









How Will I Behave Today  
and the Rest of My Life?

Venerable Wuling

Venerable Wuling is an American Buddhist nun of the Pure Land school of Mahayana Buddhism.  
More of her writing is available at [www.abuddhistperspective.org](http://www.abuddhistperspective.org)

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Pure Land Learning College Association, Inc.  
57 West Street, Toowoomba, Qld 4350, Australia  
T (07) 4637-8765 F (07) 4637-8764  
[pllc2001@gmail.com](mailto:pllc2001@gmail.com)

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11F., 55 Hang Chow South Road Sec 1, Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C.

Tel: 886-2-23951198 , Fax: 886-2-23913415

Email: [overseas@budaedu.org](mailto:overseas@budaedu.org)

Website:<http://www.budaedu.org>

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For my teacher

Venerable Master Chin Kung

His teachings on filial piety  
have been an inspiration to me  
and countless other students.

It is his belief in the importance of  
*Guidelines for Being a Good Person*  
that resulted in my writing this book.

It is my hope that this book will in some way  
repay his kindness toward me.

## PREFACE

A question people often asked me while I was writing *How Will I Behave Today* was why was an American Buddhist nun writing a book based on *Di Zi Gui*, a centuries-old children's book based on ancient Confucian classics?

It all began with a misunderstanding.

One that was not cleared up until the day after I had made a commitment to my teacher, Venerable Master Chin Kung, to write the book. Recognizing karma at work, I began to figure out how to pull all the necessary pieces together to create a book for children.

First, I started with a translation of *Di Zi Gui*. I had the good fortune to work with several talented translators. Gradually, *Di Zi Gui* became *Guidelines for Being a Good Person*. The maxims in *Guidelines for Being a Good Person* are the basis of the book you are holding. To the casual reader, these maxims can appear to be straightforward and easy to carry out. But when trying to put them into practice, one discovers that they are anything but simple, or easy. Nor are they just for children. These principles for behavior can guide us the rest of our lives.

As we were translating, we endeavored to remain as faithful as possible to the Chinese text. At times, we chose to be less literal to make the ancient text more relevant for today's readers. Ink blocks and brushes became writing tools, and carriages became vehicles, but the underlying principles did not change.

Additionally, following Master Chin Kung's use of "we" in his lectures, it was decided to use "we" in the translation, since it is all of us who should be practicing the principles, not just children.

While working on the translation, I gradually came to understand why my teacher so strongly encourages us to learn and practice the maxims. After all,



filial piety for parents and respect for teachers and others is also the foundation of Buddhist learning and practice. And so it was not at all strange for me to have written this book.

With our translation well underway, I began to write this book in the hope of bringing the maxims to life for a universal readership. Regrettably, there was not enough space to write about every maxim, all of which are located on left-hand pages. I believe those I did not write about will be understood on their own.

Reading *How Will I Behave Today* gradually will let the principles sink in and become more meaningful. Discussing the explanations and stories with children will help them better learn how to apply these principles. And since children learn by observation, it will greatly benefit them if they see you practicing the principles you are asking them to follow.

I thank the Pure Land Translation Team and other translators whose dedication and hard work has resulted in *Guidelines for Being a Good Person*. Without their contribution, I could never have written *How Will I Behave Today*.

I also thank my editor, Alec Tan, who has graciously worked with me for over ten years. His skilled guidance and admirable patience, not to mention the ability to remember what it was like to be ten years old, have been invaluable for this book. He continues to make me look a much better writer than I really am.

And to all who helped in so many ways: a deep bow, and a sincere thank you.

I hope you will enjoy reading this book as much as I enjoyed working on it. Your comments and suggestions are most welcome. If you feel that anything in this book is inaccurate or amiss, please let me know.

Venerable Wuling  
Toowoomba, Australia

## FOR YOUNG READERS

The guidelines in this book may sound simple and seem to apply only to children, but they are neither simple nor just for children. These guidelines contain important principles that will help us the rest of our lives.

It is, and always will be, important that we respect and learn from our parents and that we not do anything to hurt or embarrass them. It matters that we meet our responsibilities at home and at school, and later at work. And this will never change. It is good for us to interact well with others, to live within our means, and to take care of our possessions. And it always will be good to do so.

All of these will help us to be happy, whether we are eight or eighty. Why?

First, we will be happy knowing that we did what was right!

Second, the way we treat others will become the way we are treated. Being unkind to others will result in others being unkind to us. Being considerate of others will result in others being considerate of us.

By following the guidelines and principles in this book, each of us will ensure a happier today and tomorrow.

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# RESPECTING AND LOVING OUR PARENTS AT HOME





When our parents call us,  
we should answer them right away.  
When they tell us to do something,  
we should do it promptly.



When our parents instruct us,  
we should listen respectfully.  
When they scold us,  
we should sincerely accept what they say.



When we were babies, our parents gave up doing many of the things they enjoyed doing. Instead of going to bed when they wanted to and sleeping through the night, they got up every few hours to take care of us. Instead of going out to dinner with friends, they stayed home with us. Long vacations, leisurely weekends, doing what they wanted whenever they wished—all were put on hold.

Even as we became older, they would put aside their own activities to take care of us. When we got sick, they would stay home to care for us. When they had to make a choice on how to spend their money, they thought of us first.

Our parents did their best for us, so we owe them a lot. The best way to thank them is to try to make them happy by doing what they have taught us to do. For example, when they call us, we should answer them right away. They may want to show us the neighbor's new puppy or teach us how to bake chocolate chip cookies. Or it could be an emergency and they may need us to do something urgent right away.

When our parents tell us to do something, we need to do it the first time they ask us. If Mom tells us to put away our toys or to turn

off the computer, we need to do it right away. Or when Dad tells us to take out the trash or to feed the dog, we need to do that promptly also. And while we are doing what they ask, we shouldn't argue with them or grumble to ourselves.

What about when our parents scold us?

We need to remember that they really are doing it for our own good. It would be much less stressful for them if we did things properly and without having to be corrected. But they do correct us because they want us to be good children and responsible adults. Also, they want us to set good habits, knowing that good habits will build our character and help us to be more happy and self-confident.

So when our parents scold us, we shouldn't become upset. Instead, we should remember that they are scolding us to help us. We should listen respectfully to what they tell us. Taking their advice to heart, we should tell them that we will try to do better the next time.

As for why we should answer and come when our parents call us, let's see how Felicia and Hanna learned why this is so important in . . .



## A Missed Opportunity

Ever since they last visited Gram, their grandmother, Felicia and Hanna had been pleading with their mother to teach them to make chocolate chip cookies. It was a “secret family recipe” and Gram always baked them because she knew how much her two granddaughters loved them.

Gram had taught their mother, Mrs. Johansson, how to bake the cookies. But Mrs. Johansson had been very busy with work so there hadn't been any time for baking lessons for her daughters.

Fortunately, the project at work was now completed and Mrs. Johansson decided that she would teach her daughters this Saturday, just like that day when her own mother taught her. Wanting to surprise them, she bought the chocolate chips and other special ingredients, and put everything away where they wouldn't see them.

On Saturday afternoon, she called to the girls, “Felicia and Hanna, come to the kitchen!”

Hanna, who was younger, came quickly, but Felicia was busy texting her friends and called out “In a minute, Mom!”

Hanna's eyes grew big as she learned that today was "the day." Excited, she helped her mother get out all the ingredients and cooking utensils. Her mother showed her how to carefully measure the ingredients and then mix everything together. Mrs. Johansson called out again, "Felicia, please come to the kitchen!"

Felicia gave a distracted "Coming!" and continued texting.

Remembering her favorite part of helping her own mother, Mrs. Johansson told Hanna she could lick the spoon after the cookies were mixed. They opened the bag of imported chocolate chips, but Felicia still hadn't come to the kitchen.

Mrs. Johansson smiled as she and Hanna sampled a few of the chips "to be sure they are good." Then they ate a few more because "They are good!" Once again, Mrs. Johansson called out "Felicia!" But she couldn't even hear Felicia's mumbled reply.

Mrs. Johansson turned on the oven. She and Hanna spooned the cookie dough onto the baking pans and put the first one in the oven. While the cookies were baking, Mrs. Johansson got out the cups and saucers she used on special occasions. Then she and Hanna made some hot chocolate and dropped a marshmallow into each cup.

As they were sipping the hot chocolate, the aroma of the baking cookies began to fill the kitchen. Hanna listened as her mother told her about how she had helped Gram bake cookies. Hanna loved hearing stories about her grandmother and mother because her mother was always so happy when she told them.

She told Hanna, "When you are grownup, you too will remember this very special day."

Then Mr. Johansson came in. "Wow, it's chocolate day! I could smell your cookies out in the yard. Are they ready yet? I'm always hungry for your mother's chocolate chip cookies." As he pulled out a chair at the table, Mrs. Johansson poured him a cup of steaming hot chocolate and then took out the first tray of cookies. As the three were sitting at the table eating the warm, gooey cookies and drinking their hot chocolate, Felicia came in.

"I'm sorry Felicia, but I called you several times."

Seeing the cookies, Felicia realized that she had missed something she had been looking forward to for weeks. Reaching for a cookie and the hot chocolate her mother poured for her, Felicia said, "Next time you call, I promise I'll come right away!"

We should make sure that our parents  
are warm in the winter and cool in the summer.



In the morning, we should greet them  
and show them that we care.  
At night, we should make sure  
that they are resting comfortably.

Just as our parents look after us, think how nice it would be if we do the same for them. We do not have to do anything major. We can do small things to show that we are concerned for their comfort. These will let our parents know that we appreciate all the ways they look after us.

In the summer, we might bring our parents a cool drink or open the window if there is a breeze outside. We could close the curtains to keep the sunlight from making the room too hot. In the winter, we can find their slippers or bring them a cup of tea and a warm throw for them to put over their shoulders or on their lap.

When we greet our parents in the morning, we can give them a hug to let them know we love them and ask if they had slept well. In the evening, we can ask if there is anything they would like before we say goodnight.

Throughout our lives, there will be many ways that we can show our parents how much we appreciate all they have done for us. Just as they have looked after us all this while, we may have—and should cherish—the opportunity to look after them when they are much older.



Before going out, we should let our parents know.  
When we return, we should tell them we are back.



We should lead a routine life, and we should not  
be constantly changing our mind in whatever we do.



Our parents worry about us, regardless of whether we're young children or grown adults! So when we're going out we need to tell them. We also should let them know where we're going, who we'll be with, and when we'll return. And later when we come home, we should also let them know.

Imagine if you have a kitten or a puppy and you cannot find it anywhere in the house or yard. Just like your mom and dad worrying about you, you'll be very worried that something has happened to your kitten or puppy. You might be scared they had gotten lost or maybe even been hurt. In the same way, our parents worry about us.

Also, it is good to have a regular routine: getting up at a certain time, going to school (or work when older), having dinner with our family, or doing homework before doing other things. Having a regular routine will mean we don't have to figure out what to do every day and when to do it.

As for changing our mind, doing so for a good reason can be fine. But constantly changing it without thinking of the possible consequences can create a lot of problems.

Even if you're a cat living in a barn . . .

## Mrs. Black-whiskers Gray's New Home



Mrs. Black-whiskers Gray lived in a barn with her three little kittens. One was an orange tabby, one was solid green, and one pink with black spots. All three had their mother's beautiful pink nose and sweet smile.

The three little kittens were very happy in the barn, which was filled with hay that smelled wonderfully sweet and fresh. The hay provided many secret hiding places in which to play.

Their mother lovingly took care of them and taught them what they needed to know to live safely in the world. She told them all about the house she visited every morning for her breakfast. And she also taught them about the other animals who lived on the farm.

One day, Mrs. Black-whiskers Gray returned to the barn and told them she had found a better home. Before they knew what was happening, she took them one by one to their new home: a big basket with lots of clothes in it that was on the back porch of the house.

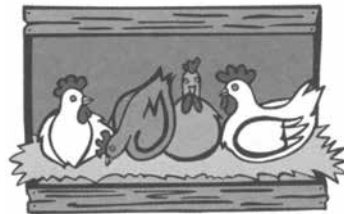


But that night there was a terrible storm with wind and thunder and lightning.

The kittens cried all night long and the next morning their mother told them she was very sorry for taking them away from the barn. When the sun came out and all the puddles had dried up, she carried them back, one by one, to the barn.

Then after several days, she came into the barn and told them excitedly that now she had really found a better home. This time she took them to the shed where the chickens lived. She told her three kittens they would have fun playing with the baby chicks.

But that night when all the chickens came in to go to sleep, there were so many of them that there was no space left for the three little kittens to lie down. All that was left was a battered, old egg carton on the floor of the shed. Uncomfortable and cold, the kittens cried unhappily for some time until, exhausted, they finally fell asleep.



The next day, their mother, once again, carried them one by one back to the barn.

When they were all together again, she apologized and said she wouldn't change her mind again about where they would live. Comforted by this assurance, the kittens began to happily play again in the hay.

But only a week had passed when Mrs. Black-whiskers Gray came running into the barn excited again. Being a little older and a lot wiser now, Orange Tabby looked at Green and Green looked at Pink. You could tell they were all nervous.

Their mother said this time she had found a very special home and she was sure they'd love it.

Being very dutiful, and loving their mother a great deal, the kittens didn't protest. So again their mother moved them, this time to the back seat of an old car that wasn't used any more.

But that night the family's big, black and white dog jumped onto the front seat and even though he smiled (as much as he could) and gently assured the little kittens that he wouldn't hurt them, they were still scared. After all, he was so big and seemed to fill the entire front seat.



They huddled together and shook in terror until they finally fell asleep under the watchful eye of their mother who stayed awake all night thinking.



The next morning, she explained that they were her first kittens. So she was still learning how to be a good parent. She now knew that making many changes without good planning and careful thought could cause serious problems.

Then she carried them back to the cozy corner in the hay barn where they had been so happy and safe and comfortable.

And never again did Mrs. Black-whiskers Gray casually change her mind.



Constantly changing our minds  
can create a lot of trouble.

Even when a matter is trivial,  
we should not act without permission or just do as we please.  
If we do so, then we are no longer a dutiful child.



We should not hide any possession,  
no matter how small, from our parents.  
If we do, they will feel hurt.

We may think something is too minor to bother asking our parents about, but it's still best to check with them before proceeding with something new. And as for hiding things from our parents, if we do so they will feel hurt. Instead, we need to share whatever we have with our family . . .

### Two Brothers and One Umbrella

Once upon a time, there were two brothers. The younger one had an important job in the city, so he liked to wear the business hat he had bought on a visit to London. But since the hat, which the shop owner had called a derby, was brown, he liked to wear his red jacket with it to liven things up.

The other brother always wore French berets. His favorite was a purple one that went with his purple pants. Purple was his favorite color since he loved to drink French wine made from purple grapes. (He was very proud of being French and never ever, ever wanted to go to London.) Also, he worked in the local village so he didn't need to look like a businessman.

Even though they dressed differently, the two brothers lived happily together in the same house. In fact, their parents lived with them and the four enjoyed the arrangement immensely.

One morning it began to rain very hard. The brother who worked in the city suddenly realized he had forgotten to bring his umbrella home the day before. He needed to go to work but he didn't want to get his brown derby and red jacket wet. The brother who worked in the village said he understood. After all, he would not want to get his purple beret and pants wet either.

The two brothers looked at each other. The parents looked at both their sons. The brothers looked at their parents. Then everyone turned together to look at the sole umbrella in the stand by the front door. And there they all stood, thinking.

The brother who worked in the village went into the kitchen and got a pair of scissors. He came back to the stand by the front door and said that his brother was more important to him than his umbrella. (Luckily, his umbrella was orange and not purple or things might have turned out very differently!)

He carefully cut the big, orange umbrella in half. Realizing what

his brother was thinking, the brother who worked in the city took a cane that was also in the stand and with some string connected the cane to the half of the umbrella that had been cut off. The two brothers smiled at their new-styled umbrellas and agreed that if they both tipped their umbrellas just a little bit, both would manage to stay dry.



The parents beamed in approval at the selflessness of their two sons. The brothers opened the door and walked down the front path. At the sidewalk, they turned to wish each other a good day.

The brother in the brown derby and red jacket turned left to go to the train station to catch the 8:15 express to the city. The brother in the purple beret and pants turned right to walk to the village. Their parents waved goodbye and went back inside the house hand-in-hand. They smiled to each other with the knowledge that their lessons on sharing had paid off.



