



SOON

SERIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC ONLINE NEWSLETTER

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IDEAS BANK

Stones...Have Feelings Too!

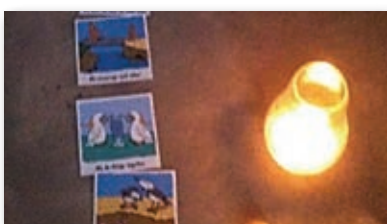
Remember picking up a stone or pebble because there was just something about it?

In this month's Ideas Bank, meet a whole quarry of quirky, engaging, happy, sad, afraid, shy, joyful and just plain outrageous 'stone' characters!

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Topping the list with love

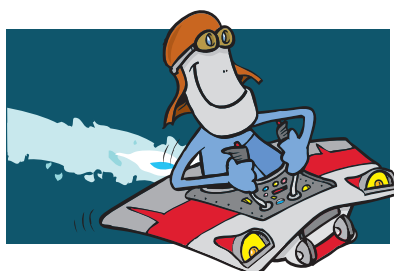
From the Nuba Mountains in Sudan comes a moving story about recognising love and friendship.



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Launching April 9

Next time you visit our website, get ready for a fresh new look!



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In the Mailbag

This month's postcard comes from school counsellor Julie Wilkins.



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SOON

Ideas
Bank

Stones... have feelings too!



Use these cards for interpreting feelings, naming feelings and building emotional literacy!

Each of the 52 *Stones ...have feelings too!* cards features a quirky stone character showing an emotion. Users are free to interpret the emotion as they wish. On the back of each card there are three words offering possible interpretations of what the stone is expressing. Sometimes the words are very similar in meaning, sometimes they describe quite different emotions. After all, we sometimes interpret feelings, expressions and behaviours quite differently!

Pictures of the future

While the stones can be used to unpack feelings about past experiences, they can also be used to build optimism. Choosing a stone to represent how we want to be is a great way of reinforcing purposefulness and describing what we are looking forward to. Picturing the future using the stones can suggest strategies for growth and change.

- Can you choose the stone you would like to become, or the stone you would like to be (at the end of an event or process)?
- Can you describe how you will be feeling?
- What will you be thinking and what will you be doing?
- How will it be different to what you are feeling, thinking and doing right now?
- What differences will other people see?
- What effect do you think these differences may have on them?
- How do you think you might hang onto, or capture, or control these feelings and make them last?

Reframing feelings

Reframing is often used during counselling to change prevailing negative, hurtful or destructive ways of looking at ourselves or others. As a therapeutic technique, reframing reminds us that there are always alternative ways of looking at any situation, if only we are able to change perspective.

The stone characters have a certain ambiguity that allows their expressions to be interpreted in different ways. Here are some questions you might ask in the context of a reframing exercise:

- Which of the three words do you think best fits the stone's expression?
- Can you think of other words that might more accurately describe this feeling?
- What was your first impression of that stone's feeling? Has this changed since you considered the different words on the back?
- Could all these words fit or are there subtle differences suggested by each of the words?
- What influences your interpretation of the stone's expression?

Stones for evaluation

Stones ...have feelings too! can be used in innovative ways to provide feedback and to check that an activity or process has been understood. The cards may work particularly well with groups who struggle with conventional evaluation techniques. Using the cards, questions can be constructed to elicit responses in terms of feelings. For example:

- Which card best represents how you hoped to feel at the end of the process/event?
- Which of the stones best represents how you feel (about a particular event or process)?
- Which stones correspond with different parts of the activity?

Dramatic expression

There are countless ways that language and arts teachers, and therapists, can use the cards as prompts for creative expression. Try using them for a drama class!

- Here is a character for you to act out. What sort of personality goes with this stone?
- How do you imagine they would move or talk?
- What would they be thinking and feeling?
- Can you and others in your group devise a scenario in which you act out your stone character? For example, imagine a scene in a supermarket where your stone characters are doing their weekly grocery shopping, or perhaps a group of stones stranded in a lift or at a dinner party!

Don't forget our Stones Value Pack. It includes the *Stones ...have feelings too!* cards, the companion sticker sheets, the picture book *The Wrong Stone*, and the Pocket of Stones, containing 12 handcrafted, ceramic 'stone' characters—perfect for tactile learners.



