

Learning thru Lemurs



Inspired by Dr. Patricia Wright, Illustration by Zina Saunders

Encouraging Ecological and Environmental Awareness RESOURCE AND ACTIVITY GUIDE

A LEMURIFFIC Thank You

My students and I would like to specifically thank



Duke Lemur Center,



Lemur Love, and

Lemur Conservation Network



for their encouragement and support

in facilitating our year of Learning thru Lemurs.

#LemurUp

#StrongerTogether

#LemurStrong

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Introduction



Philosophy: I am a 6th grade English/Language Arts educator. I believe it is important to teach students more than just the basics and keep them engaged with learning that is **relevant and purposeful**. Therefore, each school year, I choose a year-long theme to integrate into learning that excites students and teaches them the importance of being global citizens.

Guiding Question: How do you interest 54, sixth-grade students in a year of engaged learning; not sitting and having information dumped into their heads, but TRUE, engaged, interactive learning? Well, you **LEMURIZE** the curriculum, of course!

Inspiration: This is how **Learning thru Lemurs** came to be. Flashback, July 2014, a visit to my mother-in-law in Pensacola, Florida: we meandered over to the **IMAX** to view the latest showing, which happened to be ***Island of Lemurs: Madagascar***. I did not know what to expect, having never heard of the movie, but as an educator, I was curious. Whew! I was in for an inspirational experience. Coming out of the cinema, I was in awe of the movie: content, cinematography, and most importantly, the cause, raising awareness of the lemur plight. My students would be captivated with these cool creatures and exposed to **environmental and ecological awareness by Learning thru Lemurs**. The lemur theme would give the students a **purpose for learning**. The rest of my summer now had purpose, creating our year of **Learning thru Lemurs**.

How to: This **Resource and Activity Guide** will suggest how to incorporate higher-order, engaged learning via the theme of **LEMURS!** Though my alignment is to the 6th grade ELA CCS, the resources and activities can be tailored to any grade level. Additionally, this guide is set up into **topics of study**. Depending on your pacing, you can incorporate more or less of those topics and activities to into your year of learning.

A Year of Learning thru Lemurs



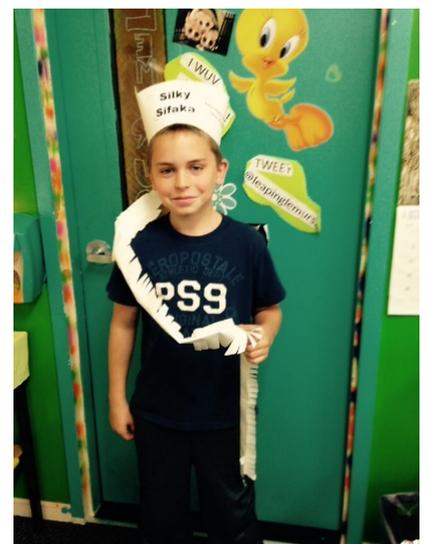
We have enjoyed a year of learning all about lemurs while integrating the Common Core Standards and Passion-Based Learning; this is our narrative.

On the first day of school, August 2014, my students entered a room thematically filled with lemur books, rainforest vines, tropical colors, lemur pictures, *Madagascar* movie posters, stuffed-animal lemurs, and more....all **LEMURIZED!**

The response was excitement and curiosity. This was just the beginning of our leaping year of **Learning thru Lemurs.**

So how have we incorporated lemurs into our curriculum to motivate our minds, ignite our interest, keep our curiosity, and cultivate our creativity? To begin with, we named our 6th grade class, **Team Lemur!** We crafted slogans for our team: **Lemur Up** and **Lemur Strong.** These slogans represented the character traits of lemurs that we wanted to apply to our everyday life: **perseverance, dedication, teamwork, and playfulness.**

Next, we began learning about lemurs: videos, books, articles, and **TWEETS.** Thus began our next level in **Learning thru Lemurs.** Team Lemur set up a Twitter [@leapinglemurs2](#) and an Instagram [@leapinglemurs](#) account to become better informed of all things lemur and communicate our learning to the community. We began daily postings on both accounts. The students began checking the accounts, commenting, and following the diverse information posted.