Sharing makes everyone happy.

When something pleases our parents and is proper,  
we should try our best to provide it for them.  
When something displeases them, we should remove it.



If we injure ourselves, we will make our parents worry.  
If we do something unvirtuous, they will feel ashamed.



Our parents are models of good behavior for us. They have taught us what is right and what is wrong. But there may come a time when what they ask goes against what we know to be proper and good. When this happens, we can try to let them know how we feel while remembering that we need to do so respectfully.

If we talk to them calmly, we will have a much better chance of moving them and changing their behavior. Let's see how a girl named "Gentle" did just this . . .

### How Atifeh Helped Her Parents

Long ago, there lived a girl called Atifeh, which means "gentle." Her parents had named her this because as a newborn baby she was very sweet. They marveled at her good nature.

Atifeh lived with her family in a beautiful valley. As did most people, the family had some sheep. They also had a large, gray ram. It was his job to look out for the herd and protect them from danger. Atifeh's father cut the wool from the sheep every year for her mother to spin and to make into beautiful clothing and blankets.

As Atifeh grew up, she began to help her parents around the farm. She helped clean the house and water the plants, and brought things when her parents asked for them.

She also loved to feed grass to the baby sheep in the springtime. As she played, she delighted in the butterflies and the birds and the small animals. She would sit very quietly under a big cypress tree and wait for them to come to her. When they did, she would feed them crumbs from the bread her mother baked. Not having any brothers or sisters, she regarded the birds and animals as her family and cared for them as a big sister would a younger one.



When Atifeh was about five years old, her mother told her it was time to start learning how to cook. Atifeh was very excited because she loved to eat her mother's delicious food, but had no idea how it was prepared or even what was in it!

Her mother told her to ask her father for some carrots and potatoes from the garden. Atifeh happily went to her father to ask him for the vegetables. He smiled fondly down at her and pulled out some carrots and potatoes, put them into a small basket, and

handed it to Atifeh. Carefully holding the basket, she walked back to the kitchen and with a smile handed it up to her mother.



Then her mother asked her to get some of the herbs that grew outside the kitchen door. Atifeh went outside, picked the herbs, and brought them to her mother.

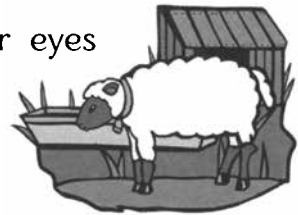
Her mother beamed at her and said since Atifeh was learning to cook, she would teach her how to make a very special dish: lamb stew. But for this they would need the special ingredient, which was lamb. She asked Atifeh to go and tell her father that she needed “lamb.”

Atifeh went dutifully to her father and told him what her mother had said. Curious, she asked, “Father, what is lamb?” Her father knelt down on one knee so he could look directly into her eyes and softly replied, “A lamb is a baby sheep.”

Atifeh froze. She couldn’t speak. She just looked at her father in shock. Then she very slowly shook her head and mouthed a silent “no.” She turned and ran back to the kitchen, with her father following her. His gentle daughter had never said “no” to him before.

Back in the kitchen, Atifeh was trembling and struggling to come up with just the right words. Finally, she looked at her mother and said, “Mother, when you wanted the carrots and the potatoes, I was happy to get them for you. When you wanted the herbs, I brought those to you as well. But to kill is wrong. You and father have always taught me to care for animals and never to harm them. As much as I want to be a good daughter, I cannot because I will not tell father to kill a sheep.”

Then Atifeh stopped talking. She turned her eyes downward and stared at the floor. She was expecting a scolding for surely her parents would be very angry at her refusal to do what she was told. Instead, her parents were speechless, shocked that their gentle daughter had spoken so strongly. They looked at each other and both realized what else would a girl named “Gentle” do? They thought about what she had said.



Atifeh’s mother sat down on the chair next to the table and took Atifeh in her arms. Smiling, she gently said, “We have always taught you to live up to your name, to care for all living beings, and to

respect everything around us. Atifeh, you are right. Killing is wrong. From now on, the sheep will give us their wool, but not their lives. We will not kill any more sheep.”

That night, Atifeh went to the ram to tell him good night. He was standing on a small hill, watching over the sheep just as a guardian does. She reported to him what had happened. In his eyes, she saw deep gratitude.

For many years after that, Atifeh would go to say good night to the ram and he would look at her and offer a silent, “Good night, Atifeh. And thank you.”



When we talk respectfully and calmly,  
others will listen to us  
and consider what we are saying.

When our parents love us,  
it is easy to be respectful and loving.



When they do not love us,  
respecting and loving them means we have a noble heart.

When our parents care for and are happy with us, it's natural for us to return their love and to be good. It's like giggling or laughing. When others laugh, we often end up laughing along with them. And we all know what happens when someone starts giggling. Loving our parents when they love us is as easy, and as natural.

But what if our parents are angry about something, maybe something we did? If we did something wrong, it is understandable if they get upset with us. Maybe they were scared for our safety or frustrated when we repeatedly did not do what they told us to do. But their anger is only a temporary emotion. By no means does it lessen their love for us.

If we understand, we won't be upset. But by not understanding, we might well do something we regret later. Like Pieter did in . . .

### Pieter's Misunderstanding

The winter had been long but spring finally arrived. Pieter could now run to greet his father at the front gate when he returned from work. His father would swing Pieter up on his shoulders and grasp



Pieter's ankles as he held tight to his father's neck. They would head for the front porch where Pieter's father would sit in his chair. Pieter would curl up in his father's lap and tell him all about his day.

But one day when his father came home, he looked very unhappy. When Pieter tugged at his hand and asked to be picked up, his father said sharply "Go away Pieter, I'm thinking."

Stung by his father's words, Pieter decided he would do just that. He'd go away. After his father went into the house, Pieter turned and ran out the front gate.

Pieter ran as far as he could and then slowed to a walk. Soon he came to the village. He was so tired that he had to sit down on the curb. Then he realized he was also hungry and cold. And worse, he began to think about his father who must be getting worried about him.

The next moment, Pieter noticed a pair of shoes standing in front of him. They were not just any shoes. They were the ones the village policemen wore. A question floated down to him, "Son, are you okay? Are you waiting for someone?" Pieter looked up and saw a



policeman with a kind face and nice smile.

Pieter stood up and shyly admitted that he had run away from home. The policeman scrunched down to Pieter's level. "You know, when I was about your age I did the same thing. My parents had said something that hurt my feelings. It so surprised me that I found myself running away. And it was getting dark, and I was getting scared. Plus, I had no money and nowhere to go. Yup, I remember it clearly."

Pieter exclaimed, "Just like me! Dad told me to go away."

The policeman nodded. "I bet that surprised you."

Pieter mumbled, "Yes."

"You know, after I ran away, I felt miserable and wanted to go home. Are you, by any chance, thinking you'd like to go home?" the policeman asked with a reassuring smile.

Pieter said "Yes" again, this time with a broad smile. The policeman asked Pieter where he lived and Pieter told him. He replied, "I know where that is. I just moved close to there with my wife and little girl. Would you like me to take you home?"

Pieter nodded enthusiastically.

The policeman swung Pieter up onto his shoulders and while holding firmly to Pieter's ankles, told him to put his arms around his neck. Pieter did so.

After just a few steps, he heard Pieter begin to cry. He put Pieter down and scrunched down again. He asked Pieter why he was crying.

Pieter said his father carried him the same way every day when he came home from work. The policeman smiled. "It sounds like you have a really good daddy. After working all day, the first thing he does when he comes home is to carry you proudly on his shoulders. You know, your dad probably had a really tough day today and was just feeling bad. And I'm sure he didn't really mean it when he told you to go away."



Pieter agreed, "Yes! He's a really great dad. But today he did look tired and unhappy. Now I made things even worse for him."

The policeman chuckled. "Well, that's it then. You and your dad just had a misunderstanding." And with that, he again swung Pieter up on his shoulders and continued walking until they could see the house Pieter lived in. As the two approached the gate, Pieter's father came running out to them.

The policeman put Pieter down. He ran to his father who scooped him up, saying “Pieter! Where have you been? I cooked dinner but then I couldn’t find you. I’ve been so worried.”

He then looked questioningly at the policeman who winked and nodded in the direction of the village. He said, “Pieter has been showing me around. My family and I just moved here.”

Pieter’s father quickly understood and said, “Ah. It’s very nice that you’ve been talking to our new policeman. But Pieter, you do know that you can talk to me anytime, right? Even when I’m tired or upset. Okay?” Pieter beamed at his father and nodded.

They thanked the policeman, who began whistling as he turned to walk back to the village. Then Pieter’s father put Pieter on his shoulders and held on to his ankles as Pieter clung to his father’s neck. Together they went in to dinner.



Even if our parents are upset with us,  
we should try to help them be happy.

— — —

If our parents do something wrong,  
we should urge them to change.  
Do so with a kind expression and caring voice.



Should our parents not accept our advice, try again  
when they are in a better mood. If they still do not listen,  
our sincere tears will show them how deeply we care.  
Should they get angry with us,  
do not hold it against them.

— — —

As we grow up, we learn from our parents what is right and what is wrong. For example, they will teach us that stealing and lying are wrong. More importantly, they show us what is right by doing it.

But one day, our parents may do something wrong. Knowing that even our parents can sometimes make mistakes, what can we do when this happens? We can respectfully talk to them. By remaining calm, we will have a good chance to help them.

How might we do this? Read on to see how one little girl found a way to help her father . . .

### Someone is Watching

Once, in the not so distant past, a man decided to take some apples from his neighbor. He thought, "I'll only take a few. My neighbor will never miss them and besides he can't possibly use all those apples." He waited until it was dark.

To be sure he wasn't caught, he took Natasha, his youngest daughter, with him so she could keep watch and warn him if anyone approached.

Walking very quietly, father and daughter went to the neighbor's orchard where there were many apple trees. The father reached up to the first tree and picked a few apples. He was about to put them into the basket he had brought along when his daughter said softly, "Father, someone's watching." Her father immediately looked around but saw no one.

He then went to another tree and picked a few more apples. His daughter tugged at his pants and a little louder this time said, "Father, someone's watching!" Again, he looked around nervously, but saw no one.



He picked up his basket and moved down the row of trees and reached up to pick a few more apples. He was just putting them into his basket, when his daughter called out "Father, someone is watching!"

He was frustrated at looking around and seeing no one. But just to be safe he moved deeper into the orchard where he was further away from the road. Even here, his daughter cried out to him "Father, someone is watching you!" Again, he looked all around but

saw no one. Exasperated, he turned to his daughter and said, "Why do you keep saying someone's watching? No one's here!"

His daughter looked up at him, her eyes glistening with rising tears, and said, "I'm here."

Moved by her concern, her father suddenly realized he had been setting a very bad example and that his daughter had only been trying to help him realize that taking the apples was wrong. After all, he had always taught her that stealing was wrong, and here he was doing it! He hugged her to let her know that she was right and what a good daughter she was.

They walked home together hand in hand. Along the way, they carefully put all the apples back under the trees.



To help others see their mistakes, we need to speak politely,  
at the right time, and away from others.

When our parents are ill, we should make sure that they take the right medicine. Care for them night and day, and do not leave them alone.



For three years after our parent's passing, we should remember them in sadness. We should live simply and not adorn our home. Avoid merry-making, meat, and alcohol.

We should arrange our parent's funeral in a proper manner. We should always honor them as if they were still alive and, especially on the anniversary of their death, remember them with a sincere heart.



If our parents don't feel well, we can help to look after them. We can bring them water or a hot drink if we are old enough to make it. We can make sure their room isn't too dark or too bright, and that they are comfortable. We can read to them or make sure they have some books next to their bed. Or we might bring them some fresh flowers from our garden or even a bell to allow them to call us should they need something.

Instead of going outside, we can do something in the house so that we can hear if they need us. But we need to be quiet if we are watching TV or playing on the computer. This will allow them to rest better.

If it is time for our parents to take their medicine, we can bring it to them, along with some water or crackers. When it is prescription medicine, we need to check very carefully that the container has their name on it. Giving a person the wrong medicine can make them very sick.

Another way people take medicine is to use herbs. Since the herbs are brewed in water, it is very important to make sure that the drink is not too hot or too cold.

Also, in some parts of the world, if a family is small and there are no relatives close by, children can find themselves having to take on adult responsibilities. They might be the only person available to look after sick parents or younger brothers and sisters. And they may even have to arrange for a parent's funeral.

When our parents are no longer alive, we should continue to remember them with love and appreciation for all they have done for us.

### Try This Out

Think of how many ways you could look after your mom or dad if they were not feeling well. Don't know what to do? Notice what they do for you the next time you are sick. By watching how your parents care for you, you can learn how to look after them should they not feel well sometime.

~ 3 ~

## BEING MINDFUL IN DAILY LIFE



Get up early and go to bed at a reasonable time.  
Knowing how time flies, we should treasure every day.

When we get up, we should wash our face and brush our teeth.  
After using the toilet, we should always wash our hands.



Our hat should be properly put on, clothing correctly buttoned,  
and socks and shoes neatly worn.

We should put our clothes away in their proper places. We should  
not leave them lying around for they will get dirty that way.

Children are showing their love for their parents when they are loyal to one another and get along well. By caring for and helping one another, children relieve their parent's concerns for them and thus make their parents happy.

And few things make parents happier than hearing their children laughing merrily together and seeing them care for one another. Parents know that while friends may come and go, brothers and sisters are for life.

Let's see how Jason learned how helpful a big brother can be . . .

### Things are Often Not What They Seem

Jason's big brother, Patrick, had just received permission to go hiking with his friends on Lookout Mountain. When Jason heard that, he got all excited and wanted to go along with them. "Patrick, can I please come with you? Please, please, pleeease?"

Patrick shook his head and said in his big brother voice, "No Jason, not up the mountain. This trail is much tougher than you're used to. There's more climbing on this one."

Jason was hurt. He admired his brother and liked to do things with him. But lately, Patrick has been spending time with his friends, Alec and Heng. Jason was afraid that Patrick preferred his new friends to him. "You just don't want me along!" he sputtered.



Patrick looked at Jason, then at Alec and Heng who were close by waiting for him. They had quite a ways to go and needed to get started. He explained, "Jason, there are some things you do with your friends and some things I do with mine. This hike is one of them. Plus, it's too dangerous for you. I have to go with the guys now. See you later."

Jason became even more upset. And embarrassed! His older brother, in front of his friends, had just told Jason that he wasn't good enough to go on the hike! But Patrick and his friends were only a few years older. How could it be okay for them, but dangerous for him?

Dejected, Jason watched the three go off. Watching them walk down the road laughing together, he wondered if they were laughing at him. Suddenly, he had an idea. He'd follow them and

when they turned around to come back, he'd pop out from behind a tree or a rock and surprise them. Then they'd see he was good enough to go along with them.

Jason hurried to follow them. The walking wasn't hard at all. He had been on the path before with Patrick and knew the way well. Then he saw them take the trail near the big rock. So this is where they were going. This was so great!

He could follow them easily. There was nothing dangerous about this trail! After several minutes, he saw a stream with a fallen tree trunk over the stream. He ran across it. Now he was feeling really confident. He could hear Patrick and the others so he knew he was keeping up.



He went around a bend and saw a stone ledge up ahead. It was steeper than any he had climbed before, but he was sure he could do it. He began to climb and realized it was actually trickier than it looked. There were loose stones all along the way.

Jason put his hand up to hold onto the ledge. He really had to stretch out to put his foot onto the next outcropping. But some of

the stones were loose and they shifted under him. He couldn't hold on. As he fell he cried out. Luckily, he landed on some low bushes and they cushioned his fall. But he felt a sharp pain. It was his foot.

Then he heard a voice, "Jason is that you?" It was Patrick calling down to him. "Are you okay?"

Jason, breathless and in pain, managed to get out "I'm okay."

Patrick quickly climbed down to him. Alec and Heng were right behind him. Patrick kneeled to check Jason's arm and legs, but when he touched Jason's foot, Jason gave a very loud "Ow!"

"It doesn't look broken, but you probably twisted it. Don't worry, you'll be fine." Relieved that it was nothing serious, Patrick sat back on his heels and with that angrily demanded, "Why did you follow us? I told you not to. What were you thinking?"

Jason didn't know what hurt the most: the pain, his embarrassment, or Patrick yelling at him. "I wanted to come with you! I thought you said it was too dangerous only because you didn't want me around!"

