



IMAGE: SPANA

Changing our habits to improve working donkeys' lives

Humans cause the problems but also hold the solutions. Our ingrained behaviours need to be examined and understood before any necessary changes can be effected.

Behavioural change is about altering habits and behaviours for the long term. Change is rarely easy. It often requires a gradual progression of small steps toward a goal.

To succeed, we need to understand the three most important elements in changing a behaviour:

- Readiness to change: Do you have the resources and knowledge to enable a lasting change successfully?
- Barriers to change: Is there anything preventing the change?
- Likelihood of relapse: What might trigger a return to a former behaviour?

There are many attempts by academics to analyse the “how” of changing human behaviour to result in better animal welfare.

The Six Stages of Change

by Kendra Cherry, author and educational consultant

1-Pre-contemplation:

People in this stage do not understand that their behaviour is damaging, or they are under-informed about the consequences of their actions.

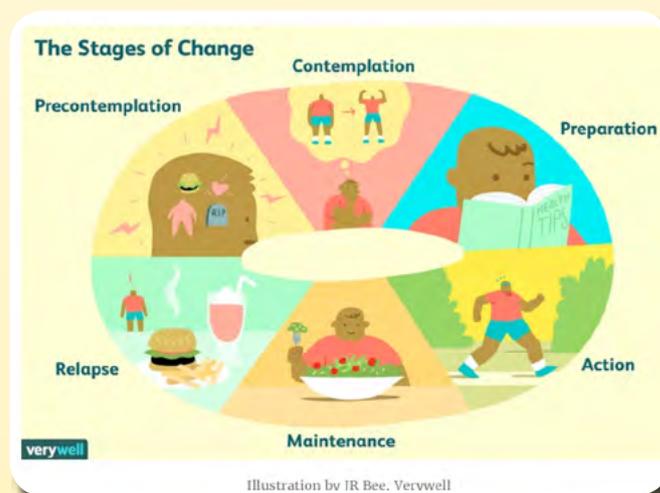
2-Contemplation: People become more and more aware of the potential benefits of making a change, but the costs tend to stand out even more. This conflict creates a strong sense of ambivalence about changing. Because of this uncertainty, the contemplation stage of change can last months or even years.

3-Preparation: Gather as much information as you can about ways to change the behaviour. Prepare a list of motivating statements. Identify the goals you need to achieve.

4-Action: Congratulate and reward people for any positive steps taken. Reinforcement and support are extremely important in helping maintain positive steps toward change.

5-Maintenance: Avoid past behaviour and keep up with your new behaviour. Find ways to avoid temptation and reward new behaviour. Relapses are common and are a part of the process of making a lifelong change.

6-Relapses: Reassess resources and techniques. Reaffirm the motivation, plan of action and commitment to the goals. Also make plans to deal with any future temptations.



We have all probably had the experience of running a project to its end and then asking the participants if they will continue with the solutions that were presented to address the specific issues. They may reply “yes”, and this may happen or not (always follow up on projects) or they may shrug their shoulders and say it is too much trouble to implement the changes, they prefer to operate “like we have always done”. A ‘change-champion’ must be prepared to work tirelessly to effect long-lasting change in behaviour.

REFERENCE: www.verywellmind.com/the-stages-of-change-2794868

Donkeys contribute towards peace and prosperity

For donkey welfare to make a meaningful and lasting impact, we must consider the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by all the United Nations Member States in 2015. The SDGs are 17 interlinked objectives designed to serve as a “shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet now and into the future”.

THE UN 17 GOALS FOR PEACE & PROSPERITY:
<https://sdgs.un.org/goals#icons>

identifying the SDGs that are related to donkey welfare. This document is available in our on-line library.



As an example: have you considered that donkey carts contribute to the SDG #1 by providing a means of transport to generate income? At the same time serving the community by carrying purchases from drop-off points to the homes of rural people, especially the elderly?

amaTrac Uluntu has produced a most valuable document, South African Working Donkeys’ contribution to SDGs,

It is well worth studying to ensure that projects are correctly aligned not only with the “One Health, One Welfare” concept but also the SDGs. Any funding application will have a greater chance of success if the relevant SDGs are identified and mentioned.

Thank you to *amaTrac Uluntu* and their Director, Michelle Griffith, for this information.

www.donkeysforafrica.org/Resources/Donkeys-SDGs.pdf

Humane Education nurtures compassion

Closely related to human behaviour change is the teaching of Humane Education.

Humane education nurtures compassion and respect for animals and all living things, including the earth. It leads to an understanding of the interconnectedness of the living world and to recognising how beliefs, decisions and actions impact the lives of human and non-human beings. In essence, it sets learners upon a valuable life path, based on firm moral values.

If we are to achieve sustainable and improved animal welfare, we must include the youth as well as adult animal owners. Younger people are open to change, excited about trying new options and ready to absorb life lessons backed by sympathetic and relevant practices.

