



## Once Upon a Billabong

### Guide to helping your child understand Strengths

*The book is based on a community of animals living around the Djugeena Billabong in Arnhem Land. Two friends, Traydoo and Mindjil love their community and when the Crocodiles arrive to make life difficult for their community, the two friends decide to work together to return the community to their happy and cohesive existence. The friends called on their character strengths to develop a resolution and worked with the community to instigate their successful plan.*

Read the book to your child, playing the song at least once to get them to develop a sense of community and love. Show them on a map where Arnhem Land is and ask them about how long it would take to drive from your house.

#### **Try some of these questions to encourage curiosity & develop understanding of strengths.**

There are no right or wrong answers. Use these questions as triggers for a conversation and exploration of strengths in the story and how they were used, and hopefully, lead on to how they could use their strengths too. It's about getting them to identify strengths in others, so they can see their own strengths.

- What do you think Djugeena is like? Would you like to go there? What do you think the weather is like there?
- Can you tell me what the story is about? Can you tell me the story? Can you tell the story to someone else?
- Is it a good story? What words can you use to describe your feelings about the story? Were you scared, happy, sad, excited?
- There are a lot of animals that live around Djugeena, which are your favourite? Why? What do you think the animals eat? Where do you think they live? In a nest, tree, burrow, under water etc?
- What does hibernation mean? Why does Traydoo hibernate?
- What did you think of the buffaloes? Why were they muddy? What do they eat?
- What did you think of the Mimih Spirits? Did you think they were real? Did you know that the Aboriginal people believe that there are Mimih Spirits who scare the children?
- What was the plan that Mindjil and Traydoo developed to scare away the Crocodiles? Did they have any help to do the plan? Who helped them? Did it work?

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- How do you think Traydoo and Mindjil were feeling when they were asking the Crocodiles to protect them from the Mimih Spirits? How do you think they were feeling about the plan? Were they worried or excited or scared?
- How do you think they were feeling once the Crocodiles ran away?
- Why did Mindjil and Traydoo stand very tall and proud when Burlunga spoke to them in front of the whole community? What does it mean to be 'proud'? Have you ever felt 'proud'? When was that and what happened to make you feel proud?
- Tell me what you think of Mindjil? What do you think his strengths are? (Whatever your child identifies, encourage and ask why they think that. It's all about exploration of strengths. The list below will help)
- Do you know anyone who has the same strengths?
- What about Traydoo? What are his strengths? Do you know anyone like Traydoo?
- Here is a list of strengths. Which ones do you think Traydoo and Mindjil have? What makes you think they are their strengths?
- How did Traydoo and Mindjil use their strengths? (eg if they chose Courage, ask them to identify in the story where they showed courage. Kindness, gratitude, problem solver, pride, love, teamwork etc)
- What about the Crocodiles? What strengths did they have? Did they use their strengths well? How do you think they could have used their strengths in a better way? (This is about highlighting that you can sometimes overuse your strengths. Eg they may have a strength of Competition or Strategic Awareness or Planner, which they used too much and took advantage of the community)
- What about the Buffaloes? Did they have any strengths? What ones? (eg Adventure, action, teamwork, which they overused or used inappropriately.)
- What are your strengths? Do you think you could use some of those strengths to come up with a plan to get rid of the Crocodiles? How?
- What strengths do you use at home/at school/when you are playing?
- Let's make a list of all your strengths and see how we can use them.
- Can you see any strengths in your siblings/friends/classmates/parents/grandparents?
- When do they use them? Do they use them too much sometimes? Do you think they could use them more?
- Can you use your strengths at times when things get tough? (eg use a strength of perseverance when they lose a game etc)

## Strengths (not a definitive list)

Teamwork	Humour	Work ethic	Adventure
Zest	Perspective	Problem solver	Resilience
Appreciation of beauty	Love of learning	Listener	Strategic
Creativity	Hope	Judgement	Awareness
Love	Optimism	Planner	Relationship
Kindness	Playfulness	Detail	Developer
Curiosity	Open-mindedness	Pride	Writer
Gratitude	Authenticity	Innovator	Honesty
Perseverance	Self-regulation	Courage	Trust
Social intelligence	Patience	Action	Compassion
	Organiser	Competition	Caring