

The Boy with a Tiger in the head

Hello, I'm called Tigris, I'm 10 years-old and I'm here to share one thing with you: You can be as strong and confident as me and even though I'm young and small I feel like a Tiger. That's why other kids call me Tigris. They respect and admire how I walk and talk.

You can also feel the same way I do, but you need to move and act like you have a Tiger in your head. Don't let other kids or adults bully you. Have you seen a Tiger bullied by another animal? He walks with confidence and is sure of himself.



Me too, I feel sure and confident of myself because I feel important. I am important to my Mum and Dad, to my sisters and brothers. To my neighbors and school mates. Even to all the strangers who pass by me on the pavements because I can help them if they have a problem or need to find their way.

I'm important to all the people who live in the buildings I walk by each day. If I see smoke coming out of any of the buildings I can call the firemen. If an old man fainted in public I could call for an ambulance. I've already helped an old lady and some blind people cross the roads.

Each time I walk into a shop to buy something I contribute to the shopkeepers and also help keep their business open.

Oh, I almost forgot, I'm also very important to my cat Kitty, and my dog, and my goldfish because I feed them. They are always happy to see me when I get home from school.

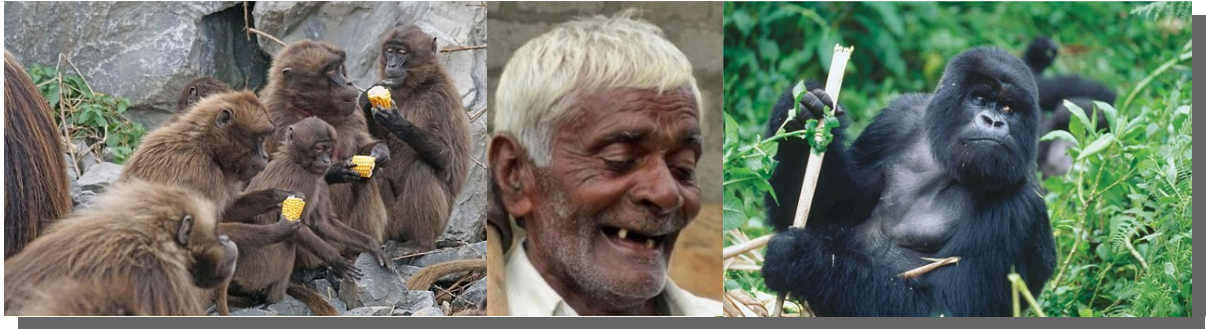
Having a Tiger in my head helps me focus on my studies. Did you see how the below Tiger looks at you? He is very FOCUSED. Me too, I'm focused when I study and do my homework. When I'm playing football with my team I'm also focused like a tiger. Look in his eyes again!



My Mum and Dad also say I should always stay alert and focused. They are great teachers. They always say to me: Tigris, don't judge a book by its cover. Keep your big mind open! And they always ask me: Why? What? Where? When? Who? and How? And make me look for the answers myself. They help me think and not react. I'm very grateful to them. I think Mum and Dad are Tigers too. We are a Tiger family!

Last year I met a toothless old man who lived next to the jungle of BacoBaco.

This happy, jovial man was often surrounded by small groups of Baboons and a clan of Gorillas ...



In our village there are lots of young children who also accompany this man around whenever he appears. And he loves to tell stories and ask simple questions.

One day, my friend asked: “Why are those Baboons always sitting next to you?” “They're my friends”, the old man replied. “Look over there! See the two Gorillas in the distance. They too are my friends ...” he said.

Another kid interrupted him: “Don't you have any enemies?” “Of course, I do!” he exclaimed with a smile. “My enemies are also Monkeys and Gorillas, but these don't live outside – but inside my head and your heads! They live inside our brains. And you have to be careful and catch them before they catch you and make your life miserable”.

“What are you talking about? How can a Monkey or Gorilla live inside our heads?” We all wanted to know.