He tried to get up and the pain got much worse. "Ow! Patrick, I can't walk!"



Patrick got over his anger as quickly as it had arisen. Actually, he had been more scared than angry. He had been worried Jason was really hurt. "It's okay Jason, I'll carry you home." He turned to his friends and told them to go on without him. But they said they would go back with the two brothers. They had enough excitement for one day.



Alec said, "Take it from someone with an older brother, Jason. It may not feel like it sometimes, but they're usually looking out for us. And most of the time they know what they're talking about." Then he winked at Jason, "But it can be really frustrating at times."

Carrying Jason piggyback, Patrick started back down the trail. Jason looked at their house way in the distance and gulped. "Wow, it's so far."

Patrick said, "Don't worry. We'll make it just fine. You and me together."



With respect and love, siblings become our best friends.

When siblings value family ties more than possessions,  
resentment will not arise.



When siblings are careful with their words,  
feelings of anger naturally dissolve.

if we're not careful, we may find ourselves saying things that hurt our brothers and sisters. Or even worse, we may find ourselves fighting and not speaking to one another because we're arguing over family possessions.

This is what happened to Mr. Joseph's family. But then one day he found a way to change everything with . . .

### Mr. Joseph's Special Chest

Although Mr. Joseph had three sons, he was very lonely because they rarely came to visit him. And when they did visit, it was always by themselves because they didn't get along.

Every visit was the same.

They would spend all the time talking about themselves and telling him how busy they were. When they had run out of things to tell him, they would then ask how he was. But as soon as he began to tell them, they would make an excuse to leave. They never spent time listening to him, never asked if there was anything they could do for him or even asked how his day was.

Mr. Joseph was getting older so he had plenty of time to consider his situation. He rarely saw his sons and he wanted to change that. He also wanted them to get along better and look after one another like he and his own brothers had done. He began to plan a way to make all this happen.



First, he bought a chest with a lock and put the chest in his sitting room. Then he brought home several rocks from the nearby forest. So that the rocks wouldn't make any noise, he carefully wrapped them in some rags and then put them in the chest. He put the key to the lock on a string and wore it around his neck.

Next, he got a lot of pennies, which he placed in several bags. These he also put in the chest. He made sure the bags had plenty of room for the coins to clink against each other should the chest be moved.

For a final touch, he bought an expensive chair. The chair was an extravagance for him, but necessary for his plan.

And then he patiently waited.

His youngest son was the first to visit. He immediately noticed

the locked chest, the key on the string around his father's neck, and the new chair his father was sitting on. When he asked about them, his father said he had received a generous offer for the forest behind the house and so sold it. In fact, he had received so much money that he splurged on the chair as a comfort for his old age. The rest of the money was in the chest where he could keep an eye on it. The key opened the lock so he wore it for safekeeping.

When Mr. Joseph's son thought his father wasn't looking, he nudged the chest with his foot. It didn't move, but he heard the clinking of coins. Then he eyed the new chair. If his thrifty father had spent money on such an expensive chair, he must have indeed received a lot for the land.

He decided he would come to visit his father more often.

Then the middle son came by and he also noticed the chest, the key, and the chair. Asking about them, he received the same explanation his brother got. He also tested the chest with the same results and eyed the new chair. Like his brother, he decided he would visit his father more often.

After some time, the oldest son also came for a visit. Like his two

brothers, he asked about the new possessions and learned of his father's good fortune. After nudging the chest and checking out the chair, he too decided to visit more often.

As the three each began to call on their father more often, they began to spend more time talking with him and listening to what he had to say. They even helped out doing things around the house. They also found out what food he liked and brought it to him when they visited.

This continued for some time until one night, Mr. Joseph passed away peacefully in his sleep. His sons were told of their father's passing and they all came to the house that very day.



They quickly found the key among his clothes and went to the chest. With barely contained excitement, they unlocked it and lifted the lid. The oldest brother took out the bags and dumped their contents on the table. The three stared at the pile of pennies. Then they reached into the chest to take out the rags and their heavy contents. When placed on the table, the cloth fell away to reveal the rocks.

In shock, the three looked at each other. They became very

angry. Then the eldest brother shook his head and admitted that he only started to visit more because of the chest. The other two brothers said the same. Realizing what their father had done, the eldest brother said that he must have been really lonely.

The three brothers began to feel ashamed for all those years they had neglected their father. They had only cared for him when they thought he had a lot of money. And to make matters worse, each had visited him secretly in hopes that they would get more of the money! So they had been jealous brothers as well as bad sons. This was not the way their father had brought them up.

With a heavy heart, the youngest brother bent over the chest to close it but saw something that had been carved in the bottom of it.

They all moved closer and read the inscription together:



A family's greatest wealth  
is its members' love for one another.

When drinking, eating, walking, or sitting,  
let elders do so first; younger ones follow.



When an elder is asking for someone,  
find that person right away.  
If we cannot find that person, we should immediately report  
back and ask if we can help instead.



Very simply, we are to treat people, especially our elders, with respect and kindness. Why? When we respect others, they are happy. And we are happy too!

Also, when we let elders go first, we are learning to be less selfish and more humble as well as more considerate of others. It's just the right thing to do.

What are some of the many ways that we can let our elders go first?

At mealtimes, instead of taking our food right away, we should ask them to help themselves first. Instead of taking the best seat for ourselves, we can let them choose where they want to sit.

If we're getting into an elevator, we should first let the riders exit, then allow our elders to enter before us. If we are out with someone who is older, instead of running on ahead, we can walk with her. When going through a doorway, we can hold the door so our elders can pass through before us.

Also, if an elder, for example our teacher, asks us to find someone and we cannot, we should go back and let the person know. Then we can ask if there is anything we can do for the person.



When addressing elders,  
do not call them by their first name.  
When in the presence of elders, do not show off.



When meeting elders whom we know, greet them promptly  
and respectfully. If they do not greet us in return,  
respectfully stand aside.



When we say hello to an elder, someone more than a few years older than us, it's much more polite to address them by Mr. or Ms. and their last name. If they are good friends of our parents, we can call them Aunt or Uncle followed by their first name. This way we treat them respectfully.

If we greet someone and they don't return the greeting, don't make a fuss. Their minds may be somewhere else. What is important is that we were polite in saying hello.

Also, we shouldn't show off. If we're busy showing off or bragging, we won't have time to listen. So more than likely we won't be learning from our elders. Even worse, we may end up irritating them. Also, when we show off, others cannot talk to one another because we're being rude and loud. And children (and adults) who are rude and loud do not get invited to fun places. Plus, no one wants to be friends with a show off.

### Try This Out

Try smiling at an elder tomorrow and notice how you feel.

— — —

If we are in a vehicle and see an elder whom we know passing by, we should get out and greet the person [if the situation safely allows].



We continue on our way only after the elder has left us.

— — —

In the past, people rode in carts and wagons or on horseback. It would have been rude to remain seated in a wagon or on your horse when someone who was older was on the ground. We can do the same today if we're on our bike and it is safe to stop and get off. This way, we can say hello courteously to the other person instead of rushing by with just a quick wave.

Also in the past, as the elder was leaving, those who were younger would wait until the elder had gone some distance. Why? Driving off first would have been like saying the younger person was more important than their elder! Also, if the wagon went through a puddle, it could splash mud on the elder person on the ground. So it was polite to wait till the elder had gone a good distance before leaving.

Even in today's busy world, we should let the older person walk off first before we turn and walk away. Do you think this is too much of a bother? How would you feel if you turned to wave goodbye to someone and they were already rushing off. Now think of how you would feel if they were still standing there smiling and waving to you. You would feel good because they were still thinking of you, and not themselves.

When an elder is standing, do not sit.  
After an elder sits down, sit only when invited to do so.



Before an elder, speak softly.  
But if our voice is too low and hard to hear,  
we are being improper.

One very good way to show respect is to remain standing as long as an elder is standing. Only after the elder sits down and invites others to sit should we do so.

Another way to show respect is to not talk so softly that people cannot hear us. What about talking too loudly? This can get us into even more trouble! How so?

Read on to see how one crow learned that making too much noise can have severe consequences . . .

### Why Crows Only Say “Caw! Caw!”

A very long time ago, all birds were silent. They didn’t know why this was so, just that it had always been that way. They were very sad about this because all the other animals could talk. Only the birds were mute.

Then one day, a fascinating bird appeared. He was as brightly colored as a rainbow! But that was not what really amazed the other birds. As they all clustered around to look on in awe, he began to talk! And what he said astounded them.

He told them he had come at the order of the Sound Giver. It was the Sound Giver's job to decide what would be the best sound for each animal. Once decided this sound would belong to that animal and no other. Much to the distress of the Sound Giver, she just learned she had never given the birds their sounds! She was coming now to correct her terrible mistake.

With that, the Sound Giver came into the clearing. She was a little girl! She apologized to all the birds for her terrible oversight. She told them she would do something to make up for their being silent so long, something she had never done before. She would allow them to exchange their sound if they did not like it.



As the Sound Giver looked around, she saw a little finch excitedly hopping up and down. The Sound Giver smiled, held out her hand, and the finch started chirping! All the birds were thrilled and quickly lined up to receive their very own sounds.

The Sound Giver began to carefully work her way through the line. Some birds liked the sound she gave them while others politely



asked for another. She gave many birds more than one sound, others she taught to sing. She patiently worked with each one until it was happy.

Then it was time for the crow. He marched up to the Sound Giver and glared at her. The Sound Giver gave him a single “Caw” to see how it sounded. The crow repeated it loudly, then more loudly, then even louder yet! The Sound Giver winced, put her hands over her ears, and asked the crow to please speak more softly. But the noisy bird cawed louder yet and even demanded he be given more sounds. He was so loud that the Sound Giver shook her head and said “No.”



“Caw, caw!” squawked the crow, as if demanding “Why not?”

The Sound Giver calmly looked the crow in the eye. “You are loud and rude. Because of this I will only give you one sound. The soft calls of other birds will delight all those who hear them and they will be welcomed. But you will not. People will cringe at your call and shoo you away because you are so loud.”

And this is why even today, the only sound a crow can make is “Caw! Caw!”

When meeting elders, walk briskly towards them;  
when leaving, do not do so in haste.  
When answering a question, look attentively at the person.



We should regard our aunts and uncles  
as if they were our parents,  
and our cousins as if they were our siblings.

When walking toward someone who is older, do so with enthusiasm and a smile. When it is time to leave, walk away at a slower pace. If we do the opposite, approach slowly but leave quickly, the person might think we didn't want to see him or her! How would you feel if somebody dragged their feet while coming toward you and then rushed off. You would probably feel hurt.

So to avoid hurting others, approach a little more quickly and leave more slowly.

As we greet the person, we should shake hands and make eye contact. If we fidget and look around when someone is speaking to us, the person might think we're not interested in what they're saying. Making eye contact indicates we're paying attention.

When it's our turn to talk, the person will be more attentive to what we say. If during the conversation, another person joins in and begins to speak, look at that person too. By listening politely and attentively, others will respond in the same way to us.

When others are talking, don't interrupt. We should patiently wait until it is our turn to speak. This is especially important when the other person is older than us. If we interrupt those who are talking,

we could miss hearing something important. Others could too. Also, when we are rude and don't listen politely to others, others won't listen to us!

When with our aunts and uncles, we are to behave as if we were with our parents. We should respectfully listen to them and follow what they say when they ask us to do something. With our cousins, we should treat them as we've been taught to treat our siblings.

### Try This Out

The next time an adult is talking to you, look the person in the eye and pay attention to what he or she is saying. When it's time to respond, do so politely. The person will know you were really listening when you ask a question about what they had just said. Now notice how they listen to you when you begin to speak. See if you notice any difference from before, when you didn't listen as carefully.

~ 2 ~

# INTERACTING WITH OTHERS AWAY FROM HOME





Older siblings  
should love and care for the younger ones;  
younger siblings should love and respect the older ones.



Getting along well with one's siblings  
is a sign of respecting one's parents  
and caring that they are happy.



We need to look after ourselves and keep our rooms tidy. After all, not everyone has an . . .

## Aunt Alexa

Georgina did not like to clean her room. When her mother told her to put her things away, Georgina would always mumble “Later” and continue with what she was doing.

One day, after Georgina said, “Later,” she noticed her mother looking very thoughtful. Georgina became curious, not knowing what her mother was thinking. At last her mother said, “We’ll see what Aunt Alexa thinks of this.” She then quietly closed the door.

Curiosity turned to confusion. Georgina didn’t have an Aunt Alexa. What was her mother talking about?

That night, it took Georgina a long time to fall asleep. When she finally did, she had the strangest dream. A woman was busily moving around the room and throwing all Georgina’s clothes that were on the floor onto her bed. Georgina was being buried alive! In a panic she woke up.

And then she really panicked for it wasn't a dream. There was a woman in Georgina's room and she was busily throwing clothes on top of the bed as if Georgina wasn't there!

For a few moments, Georgina couldn't talk. But finally, she managed to get out a "Who are you?"

The woman looked at Georgina and replied in a very matter-of-fact voice, "Aunt Alexa, of course."

Georgina blinked. The woman seemed harmless. That is as long as you didn't count trying to bury Georgina alive under her own clothes. "I don't have an Aunt Alexa," she informed the woman.

Without batting an eyelid, the woman replied, "Of course you do. I'm her." And with that she dumped another pile of clothes on the bed.

Georgina was getting really frustrated with the whole situation. "I do not have an Aunt Alexa!" she snapped.

"Well, if you do not have an Aunt Alexa, then why did your mother say she was going to see what I thought about this?"

Georgina couldn't think of a thing to say to that. So the woman dumped another pile of clothes on the bed. With the clothes now spilling onto the floor, Georgina was beginning to fear she wouldn't



be able to get out of her own bed.

“Stop!” she demanded. But the woman ignored her and reached for the next pile of clothes.

“Please stop” she asked, remembering the wonderful effect this word had on adults.

Immediately the woman stopped and stood there. “Ah! Are you talking to me dear?”

Georgina blurted out in frustration at a situation over which she didn't seem to have any of her usual control, “Of course, I am. Who else would I be talking to?”

The woman frowned and reached for the clothes again.

“I'm sorry,” said Georgina who now was almost buried under the mountain of clothing. “I'm not used to seeing people, sorry, *aunts*, picking up my clothes in the middle of the night.”

“Well of course you're not. Your poor mother has never asked me for help before.”

Georgina decided she had better get out of her bed while she still could and tumbled onto the floor. She asked, speaking politely this time, “Why are you here?”

“I am here because your room is a mess. You dump everything on the floor and your mother has to always pick up after you. If she didn’t, you’d never be able to find anything.”

“Shocking. Just shocking,” Aunt Alexa continued, looking around and gesturing at the clothing.

Georgina looked around and found she had to agree. It was a mess. And looking at it now through her aunt’s eyes, it did seem shocking. And embarrassing. And even worse, hopeless.

She looked up at her aunt and said anxiously, “If Mom sees this, she’ll pass out. What can I do, I’ll never be able to clean all this up by morning.”

Aunt Alexa smiled at Georgina for the first time. “Would you like me to help you clean up?”

Georgina nodded and said gratefully, “Oh, yes please.”

Together, they began to clean up all the clothes. It wasn’t easy because there was clothing on the bed, on the floor, the chair, dresser—everywhere! As Georgina began to put everything away, she thought what a pain it was to have to do this. And her mother did it every week!

Eventually they got every last bit of clothing put away. Georgina was exhausted as she got back into her bed. She smiled up at Aunt Alexa. Then Georgina impulsively threw her arms around her aunt's neck and breathed a sleepy "Thank you" into her ear.

She then kissed her aunt on the cheek and said "Good night."

The next day, Georgina's mother knocked and then opened the door, and looked around at the now spotless room in amazement. She looked at Georgina questioningly.



Smiling, Georgina explained, "Aunt Alexa was here last night and helped me clean everything up."

Her mother laughed. "Ah yes, that was something my mother occasionally said to me. But, there's never been an Aunt Alexa in our family."



Keeping our things neat  
is much easier than cleaning up a mess.

It is more important that our clothes be neat and clean than fashionable and expensive.

We should wear what is suitable and appropriate for our age, and within our family's means.



When eating and drinking, do not be fussy.  
Eat only the right amount; do not overeat.

When we are young, we should not drink alcohol.  
The behavior of those who are drunk is unsightly.

