



### A. Moritz's Gift: Therapy Dog exercises

*You need children to be: Moritz, the little boy in the hospital, Barry.  
You can have them switch characters.*

*To adapt this exercise, have children supply other people whom they know are sick. Could be grandparents, friends, even someone who is very unhappy though not physically sick. Change the room and circumstances but continue to play out the scene.*

#### 1) Imagine you are Moritz.

--What is your fur like?

--How big are you? (If you are 7 years old, it might take 3 of you to weigh as much Moritz).

--How deep is your bark?

--What is your nose like? What can you smell?

--How big are your paws? Put your hand on the Moritz's paw print.

Feel what it is like to walk on your four paws.

--You wag your tail a lot. What makes you wag your tail?

You have been trained to be a therapy dog:

--When you hear loud noises at a hospital, what do you do?

--When someone hugs you too hard, what do you do?

--When there is an emergency at the hospital and doctors run down the hall what do you do?

--When big machines that rattle loudly are pushed down the hall very fast near you what do you do?

--When you are around someone who is afraid of you, what do you do?

#### 2) Little boy/Sick Person's Perspective:

--Imagine that you are the little boy in the big hospital bed with the hard mattress that is not your bed at home, and there are funny smells like medicine all around you. Moritz has put his head up to yours. How big is his head? How big is your head? How does Moritz's nose feel touching yours? Do you expect a big dog to be there in your room? Right next to you? What do you do?

--Now imagine that as you cry, you see Moritz gently move away, but that he stays with you. You know that he did not want to frighten you and that he is there for you.

--Have you ever seen a dog that big? Or so furry, with fur in such beautiful deep colors? How did he get here?

--When you are ready, say Moritz's name and reach out your hand as much as you can with the tubes in it. What does Moritz do? How do you feel when he comes back to you?

--You are tired. You close your eyes a bit and rest. When you open them and look over, Moritz is there beside your bed. What do you feel?

#### 3) Moritz's Perspective

--You and Barry go into the hospital room of the little boy who has casts on his legs and tubes in his arms, and bandages all around his head. See how small he is, how he can't move very much. How does he seem to you?

-- What do you do next? What happens when you show him that you are there by touching his hand, nuzzling his chest, putting your nose to his nose?

--The little boy is tired and scared. You, Moritz, like him very much. You want him to feel strong and calm and happy. You lie down next to him to keep him company. Even if he has a hard time in the bed, he is not alone. You can tell he knows you are his friend. You leave him strength and calm, even when you must go on to another room with Barry.

### B. A Gift to Share: Being with Others

1) Remember a time when someone you know --maybe a friend, a little brother or sister, a cousin, or someone in your class at school, was sick at home or in the hospital. They were scared and unhappy. Or maybe this person was you. Imagine that you bring Moritz over to be with him or her or you. What

happens?

**2) Sometimes people do not get better right away. Sometimes they continue to be sad or this is the time for them to be unwell. Maybe it is the time they will die. What would Moritz think of that? How would he be with them? How do you feel if you cannot fix things?**

**3) Wishing exercise:**

--wish for this person who is sick or unhappy to be happy, and not to be in pain.

--Wish for the happiness you have to go to this person, to all people who are sad.

--You don't have to worry about running out of happiness: it is endless, just like the warmth of the sun after all the clouds have gone.

--Version 1: So imagine that your wish is like warm invisible sunlight that goes freely to this person and others. Let it touch all others whom you think of.

--You can wish this happiness for yourself too. If you need the happiness first, then wish it for yourself first.

--Version 2: Imagine Moritz sitting next to you, with his warm furry body beside you. His warmth radiates from him into you, and he is there for you, happy, present, just there. You can feel and remember his presence even after he leaves. You imagine that you can send this warmth and happiness too.

**C. Generosity exercise**

**(based on a traditional Tibetan generosity practice):**

*This works well with shiny rocks, the kind that are put in gardens.*

**1) Discovering the Special Rock/Wish Fulfilling Jewel**

Have each child close his/her eyes and relax. Lead them through a visualization in which they are climbing a mountain and as they go up, they find a special cave, just their size. They go in and have a snug place to rest and look out over the beautiful valley. They explore a little and they find a special hole/cranny in the wall of the where they reach out their hand

*(Have children reach out one hand, palm up)*

They discover a special object that has been there a long long time, as if it was waiting there for them. Learn that it is a wish fulfilling jewel: anything that you or anyone else wants and needs will be granted to you. Anything and everything. Wishing on this jewel: could be a new bike for yourself, having your grandmother be well, not having to wear your cousin's old clothes, having a good friend at school, others have enough to eat, people in your neighborhood stop shooting each other

*(Drop one of the rocks in each child's hand and have them close their hand around it. Have them keep their eyes closed for a bit).*

Visualization continues: now each child makes his/her way back down the mountain, with one hand holding the special rock. They stumble and almost lose the special stone/jewel 1-2 times. How do they feel about the jewel then?

