



Coping Skills and Qualities from the Animal World

This exercise explores qualities animals possess and how these traits can inspire personal growth, recovery, and resilience. Review each one as a group and focus on the discussion points by making personal application

1. The Resilient Turtle



- **Quality:** Persistence and Patience
- **Lesson:** Turtles move slowly but steadily, always progressing toward their goal despite obstacles. They remind us that it's okay to take things slowly, but the important part is to keep steadily moving forward (no matter what – keep moving).
- **Quote:** "Slow and steady wins the race." — Aesop

Discussion Points:

- How can you apply the turtle's slow but steady progress to your personal positive change journey?
 - Have you had a situation where you felt you were moving too slowly but still ultimately made progress?
 - What are some specific areas of life where you need more patience and persistence?
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2. The Adaptable Chameleon



- **Quality:** Adaptability and Flexibility
- **Lesson:** Chameleons change their colors to blend into their environment, symbolizing adaptability. Recovery often requires flexibility and adaptability to adjust to new circumstances.
- **Quote:** "The art of life is a constant readjustment to our surroundings."
– Kakuzō Okakura

Discussion Points:

- When have you had to adapt to a new way of handling a difficult situation in life?
- What are some circumstances that you still need to learn to adapt to in your life?
- Where can you get help, guidance, and advice in learning how to successfully adapt to challenges?



3. The Team-Strong Ant

- **Quality:** Teamwork and Strength in Numbers
- **Lesson:** Ants are tiny but powerful when they work together. They rely on their community for survival, demonstrating the importance of teamwork and mutual support.
- **Quote:** *"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."* — Helen Keller
- **Discussion Points:**
 - How does your support system help you in your recovery?
 - What can you do to increase or enhance your "team" of supporters?
 - How can you use your "team" to effectively overcome obstacles in your life?



Ant-icipate success!

4. The Fearless Lion

Tell the truth,  *don't be lion!*

- **Quality:** Courage and Leadership
 - **Lesson:** Lions face challenges head-on, demonstrating courage and leadership. This can relate to taking bold steps in recovery or standing up for yourself in difficult situations.
 - **Quote:** *"Courage is not the absence of fear, but the ability to act in spite of it."* — Mark Twain
 - **Discussion Points:**
 - Can you think of a time when you had to show courage in your recovery journey?
 - How can you step up and take on more of a leadership role in your life?
 - What fears may be holding you back, and how can you face them with courage?
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5. The Observant Owl

- **Quality:** Wisdom and Awareness
- **Lesson:** Owls are known for their keen observation skills, symbolizing wisdom. In recovery, developing self-awareness is key to growth.
- **Quote:** *"Wisdom begins in wonder."* — Socrates
- **Discussion Points:**
 - How can you become more observant of your thoughts, emotions, and behaviors?
 - What past experiences have taught you valuable lessons?
 - How can you better apply the wisdom you have gained in your life going forward?

WHO?



6. The Tenacious Beaver

- **Quality:** Diligence and Problem-Solving
- **Lesson:** Beavers persistently build strong foundations, reflecting the importance of stability in recovery.
- **Quote:** *"The best way to predict the future is to create it."* — Abraham Lincoln
- **Discussion Points:**
 - What efforts are you making to create stability and "dam" the flow of chaos in life?
 - What can help you to improve your problem-solving abilities?
 - What does building a strong foundation mean to you?

DAM!





7. The Loyal Dog

Unleash your potential



- **Quality:** Loyalty and Unconditional Support
 - **Lesson:** Dogs symbolize loyalty and self-compassion, encouraging us to stand by our beliefs, ourselves, and our loved ones.
 - **Quote:** *"Be loyal to your own peace of mind."* — Unknown
 - **Discussion Points:**
 - How can you practice self-compassion in difficult moments and remain loyal to your plan?
 - What can you learn from dogs about loyalty to yourself and to those who support you?
 - How does unconditional love and support make a difference and how can you demonstrate these admirable qualities?
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8. The Metamorphosing Butterfly

- **Quality:** Transformation and Growth
- **Lesson:** Butterflies represent transformation and the beauty of change.
- **Quote:** *"Just when the caterpillar thought the world was over, it became a butterfly."* — Proverb
- **Discussion Points:**
 - How can you relate the butterfly's transformation to changes in your life?
 - What part of your journey felt like the caterpillar phase?
 - What positive transformations are you looking forward to?



You'd butter-fly straight!

9. The Watchful Meerkat

- **Quality:** Vigilance and Community Protection
- **Lesson:** Meerkats demonstrate the importance of staying alert and looking out for each other.
- **Quote:** *"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."* — Benjamin Franklin
- **Discussion Points:**
 - In what ways can you be more vigilant about protecting your mental health and wellbeing?
 - How does staying proactively alert to challenges help prevent setbacks?
 - How do you watch out for others, and how do they watch out for you?



*Hakuna Ricotta
(What a wonderful cheese)*

10. The Determined Salmon



-Salmon Says: "Keep going, don't give up"

- **Quality:** Overcoming Adversity
 - **Lesson:** Salmon symbolize perseverance and the strength to push through challenges.
 - **Quote:** *"A smooth sea never made a skilled sailor."* — Franklin D. Roosevelt
 - **Discussion Points:**
 - What are some "upstream" challenges you've faced (or are facing)?
 - What sources can you draw strength from to help you persevere?
 - What motivates you to keep going in the face of adversity and what can help you to keep going?
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Closing Questions (Optional)

1. Which animal's qualities resonated with you the most and why?
2. How can these lessons specifically apply to your current goals and challenges?
3. Are there any qualities you wish to adopt or strengthen in your life?
4. How can reflecting on these qualities inspire you to take action going forward?

Bonus Material: Some other animal lessons – Which do you value?

1. Dolphin: Encourages incorporating joy and playfulness into daily life.
2. Cat: Balances solitude with the need for occasional social support.
3. Bear: Stresses the importance of rest and renewal.
4. Wolf: Shows the value of community support and teamwork.
5. Squirrel: Exemplifies preparation and resourcefulness.
6. Deer: Symbolizes gentleness and the ability to move through challenges gracefully.
7. Rabbit: Encourages quick thinking and reproductive health, linking to personal growth.
8. Swan: Symbolizes transformation and the innate ability to manage emotional depths.
9. Giraffe: With their long necks, giraffes encourage looking ahead and keeping one's sights on the future.
10. Zebra: Their unique stripes remind us of our uniqueness and the importance of personal authenticity.
11. Penguin: Emblematic of enduring harsh environments, teaching resilience in tough conditions.
12. Lemur: Symbolizes maintaining balance and staying agile in coping with life's changes.
13. Porcupine: Teaches about setting boundaries and self-protection.
14. Coyote: Known as the trickster, reminds us to expect the unexpected and maintain a sense of humor.
15. Octopus: Illustrates flexibility and intelligence, finding multiple paths to problem-solving.
16. Starfish: With their regenerative abilities, symbolizes healing and renewal.
17. Firefly: Emphasizes the light within darkness and the importance of hope.
18. Panda: Demonstrates the importance of balance and moderation in diet and lifestyle.
19. Platypus: Shows that being unique can be a strength, embracing one's individuality.
20. Nightingale: Known for its song, symbolizes the healing power of voice and expression.
21. Skunk: Emphasizes the importance of respect and maintaining personal space.
22. Armadillo: Symbolizes protection and the boundaries one needs to feel secure.
23. Parrot: Symbolizes communication and the importance of social interaction.
24. Narwhal: Represents the uniqueness of individuals and finding one's "tribe."
25. Aardvark: Demonstrates diligence and the capacity to search deeply for solutions.