Kids may think that having the latest, most expensive clothes with designer labels and in styles older kids wear is crucial if they want to fit in. But having the latest styles is not necessary, or practical. Even if we spend money beyond our family's means on clothing, we still won't be able to keep up in other ways. And if we try to, we'll end up causing problems for our parents.

So it is better to dress simply and to only buy what our family can afford. That way, we know the friends we have like us for who we are, not because we wear expensive clothes.

We also need to behave politely when eating. When given something to eat or drink, we should appreciate it and not complain or say we want something else. Also, we should not eat too much. This is tough to do especially when it is something we really like. But overeating will not only make us sick, but fat as well!

Although kids at school may say it is the thing to do, alcohol and drugs can make kids (and adults!) do dumb things that they would never do otherwise. So if they are offered to you, leave and go tell an adult what happened.

Whether alcohol or drugs—they simply do not go with kids.

Walk in an unhurried manner and always stand up straight.  
Whether greeting friends or elders,  
do so properly and with respect.



Do not step on doorsills or stand leaning on one leg.  
When sitting, do not sprawl or fidget.

Greetings are important and they have to be done properly. When greeting others of our own age, we should do so with mutual respect.

When we're greeting someone who is older, like our aunts and uncles or our parent's friends or our teachers, we should do so courteously. We know that we feel badly if someone greets us in a way we do not like.

Similarly, when walking, standing, or sitting, do so correctly. It is simply good manners. It also shows that our parents taught us well. The good habits we form when we're young will remain with us for the rest of our lives. Our friends may not care now if we sprawl all over the furniture or the floor, but as we grow older, these things will begin to matter to them.

Also, fidgeting and sprawling can be a sign to others that we do not respect ourselves much. It says the same thing when we do not take care in how we behave and appear. Seeing this, others will not be inclined to treat us with respect either.

In other words, when we walk, stand, or sit correctly, we are telling others that we value ourselves and are worthy of their respect.

When entering a room, we should open the door carefully.  
When walking, we should be aware of our surroundings  
so as to not bump into anything.



Hold empty containers just as carefully  
as if they were full.  
Enter empty rooms as if they were occupied.



We don't want to disturb people when we walk into a room, so we should enter quietly. Depending on how busy they are, we can decide whether it is best to remain quiet or if we can go ahead and talk to them. If we just want to do something in the same room, we can politely nod or smile, acknowledging their presence. Then we can do what we came in for.

If we know the room is empty, it is still good to enter as if someone is there. In other words, we shouldn't run into a room or make a lot of noise as we enter. Even if no one is in that room, there may be other people in the next room, so we need to consider them.

And when moving around we should always be aware of our surroundings. Not paying attention can result in our bumping into something and maybe even breaking it. By leaving enough room for ourselves, we won't hurt ourselves or embarrass ourselves in front of others.

Also, whenever we carry something it is always best to do so carefully with both hands. This includes not just full containers, but also empty ones as they may break if we drop them. So holding things carefully is a good habit to develop.

Avoid doing things in a hurry,



since acting in haste will lead to many mistakes.

Think this one is obvious? Unfortunately, it wasn't to Rufus and his five brothers . . .

### Haste Makes Waste, Just Ask Rufus

Rufus and his five brothers were very happy. They had always wanted to join the army so they could help defend their country. But the country had been at peace so the king had little need for new soldiers.

So why were they so happy?

The king had just announced that he needed new soldiers because many had taken early retirement. The brothers were happy because now finally they would be able to do their part to help protect the country and its citizens. But without any helmets and weapons, nor a chariot or a horse to pull it, they were in a bind. So Rufus quickly called Acme Armor Supply. They were in luck. Acme had a special promotion and was giving away a free spear with every helmet and armor set!

Now the only problem was transportation. This one had them

stumped and gave Rufus a few sleepless nights while waiting for the delivery from Acme. Finally, Rufus had an idea. (He may have been the youngest, but he had always been the one with the bright ideas.)

Rufus was out in the stable (actually, it was a shed since they had no horses) poking around and thinking when he noticed the big basket that they had all woven together when they were still in school. Rufus then spied the stone grinding wheel near it. He had it! Excitedly, he began rummaging around until he found an old axle and a spare plow handle.

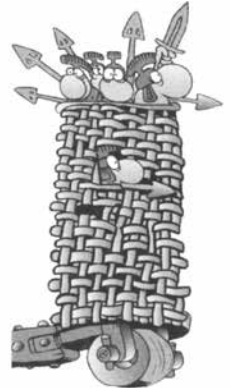
He got the brothers together and they began to work quickly under his direction. They soon had all the pieces together and boy was it a beauty. Three of the brothers ran next door to ask if they could borrow their neighbor's horse. Being a good citizen (and won over by the gleeful brothers) he agreed. The brothers brought the horse home and went to hitch it up.

But there was a slight problem.

In their haste, Rufus' brothers had hitched the handle and axle to the back of the basketariot (their name for their new vehicle) instead of the front! The brothers were all standing around

scratching their heads, and Rufus was looking particularly pained when the Acme van drove up. The driver gave them their packages, congratulated them on their patriotism, and drove off before they could try out the spears.

The brothers were delighted because now they could join the army. Then they remembered that the horse couldn't be hitched to the basketariot. As usual Rufus had the answer. He'd push! The brothers ran happily into the house, put on their armor, and quickly kissed their parents goodbye. They ran out and piled into the basketariot while Rufus went behind to push.



But there was a slight problem.

They had forgotten their helmets. Muttering, Rufus ran into the house, grabbed the helmets, and finally they were off.

But there was a slight problem.

Rufus couldn't see where he was going and all five of his brothers were excitedly yelling directions at the same time. Rufus stopped pushing, rolled his eyes, and through clenched teeth asked for his spear. He cut a hole in the basket and called it the

“navigator’s window.” Only the brother whose turn it was to sit at the window could give directions. Delighted with this arrangement, everyone resumed their position and off they quickly went.

But there was a slight problem.

The brothers didn’t know where they were supposed to go. They were making good time but probably going the wrong way.

Fuming under his breath, Rufus banged his head a few times on

the basketariot handles. But he soon got himself

under control and ran to get directions from a passerby. When he returned, he told the

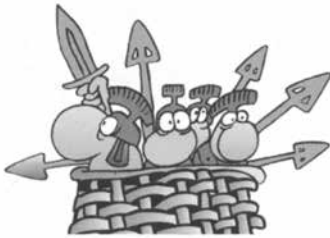
brothers exactly where the army post was and

how to get there. He made them repeat the directions to be sure they all knew where they

were going. They quickly started off again and soon came to where they were to cross a river.

But there was a slight problem.

The brothers were in the wrong spot (what can I say). They had gotten confused. It turned out that they should have crossed two miles back. Rufus, who was now gnashing his teeth and tugging at



his hair, quickly turned the basketariot around. Back they went to where they had just come from. They turned where they should have in the first place and crossed the river.

By this time, the brothers were all holding on for dear life because Rufus was running so fast the basketariot was almost airborne. The five brothers spotted the army post and cheered Rufus on to where the recruitment table was set up.



But there was a slight problem.

As Rufus dragged himself up to the table, the recruitment officer looked at the muttering, bedraggled, mud-splattered and red-faced Rufus, and then turned to his five grinning brothers in the basket. The army officer, standing tall in his spiffy uniform, looked them over, slowly shook his head, and stamped “REJECTED: No Appeal” on their applications.



Acting in haste  
usually ends in mistakes and disappointment.

Do not be afraid of a task that is difficult



or become careless when a job is easy.



Sometimes we want to do something, but we're afraid to try because the job seems so hard. Other times, a task can seem so easy that we don't do it as carefully as we should . . .

### A Heart as Big as an Elephant

Deep in the jungle lived two friends: a large elephant and a small bird no bigger than the tip of the elephant's trunk. You might think their friendship was unusual, but in the past such things were quite common. Animals and birds could talk to one another, and they all got along happily together.

One day, while Bird and Elephant were enjoying a drink of water at their favorite stream, they heard distant calls of distress. Elephant asked Bird to please fly up high to see what was happening. Bird flew above the trees and saw the reason for the alarm. There was a fire on a distant ridge! Bird quickly flew down to Elephant and reported what he had seen. Elephant knelt down, put her ear to the ground, and said, yes, she could hear the sounds of many animals running.

Bird said excitedly, "We have to help our friends. Not all the birds

can fly high and long enough to escape the fire.” Elephant agreed, “And not all the animals are fast enough to outrun the flames. But what can we do?”

Bird said, “I can carry water on my wings, and you can carry it in your trunk.” And with that Bird dove under the water and then soared up into the air. He flew to the fire and sprinkled the few drops of water he had onto the flames. He then flew back to where Elephant was filling her trunk.

“Hurry!” cried Bird.

But Elephant reassured her friend, “Don’t worry. You cannot carry much water, but my trunk holds a lot.” Bird dove into the water again and flew off to the fire. After Elephant filled her trunk and went a few steps, she carelessly tripped and spilled some water. Back to the stream she went to refill her trunk.

In the meantime, Bird was flying back and forth as fast as he could. The fleeing animals cried out, “Save yourself. It’s hopeless. You can’t carry enough water!” Bird replied he had to try and that Elephant was bringing water in her trunk. The animals knew that Bird was very persistent. But they also knew that as good-hearted as

Elephant was, she was careless. So they weren't sure how helpful she would be.

Inspired by Bird and Elephant, the other birds and animals pitched in to help. Soon they were all working together to put out the fire. All the noise woke the forest god. He saw Bird fearlessly flying back and forth, leading the others in trying to put out the fire. He also saw Elephant and the other animals helping.

Touched by their courage, the forest god threw his staff high into the air to pierce a cloud. Rain began to fall and soon the fire was out. With everyone safe, Bird flew back to Elephant.

Always honest, Elephant confessed she hadn't paid enough attention to what she was doing. She put her trunk on the ground to cradle her exhausted friend and promised that in the future she would be more careful.



To carry out tasks,  
we need to be not only courageous, but careful as well.

Keep away from rowdy places.  
Do not be curious about things that are bad or unusual.



When we are about to enter a house,  
we should ask if anyone is inside.  
As we enter, we should make ourselves heard.

If someone asks who it is, we should say our name,  
not "me" because such a reply is not clear.

It can seem exciting to go to the kinds of places that our parents or older siblings tell us that we are too young for. And it is especially tempting when other kids say they're going and want us to go along with them. But until we grow up, it is best not to consider going to such places.

We should also avoid things we know to be bad. Curiosity can cause a lot of problems. So when we're young, it is best to check out new things with parents or others who are knowledgeable.

By avoiding rowdy places and bad things, we are in fact respecting what our parents have told us.

Before we visit someone, we should first check to see if we can come by at a certain time. When we reach our destination, we need to see if anyone is there. Calling out "Is anyone home?" or knocking on the door will let them know that we are there.

We should also identify ourselves instead of assuming that they will recognize our voice. So after calling out their name, we should give our own. With that done, it is polite to wait until invited in. It is also considerate to ask if we are interrupting them.

Politeness will ensure that we are always welcome.

Before using something that belongs to another,  
we should ask for permission.  
If we do not ask, it is stealing.



After we borrow from others, we should return the items  
on time. Later, if we have an urgent need,  
we will be able to easily borrow from them again.

When we see an object just lying around, we shouldn't take it. Nor should we assume that it doesn't belong to anyone.

Elmer learned about this the hard way in . . .

### Found: Piece of Cheese, Owner Unclear

"Excuse me, sir. I don't mean to be rude and I certainly don't wish to bother you. But may I please ask what you're doing with that cheese?"

It was a reasonable question. And very politely asked. But then Cameo was a very polite cat. When her mother was pregnant, the doctor told her she needed to get plenty of rest if she wanted to have healthy kittens. Putting her kittens' needs first, Cameo's mother did exactly as she was told. Since she lived in a bookstore, she decided the logical thing to do would be to spend her time reading. And so she read many books.

One of her favorites was on etiquette. She felt that since her kittens would be living with humans, it would be helpful for them to know what humans considered as good behavior. So she diligently studied the book and taught her kittens all about human etiquette.

By listening attentively to her mother, Cameo grew up to be a very polite cat. She would run to greet people as they came into the bookshop, making eye contact as she welcomed them. If they didn't answer her, she didn't mind. After all, their thoughts could be elsewhere.

When invited, she would jump up onto the customer's lap when they sat in the chairs scattered around the shop. She would listen attentively as the customer spoke to her and meowed back her carefully considered responses. When they left, she would slowly walk them to the door to let them know she was sad to see them go.

So it was only logical that when Cameo spoke to the mouse she did so respectfully. "Excuse me, sir. I don't mean to be rude and I certainly don't wish to bother you. But may I please ask what you're doing with that cheese?" she questioned.



The mouse, who was called Elmer, was so shocked that he dropped the big chunk of Swiss and just stared at her. Never had he met a polite cat. Or one that talked for that matter. He finally blurted



out “Huh?” (Unlike Cameo, Elmer did not have the benefit of a good education). Cameo calmly repeated her question and tried to make eye contact, but now Elmer wouldn't look directly at her.

“Uhh, I found it,” he muttered.

Cameo sat down and studied Elmer. “May I ask where you found it?”

This was more than Elmer had bargained for, and he was getting rather worried. His mother just told him to go get the cheese. She hadn't said anything about the bookshop cat who thought she was a lawyer.

“On Mr. Rasmussen's desk,” he stammered.

Cameo said, “Then the cheese must belong to Mr. Rasmussen. Excuse me for asking, but did he say you could have it?”

“No,” Elmer nervously admitted.

“Oh dear. Then you're stealing it,” concluded Cameo.

Indignantly, Elmer declared, “I'm not a thief! I found it lying on the table. No one was eating it. No one was even around!”

“But if the owner of the cheese did not give it to you, then you took it without permission. And I'm very sorry, but that's stealing,” Cameo explained.

Elmer's eyes got bigger as he asked "Are you sure? I thought if I found something just lying around, then it didn't belong to anyone. Finders keepers! So I took it."

"No. Almost everything belongs to someone. Like that cheese. Before we take something, we need to find and ask the owner first." Cameo was trying to be kind because clearly Elmer didn't know that he was doing anything wrong.

"I didn't think of that. You're right." And with that, Elmer began to wail, "Oh no, I am a thief!"

"No, no, not if you put it back and never take anything again," Cameo assured him. "Don't worry. We'll figure out a way to get the cheese back on the table."

And that is just what they did. Cameo then promised Elmer that she would never tell anyone what had happened. And Elmer never again took anything without first asking the owner.

Regrettably dear reader, as much as I would like to tell you how they put the cheese back, I cannot. When Elmer told me about this, he made me promise not to tell anyone because that might get a certain bird in trouble.

~ 4 ~

## BEING TRUSTWORTHY



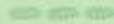


When we speak, honesty counts the most.  
Deceit and lies are unacceptable.



It is better to talk a little than chat too much.  
Tell the truth; do not speak insincerely.

Cunning, deceptive speech and foul language  
should never be used. We should never  
conduct ourselves in an unruly manner.



Whenever we speak, we should always be truthful. Lies, flattery, and exaggerations are wrong. They can mislead others and cause serious problems for those who believe the untruthful things we say . . .

### Klissa's Moment of Truth

Klissa never had her hair done before. But then she had never graduated from school before either. Her long year of studying had paid off—she was getting the Lioness of the Year Ring! Her parents said that as a special treat, she could go to the You Grow It, We Style It Beauty Shop to have her hair done.

Thrilled, Klissa poured through all the latest magazines and found several with layouts on lions! She found a hairdo she fell in love with, and wanting to surprise everyone, she hid the magazine.

On graduation day, her mother drove Klissa to the beauty shop. She asked if Klissa wouldn't like her to stay, but Klissa rolled her eyes and said, "Mommm! I'm graduating today; I'm a big lioness now. I'll catch a bus from here to school and meet you and dad there." Her mother kissed Klissa on the cheek, which got another eye-roll and

then a giggle from Klissa who quickly kissed her mother back.

Klissa entered the shop and was taken to the shop's most popular hairdresser, a monkey named Esmeralda. Esmeralda looked at the magazine and then at Klissa. "Honey, this is a pretty funky hairdo. And I mean funky. You sure you want this?"

"Oh, yes ma'am!" Klissa's turquoise eyes sparkled.

Esmeralda exclaimed, "Well then, let's get to it!" And she began to wash, cut, color, blow-dry, brush, and band Klissa's hair. When she was all done, she handed Klissa a mirror.

Studying herself, Klissa asked, "Do you like it?"

