
Storytelling for Behavior Change in physical activity

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&
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FICHA TÉCNICA

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“Tenho em mim
todos os sonhos do mundo”

*“I have in me
all the dreams in the world”*



-Álvaro de Campos
Tabacaria (Fernando Pessoa)

Preface

When two distinguished professors get together to tell us one hundred stories with the purpose of helping us to be happier, we should pay attention. In addition to the scientific demonstration that storytelling enhances behavior change, the authors make this change occur through physical activity, which responds more effectively to the challenges that the modern world poses to us.

Starting from the theoretical/scientific knowledge of the benefits of physical activity for our happiness and choosing storytelling as a privileged mechanism to instill this behavioral change, Filipe Rodrigues and Pedro Morouço manage to take us on a journey down the memory lane, in which we come across stories we heard as children, transporting us to a time when it was so much easier to be physically active.

At the end of the journey through the one hundred stories told in this book, we arrive at a destination called happiness. The pedagogical way in which each story is presented and the moral complement to it, lead us to a world of fables and allegories, easily understood by everyone and which compels us to have a more ethically responsible and physically active attitude. By pointing happiness as a destiny, Rodrigues and Morouço follow in the noble footsteps, for example, of America's founding fathers when, in the Declaration of Independence, they state that "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that

all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

When I accepted the honorable invitation to write these brief lines that serve as a preface to the book "Storytelling for Behavior Change in physical activity", I thought, from what I knew about the quality of the authors, that I would have the privilege of reading a magnificent book before other people. Now, with the book already read, I just want to share it and to advise everyone to read it, so that they can have the same privilege that I had. The privilege was not having read it before the others. The privilege, now in range of everybody, is only to read the book. Believing that happiness is a feeling that grows as it is shared, I hope that many can read this book so that we can all share the happiness that a lifestyle that combines a more active physical behavior and a more responsible moral attitude brings us.

To all who have read this preface to the end, I ask you to do yourselves a favor: read and share this book and, therefore, just be happy!

Doutor Jorge Varela
*Sub-Diretor da Escola Superior de Educação e
Ciências Sociais (Leiria) – Politécnico de Leiria*