A Year of Learning thru Lemurs

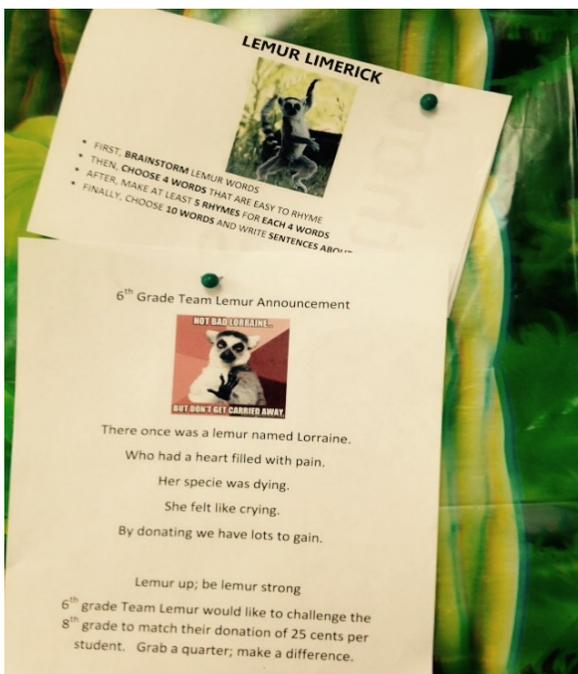


Then, one morning, we got a SHOUT OUT from **Chris Smith** of the **Duke Lemur Center**. In addition, Chris promptly sent out lemur gifts for all the students: bookmarks, stickers, and information. After reading his KUDOS and receiving their goodies, the students were catapulted into high gear, motivated to continue their lemur learning with more passion and vigor.

After, the students organized a **Lemur Awareness Week** campaign. As most students did not have any prior knowledge of lemurs, they thought they would help spread the word to others. Each student created a promotional poster with a slogan, logo, mascot, lemur information, and a call to action. Every hallway, window, and door was decorated with these creative and knowledgeable posters.



There was a buzz about our K-8 school, **all about lemurs!**



After reading about the upcoming **DLC Lemurpalooza** in October, the class decided to run their own adopt-a-lemur fundraiser. Students spent the week creating limericks, or **LEMURICKS**. Each limerick conveyed information about lemurs, as well as their cause. Daily limericks were read on the morning announcements. In one week, **we raised \$100.00**, enough to adopt our first two lemurs!

A Year of Learning thru Lemurs

As we patiently awaited our first lemur adoption kit, students began to brainstorm the next fundraiser. After viewing a Twitter post of lemurs enjoying lollipops, we knew what the upcoming fundraiser would be, a **Lollipop Fundraiser**. We sourced environmentally conscious and healthy-ish lollipops- Yum Earth Organic Lollipops. The slogans started: **Lemurs Love Lollipops; Love a Lemur; Let's Lick Extinction**. Students promoted the fundraiser with daily announcements and promotional posters, complete with slogans, product and lemur info, logos, pricing, buying



logistics, and our cause. Our supportive principal even donned a lemur costume to help us sell out of our lickables on our second day. We had creatively raised an additional \$50.00, enough to **adopt one more lemur!** And, in the meantime, we got our first round of **Lemur Adoption Kits** from **Duke Lemur Center!**

Students then took a field trip to see the opening of *Penguins of Madagascar*. How could we not? After a super premiere, learners completed a movie

analysis regarding theme, symbolism, character traits, and more. Working backward, we later watched in class the original *Madagascar 1*. Oh, King Julien! Students then compared themselves to one character in *Madagascar 1*.

The next learning assignment was crafting a full compare and contrast essay of both movies- an intensive assignment, but how much fun it was to write about these two movies! I was extremely proud of the dedication of my students; after receiving a refund from the movie theater, each student chose to donate their extra money to our adopt-a-lemur cause; thus our **4th lemur adoption**.



A Year of Learning thru Lemurs

As the holidays approached, our class became extremely creative, integrating lemurs into the seasonal fray. Classes **lemurized holiday songs**; on the fifth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me- five golden bamboo lemurs! Additionally, instead of decorating gingerbread men cookies, we created them in lemur form. After a delightful decorating session, we created holiday labels for our cookie creations and delivered them to the local senior center. The smiles were abound; the seniors had never enjoyed a **gingerbread lemur** before!



What does every sweetheart want for Valentine's Day?