STONES...HAVE FEELINGS TOO!

52 laminated, full-colour cards, 150 x 100mm, polypropylene box, 44-page booklet.
ISBN: 9 780 957823 198
Booklet author: Russell Deal
Illustrator: Ray Bowler

Product Code: 3900 \$49.50 inc. GST





SOON

In the
Spotlight

Topping the list with ‘Love’

In March last year, we published Nicole Rotaru’s account of working with communities in the war-affected Nuba Mountains. Just recently, Nicole got in touch during a short break in Nairobi, Kenya. Here’s her moving account of a team building session in Sudan.

Since 2013 I have been working in the Nuba Mountains, a site of war and conflict in Sudan. The Nuba are a resilient, determined, courageous and hospitable people struggling for liberation, dignity and education. The crimes against humanity in the Nuba stem from Khartoum’s declared vision of a Sudan that does not offer equality for its non-Arab and non-Islamic citizens.

Recently I was invited to do some team building sessions with the Voice of Peace radio station staff. A Comboni sister directed a station staff of ten: two women and eight men. Their ages span from early twenties to mid-thirties. The team had been together for several years. Their mission involved keeping the community informed of the war situation and producing a wide range of educative programs for the local community.

One of the team building sessions was called ‘Come Live into the Light’. The focus was on strengthening the team’s unity and appreciating its diversity. The aim was to strengthen the group by identifying the qualities of Voice of Peace.

As part of my facilitation, I used the *Mates Traits* cards. Each member was asked to choose one card that reflected a quality she or he believed was in the group, and the cards were placed in a central space. Discussion about each quality followed and examples of that quality in action were given. Following the discussion, members



I am reminded that the power of the human spirit can transcend extreme adversity to find meaning and hope.

placed the cards in order of priority—the most important card to be placed at the top and others to follow.

Robust discussion took place during the ordering and prioritizing. Members were free to change the order but had to explain why and get consensus from the group.

A member of the group who had been watching and listening quietly finally spoke. ‘There is a card missing,’ she said. I gave her paper and a texta to write the missing word. ‘Love’ is missing,’ she said, ‘Without that the others cannot follow. It is the first card. All others come from this one.’ She placed the paper at the top.

Her reflection stopped us all. There was silence, then a long pause. Her comment resonated with everyone.

After a time, discussion resumed but at a deeper level. Issues that had been part of the team were named, and ordering and reordering of the cards followed. This time reasons given reflected more authentically the current strength of the team—strength that had been born of angst and misunderstandings that they had struggled through. The final ordering of the *Mates Traits* cards was declared a truer reflection of the team.

As I look again at the final selection of *Mates Traits* cards made by the Voice of Peace team I am reminded that the power of the human spirit can transcend extreme adversity to find meaning and hope. The human spirit is far stronger than adversity. We have seen this expressed by many people throughout history, including Viktor Frankl, Nelson Mandela, Anna Frank and Etty Hillesum.

For this group of Nuba people, their personal struggles with misunderstandings and angst whilst living in a war zone of complete chaos, utter de-stabilization and untold suffering brought them to put Love above cards for ‘to trust’, ‘to share’ and ‘to forgive’.

I come out of a western orientation where competition, materialism and individualism are endemic. I find it compelling to see the order of values chosen by the Nuba Voice of Peace team. There is much to ponder and tussle with.

Mates Traits is a powerful resource. The cards enabled members to recall and articulate experiences as well as to facilitate rich discussion. The captions on the cards ‘spoke’ to the group along with the directness and simplicity of the characters’ expressions. Many of the drawings brought smiles and laughter. Some of the drawings may not be part of the Nuba experience, but they had their place in widening and brightening the world of the Nuba.



- Love
- We trust
- We share
- We forgive
- We respect each other
- We encourage each other each other
- We do things together
- We struggle together
- We support each other.

SOON

In the Mailbag

In this month's mailbag is a postcard from Julie Wilkins, a counsellor at a K-12 school in NSW. Her story is a powerful reminder about the importance of giving choice and encouraging experimentation. Thanks, Julie!