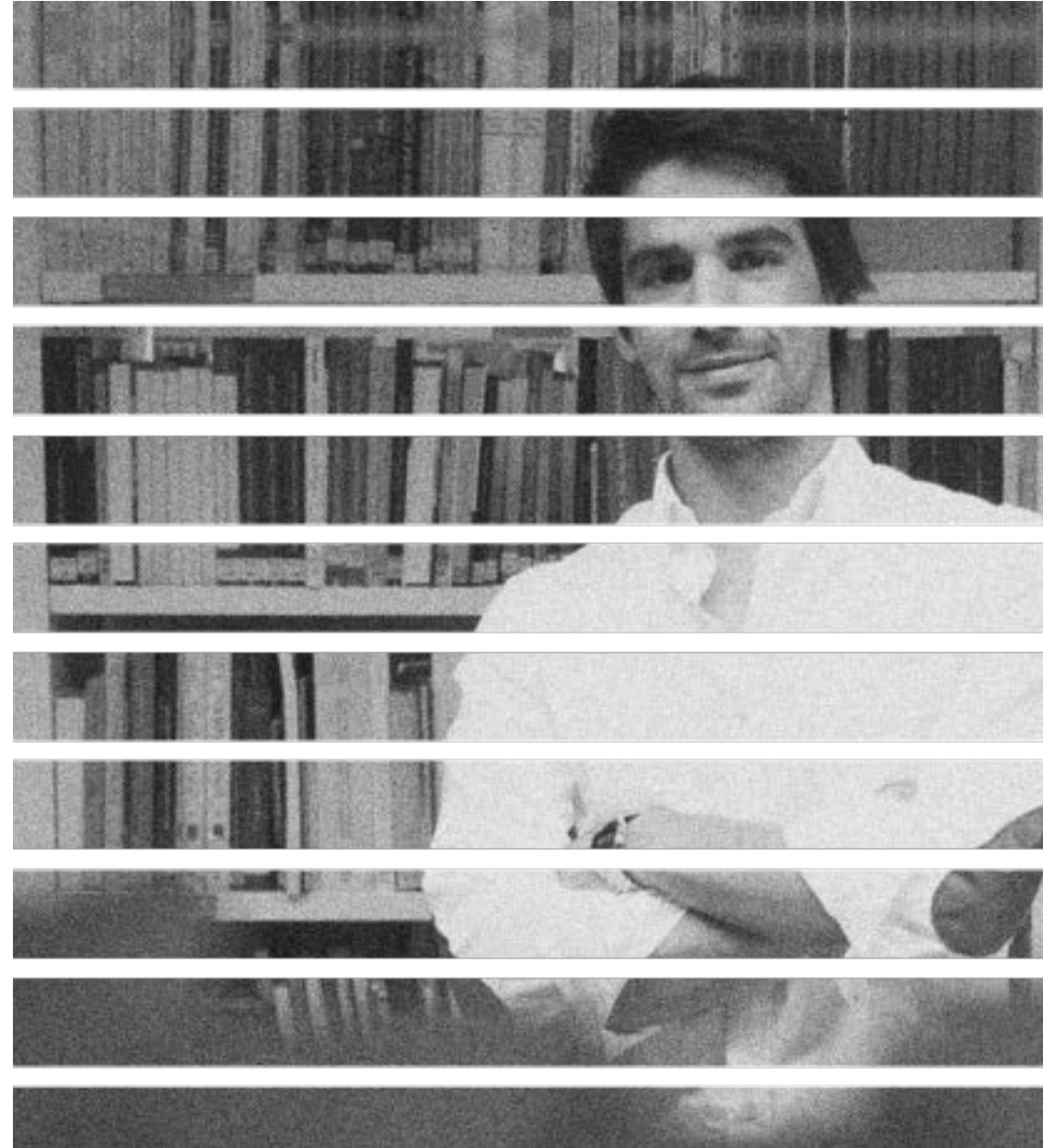


Bio Filipe Rodrigues

Filipe Rodrigues, Ph.D., is a professor, researcher, author, and consultant. He has published over 85 peer-reviewed articles and 3 books and has won more than 10 awards in sports science. Filipe serves as a Professor of Exercise Testing and Prescription in adults and the elderly, as well as in behavior change methods towards health-related behaviors at the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria. He has degrees in sports management from the Polytechnic Institute of Bragança and in fitness activities from the Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro University, a Ph.D. in Sports Science from the Beira Interior University. He is a researcher at the Life Quality Research Center and his research focuses on motivational and cognitive theories to understand health-related behaviors. Other areas of research interest include health psychology, neuropsychology, and public health interventions.

Bio Pedro Morouço

Pedro Morouço, Ph.D. in Sport Science, is a professor at the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria, currently as Dean of the School of Education and Social Sciences. He was coordinator of the master's degree in Exercise Prescription and Health Promotion, lecturer on Physiology, Biomechanics and Research Methods, related to Sports and Health. Has published over 200 works, as articles, books, or proceedings, is now researcher at ciTechCare - Center for Innovative Care and Health Technology. Invited to participate in several national and international projects, he is Ambassador for Active Portugal. Was Exercise Physiologist at a Primary Care Unit, leading the first consultation on Physical Activity Prescription for the National Health System. Above all, Pedro is a humble human being that understand the values of working as a team. Natural leader to reinforce the strengths and bridge weaknesses, developing new ideas and thinking outside the box. He is aware of the role of science for society awareness; thus, he developed skills to be able to reach wider audiences (e.g. winner of the AJE method publishing competition, 2 awards in the National Science Communications Contests and representative of Portugal in an international event), without jeopardizing the scientific inputs.