"Sure. It's just like the photo," Esmeralda replied.

Klissa left the shop and caught the bus to school. Getting off, she saw her friends. She ran up to them and asked, "Do you like my new hairdo?" They looked at each other and mumbled, "Ah, sure." "Great hairdo." "Love it."

Next, Klissa saw her lion friend Trislan. As he looked at her hairdo, she asked "Do you like it?" Trislan swallowed and paused for just a second before saying "Very nice."

Klissa saw her parents and ran over to them. "Do you like it?" Her father seemed at a loss for words. Just as her mother began to

speaking, the principal called out for everyone to take their seats. Klissa ran to her chair without hearing her mother's reply.

Soon the speeches were finished and it was time for the students to go onstage to receive their diplomas. Klissa was shaking the principal's paw and accepting the ring when suddenly one of her rubber bands broke. Then the other two snapped as well! Klissa's hairdo was out of control with hair going in every direction! Horrified, she ran off the stage.

As Trislan and her friends came up to her, she cried out, "Why didn't you just tell me it was a stupid hairdo?" They all said they didn't want to hurt her feelings. "Well, being embarrassed in front of everyone in town is a whole lot worse! Next time, tell me the truth. Please!"

Klissa's friends and Trislan apologized, her mother brushed out her hair, and her father said, "Thank goodness. Let's go eat."



When others ask us what we think,  
we should honestly—and politely—tell them.

— — —

We should not readily  
talk about something we have not seen  
for it may not be the whole truth.



We should not readily  
pass on to others  
what we do not know for sure.

— — —



If you don't know something for certain, telling it to others can create big problems. Whether you are on land or in the water . . .

### A Different Kind of Fish Dinner

It all started innocently enough. Mr. and Mrs. Trout were at the annual company dinner. Everyone had finished their salads and was waiting for the soup to be served. Mr. Bass turned to Mrs. Trout. "You've heard about Mr. and Mrs. Dolphin haven't you?"

Mrs. Trout replied, "No. What about?"

"Well, they're getting a divorce!" Mr. Bass informed her.

Mrs. Trout was shocked. "A divorce! I can't imagine it. They're such a wonderful couple. How did you hear of it?"

Mr. Bass confidently told her, "I heard it from Mr. Flounder, who heard it from Mrs. Turtle."

"Oh dear," said Mrs. Trout. "I wonder what they will do about their beautiful house."

"I hear they're going to sell it. She's moving back in with her mother while she looks for a job. He's going to ask for a transfer to

another department. He may even leave the bay and move somewhere else." Mr. Bass certainly did seem to know all about the Dolphins.

As the soup was served, Mrs. Trout turned to her husband and told him the news. Mr. Trout then passed it on to Mr. Cod, who was sitting next to him, and pretty soon everyone at the dinner heard the news. The waitpersons also heard about it when they were serving the food and clearing the dishes. They in turn told the kitchen staff, so soon everyone in the restaurant knew all about the Dolphins and their divorce.

Then to everyone's amazement, the Dolphins entered the dining room laughing together. As they took their seats, they explained that they had gotten caught in traffic. Mr. and Mrs. Trout and all the others were befuddled at how happy the Dolphins seemed. You'd never guess from their behavior that they were getting a divorce.

Then it happened. Mrs. Jellyfish couldn't stop herself. She looked at the Dolphins and tearfully blurted out, "I'm so sorry!"

The Dolphins looked at her. They had no idea what she was sorry about. Mrs. Dolphin gently patted a tentacle and said, "There, there. Why are you sorry?"

“Your divorce! Everyone’s talking about it,” cried Mrs. Jellyfish.

Mr. Dolphin dropped his soup spoon. “Divorce? We’re not getting a divorce! Where did you hear that? In fact, we’re about to sell our house and buy another to be closer to Mrs. Dolphin’s parents. And after I get my promotion, we’re going on a trip.”

Silence fell. Everyone stared at their soup and thought about what had just happened. It was a case of Mrs. Someone telling Mr. Someone, and everyone believing what they heard.

Mr. Trout stood up and cleared his throat. “I want to apologize to both of you. I repeated a rumor. Next time, I’ll check before I talk about others. I hope you will accept our best wishes for your good news. I also hope you’ll forgive us.”

Mr. and Mrs. Dolphin smiled at their friends and Mr. Dolphin said, “Apology accepted, and thank you all for your good wishes. Please, enjoy your dinner.” Everyone was greatly relieved.



Unless we know something to be true,  
we should not repeat it to others.



If someone asks us to do something  
and we are not sure whether it is appropriate,  
we should not carelessly promise.



If we do promise to do something  
[and it is inappropriate],  
we will be wrong whether we keep or break our promise.



Sometimes people we know will ask us to do something, and we will not be sure if it is appropriate to do. If we promise to do something without finding out whether it is proper, we will very likely end up being wrong no matter what we do. On the one hand, if we do what we promised, we will be wrong if it turns out to be improper. On the other hand, if we break our promise, we will also be wrong.

So it is very important to think carefully before we promise to do something. And if at all possible, we could check with our parents or a responsible older person first.

But what if the people are asking us to do something right now. What should we do? We can ask ourselves if this is the sort of thing our parents taught us was okay to do. Or if it's something we were allowed to do before. We can also ask ourselves what our older brother or sister would do or if it is something they had permission to do at our age.

If we are still unsure, then it is much better to explain that we cannot promise until we check with a parent. Not giving an answer right away is much better than ending up doing something wrong or breaking our word.



When speaking, say each word  
unhurriedly, clearly, and correctly.  
Do not mumble or talk too fast.



Some people like to gossip and comment  
about the faults or good points of others.  
But if something does not concern us,  
we should not get involved.

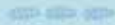


If we want people to understand what we're talking about, we need to say every word clearly and properly. We also need to talk at a reasonable speed and loud enough to be heard. Too loud and we will be annoying. So too if we mumble.

Once we know how to speak properly, we need to be careful of what we talk about. For example, gossip. What exactly is gossip? When we gossip, we are talking about someone's personal affairs. Like when we tell someone else that we heard a friend was grounded for staying out too late. Or how another friend had his phone taken away for texting too much. Since we are talking about something personal, we are gossiping.

But what if it is something good we are talking about? What if we are talking about a friend who is going on a camping trip with his dad. Is it still gossiping? Actually it is because it's personal and it is not our business.

Is there ever a time we can talk about others without it being gossip? If we say a friend is a great ice skater and we hope to be as good one day, then we are not gossiping. Why not? Because now we are involved and also we really do know what we are talking about.



When we see the goodness of others,  
we should encourage ourselves to learn from them.

Even if we are far behind them,  
gradually we will achieve as they have.



When we see the faults of others,  
we should reflect on our own behavior.

If we have the same fault, correct it.  
If we do not have this fault, we should always be alert  
and not make the same mistake.





It's always nice to see others do good deeds. We may see a friend helping a pregnant woman carry her shopping bags. Or we might see our neighbor carefully putting a bird's egg back into the nest. Seeing these things, we might tell ourselves we could never do something like that. It was easy for others. But not us. Or we may find an excuse. Like we are in a rush, or we would not think of it in time, or someone else would do it.

But like us, our helpful friend or neighbor probably shied away from doing good deeds at first. He had to learn from others. So we too can learn from watching and learning from others. Over time and with practice, we will be the one others want to be like.

But what if we see others doing something wrong? Like laughing about how others look or hurrying to get in line before someone else. Often the annoying things that others do are the same things we do! So we need to think before we criticize others. Instead of telling others to change their behavior, we need to work on changing ours first.

And if we don't have that bad habit, we need to be sure we never develop it!



When our morals, knowledge, and skills  
are not as good as those of others,  
we should encourage ourselves to try harder.



If the clothes we wear and the food we eat  
are not as good as what others have,  
do not feel sad.



When our abilities and knowledge aren't as good as others, we shouldn't give up on ourselves. Instead, we should do our very best to be like those we admire and respect.

And as for being sad when different? Larslin found a way . . .

### Not Your Usual Asagee

No one knew how it happened. Some thought it was because his mother loved to go to the museum and look at all the beautifully colored paintings. Others thought it was because his father loved to read science fiction. Still others quietly said it must have been a gene from a long-forgotten ancestor.

But whatever the reason, Larslin was not your usual Asagee. His parents tried to hide their shock when he was born. But since Asagee are very aware of the feelings of others, Larslin knew something was wrong. He just didn't know what it was.

At least not until he wobbled over to the stream to take a drink and saw his reflection. He saw he was a lovely warm orange, just like his parents. But as Larslin's eyes focused and he looked more

carefully, he saw a bright blue spot just above his nose. As he bent closer for a better look, he saw another blue spot near the top of his head! And then he saw there were more on his legs.

Larslin blinked and then looked up at his parents. No, they didn't have any blue spots. And from the look in their eyes, Larslin began to feel that he shouldn't have any either. His mother came close to him and licked his face. Then his father came as well and stood awkwardly by. Larslin looked more closely at them. He couldn't see even one blue hair.

Larslin told himself that maybe newborns had blue spots but lost them as they grew up. He consoled himself with this thought for a few days.

Then his cousins came to visit.

They were the same age as Larslin, but not one of them had even the tiniest blue spot. Since adult Asagee have extremely good manners, Larslin's aunts and uncles managed to completely hide their emotions. But his cousins were young and like most children everywhere they didn't have the best of manners. Having been warned by their parents, they tried not to laugh. But it was more

than they could manage.

One by one they started giggling. And before anyone could stop them, they were laughing out loud at Larslin. He tried very hard to be brave and to not embarrass his parents. But a tear rolled down his cheek. Then another. And soon, with all his cousins laughing at him, he burst into tears.

Larslin ran off into the tall grass and threw himself down in it. Even though his aunts and uncles hushed his cousins, their laughter still rang in his ears.



Larslin began to think that maybe his spots would never go away. He told himself that it wasn't his fault. He'd been born this way! But what if maybe, just maybe, he would be different for the rest of his life. His sadness was more than he could bear. He tucked his head between his front legs and sobbed as though his heart was broken.

He was so miserable that he didn't hear his parents approach. It wasn't until his mother nuzzled him with her nose and licked his face that he realized they were there.

But this time there was no shock in their eyes.

Only love.

Larslin couldn't see this at first because his own eyes were filled with tears. But he felt their love.

And it was wonderful.

Gradually, he stopped crying. His mother was now lying in the grass in front of him. His father was standing over them both, as if trying to protect his son from ever being hurt again.

His mother looked at him and said, "Larslin, we want to be very honest with you. When you were born, we were shocked because we had never seen any of our kind who looked like you. We didn't know what to do so we consulted the elders. They searched their books, but could not find any record of an Asagee with blue spots."

Tears began to well up again in Larslin's eyes.

His father cleared his throat. "Son, those who are different have two choices. They can allow the laughter of others to cause them to be sad. Or they can realize that all animals are different in some way. Some animals are unusually short while others are fat. Others are not very bright. Some are not as athletic as others of their kind."

His mother continued. "Whether you are happy or sad depends on what you tell yourself. The elders declared that you are very

special. But your father and I already knew that. At first we didn't know what to think. Then we realized that the way you look doesn't matter. Who you are is what is important. Please know that we love you." She smiled, "And your blue spots."

His father concluded, "There will always be some who laugh at you. You can feel sad or you can understand. We are all different in some way. Some more noticeably than others. But son, being different does not mean that one is inferior."

Larslin understood. As he stood up, his mother also rose. Along with his father, they went back to the aunts, uncles, and cousins. But now Larslin walked proudly. Yes, he was different. But his parents loved him no matter how he looked.

His cousins apologized for their laughter. They shyly came over to look more closely at Larslin. Up close, they realized the blue spots were actually very beautiful.

As Larslin grew up, he became famous. But not because of his blue spots. Larslin became famous—and loved—for his kindness and for his willingness to befriend all those who were laughed at because they were different.



If criticism makes us angry and compliments make us happy, we will attract bad company, while good friends will leave us.



If we are appreciative of criticism and uneasy with compliments, people who are virtuous, sincere, and trustworthy will gradually become our friends.





Good friends want what's best for us. So when we do something wrong, they'll tell us. They do this not to make us feel bad but because they truly care about us. They want us to become better people. Because we trust our good friends and their judgment, we listen to their criticism.

We also know that good friends praise us at times because they know we deserve it. We can trust that our good friends aren't saying nice things just to get something from us. They're trying to encourage us to do even better because they know that's what we are striving to do.

But what if we only want to be flattered? And worse, when we are criticized, we become angry! We'll never keep good friends if we behave this way. And to make matters worse, because we dislike criticism and always want to be flattered, we'll begin to attract people who are insincere and untrustworthy. We'll find ourselves surrounded by people who flatter us because it suits them to do so.

To be sure this doesn't happen, we need to appreciate it when our good friends criticize us. They are the ones who truly care about us.

If we accidentally make a mistake, it is only an error.  
But if we do it on purpose, it is definitely wrong.



If we correct our faults and mistakes and do not repeat them,  
then they will cease. But if we try  
to cover them up, we will be doubly wrong.

If we did something wrong but didn't mean to, then it was only an error. Maybe we tried to catch the ball someone threw at us, but we missed it. Or we really wanted to bring our math book home, but we forgot. These are honest mistakes and anyone can make them.

But if we make a mistake on purpose, then we've definitely done something wrong. Maybe we don't like to play baseball because we're not very good at it. So we missed the ball on purpose hoping the coach would leave us out of the game. Maybe our math homework was really tough. So we hoped that if we couldn't do our homework, the teacher might excuse us this time.

It's important for us to figure out whether we made a mistake by accident or on purpose. Why?

If they were mistakes, then we need to think why we made them and how to correct them. To become better at catching balls, we could practice with our brother. To remember to bring our books home, we could make a checklist or put aside the books. Then they'll be ready for us when we go home.

But what if we did something wrong on purpose?

Here also we need to think about why we behaved in such a

way. Were we feeling angry? Were we unhappy? Tired? Did we want to do something else instead?

Figuring out why we make mistakes takes effort and courage. But this figuring out will help us become happier.

In what way?

To stop making mistakes, whether by accident or on purpose, we need to understand why we make them. As we make fewer mistakes, we will naturally relax and worry less. And be happier.

So instead of not being very good at catching the baseball, with practice we could become the person everyone wants on their team. And instead of dreading the next math exam, having studied with a friend who is good at math, we will walk into class knowing we were well prepared for any questions.

But if we try to cover up our mistakes, not only will they get worse, we will have made another mistake! Then we'll be doubly wrong.

So the best thing for us to do is admit we made a mistake, figure out why, and decide how not to repeat it. This is how we improve and become happier.

~ 5 ~

## LOVING ALL BEINGS



Love all beings,  
for we all live under the same sky



and are supported by the same earth.

While we're all different, each of us has basic wishes. All living beings—humans and animals—want to be safe. We humans want to be happy, to be with those we like and who care about us. We want to be treated kindly and with respect. Animals also want to be safe and not be harmed. And many want to be loved.

How do we get these good things we all wish for?

By giving them to others!

If we want to be happy and safe, respected, and cared for, we need to help others have these also. All others.

We can help other people and animals be happy and safe by treating them as we wish to be treated. We can sit next to the girl on the bus that no one ever sits next to and begin a conversation. We can take care to watch where we walk and not step on any insects.

What about things that grow and things that are not alive? We should respect and care for them as well. We could help water the plants when the weather is hot. We can straighten our books so our bookcase is nicely organized.

Looking around, we will find many ways to show our love for the people, animals, plants, and things that share our planet with us.

A person of good character  
is highly respected.  
Respect is not based on external appearances.



A capable person  
will naturally have a good reputation.  
People are not won over by boasting or self-praise.



All too often, we judge people by how they look. Anyone who has ever gone to a movie because of a great trailer but found the movie boring will understand the problem with judging based on appearances.

Appearances can be very deceptive, especially with people. It is character—a person's good qualities—that really matters.

We need to remember this when choosing our friends so we can choose them wisely. Good friends are people we respect and like because they're always there for us and we trust them. Most likely our best friend isn't the best-dressed person in our class and or the star of the soccer team. But this doesn't matter because they have character. They care about others and we respect them for this.

In time, such capable people will be trusted and appreciated by others as well. Why? Because she is someone others can depend on. And he is someone who becomes good at what he does because he studies and works hard.

They will be happy to help others. They do not need to brag or show-off to impress others. Others will know their worth from how they speak and what they do.

