



Click on the picture for your printable copy.

Tolerance in Nature: The Eastern Box Turtle



A turtle lumbering along in the tall grass enjoying berries on a warm summer afternoon suddenly found itself with a heavy weight pressing down on its back. Instinctively, the eastern box turtle pulled its head and legs into its shell and closed its hinged plates so tightly that not even a blade of grass could be slipped in between the edges. A curious raccoon had discovered the interesting "rock" moving along the

ground and out of curiosity had decided to investigate. The raccoon tried everything. He tried to pry the shell open, he tried to crack the hard shell against a rock, he tried pulling on it with all four feet, and he even tried digging on the underside of the shell like a dog trying to dig a hole in the ground. Nothing worked!

The turtle continued to tolerate the irritations of the annoying raccoon. She could hold this position for hours. The raccoon had all day and found the intrigue of the hard shell worth waiting to see what was inside. Hours passed and the sun rose high in the sky. Turtles are cold-blooded creatures and as the sun rose, so did the temperature inside her shell.

Tolerance is "coming out of your shell" to see life from another perspective.

The turtle had stayed in her hot shell long enough and decided to take a chance and open up. As she peered out of the steamy shell, she saw an immature three-month old raccoon cub. The raccoon saw a smelly, rubbery rock certainly not worth eating. Both animals found themselves seeing the other from a new perspective.

Tolerance accepts the unchangeables in others.

Neither animal could change the other. The only option was to see things from the other's perspective. Biting wouldn't help. Ignoring the problem wouldn't help either. The raccoon decided to leave the turtle and wander off. The turtle went back to her delicious berries.

The next time you meet an irritation, don't hide in a shell or irritate others in return. Be tolerant like the turtle—and the raccoon.



*_adaptation by Kelly Sorge
-concept by Character First*