There is a well-documented link between childhood cruelty to animals and later criminality, violence and anti-social behaviour. Humane education can break this cycle and replace it

with one of compassion, empathy and personal responsibility.

Try to include humane education in your projects. There are many ways apart from story-telling, drawing, games and so on. Allow children to observe simple procedures, let them help where appropriate, include them in the observation of progress, ask their reasons for certain decisions.

A youngster was apprehended abusing a horse badly. The local organisation confiscated the horse and then instructed the youngster to report every weekend to help care for the horse, treat its wounds and build up a positive relationship with the animal. This resulted in a change in his attitudes and behaviour. Eventually a healed horse was returned to its young owner who had totally new attitudes and who even influenced his friends about correct handling and care.

Humane education at work

Zambezi Working Donkey Project recently visited Simoonga school in Zambia as part of their education project with partner Animal Kind International.

The day was spent educating the next generation about animal behaviour and how we can understand and work better with our four legged friends. The children enjoyed the interactive classes and composed a song about the importance of being kind to animals.



www.blindlove.co.za

www.facebook.com/Blind.love.africa/

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Situated in Bathurst, Eastern Cape, South Africa



A guiding light for equines



The South African organisation Blind Love provides a safe permanent home to equines in need and improves the lives of all animals in surrounding communities through education and access to essential veterinary services. Blind Love was registered as a welfare organisation in 2013. The name was created after a rescued horse in their care lost her eyesight.

The staff consists of Founder and Director Philippa du Toit and dedicated groom Michael Makhlabi. Michael is a passionate horseman and speaks English, Afrikaans, Sotho, Zulu and Xhosa which is a great help in field work. A young team of Agricultural College graduates from the Agripreneur Farmers Institute heads up the cart horse project in Thaba’Nchu.

Initially Blind Love was based in the Free State province of South Africa. In November 2020 they relocated to Bathurst in the Eastern Cape province with their 12 rescue horses.

First donkeys taken in

In February 2022 they were alerted to a little herd of seven badly neglected donkeys. They were riddled with parasites and two mares were pregnant. They also had terrible injuries caused by the zebra stallions they were kept with. Blind Love took their first donkeys in and had the jacks gelded and rehomed a jenny. The other jenny gave birth to a foal at Blind Love.

In September 2022 the local SPCA contacted them about 12 donkeys in a nearby pound. They feared that if the donkeys were auctioned they would disappear into the illegal donkey skin trade or end up as lion food. After a long process this little herd was released to Blind Love and the stallions were gelded. Three healthy foals were born from this herd and potential homes were identified for some of the donkeys.

At present there are 12 resident horses and 20 donkeys in the care of Blind Love. Veterinary support is provided by practices in nearby Makhanda.

The founder, Philippa du Toit, says that “Funding remains an on-going challenge every single day. The cart horse program in Thaba’Nchu is being funded by Animal Aid Abroad in 2023. They are also sponsoring a few of the rescue donkeys.”

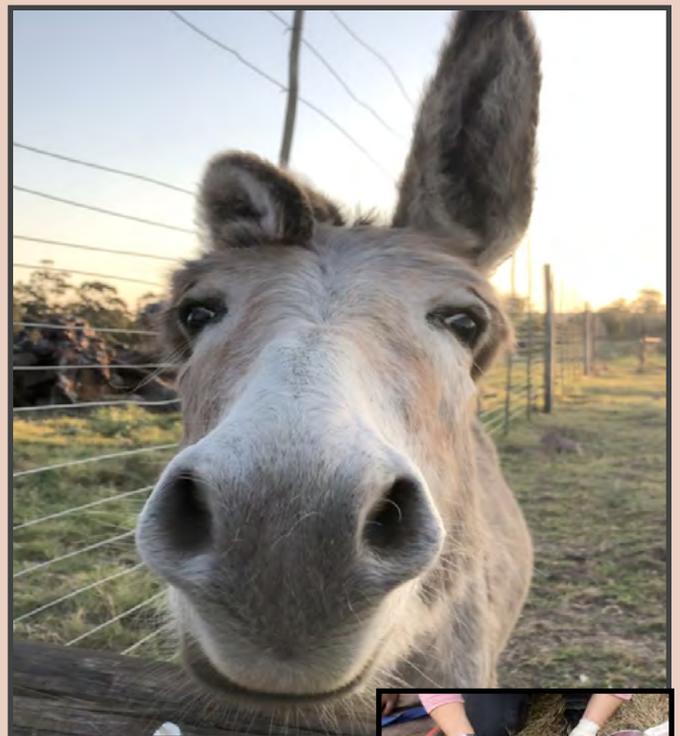
She adds “We are in discussions with local vets as to how to go about setting up a much needed outreach program with the donkey owners around Makhanda. These owners are poverty stricken and intervention is desperately needed.”