Hopefully, this is the kind of person we too will become in time.

— — —

If we are good at something, we should be willing  
to use that ability to benefit others.  
When we feel others are more competent than us,  
we should not criticize or slander them for being so.



Neither flatter the rich nor despise the poor.  
Neither ignore old friends nor take delight in only new ones.

— — —

Instead of using our skills for ourselves, it would be more fun to use our abilities to benefit others. But what if it isn't us but others who have the skills? We shouldn't be jealous or say anything bad about those people. Instead, we should compliment them.

When we praise others, it should be based on their abilities. We shouldn't praise or flatter people just because they have a lot. Neither should we look down on those who have little.

Also, we should not ignore our old friends in favor of new ones. This was an important lesson that Jack learned in . . .

### Old Friends, New Friends

Jack and Ryan had been best friends for as long as they could remember. They were always together. In fact, their parents joked that they might as well move in to one or the other's house since they spend so much time together.

One day at school, a new boy named Owen was brought to class and given the desk next to Jack. After class, Jack introduced him to Ryan. When Ryan went to the library, Owen told Jack that he had

seen him on the playground and that Jack was great at sports. Owen praised Jack so much that when Owen asked Jack to be his partner in the games that weekend, Jack agreed without thinking.

Jack's head was swimming with Owen's praise until he saw Ryan coming down the hallway from the library. Then he remembered that he and Ryan always played in the games together. Not knowing what to do, Jack said the first thing that came to his mind. He told Ryan that their teacher had asked him to help Owen feel welcome and to partner him in the games.

Ryan was hurt but didn't want to make Jack feel bad, so he said okay. He then turned to walk home, alone. Jack was about to go after him when Owen came up and started saying how great Jack would be at the games. With all the praise from his new friend, Jack forgot all about Ryan.

That Saturday, Owen and Jack were in the rope-climbing contest. Jack had never been very good at this, but Ryan never minded. During the contest, one team of climbers competed with another team. Owen was much better than Jack, but even so they lost to the other team.

Owen said no problem, that he was going for some water. When

he didn't come back, Jack went to look for him. He saw Owen talking to another boy and was coming up behind them to apologize to Owen when he heard him say, "I figured if I asked that klutz Jack to be my partner, I could always blame him if I lost. Pretty smart, huh?" And both boys burst out laughing.

Jack froze. This was who he had dropped his best friend for! Ryan had never called him a klutz. Ryan would never call anyone a klutz! Miserable, Jack turned to leave when he saw Ryan coming toward him. At first, Jack didn't know what to say. Then he knew he had to tell the truth. After admitting that the teacher had not asked him to play with Owen, Jack stopped talking. He was terrified that Ryan would never forgive him and he'd have lost his best friend.

Ryan looked at him and was silent. Then he smiled and said, "Forget Owen. Let's go play ball!"



Do not ignore old friends in favor of new ones.



When others are busy, do not bother them.  
When they are troubled, do not make things worse  
by talking unnecessarily.



We should neither expose the shortcomings of others  
nor disclose their private matters.



We usually get so caught up in what we want to say that we don't question whether it is a good time to talk. We just talk away and get frustrated when Mom or our friend doesn't pay attention to us. Even worse, the other person ends up being annoyed at the interruption.

Or we may chatter away without realizing that our friend is troubled about something. So instead of listening to him and showing how we care, we are focusing on ourselves and maybe even making things worse for him.

What can we do instead?

Before we talk to someone, we can first ask if it is a good time to talk. Or we can look and see if she is busy or seems to be deep in thought. If we do begin to talk and she isn't paying attention, it is probably not a good time to interrupt her.

What do we do if someone tells us something personal? Or if we alone know a fault the person has?

We shouldn't gossip about the shortcomings of others or discuss their personal matters. What we know is private and should remain so. By not gossiping, we show respect for others and will be respected in return.



It is good to praise the virtuous actions of others.  
Knowing that they are being praised,  
people will be encouraged to do better.



Gossiping about the wrongdoings of others is in itself wrong.  
When we slander another excessively,  
we too will suffer harm and great misfortune.





When we praise others for their good actions and they learn of it, they will try to do even better in the future. So we both benefit. We are happy in what they have done and they will try to do even better.

What about gossiping? Gossiping about the faults of others can seem harmless. After all, the other person won't hear what we have said. At least that is what we tell ourselves. But gossiping about someone can cause much harm because other people may believe what we say and thus think badly of that person. By gossiping, we will in turn be gossiped about. Why? Because by gossiping, we'll have lost the respect of those who hear us gossip.

But as bad as gossip is, slander is even worse.

Gossip is when we say something that we believe to be true. Slander is when we say something that we know is not true. This will harm and cause many problems for the other person. But that is not all that will happen. When we speak ill of another, we too will be harmed and have many problems.

If it seems a bother to praise others and to only speak the truth, please think again. If it's really that hard, then how did a snow child with a knit hat and a carrot nose manage it in . . .

## Harry's Nose

It had been snowing for weeks, and snow families appeared all over the countryside. Mr. and Mrs. SnowJones were very lucky for they had two sons, Harry and Frank. Like their father, they wore blue and yellow knit hats, and had carrot noses. Their mother, like her mother, wore a scarf and had a potato nose.



Harry and Frank loved following their father as he walked up and down the hills. He praised his sons for joining him in greeting the neighbors. Because their father praised them for their politeness, Harry and Frank tried even harder to keep up with him so that he'd be even prouder of them.

One day, before the SnowJones were awake, Harry felt something pulling on his nose. He opened his eyes and found himself staring into another pair of eyes. Big pink ones! Then he saw a pair of gigantic floppy ears and a nose as pink as the eyes. It was a rabbit! While looking at the rabbit's nose, he realized with horror that the rabbit had its teeth sunk into his carrot nose and was tugging on it!

Harry cried out. He grabbed his nose and pulled as hard as he could, but the rabbit was too strong. Before his family could come to Harry's aid, the rabbit pulled the carrot out of Harry's hands and bounded away with it. With one leap the rabbit cleared the fence in the SnowJones' yard and was gone.



And so was Harry's nose.

Harry ran over to the fence and began pounding on it, yelling for the rabbit to return his nose. Realizing his nose was probably gone forever, he sat down and began to cry.

His parents tried to console him, saying they'd get him a new nose, but Harry knew that carrots were hard to find since they had all been used up by the snow people.

Snow families from around the neighborhood came running to see what the commotion was. By now, Harry had stopped crying and was getting angry. "He was a mean old rabbit!"

The neighbors agreed in sympathy.

"He was fat and ugly!" Harry continued.

A neighbor agreed, "He sure was one fat rabbit."

"It's amazing he could even jump the fence," added another.

"He's a thief!" Harry was really getting angry now.

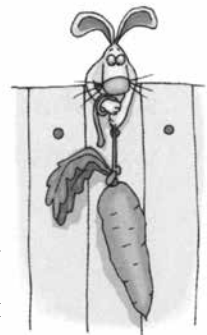
"Can you imagine stealing a little kid's nose?" piped someone from the back of the crowd. "I never did like those dumb rabbits," mumbled a snow woman near him.

"He should be caught and fined. We should take away all his carrots and see how he likes it!" Harry blurted out.

Feeling that things were getting a little out of hand, Mr. SnowJones motioned for everyone to calm down. He turned to Harry. "Now son, we know how badly you feel. But the rabbit taking your nose is no reason for you to say untrue things."

Mrs. SnowJones added, "We don't know all the facts. Maybe he's hungry. Maybe his brothers and sisters, or his elderly parents are. We don't know why he did it. But whatever the reason, we shouldn't make up things."

Then a hush fell over the crowd. An enormous carrot appeared at the top of the fence. It was held by a rope. And at the other end of the rope was a rabbit! He slowly lowered the carrot to the ground then jumped down next



to it. He dragged the carrot over to the Snowjones, looked up at Harry's parents, and swallowed hard.

"I heard what you said. I didn't take the carrot for my brothers or sisters. I don't have any. I don't have any parents either. I never had anyone teach me what was wrong. But what you told Harry sounded like good advice. I ate his carrot while listening to you, so it's gone. But here's another one. It's much bigger, so maybe you can cut it down for Harry to use."

Then the rabbit turned to Harry. "I'm sorry I took your nose."

"I'm sorry I made up stories about you," replied Harry. "And I'm sorry you don't have a family. Maybe you can live with us." Harry turned to his parents.

"Mom? Dad?" His parents smiled in agreement.

And for the rest of the winter, the rabbit happily had a family.



Kind, truthful words build friendships;  
lies destroy them.



By mutually encouraging one another to do good,  
both of us will improve our characters.  
By not advising one another to correct our respective faults,  
our characters will diminish.



When giving and receiving,  
we should be clear in what we are doing.  
It is better to give more and receive less.



When we and a friend encourage each other to do what is good and help one another, we will both become better people. On the other hand, if we fail to tell a friend about her faults, both our characters will suffer.

And as for giving and receiving? For that, let's check with . . .

### Ethel and Her Egg

Everyone knows how lady dragons are about their eggs. Dedicated. Protective. Fierce when necessary.

That spring there was no need for ferocity as the fire grass was plentiful. Daily, the husbands brought bundles of it for their wives so they could all share, as was the custom.

All, that is, except Ethel.

Ethel had forgotten that to have food in the future, she needed to share now. So, as her husband brought grass, she hid it. And when the ladies shared their grass with her, she didn't write it down in her ledger so she'd be sure to repay them. Ethel just put the grass in the pantry and never bothered with updating her ledger.

But that was just one way that Ethel was different. When it came to protecting her egg, Ethel made the other lady dragons pale by comparison. She would hold on to her egg and never leave it. At night, she'd carry it into the cave and lock the door. In the morning, she'd carry it outside. Then she'd crouch in the doorway, furrow her brow, and glower through narrowed eyes.

The other dragons became increasingly concerned. One said he'd go tell Ethel's mother what was going on. When she was told, Ethel's mom was horrified. And very worried. She came running to Ethel's cave where she saw her daughter crouching. Ethel's mother took one look at her glowering daughter and burst into tears.

Since she had three heads, when Ethel's mom burst into tears, it was really something. As one head wailed, another tearfully looked in their handbag for a handkerchief. The third looked on in fright. Ethel demanded, "Mother, what are you doing? All this noise will disturb the egg! And what are you doing here?"

Ethel's mother's third head knew what she had to do.





“Dear, your friends are very worried about you and your ledger. Your father and I raised you to be unselfish and like all good dragons to always update your ledger. Also, to always be more generous to others than they are to you. This is the only way we can hold our heads high.”

“But I also came to see about the little one. You’re being far too protective of your egg. Caring for it is one thing. When your baby hatches, he’ll take one look at your expression and be too scared to leave his egg! Then I’ll never get to see my grandson!” And with that her mother’s third head burst into tears.

Well, that got Ethel’s attention. Her baby afraid of her and refusing to leave the egg? Her not being generous as she had been taught? All three of her mother’s heads crying at once!

“Mother, I’m sorry. I’ll stop glowering. See? No more glower.” And indeed Ethel was beginning to smile.

“Mother, I owe you big time. Now, let’s find my ledger.”



It is always good to give more than we receive.

Before we ask others to do something,  
we should first ask ourselves if we would do it.  
If not, then we should not ask others to do it.



We should repay the kindness of others;  
we should let go of our anger.  
Spend less time holding grudges  
and more time repaying kindness.

Before we ask someone else to do something we don't like to do, we should think first. Is it something the other person likes to do or at least doesn't mind doing? For example, we are afraid of spiders, but our friend actually likes them! In this case, we could ask her to please catch a spider and carefully release it outside.

What if it is something that the other person also does not like? Let's say she doesn't like spiders either. Then we shouldn't ask her to catch that fast-moving, hairy one in our room.

But what if we don't know how our friend feels about something we don't like doing? Then we shouldn't ask her to do it because it isn't kind to ask another person to do something we ourselves don't want to. She might be hurt or become upset that we expected her to do something we wouldn't do ourselves.

We all know how it feels to be angry. We become terribly upset; we cannot think straight. Knowing how badly we feel when we get angry, we do not want to be the cause of someone else feeling that way.

Not wanting to hurt or upset others, we don't ask them to do something unpleasant that we ourselves don't want to do. Instead, we try to always treat others with consideration. And a side benefit

is that in return, we also will be treated thoughtfully.

What do we do if someone did or said something to us and we get angry? That's what happened to Twill, and this is how he handled it in . . .

### Twill Grows Up



Twill had been looking forward to the human's picnic for weeks. As a teenage ant, he was too young to have been to one yet, but had heard all about them from listening to the older ants. There would be so much wonderful food there. And lots of ants too. Maybe he'd even get to meet some really cute girl ants.

Twill was lost in his daydream when his mother called to ask if he had finished his chores and studied for his final exam. Since he hadn't done either, he didn't answer her. He knew that if his mother found out he would be stuck in the apartment and not get to hang out with his buddies. He decided he'd go see them now without telling his mother. There'd be plenty of time later for studying and chores.

He slipped out and quietly closed the front door behind him. He had only gone a dozen steps down the tunnel when his mother opened the door and stuck her head out. "Hello boys," she called out to Twill's friends at the end of the tunnel.

Then she looked at Twill. "Twill, have you finished studying and doing your chores?"

Twill was so embarrassed! Why did his mother have to treat him like a baby. He was a teenager for Pete's sake! Twill gruffly retorted, "I'm busy now, Mom."

Twill's mother stepped out into the tunnel and looked at him. Sighing, she said, "Twill, you're not going anywhere until you finish your work. Back into the apartment. Now." To Twill's friends she said, "Twill will have to join you later after he's done."

Twill stormed back into the apartment and angrily began doing his chores. As he was washing the dishes, putting out food for their pet grub, and packing the food his mother had fixed for the queen, he muttered to himself about how unreasonable his mother was. Why did she always go on about school and chores? Didn't she know he had important things to do? He was almost an adult!

Was she always going to treat him like a child?

He was still very upset when he took out the trash. It was so unfair. And embarrassing. How would he ever face his friends again! He sat down on the ground, propped his elbows on a piece of wood and his chin on his hands. Why were parents always nagging their kids? If it wasn't one thing, it was another. They never understood. Parents thought only about what they wanted their kids to do, not what their kids wanted.

After some time, he heard footsteps behind him. When he turned to see who it was, he saw that it was his mother.

"Son, I'm sorry you're upset. You have chores to do because you're almost an adult now, and I depend on you. And you have to study hard because a good final grade will get you that job you want.

"Twill, meeting our responsibilities is something we all need to do. And meeting them happily, or at least not unhappily," she said as she smiled, "will make whatever we are doing more enjoyable."

"Now, I have to get this seed inside. I came out here to find one because you're going to need it for your final exam. After the picnic, when the other students start looking for them, they'll be hard to

find. I'll go now and put it in your room for you."

Twill watched his mother turn to leave. Now he felt terrible. Here he had been angry and complaining about her when, as usual, she had been thinking of helping him.

Not sure how to apologize, he called to her, "Mom?" She turned around to look at him.

Looking down at his feet, he said, "Thank you." Then he looked up at her. "I really mean it. And I'm sorry." The smile on her face could only come from a mother. He got up and ran over to the door. He opened it for her, and then helped her carry the seed back to his room.



It is better  
to remember the kindness of others  
than to hold on to our anger.

When we interact with people who serve us,  
we should act in ways that inspire respect.  
And while being dignified and proper is important,  
it is also important to be kind and generous.



If we force others to do as we wish, they will silently rebel.  
But if we convince them with sound reasoning,  
they will happily agree without complaining.



In some places, it is common to have a maid or perhaps a gardener working for a family. Elsewhere, this is more unusual. But even if our family does not have someone working just for us, we still have many people who serve or help us in some way.

The person may cook or bring us our food at a restaurant. She may deliver our mail, fix the plumbing, or wash our car. He may check our groceries in the store, mow the lawn, or clean our home.

These people are all helping our family, so we should act courteously and with appreciation. If it was not for them, we would have to do everything ourselves!

Thanks to the people who help and serve us, we have time to go to school, play in sports, spend time with our friends, or go camping with our family. So the next time someone brings us our food at a restaurant or delivers something to our home, we should smile and say “Thank you.” And mean it.

How else can we can act toward those who help our family?

When we need a person to do something for us, we can explain why we are making the request. For example, instead of telling the delivery person to put the box inside the door, we could ask, “Could

you please put the box inside the door? And then explain, "It's too heavy for me to carry." Then we can smile and say "Thank you!"