Lemur Haiku notecards, of course. Coming back from the holiday break in January, 2015, students immediately began their next lemur project; lemur haiku notecards. Each haiku focused on describing a specific lemur. Students were very descriptive and particular with word choice, as a haiku has only 17 syllables. Additionally, they tried their hand at creating watercolors and original artwork for their notecards. Each student completed a pack of five notecards, wrapped and tagged them,

and gave them to their parents for Valentine's Day.

A Year of Learning thru Lemurs



In March, after viewing another engaging Twitter post of lemurs devouring popcorn,



students began planning their next fundraiser, this time for **LEMUR LOVE**. St. Patrick's Day was approaching, so we

came up with the idea to sell environmental emerald (green) popcorn; otherwise known as **LEMURCORN**.

Students sourced the popcorn, created promotional posters, designed packaging, created a production/ assembly line, and actively sold their product. Bags of LemurCorn sold, 2 for a dollar. Hidden in select bags of LemurCorn were gold, chocolate coins.

If you found a golden coin in your bag, you could redeem it for a student-made, gimp Lemur Tail bracelet. Finally, students did a cost/profit analysis of their hard work. They had raised, profit, \$200.00 for **Lemur Love**, in less than 3 days.

Our next venture was to delve into our literary selections of **Rainforest**

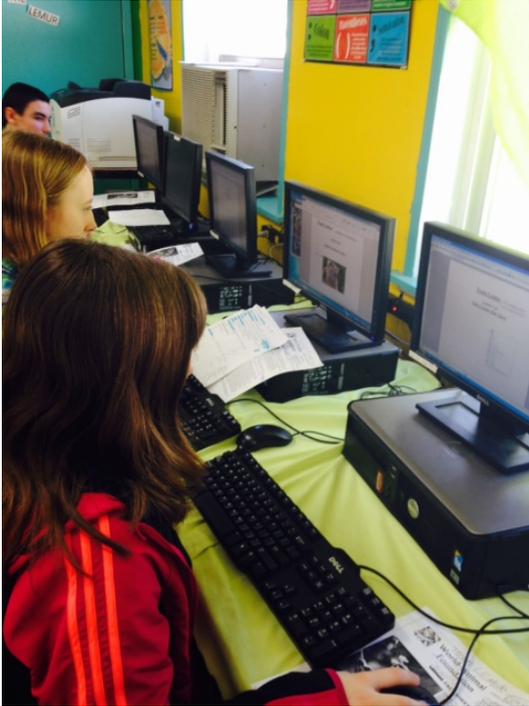
Reading: *The Mystery in the Amazon Rainforest*, *One Day in the Tropical Rainforest*, and *Travels with Gannon & Wyatt: Great Bear Rainforest*.

These selections were not only entertaining and captivating, but also supplied awesome background knowledge on the importance of the rainforest; which we used in our next major writing assessment:

A Save the Rainforest Argumentative.



A Year of Learning thru Lemurs



Students then put on their debate hats and crafted a **Save the Rainforest Argumentative**, complete with proposed solutions to deforestation. We discussed deforestation causes, global warming, industry responsibility, ecosystems, biodiversity, social and economic impact of rainforest areas, ecotourism, sustainability, and more. Students researched the causes of deforestation, chose a cause to combat, and wrote evidence-based arguments, counter arguments, and proposed solutions. Causes ranged from cattle ranching to slash and burn agriculture. Some students challenged themselves by choosing a counter point of view to defend, such as a timbering; not an easy argument, but it was interesting to hear all viewpoints.

By mid-May we were beginning to wrap up the year. We had received our **5th Lemur Adoption Kit** from the **Duke Lemur Center**. Each adoption kit we received was an inspiration to continue **Learning thru Lemurs**. Our last major reading and writing activity was to create our own **Lemur Adoption Kits**, complete with lemur fact sheet, glam shot, informational bookmark, adoption certificate, and lemur thank-you card. As students researched and compiled their Lemur Adoption Kit information, they began creating a lemur stuffed animal to go along with their kit. Learners designed and sewed by hand a lemur stuffed animal: choosing a type of lemur, naming it, giving it quality character traits, and writing a narrative about their lemur. Every lemur lover needs to learn to sew, and what a cool cause to learn for! Their adoption kits were the perfect promotional material for our last fundraiser at our end-of-year event, **LEMURPALOOZA!**



A Year of Learning thru Lemurs



Finally, in celebration of our year of **Learning thru Lemurs**, and final fundraiser, 6th grade Team Lemur hosted a **Lemurpalooza** celebration complete with lemur and environmental games, informational activities, and student-designed, lemur-themed food. This evening event was a creative, interactive way to share student learning; acknowledge our accomplishments; and increase awareness in the community of the challenges that lemurs and the rainforest face.