Storytelling for Behavior Change
in physical activity

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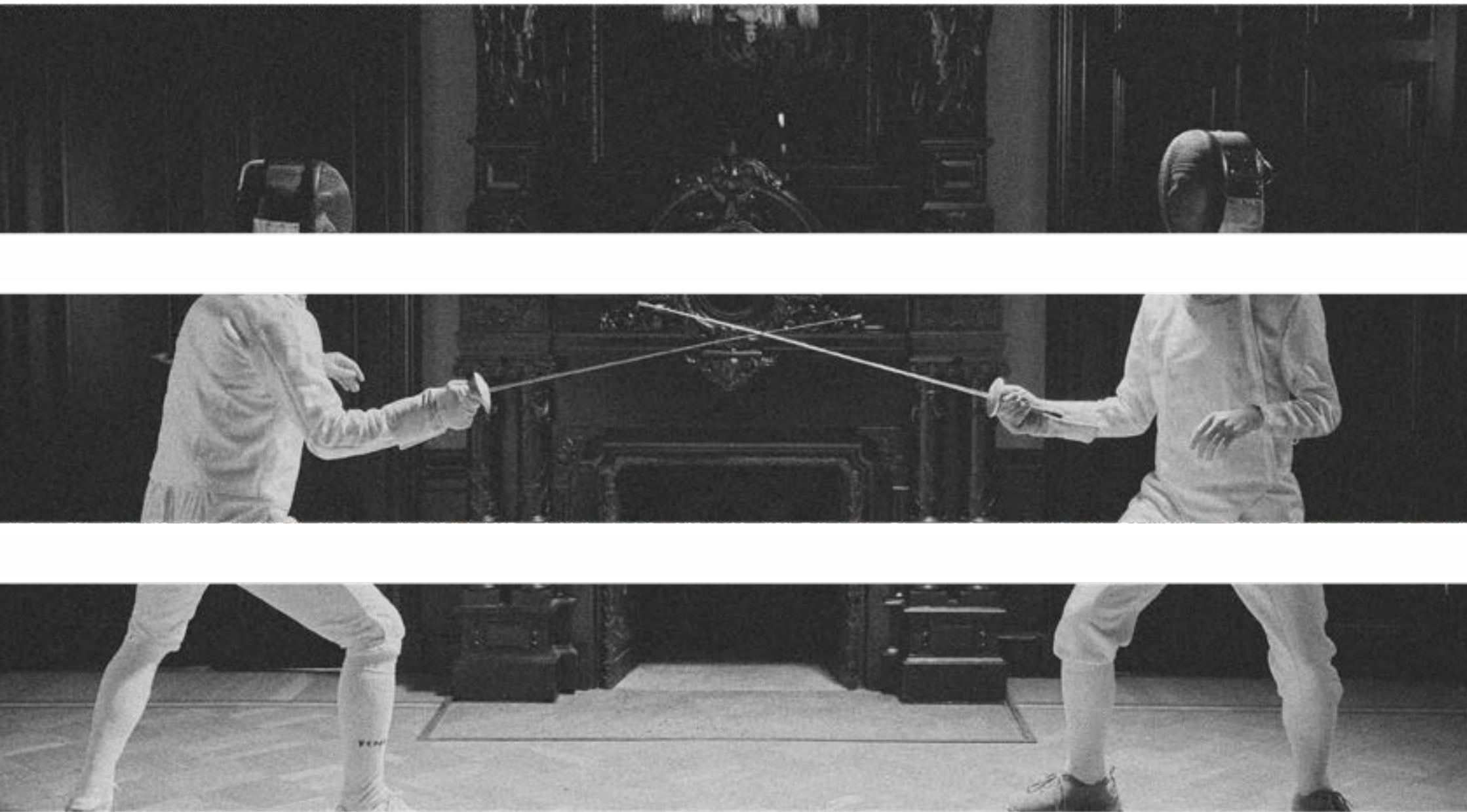
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Introduction

Thank you for investing your precious time in reading this book. We believe it will be worth it! Let us share with you one of the best-kept secrets: Everything happens for a reason. Sometimes things happen to us that may seem horrible, painful, and unfair at first sight. But, in reflection, we will find out that without overcoming those obstacles we would have never realized our potential, strengths, willpower, or heart.

Success and downfalls, we experience during life, help us to create who we will become. Even bad experiences, like a loss of a loved one, can have a lesson learned. They are probably the most important ones. If someone hurts you, betrays you, or breaks your trust, do not look back in anger. Forgive them, for they have helped you learn about respect and the importance of being cautious when you open your heart. On the other hand, if someone loves you, love them back unconditionally, not only because they love you, but because in a way, they are teaching us to love and how to open our hearts and eyes to things.

For the people around you and your own sake, make everyday count. Appreciate life. Appreciate love. Appreciate every moment and take from those moments everything that you possibly can for you may never be able to experience it again. Listen to people and their stories. Let yourself fall in love, break free of your old believe system, and set your sights high on the stars. Hold your head up because you have every right to. Tell yourself you are a powerful human being and believe in yourself. You can make of your life anything you wish. Create your own dream life then go out and live it with absolutely no regrets.

There is evidence to suggest that storytelling can have a positive effect on promoting healthy behaviors such as physical activity. Motivational interviewing is an effective intervention for improving healthy behaviors related to diet and exercise among adults (Mutschler et al., 2018). Additionally, motivation science takes an integrative approach, drawing from multiple disciplines, including cognitive, social, and educational psychology, to promote health behaviors (Brooks et al., 2022). It is hoped that this approach can increase our ability to promote health behaviors by explicating the relationship between health motivation and health behaviors (Kwasnicka et al., 2016). Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that motivational stories can have a positive effect on promoting healthy behaviors, although further research may be needed to confirm this (Passon, 2019).

We are going to share with you 100 inspiring stories the world has written. Some of them might be new to you. Others you have already heard of. Nevertheless, sometimes it is good to reread the things we supposedly know, just to reinforce the lesson behind the story.