As long as others know why we are asking them to do something, it'll be much easier for them to happily do as we request. And we'll feel happy as well because we'll get the help we need by being pleasant.

The way we act toward others will become the way others act toward us.

### Try This Out

Start a list of all the people you can think of who help you or your family. For the next week, add to it every time someone new does something for your family. They may come to your home or be someone you meet when you're out with your parents. To see how much help these people are giving you, think of how much time you would need if you did everything yourself. Now, the next time you say thank you, you will mean it even more and the other person will be even happier.

~ 6 ~

BEING CLOSE TO  
KIND AND VIRTUOUS PEOPLE





We are all human beings,  
but we are not the same.



Most of us are ordinary;  
only a few of us are kind and virtuous.



Although we are all human beings, we differ in many ways. One of these many ways is behavior.

We are all a mixture of good and bad behavior. Sometimes we act properly: we respect others and care about their feelings. At other times, we act improperly as we think only about what we want and ignore how our selfish behavior hurts others. In time, as we become more aware of our selfish behavior and realize what we're doing wrong, we'll be able to begin to correct our faults and improve the way we act.

Why is correct behavior so important?

And why must we change some of the wrong things we are now doing?

Just as our past behavior has resulted in who we are and what we have today, our current behavior will lead to who we'll be in the future.

And it is not just our behavior that determines this. How we think and talk will also contribute to the kind of lives we will have in the future. For example, if we always talk about others and even say things we're not sure are true, we ourselves will become the target of gossip and lies!

Fortunately, if we're trustworthy and considerate of the feelings of others, then we'll gradually attract friends who are also trustworthy and thoughtful. So instead of ending up with selfish, unkind friends, we'll have friends who are loyal and understanding.

With even more time and effort, we'll become a truly good person.

Why would we want to be truly virtuous, to always be good and kind, and to be respectful of others?

When we become truly good and kind, we'll make our parents happy and proud of us. We won't have misunderstandings and arguments, either with our siblings or with other people. We'll do better at school and later at work. We'll be liked and respected by people we like and respect.

We won't hurt the feelings of others or do something wrong and then wonder how to undo the harm we have caused. Other kind and virtuous people will want to be near us. They will trust us and treat us with respect, and not say things that will hurt our feelings.

As a truly kind and virtuous person, we'll be able to live a happy and enjoyable life.

A life that we created.

How do we create this good life?

By following the guidelines in this book and understanding that everything we do will have consequences.

The way we *act* toward others is the way they will act toward us.

The way we *talk* to others is the way they will talk to us.

And the way we act and talk start with how we *think*.

With correct thoughts, correct speech, and correct actions, we will become the caring and thoughtful children, teens, and adults good people admire and want to be close to.



Truly virtuous people  
are held in awe by others.



They are not afraid to speak the truth,  
and they do not fawn on others.



## The Power of Trust

Nabeel was a quiet man by nature and a scholar by training. Admired by all who knew him, he treated everyone, even animals and the plants around his small mud house with respect and love. And when others needed help, he always stepped forward.

The villagers loved him for his kindness and sincerity. They delighted in his humility and virtuousness. Very simply, they were just in awe of him.

One day, a high-ranking government official rode into the village square on a handsome black horse and dismounted. His servants scrambled off their donkeys and rushed to the official's horse. Suddenly some dogs began barking excitedly at the newcomers, and the horse reared in fright.

"Fools!" he shouted, striking the servants with his wooden staff. "You clumsy fools! You let my horse become frightened! I'll teach you not to do that again." And again he struck out at the cowering men.

Not daring to say anything to an important, powerful man, the gathering crowd of villagers looked on in horror.

The official was about to strike the servants again when Nabeel came through the crowd. He quickly moved in between the official and his cringing servants.

After calmly paying respects to the official, Nabeel said, "My lord, your servants were at fault, but so too were the dogs who frightened your horse. Since the dogs did not know any better and they belong to us villagers, then surely each of us is also at fault. So we should be punished as well."

Nabeel turned to the crowd. "My friends, please line up behind me so the official can strike each one of us."

The villagers were terrified and yet they trusted Nabeel completely. So even though they did not understand why he was putting them in such danger, they did as he asked.

The official watched in amazement as every man, woman, and child lined up behind Nabeel. There they quietly stood with heads bowed, too frightened to look directly at such an important man. Too confused to even speak to one another.

When they were all in line behind him, Nabeel turned back to the official and calmly looked into his eyes. "My lord, we are ready. Beginning with me, please strike each one of us in turn for the fright

our dogs gave your poor horse.”

The official gazed back at Nabeel. Even in the capital, few people dared to look him in the eye, much less stand up to him. Yet, here was this old man in this out-of-the-way village doing just that. But that was not all. This old man had, with just a few words, got every person in the village to do as he said!

The official was no longer angry—he was intrigued. He looked at Nabeel and asked simply, “How?”

Nabeel smiled. “My lord. In truth, it was no one’s fault that your horse was frightened. It was an accident. And you cannot deal out punishment for an accident anymore than you can justly punish a whole village for it.”

“Also, trust and respect can overcome fear. But trust and respect have to be earned. And fear? Fear is a weapon, and weapons accomplish little that is good. So my lord, it is much wiser to move people through trust than with fear.”



A virtuous person  
is respected and loved by all who know him.

— — —

If we associate with and learn from people of great virtue,  
we will benefit greatly. Day by day, our own virtues will grow  
and our faults will lessen.



If we do not associate with and learn from these people,  
we will suffer a great loss. We will attract people without  
virtue, and nothing we do will succeed.

— — —

If we spend time with good people, we'll learn from them and become more virtuous ourselves. But if we distance ourselves from them, we'll end up attracting unvirtuous people. Then we'll have serious problems. This is a lesson even a princess needs to learn . . .

### The Princess and Her Two Gifts

Princess Christine began the day as she always did. She stretched, got out of bed, and called her maid. After the maid helped her dress, the princess went to the dining hall where she greeted her father, King Alfred.



The king and the princess were served breakfast by Willis, their new butler. Willis also told them all the latest news. The king was delighted with this because his new butler updated him more than the royal advisors did! Willis told them that two strangers were on their way to the castle. The princess asked if one was a tall, handsome prince. Willis replied no. King Alfred asked if one was a rich taxpayer, but he too was told no.

Willis reassured the two disappointed royals that it would still be



an important day. When the king asked why, Willis explained, "Sire, each visitor is bringing a gift for the princess. May I make a suggestion to her highness?"

As the king nodded, Willis turned and said, "Princess, instead of greeting them as yourself, I suggest you do so as your maid. You can put on an old cloak." He brought one in from the hallway and gave the cloak to her.

She put it on and asked excitedly, "Now what?"

"Your visitors will arrive any moment. You will need to use wisdom. I am confident that you will know what to do."

Then they heard loud knocking. Eagerly the princess ran to the door. She flung it open and saw an elderly, dignified man. "Sir, I am the princess's maid. May I help you?"

"Child, I am a virtuous sage from far away. I have knowledge that will greatly benefit your mistress. Kindly tell her I am here."

Before the princess could reply, she saw a carriage approaching. As it stopped, a groom jumped down and opened the door. A beautiful woman carrying a sparkling box stepped out and stood by the carriage. She announced, "Tell your mistress she has a very important



visitor. In this box are secrets that will make her rich and powerful!”

Not sure who to talk to first, the princess turned to the sage. He held out his arm as if to reassure her and softly said, “I bring goodness and truth for the princess.”

The princess looked again at the beautiful woman.

“I bring her wealth and power! All in this box.”

As if mesmerized by the box, the princess walked out the door. She continued past the virtuous sage. And away from his gift of goodness and truth. Her eyes were held by the magical box. She forgot that she was dressed as a maid and reached out to touch it.



The woman struck her. “Impudent girl! This is for the princess not her wretch of a servant!”

Instead of being angry, the princess felt as if she had just awakened from a trance. “How could I have been so blind,” she marveled, “as to think a selfish gift more valuable than a virtuous one? Thank goodness that I realized it in time.” With that, she threw off the cape. “I am Princess Christine. To me, your gift is worthless. I do not want it.”

When the woman cried out, the king came running, Willis at his

side. They all watched as the woman turned into an old witch and the box into a snake, which coiled around her arm. Then suddenly both were gone.

The princess turned to the sage. “Sir, I am ashamed. I was greedy and foolish. Caught up by selfish thoughts, I turned away from virtue. I will never do so again. If by chance you still think me worthy of your gift of goodness and truth, I would be most honored by it.”



“Princess,” said the sage, “it takes wisdom to know that we have made a mistake and courage to admit it. The following few words—my gift to you—may appear to be simple. But they are beyond value. *To become virtuous, we need to always be with those who are virtuous, and learn from them.*”

“Princess, my king is looking for a bride for his son. She must be humble and know the value of virtue. The prince has also been looking. He sent word that he believes he has found his bride. I now agree with him. Would you like to meet your prince?”

“Oh, yes please!” replied Princess Christine.

“Here he is. His name is Prince Willis.”



~ 7 ~

AFTER DOING THE ABOVE,  
THE ARTS COME NEXT



If we acquire knowledge  
but do not sincerely apply what we have learned,  
we will have only increased our conceit.  
What then will we become?



If we are sincere in what we are doing  
but not acquiring knowledge,  
we will only be stubbornly following our viewpoints.  
We will never see the truth.

If we study a lot, but don't apply what we have learned, we won't benefit. Even worse, we could easily become arrogant in thinking that we know a lot.

If we are sincere in the things we do but don't increase our knowledge, we'll always think the same way and resist any change. We'll never see that we are mistaken.

This is true whether we're a raccoon or something else . . .

### The True Benefits of Learning

"I know I'm right. I'm always right!" he said confidently.

"Well, I know I'm right, so you must be wrong. Just because you read all the time, you think you know everything," she sighed.

"You're a sweet kid Lily, but you never read anything. If you read even a little, you'd be more aware of what was going on. For example, you'd know that you mastodons have been extinct for 10,000 years." Jacque said, returned to his reading.

"Goodness! What's a master...masti...mastodon"? Lily asked.

Without looking up at Lily, Jacque closed the book and opened



another. "A big, furry elephant."

"Well I don't care what some book, or the raccoon reading it, says. I am not extinct," Lily insisted.

"Like I say, you're attached to your ideas, Lily. But be realistic. How many other mastodons do you see around here?"

Lily gasped. "Wait a minute. Jacque, did you just call me a furry elephant?"

"Not me, Lily. That's what it says in the book."

Since Jacque was reading, he didn't see the hurt expression on Lily's face. But above them in the trees, Ricardo had been listening to their conversation. And he did see how upset Lily was. He also saw the title of the book Jacque was reading.

Ricardo called down to them, "Jacque...Lily...what's up?"

Lily sniffed, "Jacque just called me a furry elephant."

Jacque looked up. "Actually, I said a *big*, furry elephant."

"Interesting. Say, Jacque, what are you reading now?"

"*Guidelines for Being a Good Person*. It's about respect and caring about the feelings of others," Jacque answered.

“Doesn’t it also warn about reading a lot but not using what you’ve learned?” Ricardo asked.

Startled, Jacque replied, “Yes!”

“Doesn’t it also talk about the importance of being a kind and trustworthy friend?”

Jacque gave a more hesitant “Yes.”

“Jacque, you implied Lily wasn’t very smart since she rarely read anything. Also, instead of saying her kind was big and furry, you could have used words that were more polite. You’re reading that book but not applying what you read.”

“And Lily, you’re very sincere but you can be a bit stubborn at times. Reading would broaden your thinking.”

Jacque and Lily looked at each other. “How about reading this book with me Lily?” Lily smiled and happily sat down next to Jacque, and they began reading—and learning—together.



In learning, we need to apply what we learn.  
In living, we need to keep learning and be open to the truth.



When studying,  
our mind, eyes, and mouth must be focused on our learning.  
All three must be wholeheartedly dedicated to learning.



When reading a book, do not contemplate another.  
If we have not completed one, do not start another.



When studying, we'll learn better—and more quickly—if we really want to learn. To succeed, we need to focus on what we're reading and not allow ourselves to be distracted.

So when studying history, we should only have our history books out. If we're using a computer, we should only open the programs we need for our homework. Also, we shouldn't be watching TV or listening to our favorite songs because these will distract us.

This principle of focusing on only one thing is not a new idea. In some countries in the past, students studied just one book at a time. They would not even think of another book until the current one was finished. Even though we now study many subjects at the same time, we can follow the same basic principle by doing our homework one subject at a time.

Studying one subject at a time makes good sense.

If we keep going back and forth between our history and science homework, we'll be wasting time. We'll have to remember what we had been working on in science the last time before we can begin again. Then we'll have to do the same with history.

By focusing on one subject, we'll get more out of our studies.



In our studies, we should set a reasonable timetable and then study hard. With enough time and effort, we will thoroughly understand the text.



If we have a question,  
we should make a note of it.  
Then ask a person who knows the answer.





Things often end up taking longer than we think they will. Just like when we study. Perhaps people are interrupting us. Or maybe the topic is more difficult than we thought it would be. Maybe we don't have all the books we need. We could be tired and finding it hard to pay attention.

If we set a reasonable study schedule and stick to it, we'll have enough time to do a good job on our homework (and work when we are older). By not feeling rushed—my paper is due tomorrow!—we'll be more relaxed instead of in a panic. So instead of just passing the exam, we'll really learn the subject.

Not only do we need enough time to study, we also need to try hard to understand what we're studying. With enough time and effort, we can even learn those subjects that are difficult for us.

What if we come across something we don't understand? When this happens, we can carefully write down our question so we don't forget anything. Then we can ask someone who knows the answer. Maybe this helpful person is a parent or the librarian. Maybe she is a friend who is really good at geography.

By asking the right person, we'll be sure to get our answer.



We should keep our room clean,  
our desk tidy,  
and our pens and pencils in their proper places.



If we do not properly care for our writing tools,  
it shows carelessness.  
If our words are written sloppily,  
it shows disrespect.



So far we've learned to respect our parents and our elders, and to care for those who are younger. But it's also very important to respect and care for our room (or our space in a room) and everything in it.

When we treat our room and the things in it with respect, we'll develop the habit of respect. We won't have to keep reminding ourselves to behave correctly; we'll naturally do the right things. Our parents will be happy, and so will we.

Also, a neat work area will make studying easier. We won't waste time looking for that book we need to do our homework with or become upset when we can't find it. Also, a tidy study area will make it easier for us to concentrate on our homework or whatever we're doing.

And because we are neat and organized, when we leave for school the next day, we'll already have everything we need in our book bag. No more rushing around—or worse—getting to school and realizing that we forgot to bring our report for English class!

Keeping our pencils sharpened, putting the tops back on markers, and writing neatly are all ways to show that we're careful and respectful.



Books should be organized and placed on the bookshelves in their proper places. After reading a book, we should put it back where it belongs.



Even when in a hurry, we should carefully put our book away. If it is damaged, we should repair it.

Do not read books  
that are untruthful or immoral,  
for these will block our wisdom and undermine our aspirations.



Books are easier to obtain than ever before. We can borrow them from the library or buy them at a store or online. Since they are so convenient to get, it is easy for us to forget that they need to be treated with respect so that they will last.

By organizing them neatly on our bookshelves, we'll always know where they are when we want them. So we won't waste time looking for them.

Also, if our parents or grandparents give us books as gifts, we'll especially want to keep these safe. We may even want a special bookshelf for them.

After reading a book, leaving it open can easily damage it if we put it down with the spine up. Instead, we can insert a bookmark, close the book, and carefully put it back on the shelf.

If a page is torn in one of our books, we can easily repair it by putting some tape over the tear. If the cover is bent, we can smooth it out with a few heavy books on top.

What about books that are untruthful or immoral? Such books may seem fun or exciting but they will waste our time and money.

They will prevent us from becoming wiser and better people.



We should not, because of our arrogance,  
harm ourselves by doing something improper.  
We should not, because of our lack of confidence,  
give up on ourselves.



With effort,  
we will gradually become  
a noble person.



## A Truly Good Person

It was Claire's favorite part of the day. Every night, before she went to sleep, her mother would read a book with her. They wouldn't read a lot. Just the right amount.

Then Claire's mom would talk to her about what they had read.

Would Claire have done anything differently from the characters in the book? Which ones did she admire and why? What did Claire think would happen next, after the story ended?