During this evening, over **165 family members** attended. Not only did we raise more money for adopting lemurs, but we created an exponential **environmental and ecological awareness** in our community.



Reflection on Learning thru Lemurs

Our jumping journey of **Learning thru Lemurs** for the year is done, but our lemur learning and dedication to continue our ecological and environmental awareness campaign is far from over. Our knowledge we will carry forward, forever. What did the students love about Learning thru Lemurs? *It's hands-on, project-based, problem-solving, real-world, not a bunch of worksheets, and it's learning that makes a difference.* As an educator, I am thrilled with the amazing amount of engagement that students have exhibited this year, all due to passion-based learning and **LEMURS**. Students have not only learned many ELA Common Core Standards during this year of **Learning thru Lemurs**,



A Year of Learning thru Lemurs

but more importantly they have begun their journey toward becoming **global citizens**. To any educator who thinks they would like to **LEMURIZE** their curriculum; remember, it's just simple leap away!

#LemurUp

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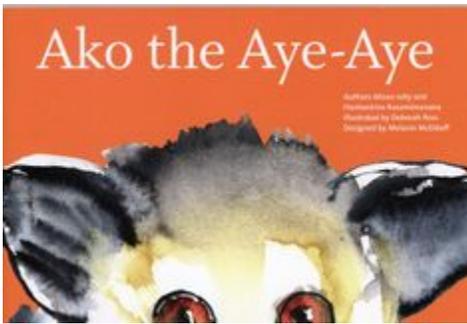


Multi-Genre Resources



“Be the change you wish to see.” – Gandhi

I have integrated a plethora of diverse sources: literary text, informational text, videos/films, environmental games, web sources, and Twitter accounts. Each resource can be read or viewed together; discussed as a whole class; then independently reflected on.



Literary Text: A search on Amazon will give you a plethora of other choices.

- The Ako Series: Madagascar Lemur Adventures- Dr. Alison Jolly
- A Little Lemur Named Mew- Joyce Powzyk
- The Adventures of Larry the Lemur- Ralph Castaneda
- How to Lose a Lemur- Frann Preston-Gannon
- Lemurs- Angie Marino
- The Lemurs' Tale- Ophelia Redpath

Informational Text-Books: A search on Amazon will give you a plethora of other choices.

- For the Love of Lemurs- Patricia Chapple Wright
- Lemurs- Claire Thropp
- Lemur (A Day in the Life-Rain Forest Animals)-Anita Ganeri
- Lemurs!- Becky Wolff
- Let's Learn About Lemurs- Breanne Sartori
- Ring-Tailed Lemurs- Joelle Riley
- Sifaka- Deutsche Don Juan
- Madagascar- Hilary Brandt
- Lonely Planet Madagascar- The Lonely Planet
- Madagascar: The Eight Continent- Peter Tyson Emilie
- My Madagascar- Catherine Dolan
- Madagascar Wildlife- Daniel Austin



Illustration by Zina Saunders

Multi-Genre Resources

Informational Text/Articles: Close Reading: A Google search of 'lemurs informational text' or 'lemurs comprehension' will give you a wider array of grade-level text.

<http://www.wildmadagascar.org/wildlife/lemurs.html>

<http://a-z-animals.com/animals/lemur/>

http://islandoflemurs.imax.com/downloads/educator_guide_complete.pdf

<http://www.readworks.org/passages/leaping-lemurs>

http://superscience.scholastic.com/top_news/2014/04/saving-endangered-lemurs

<http://sites.levittownschoools.com/ckind/Documents/Reading%20Informational%20Text%20Lesson.pdf> (page 7)

<http://www.abcteach.com/documents/comprehension-lemurs-upper-elementary-9840> (free membership)

<http://www.abcteach.com/documents/comprehension-lemurs-middlehigh-9839> (free membership)