'A child using Sandplay wanted to build two houses in her scene. She looked over my toy shelf for options and decided on The Bears cards. She painstakingly chose the bears that reflected her feelings about each house as the walls, and the bears she chose and placed face up as the roof on each house was profound. The lesson for me? Don't limit the use of any resources!'



Another child used the Two Worlds cards and made a collage on the floor of what it's currently like at Mum's—on the other side, at Dad's. Underneath he put cards that reflected his hopes to share with Mum and the hopes to share with Dad. He learnt SO much by externalising.'



THE BEARS APP

AU\$1.29 (Apple)

AU\$1.99 (Android)



The absolute classic for talking about feelings—now available as a simple App for your mobile device!

The Bears have a worldwide reputation for their ability to invite people from all cultures to identify, talk about and constructively harness their feelings. Now you can download all 48 Bears onto your mobile device—and let them to do the talking!

The Bears App gives practitioners, clients, children and adults simple and fun ways of giving immediate feedback, encouragement, reminders and messages about feelings using a much-loved metaphor. Keeps your bears about you, on the road and in your pocket!

We heard it in the night: the rustling, shuffling and “schrrrrp” of lifting adhesive. It's on again, it's nearly here...

Innovative Resources'

MAD MAY STICKER SALE IS BACK!!!

50% OFF ALL Stickers

Get 50% off all our stickers when the calendar ticks over to May.

Teachers, parents, counsellors: go check your sticky stockpiles and get ready to say it with gum!



“Mission Control to webmeister... Come in, please. We are ready to launch.”

“Roger, Mission Control. We are launching in five, four, three, two, one...”

April 9.

A new website arrives.

Get ready for a brand new look and a whole new feel next time you visit us in cyberspace!

SOON

Workshops and Training Facilitation Daze

The practice of strength-based, solution focused facilitation

- Are you new to training and facilitation?
- Have you been training and facilitating for a while and want to be invigorated?
- Do you want to explore participant-centred interactive group work activities?

FACILITATION DAZE is a day of sharing skills and experiences of group facilitation and engagement. It is a day of trying out ideas that have grown out of St Luke's Strength Approach as well as those inspired by Paul Z Jackson. This 1-day workshop is designed for facilitators, group worker and culture builders, and is jointly hosted by the Russell Deal, Andrew Shirres and Gillian Ryan from St Luke's Anglicare and Innovative Resources. Some of the techniques explored will include:

- Handling Ragged Starts
- Using Sparkling Moments in Introductions
- Setting Ground-rules
- Stretch Listing
- Energising
- 'Yes and...' (making people look good)
- Alternative Feedback
- Reflective Learning
- The Stone Game
- Noticing

FACILITATION DAZE

DATE: Wednesday 13 May, 2015
TIME: 9.00am - 4.30pm
LOCATION: St Luke's Beehive Training Room,
22 Pall Mall, Bendigo, Victoria.
COST: \$217.80 (inclusive of GST)
Register by 20 April, by calling (03) 5444 8138
or emailing trainingcoordinator@stlukes.org.au.

Strengths Approach Training – 3 days

Everyone has strengths. Our qualities, capacities, relationships, values, stories, experiences, skills and material resources can all be strengths. But sometimes, 'The Problem' can be all-consuming, keeping us stuck and creating barriers to change. Strengths-based practice keeps the focus squarely on identifying, mobilising and celebrating strengths.

The principles and skills of strengths-based practice include the following:

- Values and beliefs of the strengths approach
- How 'Power Over' can occur and working towards 'Power With'
- Creating conditions for change
- Using the 5-column approach to implement plans
- Key strength approach skills such as externalising, scaling, reframing and normalising

STRENGTHS APPROACH TRAINING

DATE: May 4-5 and June 16
VENUE: 22 Pall Mall, Bendigo, Victoria
COST: \$385.00



DON'T FORGET WE'VE MOVED!

FIND US AT:

62 Collins Street,
Kangaroo Flat,
Victoria 3555



Our New Phone number:
03 5446 0500

Our New Fax number:
03 5447 2099

WHAT'S MISSING FROM YOUR TOOLBOX?

