my dad always told me, 'Don't be a quitter. If you start something, finish it. And always do your best.'"

Teddy's dad had this advice about eating, "You must eat right if you want to be your best."

Teddy Tortoise listened to his dad's advice and took it to heart. If you want to be successful in life, listen to your parents and learn from them.

Self-Discipline and Responsibility

When Harry Hare went home that day, he plopped down in his easy chair and said, "I don't have to do anything for this silly race." He ate lots of junk food, watched TV, and went to bed very late. However, when Harry Hare woke up in the morning, he was very tired.

When Teddy Tortoise went home, he was going to listen to his dad and eat right. "I'll eat a healthy meal with meat and vegetables," he said. "Then I'll go to bed early so I'll have a good night's rest." In the morning Teddy ate a healthy breakfast.

Harry Hare didn't have self-discipline, but Teddy Tortoise did. Teddy wanted to be responsible and do his best. That is why he ate healthy and got good rest. Everyone needs to eat healthy and get good rest in order to be and do your best in whatever you are doing.

Courage

The day for the race came. Everyone wanted to see the race between Harry Hare and Teddy Tortoise. Harry Hare strutted to the starting line. Teddy Tortoise came plodding slowly behind.

"This race is so foolish!" complained Ronnie Raccoon. "Now Harry Hare will never stop boasting."

"I know," groaned Benny Buck. "This is such a silly race."

Even though Teddy Tortoise knew that he was slow, he had the courage to race Harry Hare anyway. You, too, should have the courage to do something even when others make fun of you or put you down.

Sportsmanship

"Are set for the race?" Mr. Wise Owl asked.

"Yes!" shouted Harry Hare. He stuck out his chest and boasted, "No one can beat me!"

"I am set," Teddy Tortoise said.

Harry Hare did not show good sportsmanship because he was bragging and showing off, but Teddy Tortoise simply went to the starting line without bragging. Even when Teddy won the race, he did not brag or show off. That showed he was a good sport. You should have a good attitude whether you win or lose.

Perseverance

Teddy Tortoise, true to his word, kept going and going. He was also tired and wanted to rest, but he had made up his mind that he was going to do his best to finish the race. When Teddy Tortoise came around the bend, he saw Harry Hare sleeping under a big tree. Teddy Tortoise never said a word. He just kept walking and walking. He was not going to stop.

Teddy Tortoise also wanted to rest, but he was determined to do his best, so he kept going. You need to always do your best and never quit if you want to succeed in life. Sometimes people quit right when they were about to reach their goal. If they had just stuck with it a little longer, they would have made it.

Appreciation

Mr. Wise Owl put an award around Teddy Tortoise's neck and declared, "We want to thank you for teaching us: In spite of hard times, always do your best and never give up."

"Thank you," said Teddy Tortoise. Then all the forest animals clapped and shouted as loud as they could, "Hoorayyyyy! Teddy is the racing champion! Hoorayyyyy!"

Mr. Wise Owl gave Teddy thanks for teaching them an important lesson and Teddy Tortoise thanked Mr. Wise Owl for the award and appreciation. We should always remember to give thanks whenever anyone does something for us or recognizes our achievement.

Questions

1. At the beginning of the story, why did all of the animals groan when they saw Harry Hare coming?
They knew that they would have to listen to his boasting about himself.
2. What did Harry Hare say was the reason no one wanted to race him and was he right?
*He said, "You don't want to race me because I'm too fast for you. I am the champ!"
It was true that he was fast and maybe faster than any of them.*
3. What did the animals first decide to do to stop Harry Hare's boasting?
They decided to ask Mr. Wise Owl for his ideas.
4. What did Mr. Wise Owl suggest they do?
He suggested that someone must accept Harry Hare's challenge and race him.
5. Why didn't Benny Buck or Freddy Fox want to race Harry Hare?
They thought he was too fast for them to win.
6. Why did Bobbi Bear think it was silly to ask Teddy Tortoise to race Harry Hare?
He said, "There's no way he could win."
7. Why was Teddy Tortoise willing to race Harry Hare?
No one else was willing, so he would try and do his best.
8. How did Mr. Wise Owl say they would make the race in order to see if there would be a quitter?
He said they would make the race extra long.
9. Who finally agreed to tell Harry Hare about the race the next day?
Freddy Fox finally agreed to tell Harry Hare about the race.
10. Why didn't the others want to tell Harry Hare about the race?
They knew they would have to listen to him bragging about himself. (inference)
11. Why did Harry Hare roar with laughter when they told him he would race Teddy Tortoise?
He thought that he would leave Teddy Tortoise behind in his dust.
12. What did Harry Hare do to prepare for the race?
He did nothing but eat junk food and watch TV late into the night.
13. What did Teddy Tortoise do to prepare for the race?
He ate a healthy meal and went to bed early so he would be rested. He also had a healthy breakfast.

14. Describe how Harry Hare walked before the race started. Describe how Teddy Tortoise walked.
Harry Hare strutted and Teddy Tortoise plodded.
15. How do you think Teddy felt the morning of the race? Why did he feel that way?
He probably felt nervous and scared, but hopeful. He knew he was slow and Harry Hare was fast. (inference)
16. As Harry Hare began racing, what did he first stop to do?
He ate a bunch of carrots.
17. What did Harry Hare's stuffed tummy cause him to do?
His stuffed tummy caused him to tire quickly and caused him to need a rest.
18. How did Teddy Tortoise feel during the race?
He felt tired and needed a rest.
19. When Teddy Tortoise came towards the finish line first, what did the other animals think and do?
They couldn't believe that Teddy Tortoise was winning, so they cheered for him.
20. How did Harry Hare think he would feel if he lost to Teddy Tortoise and why?
He would be ashamed for the rest of his life because Teddy Tortoise is the slowest animal in the forest.
21. What did Teddy Tortoise do at the last minute which won him the race?
He stuck out his neck which put his nose across the finish line before Harry Hare.
22. How do you think the other animals felt when Teddy won the race?
They were happy and surprised; maybe they regretted not having raced Harry Hare themselves. (inference)
23. What did Harry Hare say and do when he lost the race?
He said nothing. He just groaned and said, "Look at me. I lost the race to the slowest animal in the forest. What a shame! What a shame!"
24. What did Mr. Wise Owl thank Teddy Tortoise for teaching them?
He taught them that in spite of hard times to always do your best and never give up.