

Questions for The Rabbit Listened

- 1) What are your “blocks?” What have you been trying to build together as a family? (e.g. blending two families together, better communication, more quality time). Or if you’re just working with the child, ask questions along the lines of, “What were you trying to make or create?” (e.g. a new friend, get attention from the teacher, help your parent).
- 2) What “black crows” knock you down? Where are you struggling with as a family? (e.g. cancer diagnosis, substance use, divorce, etc.)
- 3) When there is a problem, who do you act like? The Chicken, Bear, Elephant, Hyena, Ostrich, Kangaroo, Snake, or the Rabbit?

Let’s take a closer look at these animals and the specifics of each of their communication styles:

Chicken-The Chicken is first on the scene and notices the negatives of the situation and wants to talk out all the details. Is your impulse to focus on the negative when there is a problem? Do you feel compelled to immediately talk out an issue? Do apologize excessively even if what happened isn’t your fault? How would you like to be comforted if the roles were reversed?

Bear-The Bear arrives second and is very angry about what has occurred. Is your impulse to lash out when there is a problem? Do you scream and hit? Kick and bite? In what other ways is anger affecting your life? What comments do your loved ones make about your anger?

Elephant- The Elephant is third and immediately wants to remember how the blocks were arranged and fix the situation. Is your impulse to immediately want to jump to a solution and make things the way they were? Do you ruminate over the issue and are unable to let go and move forward?

Hyena- The Hyena arrives fourth and tells Taylor to laugh about what happened. Is your impulse to make light of a situation and hide in humor and jokes? Are you aware of your inappropriate affect in situations that call for a more serious reaction?

Ostrich-The Ostrich is fifth on the scene and immediately hides. Is your impulse to avoid and refrain from thinking or talking about a situation altogether? What is your avoidance doing for you?

Kangaroo-The Kangaroo offers another avoidant suggestion, which is simply to throw all the blocks away. Is your impulse to give up completely when situations become uncomfortable and require commitment and follow through? (e.g. giving up on a diet) What would you give hope to rebuild again?

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Snake- The Snake is the last to arrive and suggests that Taylor go and knock someone else's blocks down. Do you often punish others for the hurt you feel yourself?

Finally, we meet the **Rabbit**, who simply stays near Taylor and listens to the child go through the gamut of emotions presented by the parade of animals until Taylor comes back full circle and is ready to build again.

So, what is our goal with this exercise? Our goal is to embrace all these animal parts of ourselves that get angry and want to hurt others, hide etc., but then move past them to be able to listen compassionately to ourselves and others.

The goal: Listen like a rabbit. We're all (myself included) working on "listening like the Rabbit" which means to listen to someone else's pain and practice listening with empathy and understanding; offering no solution unless the patient is ready for it and ready to make change. I.e. Motivational Interviewing