Claire would also ask her mom the same questions. She was really good at guessing which characters her mom admired the most. First, they always listened to their parents! Often in the story, they would make a mistake and then learn from it. And they were kind to the people and animals they met.

One day, after Claire and her mom had finished reading *The Little Mermaid*, Claire was especially quiet. Her mom asked, "Claire, what are you thinking about?"

Slowly Claire replied, "The mermaid was so good. First, she swam for hours to save the prince's life. Later, when she had a chance to

become a mermaid again she didn't because she would have had to kill the prince. Instead, she jumped into the water but was saved by fairies."

Her mom agreed, "She was very brave, wasn't she."

"She was sooo brave. And so good!" Shaking her head, Claire said, "I could never be like that."

Claire's mom stroked her daughter's hair. "If we tell ourselves that we cannot be really good, do you know what will happen?"

"No," Claire answered.

"If we tell ourselves that we can't be really good, we won't be. Because we won't even try. So what we tell ourselves is very important. It's like the story about the blue locomotive. Remember how he kept saying, 'I think I can. I think I can.'? And he did! Do you understand what I'm saying?"

Claire brightened a bit. "I think so. I should tell myself that I can be good. Just like the little mermaid."

Her mom hugged her and said, "That's my Claire."

Suddenly they heard a surprised cry coming from the kitchen. Claire's mom jumped up and ran out of the bedroom. Claire got off





the bed and ran after her. When they got to the kitchen, they found Claire's twin brother, Chris. He was sitting on the floor holding his foot. Next to him was a soymilk container.

His mom ran to him. "Chris, are you okay? What happened?"

"You said we could have soymilk and cookies tonight as a treat. I wanted to surprise you and get the soymilk out. But it fell off the shelf and hit my foot. I just wanted to help."

His mom checked his foot, then picked up the soymilk container and put it on the table.

"Well, this certainly is the night for lessons! Your foot is okay and will stop hurting in a few minutes. You need to be more careful. Chris, haven't I told you to hold things with both hands? When I tell you something, like to do things slowly, there's a reason. I want you to do things correctly, and I don't want you to be hurt. Do you understand?"

Chris nodded and went to his mother. "Yes. I'll try to be more careful next time."

She hugged him and smiled. "You're so adventuresome! I can't keep up with you."

Then she put out the cookies and poured the soymilk, and the twins sat down at the table.

“There’s something else the both of you need to understand.”

Claire and Chris looked at their mother as they munched their cookies. She sat down at the table between them.

“I’m very proud that you try so hard to be good. Being a really good person takes time and work. But it is worth it.”

As they looked up from their cookies, she continued. “Because being a really good person will make you and those with you happy. You’ll be happy because you know you’re doing what’s right. Others will be happy because you’re so nice to be with.”

Claire and Chris were looking up at their mother and listening to every word she said. They knew her this-is-important voice.

“I know that each of you can become a really good person. I want you to know that too. As I’ve told you before, everything you and I say and do causes something to happen. It’s like a boomerang. So your efforts to be good will result in you being good. Okay?”

Claire snuggled closer to her mom. Chris beamed up at her.

Their mom smiled as she looked down and hugged them both.



With effort,  
we will gradually become  
a noble person.



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## Guidelines for Being a Good Person

Di Zi Gui

Translated from Chinese by the  
Pure Land Translation Team

### Preface

This book was written by ancient Chinese sages. It teaches us the guidelines for being a good human being. First, it teaches us to respect and love our parents, and to be kind to our siblings. Second, it teaches us how to interact with people and engage in daily tasks. It also teaches us to be a trustworthy person. Furthermore, it teaches us to love all beings and to be close to kind, virtuous people. Having learned how to do all these, we can then expand our horizons by studying the arts.

### Chapter 1: Respecting and Loving our Parents at Home

When our parents call us, we should answer them right away. When they tell us to do something, we should do it promptly.

When our parents instruct us, we should listen respectfully. When they scold us, we should sincerely accept what they say.

We should make sure that our parents are warm in the winter and cool in the summer. In the morning, we should greet them and show them that we care. At

night, we should make sure that they are resting comfortably.

Before going out, we should let our parents know. When we return, we should tell them that we are back. We should lead a routine life, and we should not be constantly changing our mind in whatever we do.

Even when a matter is trivial, we should not act without permission or just do as we please. If we do so, then we are no longer a dutiful child.

We should not hide any possession, no matter how small, from our parents. If we do, they will feel hurt.

When something pleases our parents [and is proper], we should try our best to provide it for them. When something displeases them, we should remove it.

If we injure ourselves, we will make our parents worry. If we do something unvirtuous, they will feel ashamed.

When our parents love us, it is easy to be respectful and loving. When they do not love us, respecting and loving them means we have a noble heart.

If our parents do something wrong, we should urge them to change. Do so with a kind expression and caring voice.

Should our parents not accept our advice, try again when they are in a better mood. If they still do not listen, our sincere tears will show them how deeply we



care. Should they get angry with us, do not hold it against them.

When our parents are ill, we should make sure that they take the right medicine. Care for them night and day, and do not leave them alone.

For three years after our parent's passing, we should remember them in sadness. We should live simply and not adorn our home. Avoid merry-making, meat, and alcohol.

We should arrange our parent's funeral in a proper manner. We should always honor them as if they were still alive and, especially on the anniversary of their death, remember them with a sincere heart.

## Chapter 2: Interacting with Others Away from Home

Older siblings should love and care for the younger ones; younger siblings should love and respect the older ones. Getting along well with one's siblings is a sign of respecting one's parents and caring that they are happy.

When siblings value family ties more than possessions, resentment will not arise. When siblings are careful with their words, feelings of anger naturally dissolve.

When drinking, eating, walking, or sitting, let elders do so first; younger ones follow.

When an elder is asking for someone, find that person right away. If we cannot find that person, we should immediately report back and ask if we can help instead.

When addressing elders, do not call them by their first names. When in the presence of elders, do not show off.

When meeting elders whom we know, greet them promptly and respectfully. If they do not greet us in return, respectfully stand aside.

If we are in a vehicle and see an elder whom we know passing by, we should get out and greet the person [if the situation safely allows]. We continue on our way only after the elder has left us.

When an elder is standing, do not sit. After an elder sits down, sit only when invited to do so.

Before an elder, speak softly. But if our voice is too low and hard to hear, we are being improper.

When meeting elders, walk briskly towards them; when leaving, do not do so in haste. When answering a question, look attentively at the person.

We should regard our aunts and uncles as if they were our parents, and our cousins as if they were our siblings.

### Chapter 3: Being Mindful in Daily Life

Get up early and go to bed at a reasonable time. Knowing how time flies, we should treasure every day.

When we get up, we should wash our face and brush our teeth. After using the toilet, we should always wash our hands.

Our hat should be properly put on, clothing correctly buttoned, and socks and shoes neatly worn.

We should put our clothes away in their proper places. We should not leave them lying around for they will get dirty that way.

It is more important that our clothes be neat and clean than fashionable and expensive. We should wear what is suitable and appropriate for our age, and within our family's means.

When eating and drinking, do not be fussy. Eat only the right amount; do not overeat.

When we are young, we should not drink alcohol. The behavior of those who are drunk is unsightly.

Walk in an unhurried manner and always stand up straight. Whether greeting friends or elders, do so properly and with respect.

Do not step on doorsills or stand leaning on one leg. When sitting, do not sprawl or fidget.

When entering a room, we should open the door quietly. When walking, we should be aware of our surroundings so as not to bump into anything.

Hold empty containers just as carefully as if they were full. Enter empty rooms as if they were occupied.

Avoid doing things in a hurry, since acting in haste will lead to many mistakes. Do not be afraid of a task that is difficult or become careless when a job is easy.

Keep away from rowdy places. Do not be curious about things that are bad or unusual.

When we are about to enter a house, we should ask if anyone is inside. As we enter, we should make ourselves heard.

If someone asks who it is, we should say our name, not “me” because such a reply is not clear.

Before using something that belongs to another, we should ask for permission. If we do not ask, it is stealing.

After we borrow from others, we should return the items on time. Later, if we have an urgent need, we will be able to easily borrow from them again.

#### Chapter 4: Being Trustworthy

When we speak, honesty counts the most. Deceit and lies are unacceptable.

It is better to talk a little than chat too much. Tell the truth; do not speak

insincerely.

Cunning, deceptive speech and foul language should never be used. We should never conduct ourselves in an unruly manner.

We should not readily talk about something we have not seen for it may not be the whole truth. We should not readily pass on to others what we do not know for sure.

If someone asks us to do something and we are not sure whether it is appropriate, we should not carelessly promise. If we do promise to do something [and it is inappropriate], we will be wrong whether we keep or break our promise.

When speaking, say each word unhurriedly, clearly, and correctly. Do not mumble or talk too fast.

Some people like to gossip and comment about the faults or good points of others. But if something does not concern us, we should not get involved.

When we see the goodness of others, we should encourage ourselves to learn from them. Even if we are far behind them, gradually we will achieve as they have.

When we see the faults of others, we should reflect on our own behavior. If we have the same fault, correct it. If we do not have this fault, we should always be alert and not make the same mistake.

When our morals, knowledge, and skills are not as good as those of others, we should encourage ourselves to try harder.

If the clothes we wear and the food we eat are not as good as what others have, do not feel sad.

If criticism makes us angry and compliments make us happy, we will attract bad company, while good friends will leave us.

If we are appreciative of criticism and uneasy with compliments, people who are virtuous, sincere, and trustworthy will gradually become our friends.

If we accidentally make a mistake, it is only an error. But if we do it on purpose, it is definitely wrong.

If we correct our faults and mistakes and do not repeat them, then they will cease. But if we try to cover them up, we will be doubly wrong.

## Chapter 5: Loving All Beings

Love all beings, for we all live under the same sky and are supported by the same earth.

A person of good character is highly respected. Respect is not based on external appearances.

A capable person will naturally have a good reputation. People are not won over by boasting or self-praise.

If we are good at something, we should be willing to use that ability to benefit others. When we feel others are more competent than us, we should not criticize or slander them for being so.

Neither flatter the rich nor despise the poor. Neither ignore old friends nor take delight in only new ones.

When others are busy, do not bother them. When they are troubled, do not make things worse by talking unnecessarily.

We should neither expose the shortcomings of others nor disclose their private matters.

It is good to praise the virtuous actions of others. Knowing that they are being praised, people will be encouraged to do better.

Gossiping about the wrongdoings of others is in itself wrong. When we slander another excessively, we too will suffer harm and great misfortune.

By mutually encouraging one another to do good, both of us will improve our characters. By not advising one another to correct our respective faults, our characters will diminish.

When giving and receiving, we should be clear in what we are doing. It is better to give more and receive less.

Before we ask others to do something, we should first ask ourselves if we would do it. If not, then we should not ask others to do it.

We should repay the kindness of others; we should let go of our anger. Spend less time holding grudges and more time repaying kindness.

When we interact with people who serve us, we should act in ways that inspire respect. And while being dignified and proper is important, it is also important to be kind and generous.

If we force others to do as we wish, they will silently rebel. But if we convince them with sound reasoning, they will happily agree without complaining.

## Chapter 6: Being Close to Kind and Virtuous People

We are all human beings, but we are not the same. Most of us are ordinary; only a few of us are kind and virtuous.

Truly virtuous people are held in awe by others. They are not afraid to speak the truth, and they do not fawn on others.

If we associate with and learn from people of great virtue, we will benefit greatly. Day by day, our own virtues will grow and our faults will lessen.



If we do not associate with and learn from these people, we will suffer a great loss. We will attract people without virtue, and nothing we do will succeed.

### Chapter 7: After Doing the Above, the Arts Come Next

If we acquire knowledge but do not sincerely apply what we have learned, we will have only increased our conceit. What then will we become?

If we are sincere in what we are doing but not acquiring knowledge, we will only be stubbornly following our viewpoints. We will never see the truth.

When studying, our mind, eyes, and mouth must be focused on our learning. All three must be wholeheartedly dedicated to learning.

When reading a book, do not contemplate another. If we have not completed one, do not start another.

In our studies, we should set a reasonable timetable and then study hard. With enough time and effort, we will thoroughly understand the text.

If we have a question, we should make a note of it. Then ask a person who knows the answer.

We should keep our room clean, our desk tidy, and our pens and pencils in their proper places.

If we do not properly care for our writing tools, it shows carelessness. If our words are written sloppily, it shows disrespect.

Books should be organized and placed on the bookshelves in their proper places. After reading a book, we should put it back where it belongs.

Even when in a hurry, we should carefully put our book away. If it is damaged, we should repair it.

Do not read books that are untruthful or immoral, for these will block our wisdom and undermine our aspirations.

We should not, because of our arrogance, harm ourselves by doing something improper. We should not, because of our lack of confidence, give up on ourselves. With effort, we will gradually become a noble person.



May the goodness  
accrued from this work  
help to alleviate  
the suffering of all beings  
and enable them  
to find lasting happiness.



Please visit

[www.howwillibehavetoday.org](http://www.howwillibehavetoday.org)

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and a list of

Amitabha Buddhist Societies and  
Pure Land Learning Centers

The guidelines in this book may sound simple and seem to apply only to children, but they are neither simple nor just for children. These guidelines contain important principles that will help us the rest of our lives.

It is, and always will be, important that we respect and learn from our parents and that we not do anything to hurt or embarrass them. It matters that we meet our responsibilities at home and at school, and later at work. And this will never change. It is good for us to interact well with others, to live within our means, and to take care of our possessions. And it always will be good to do so.

All of these will help us to be happy, whether we are eight or eighty.

Why?

First, we will be happy knowing that we did what was right!

Second, the way we treat others will become the way we are treated. Being unkind to others will result in others being unkind to us. Being considerate of others will result in others being considerate of us.

By following the guidelines and principles in this book, each of us will ensure a happier today and tomorrow.

Venerable Wuling is an American Buddhist nun. More of her writing can be found at [www.abuddhistperspective.org](http://www.abuddhistperspective.org).

With our compliments:

Pure Land Learning College Association, Inc.  
57 West Street, Toowoomba, Qld 4350, Australia  
Tel: (07)4637-8765 Fax: (07)4637-8764  
[pllc2001@gmail.com](mailto:pllc2001@gmail.com)

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*“Wherever the Buddha’s teachings have flourished,  
either in cities or countrysides,  
people would gain inconceivable benefits.  
The land and people would be enveloped in peace.  
The sun and moon will shine clear and bright.  
Wind and rain would appear accordingly,  
and there will be no disasters.  
Nations would be prosperous  
and there would be no use for soldiers or weapons.  
People would abide by morality and accord with laws.  
They would be courteous and humble,  
and everyone would be content without injustices.  
There would be no thefts or violence.  
The strong would not dominate the weak  
and everyone would get their fair share.”*

~THE BUDDHA SPEAKS OF  
THE INFINITE LIFE SUTRA OF  
ADORNMENT, PURITY, EQUALITY  
AND ENLIGHTENMENT OF  
THE MAHAYANA SCHOOL~

With bad advisors forever left behind,  
From paths of evil he departs for eternity,  
Soon to see the Buddha of Limitless Light  
And perfect Samantabhadra's Supreme Vows.

The supreme and endless blessings  
of Samantabhadra's deeds,  
I now universally transfer.  
May every living being, drowning and adrift,  
Soon return to the Pure Land of Limitless Light!

**\* The Vows of Samantabhadra \***

I vow that when my life approaches its end,  
All obstructions will be swept away;  
I will see Amitabha Buddha,  
And be born in His Western Pure Land of  
Ultimate Bliss and Peace.

When reborn in the Western Pure Land,  
I will perfect and completely fulfill  
Without exception these Great Vows,  
To delight and benefit all beings.

**\* The Vows of Samantabhadra Avatamsaka Sutra \***

# DEDICATION OF MERIT

May the merit and virtue  
accrued from this work  
adorn Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land,  
repay the four great kindnesses above,  
and relieve the suffering of  
those on the three paths below.

May those who see or hear of these efforts  
generate Bodhi-mind,  
spend their lives devoted to the Buddha Dharma,  
and finally be reborn together in  
the Land of Ultimate Bliss.  
Homage to Amita Buddha!

**NAMO AMITABHA**

南無阿彌陀佛

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Tel: 886-2-23951198 , Fax: 886-2-23913415

Email: [overseas@budaedu.org](mailto:overseas@budaedu.org)

Website: <http://www.budaedu.org>

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