<http://files.havefunteaching.com/2013/08/leon-the-lemur-second-grade-reading-comprehension-worksheet.pdf>

<http://saradavila.com/front/2014/02/03/unusual-animals-the-sunda-lemur-reading-comprehension/>

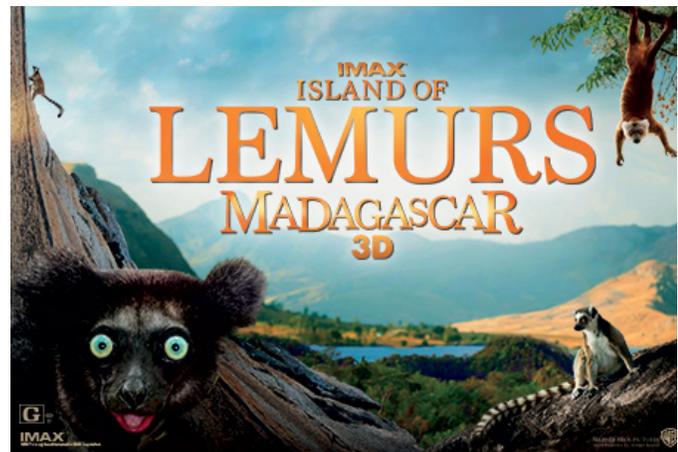
<http://easyscienceforkids.com/fun-lemurs-and-monkeys-quiz-free-interactive-kids-science-quizzes/>

Videos/Films: A search on Amazon, Google, or Teacher Tube will give you a cornucopia of other choices.

- Island of Lemurs: Madagascar
- Nature: A Lemur's Tale
- Zoboomafoo: with the Kraft Brothers
- Madagascar
- Penguins of Madagascar
- Fern Gully
- Rio

Games: Amazon is a great source for these games.

- Earthopoly/Wild Animalopoly
- Educational Trivia Card Game: Rain Forests of the World
- Rain Forest Animals Clue
- Fern Gully Trading Cards
- Rainforest Card Games
- Congo Basin Chess
- Rainforest Puzzles



Multi-Genre Resources

Web Sources: A search on Google of 'lemurs' will provide a myriad of additional information.



<http://lemur.duke.edu/discover/meet-the-lemurs/>

<http://www.wildmadagascar.org/wildlife/lemurs.html>

<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/ring-tailed-lemur/>

<http://www.lemurworld.com/facts-about-lemurs/>

<http://www.lemurs.us/basics.html>

<http://www.lemurworld.com/>

Nat Geo, Discovery, BBC, and PBS are excellent sources for more information.

Conservation Connections:

<http://lemurconservationnetwork.org/>

<http://lemur.duke.edu/protect/conservation/sava-conservation/>

<http://www.lemurreserve.org/>

<http://www.lemurlove.org/lemur-conservation.html>

Twitter Accounts to follow: Type in 'lemurs' or other environmental/ecological words in your Twitter search to connect with more conservationists.

@LemurNetwork

@Lemur_Love

@DukeLemurCenter

@Patcwright

@LemurReserve

@UniteLemur

@CotswoldWildlifePark

@SavetheLemurs

@NationalWildlife

@World_Wildlife

@WWF

@PBSNature

@PlanetMadagascar

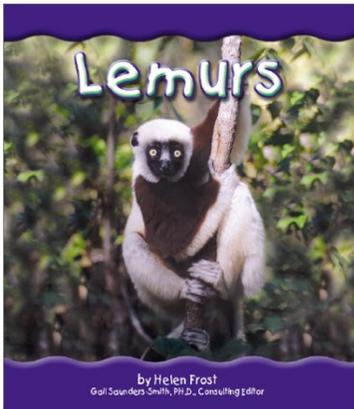


Getting Started: One Small Leap at a Time



LEMURIZE YOUR CLASSROOM

1. Get your **resources** together from the library or place them in your yearly orders:



informational text, literary text, movies, environmental and lemur learning games, websites, and music. Use our **Resource Guide** to assist you in your choices.

2. Set up your class **Twitter and Instagram** account for

networking, sharing, and gathering knowledge. We were

@LeapingLemurs2 for Twitter and @LeapingLemurs for Instagram.



Choose yours and print the addresses on handouts for parents and students as a reference.