**2) Self-Sharing**

--Put the rock/jewel in one hand and think of all that you can/will do with it. Feel how precious it is.

--Feel the weight of it in your hand, how it feels in your hand with the palm open and closed. Is your hand warm? Cold?

--Now bring the hand with the jewel in it to your other hand. Open your palm and cup your hand so it can receive the jewel.

--when you are ready, drop the jewel from one hand into the other.

--How does that feel? Is it hard to do? Keep on.

Have discussion along the way

### 3) Sharing with Others

*(Note: this is a practice, and it will not be easy for everyone. And/or it will present unexpected difficulties at various points. It is important that no one sees they have failed if they don't 'share' immediately. Gently look at and be with what is happening).*

--Find a partner. Each of you has a jewel.

Person A: You lose your jewel (have someone come along and temporarily take the jewel as the story of the loss is narrated --there was a flood, you lost the jewel, etc) but you still need the jewel to do many things. How do you feel when you have lost the jewel?

How does your hand feel, empty of the jewel? Reach it out, empty.

Person B: You still have your jewel. You think of all you are going to do with it. You see across from you a person who has lost his/hers. He/she reaches out one hand to you. You know that you can let this person have the jewel in your hand. That this person really wants, needs it.

--What do you feel? How do you hold your jewel?

--Now reach your hand out toward Person A's open empty hand.

--Bring your hand with the jewel in it over the other person's hand. Bring it closer and closer.

Variation 1: When you are ready, drop the jewel into the Person A's hand. What do you feel? How does your hand feel?

Variation 2: Get your hand closer and closer and closer to Person A's hand. You almost drop it in but at the last moment at a signal from the one doing this exercise, you draw your hand back. This might happen several times. Then when you are ready, the last time you drop the jewel into their hand. What do you feel at these different points?

Give the jewel back to Person A.

Do the whole exercise again, switching A and B roles.

--If these rock/jewels are part of the equipment, it can be very powerful when they need to be returned. Or it can be arranged that they are kept by those who played in this exercise. They might write about the jewel or use it to keep practicing, using it to introduce others to sharing.

### **D. Moritz Character web (qualities from A Gift to Share):**

**Draw a box with Moritz's name in it. Have lines radiating out on different sides.**

**Have children supply qualities of Moritz. Such as:**

#### **Moritz:**

- is born in a place with big snowy mountains
- has six brothers and sisters
- has a mother who told him he has a gift to heal people and to make others happy
- tugs on Barry's shoelaces when he is a puppy
- peed on Barry's shoes once
- is brown and black and white
- flew very far in airplane in a kennel
- took an obedience class with lots of wild puppies
- calms down puppies and people
- is a certified Pet Therapy Dog
- loves to live with Barry
- helps Barry

### **E. Opening to Your Gift to Share**

**1. Think about the story. Moritz's mother told him he had a special gift to heal and help people.**

--Did he discover this gift right away? Did he still run around and have fun as a puppy?

--Did Moritz stay with his mother? Why not? Even when he was not with his mother any more, what did he have from her?

--He met Barry and he agreed to go on a big adventure. How did this help him with his gift?

--What kinds of schools did Moritz go to?

--How did Moritz feel about what he could do?

## **2. Imagine that you are with Moritz and Moritz's mother.**

--They are sitting with you in a beautiful place, or maybe they have come to your room. You choose.

--They are sitting on each side of you.

--Moritz tells you that he knows you have a gift of your own. He knows this because he can feel it. Do you think this is true?

--You may not know what your gift is yet. How can you find it? Close your eyes and feel Moritz's furry body next to yours. You put your hand on his big head and feel his calm. How he helps you just by being there, in the same place. Or if he isn't there, he helps you just because you know that he is using his gift. He knows you can use yours too.

--See things you like to do, things you care about. Do you like to sing? Do you like to paint? Do you like to run really fast? Do you like to read? To perform in plays? To help people? Do you like to laugh, tell jokes? What if doing what you like could be a part of your gift?

--Remember that Moritz grew from a small(ish) puppy into a very big dog. You have to grow too. How could your growing be part of the gift you have?

--Moritz had Barry to take him to puppy obedience school and to Therapy Dog School. Do you have people who help you to learn? Do you have schools and books and ways to learn what you need, what you like to do? If you don't know how to learn about your gift, can you think of who can help you? How you can help yourself? Who can you talk to about this?

--Even if you feel as if you do not have ways right now to train your gift, you can keep believing in yourself. Feel Moritz beside you again. Read his story over. Remember his story. Moritz found his way. He did not give up. He helped that little boy who could not get out of that hospital bed.

--You can tell yourself, "I have a gift to share. I want to discover what it is. I will learn how to make this gift open up for myself and others."