“See”, the old man explained. “Each time you feel bad, anxious or frightened, the Monkeys in your head are telling you something bad will happen to you! This something has not happened and is not real, we are just imagining it. So, our Monkeys or thoughts can make us think this way and make us anxious, frightened or angry”.

“When we grow up”, he said, “we must learn to face reality and many situations where the Monkeys and Gorillas in our heads will try to scare us and not allow us to think properly. So we have to stop these enemies inside our heads.

I told the man I had a Tiger in my head and he started to laugh loudly. He said he has one too – a big, strong Tiger ... maybe they are twins!

The old man went on to teach the village children how to stop these enemies in their heads from stealing our time, our energy and our freedom. I'm very happy I met this man and Mum has invited him to stay with us for a few days during the holidays.

Another thing I would like to share with you is to never be afraid of bullies. Once, a big boy tries to bully me and I look at him like a Tiger. And ask him why he wants to bully me.

I say: Why are you trying to bully me? Are you not confident in yourself? How come you don't feel important like me? When was the last time you received a hug from someone?

I then try and explain to him, but first I hug him and say let us be friends. I then tell him from the bottom of my heart that he is important to me. That if I was in trouble he could help me. He wanted to know what trouble. I say if my bicycle broke, he could help me repair it. He then looked like he did not understand me at all.

I then have to find another example: If I'm drowning in a swimming pool, maybe he will be able to save me. He says he cannot swim. So again, I have to look for another example.

It is difficult for me to explain this to him. So I hug him again and this time he hugged me back! And that is how he and I came to be friends. I keep telling him that he is important to many people, but I don't think he understands when I say that.

One time I gave him a bone and asked him to give it to our neighbor's dog and watched how happy the dog was, wagging its tail. I said: See, you are important to that dog. After that every time he passes by my neighbor's house the dog would rush out and wag its tail many times at him and jump up to lick him. When I see that I tell him again: see, you are very important to that dog, whether you have a bone or not. I think he understands a little now that he is important.

He is no more a bully. He is now a VIP and a good friend to me. Like the old man too, I have many friends. One day I saw a Baboon and not far away was that old man. So I went and sat down with the other children to listen to him talk and laugh. He laughs a lot. I like it when he laughs.

One girl wanted to know why she should study all the time. Her Dad wants her to be an engineer like him, but she says she is not interested. She is only 9 years old and not interested in studying at all. She wants to be a dancer, she tells the old man. But her father scolds her for not studying. What must she do?

The old man (I call him GrinnyFace. He grins a lot. Maybe he is amused by all the funny things he sees and hears and that is why he grins a lot). GrinnyFace grins and says to her: If you don't want to study you will not be able to read or write properly, or have information that will help you later when you grow up.

Of course, she does not have to be an engineer like her father, but she could still spend time studying or reading books that she is interested in. I read a lot and I said to her I could share some of my books with her. She was happy I said that.

GrinnyFace was happy too to see me volunteer. He said we should help each other learn and feel good together. One thing he said that I will not forget: “You are all important children and valuable like diamonds. You don't need to polish your diamond as it is valuable even if it is covered with dirt! You can polish it if you want to make it shine, but you do not have to. The value is the same. And so, you do not have to be useful in life to be important. You are already born important!”

My Mum and Dad say the same thing to me: You don't need to prove to anyone. A bully will try to prove that he is stronger or more powerful than you are. Or more important than you are because he does not feel important. So if he does not know he is important you must help him or her feel important. This way we will have a better life and create things together.

I can talk more about many other things but at 10 years-old I have already learned to talk less and do more. Act more than talk is what I mean. So, I hope you feel good and continue to act like a Tiger and chase the Monkeys away in our heads.

Thank you, GrinnyFace, thanks Mum and Dad! Thank you all my friends for helping me learn more and share this with you.

Tigris *Tiger* 虎



PS. I'm not only “wise” I'm playful too ;) !!!



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