Getting Started: One Small Leap at a Time

3. Establish your **class culture** by creating a class name, mantra, slogan, logo, and mascot. We were **Team Lemur**; our mantra was, “Be the change you wish to see.” by Gandhi; our slogan was Lemur Up, Lemur Strong; our logo was a Leaping Lemur, and our mascots were stuffed-animal lemurs. Establish these elements as part of your classroom, every-day dialogue and correspondence.



4. Update your **class webpage** to include lemur pictures and informational links.
5. Begin **setting up your room** to reflect the lemur and rain forest theme. We **decorated** with lemur pictures and posters of the Island of Lemurs: Madagascar IMAX movie, rain forest

leaves, and vines. Choose **thematic colors** for your class. I had three classes. Each one

had their own color:

tropical teal,

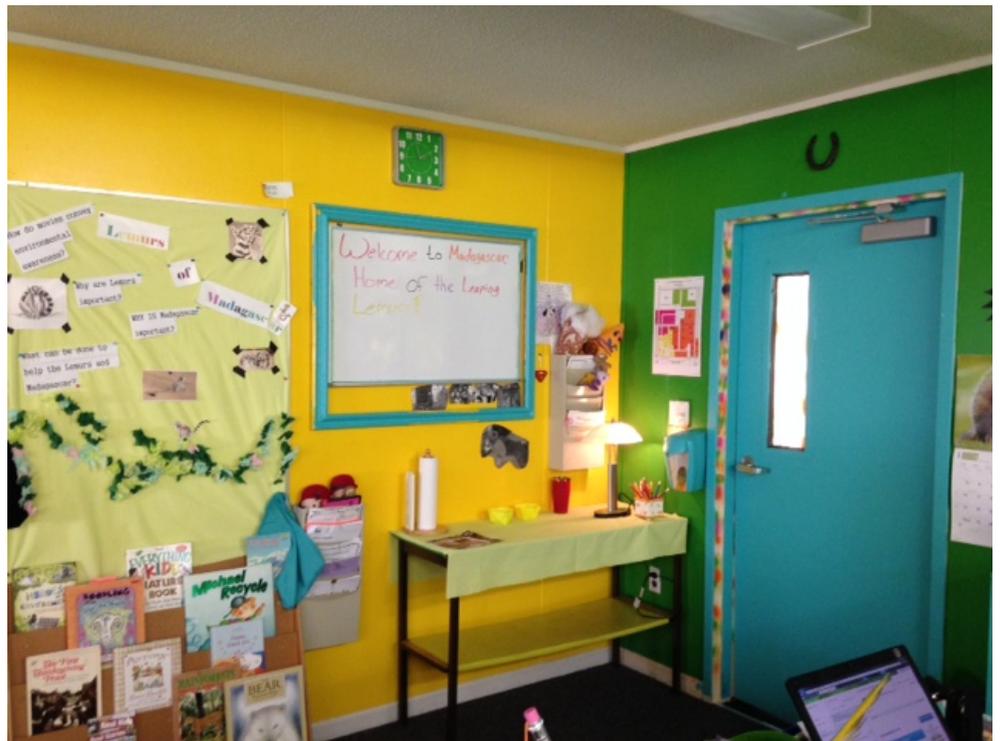
environmental

emerald, or sizzling

sunshine. Incorporate

these colors with

your decorating,



Getting Started: One Small Leap at a Time

activities, and correspondence.

6. Establish lemur/rain forest **learning areas** in your room. We had a teal carpet in the



reading corner that was called the

LAGOON. Our working area

was a colorful, floral carpet

known as the **CANOPY**.

Additionally, a whole section of

the room was set up with JUST

lemur and rain forest books; the

FOREST FLOOR.

7. Create **thematic bulletin boards** incorporating lemur and rain forest vocabulary and year-long guiding questions.

8. Make some **goals and objectives** for the year as you reference your standards, then begin looking through our **Resource and Activity Guide** to see what fits into your pacing. Remember, you do not have to do a whole year of Learning thru Lemurs, but can pick and



Getting Started: One Small Leap at a Time

choose **specific topics or activities** that fit into your curriculum.

9. Have fun, be flexible, stay engaged, and remember your purpose--LEMURS!



Getting Started: One Small Leap at a Time

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