

# Script for Animals of Regulation

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Did you know that inside of you is a small zoo? You have the capability of being like different animals depending on how you feel. Paying attention to what animal you are acting like, can help you make good choices and feel good inside your body, have strong, healthy relationships, and feel safe.

Let's start with when we are like a dog. When we are a dog we can listen well, we can obey, we can make good choices, we can eat and drink and play. We can also feel all of our feelings: like sad or happy or frustrated or nervous, but we are in control and we are the boss of our feelings. When we are dog, we are also in control of our bodies, our words, our choices, and our actions. We are also like a dog, when we are able to be curious and think and solve problems. We can use our voice, like a dog barks, when it has something he wants to tell you or show you.

When we are being like a dog, we feel safe and loved. We feel connected to our family and friends.

Sometimes when we're feeling silly and playful we go into monkey. Monkey is when we are having fun. Monkey is when we laugh and tickle and run and play. When we're in Monkey, we are busy and we work well with others. Monkeys are great at teamwork. Sometimes we also might feel like dancing and moving our bodies a lot.

We feel best when we are in dog or monkey. But sometimes things happen that make us leave dog and monkey and move into other animals.

When we start to feel frustrated or irritated or annoyed that's when we start moving into lion. When we move into lion we are furious and mad. We might yell or want to fight. Our bodies feel uncomfortable; they are full of too much energy. We might feel like we need to move around to try and get all that mad feelings out of our bodies. We also feel out of control. Like a lion that wants to fight and roar, we aren't thinking about what might get us in trouble. We are so mad we don't even care!

Other times, we might leave dog and monkey when we're starting to feel worried or scared. We don't feel good in our bodies when that happens either. That's when we go into rabbit. When we go to rabbit we feel very afraid. We might feel panic; our tummies might hurt and our breathing might change and our heart might be beating fast. When we are in rabbit we might want to hide or run away. Sometimes we just want to be with our mom or our dad and for them to cuddle us. Our bodies feel uncomfortable because they have too much scared feeling inside and it's hard to get it out. When we are in rabbit, we felt powerless and like we might want to cry.

Sometimes, we leave dog and monkey and we go into sloth. Sloth is when we feel tired. We might feel like we just need to take a break. We want to lay around and do nothing. Or we just want to play video games and watch TV. Sloth is feeling tired and worn out. Sloths feels like "blah" and "meh." Sometimes we go to sloth when we feel discouraged or we've been too busy for too long. Everyone has to go into sloth sometimes to take a break, but we don't want to get stuck in sloth.

Sometimes we can go all the way to turtle. Turtle is when things feel so terrible that we just want to give up. Turtle is when we feel numb, like we don't even have feelings anymore. Sometimes it's hard to listen or pay attention when we're in turtle. Instead we just kind of zone out or checkout. When we're in turtle we just want people to leave us alone. We just want to be still. Our bodies feel heavy in turtle. Or we can't really feel our bodies anymore. Sometimes we even go away inside of ourselves.

It doesn't feel good when we are in lion, rabbit, sloth or turtle for too long. Sometimes we need to go into those animals because something is happening that makes us need to act like a lion to keep ourselves safe or to defend someone else. Or sometimes something scary happens and we do need to run away like a rabbit. or sometimes if life is too crazy we need to slow down and take a break like sloth or get small and quiet like turtle.

When we start getting stuck in lion, rabbit, sloth, or turtle or we keep moving between those animals and skipping dog and monkey, that's when we need help with our big feelings or our numb feelings.

Having a safe, calm grown-up can help us get back into dog or monkey. We can also try coping skills that help us feel better and move back into dog or monkey. When we are in lion we need to calm our bodies. We can try taking deep breaths. We can also go to a calm down spot where we have the space to be alone and calm ourselves down. For some kids it helps to have a grown-up joined them in their calm down spot. You can choose. We might also feel better if someone can help us notice that we're in lion. And then we have to give our bodies time to move from lion and back to monkey or dog. Sometimes laughing can help too.

When we are in rabbit and need to move back to dog or monkey, some of the same coping skills help. We can take deep breaths. We can use a calm down spot. We can ask a grown up to cuddle with us. We can also think powerful thoughts when we know we are safe. And if a grown-up can help us notice that we're in rabbit, that can help us too. Sometimes it takes awhile after we take our deep breaths, for our body to feel calm and safe again. It's important to keep taking deep breaths until our body feels better. Also asking for hugs or watching a funny video can help.

When we move into sloth or turtle, it helps if a grown-up can notice that we are slowing down. If we are stuck in sloth too long or go all the way to turtle, then we might need to get up and move our bodies. Sometimes going for a walk can help. Or we can turn on some fun music and dance. We can throw a ball back and forth with our mom or dad or sibling. We can also swing on a swing or jump on a trampoline. Doing something silly, can also help us move back to dog or monkey. And getting hugs and snuggles usually helps too.

Questions for kids and parents to talk about together:

- 1) What are some times that you move into lion? Rabbit? Sloth or turtle?
- 2) What animals do you spend the most time being?
- 3) What 3 coping skills will you practice to try and help you move back into dog or monkey?

A note to parents:

Parents, it is important for you to be in dog or monkey, if you want to bring your child back to dog or monkey. If you move into lion, rabbit, sloth, or turtle then your child cannot access dog or monkey. Our goal as parents is always to invite our child into the calm, connected space of dog or monkey. You cannot yell or frightened or shut down a child into dog or monkey. You can only invite them into dog or monkey from a calm and regulated stance.