A problem is that donkeys roam the streets and accidents occur regularly. Owners also need assistance with cart and harness repair and primary healthcare. A gelding campaign for the area is also planned. This ensures that there are busy times ahead for Blind Love.

THE STORY OF MOUSE

The small group of donkeys rescued in March 2022 included a sad, sick little donkey in immense pain, standing apart from the others. He was found to have a terrible ear infection caused by ticks. The ear was also a seething mass of maggots and screw worm. With some difficulty he was loaded and taken to the Blind Love premises, where he was named Mouse. Veterinary examination revealed a further mass of maggots and screw worm behind his front legs.

After intensive treatment Mouse recovered and is now full of mischief. One of his ears will always flop over because the parasite infections destroyed the cartilage but Mouse doesn’t let this prevent him from enjoying his new life to the full.



A happy Mouse, above. Insets: The terrible ear infection being treated allowed him to be re-integrated into his herd.



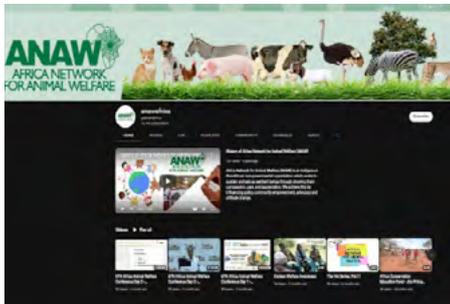
SUPPORTED BY:



6th Africa Animal Welfare

Conference- Action 2022 was held on 31st October to the 2nd November 2022.

The conference involved impactful debates and discussions on the implications of the interaction between animal welfare, people and the environment on Africa's development.



In case you missed some of the proceedings or want to revisit: the three day event is live on the YouTube platform at: www.youtube.com/@anawfrica

Oscar Nkala of Oxpeckers

commented on our conference reports in the DfA newsletter of Dec 2022- Jan 2023: "Thanks for the latest update, which covers a lot of pressing issues quite broadly. I'm very pleased to note the increasing number of African community based animal welfare groups that take donkey welfare so seriously. When I wrote the first story on this sordid trade in 2016, I felt like a voice screaming in an empty wilderness. But I'm happy to see that the world noticed and now communities are taking matters into their own hands for the best reason!"



From the Editor

Donkeys for Africa was launched in April 2017 and initially appeared quarterly, soon moving to six issues per year. Reader interactions have increased over time as has the database that receives direct notification when new issues are published. We also include individuals and organisations that are not solely involved with donkeys – which raises awareness and extends our reach about donkey welfare.

The Donkey Sanctuary (UK) supported this project from the first edition. A revision of their strategic plan and projects has now led to the termination of their partnership with us. We thank The Donkey Sanctuary for their faith in Donkeys for Africa which allowed us to become established as a crucial

Put donkey welfare organisations on the map

Please help the University of Cape Town to map donkey welfare organisations in Africa via this short survey: <https://forms.gle/B9wAw3mpbZkDoaBZA>

Please fill in this one minute survey – and help to put donkey welfare organisations in Africa on the map

Drs Leanne Scott and Isabel Meyer from the University of Cape Town (UCT) are gathering information on the organisations and people involved in donkey welfare. Please help to complete the picture by sharing your information, using the link:

<https://forms.gle/B9wAw3mpbZkDoaBZA>

The survey has started in South Africa and will incorporate donkey welfare organisations around Africa. You can see the map as it develops at:

<https://www.google.co.za/maps/d/viewer?mid=1ppkjst2e9DQyXS1XSF8I8uqoBx-RBs&usp=sharing>



Donkeys on roads

Research is underway investigating livestock and road accidents, with particular reference to donkeys.

We know that they tend to wander onto roads with potentially fatal consequences for themselves and humans. If you have any comments, evidence-based or anecdotal, about this topic, please send them to us.

There are a number of areas where donkeys wear reflective collars – how effective has this been? We would love to hear from you.



Popular topics in our newsletters:

Last year we asked you what topics you want to see addressed in our newsletters. Most popular was news about the skins trade, how it affects countries and how to address its impact. Information on conferences, symposia and webinars; and profiles on organisations or individuals were also popular.

We invite submissions for publication on any donkey or mule related welfare topics. If you would like your organisation profiled, please contact us. This is a good way of publicising your work and catching the attention of funders and agencies that can collaborate with you.

communications portal for organisations and individuals involved in donkey and mule welfare across the continent of Africa.

We will continue to serve you, the donkey welfare practitioners who soldier on in the face of huge challenges. Let's all stay in touch. Our next issue will appear late in April.

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 www.donkeysforafrica.org

 Donkeys-for-Africa



THE DONKEY SANCTUARY

www.thedonkeysanctuary.org