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Inspirational stories

Motivational stories are usually about people who have taken action to achieve their goals or overcome obstacles in their lives. These stories can motivate people to take similar actions and pursue their own goals. Inspirational stories are usually about a person who has overcome difficulties or challenges in their life and achieved success or accomplished great things. These stories can inspire people to believe in themselves and their abilities and to act toward their own goals and aspirations. For example, the story of J.K. Rowling, who overcame poverty and rejection to become one of the most successful authors in history, is inspiring. Another example is the story of Michael Jordan's perseverance and dedication to his sport can motivate athletes to work harder and never give up on their dreams.

There is scientific evidence to support the applicability of motivational stories for behavior change. The release of oxytocin, a hormone associated with social bonding and trust, in response to compelling narratives is one example of how storytelling can affect our thoughts and behaviors (Kosfeld et al., 2005). Additionally, behavior changes interventions that incorporate motivational strategies, such as motivational interviewing, be effective in promoting behavior change in a variety of contexts (Lohr et al., 2022). Finally, motivational stories can be particularly effective in promoting behavior change, as motivation is a key factor in promoting healthy behaviors (Rodrigues & Monteiro, 2021). Overall, scientific evidence suggests that motivational stories can be a powerful tool for promoting behavior change in a variety of contexts.

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TEXTS

Judge nothing before the appointed time

On a beautiful summer day, a man found a cocoon of a butterfly. One day, a small opening appeared. He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled its body through that little hole. Until it suddenly stopped making any progress and looked like it was stuck. So, the man decided to help the butterfly. He took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily, although it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings.

The man did not think anything of it and sat there waiting for the wings to enlarge to support the butterfly. But nothing happened. The butterfly, spend the rest of its life unable to fly, crawling around with tiny wings and swollen body.

Despite the kind heart of the man, he did not understand that the restricting cocoon and the struggle were needed by the butterfly to get itself through the small opening. It was a way of forcing the butterfly to grow and produce force into its wings, to prepare itself for flying once it was out of the cocoon.



Moral of the story

Our struggles in life develop our strengths. Without these struggles, we never grow and never get stronger, so we need to tackle challenges on our own, and not rely on help from others.

Be aware of opportunities

In ancient times, a very old King had a rock placed on a roadway. He then hid and watched to see if anyone would move the rock out of the path. Some of the King's wealthiest tradespeople and courtiers came by and simply traveled around it. Many people blamed the old King for not keeping the roadways clear, but none of them did anything about getting the stone out of the way.

A peasant then came along carrying a load of vegetables. Upon approaching the rock, the peasant laid down his burden and tried to push the stone out of the road. After much pushing and straining, he finally prospered.

After the peasant went back to pick up his vegetables, he noticed a handbag lying in the road where the rock had been. The handbag contained many gold coins and a note from the old King explaining that the reward was for the person who removed the rock from the roadway.

Moral of the story

Look at obstacles as opportunities to improve your circumstances, and while the lazy people complain, the others are creating opportunities through their generous hearts, care, and determination to get things done.

Redefining happiness

Once, a middle school teacher set an assignment for a group of students. She asked them what they wanted to be when they grew up. Some of them wrote doctors, others wrote down singers, some wrote down teachers, and others wrote down lawyers.

And when she was marking through these papers, she noticed that one of the boys wrote down the word happy.

She went up to him and said: "John, I think you misunderstood the assignment", and he replied: "Miss, I think you misunderstood life".

Moral of the story

Happiness is more than just a job. Is knowing what drives you and what motivates you to do as an employer or employee.

How your beliefs control you

A woman was walking through a circus camp, and she spotted that the elephants were not being kept in cages or held by use of chains. All that was holding them back from fleeing the circus camp was a small piece of rope tied to one of their legs. As she gazed upon these animals, she was completely confused as to why the elephants did not use their force to break free from the rope and escape the circus. She thought that they could easily do so, but instead, they did not even try at all.

Curious and searching for answers, she approached the trainer and asked why the elephants were just standing there without trying to escape. The trainer replied: “When they are very young and much smaller, we use the same size rope to tie one of the legs and, at that age, it is enough to hold them. As they grow up, they are conditioned to believe they cannot break free. They believe the rope can still hold them, so they never try to break away”.

Moral of the story

No matter how long you have been fighting against the world, always continue with the belief that what you want to achieve is possible. Trusting you can become successful is the most important step to actually accomplishing it.

Love is progress

Once a couple was asked how they managed to stay together for 50 years, and their response was astonishing.

They said that: “We lived in a time where if something was broken, we would fix it and not throw it away”.

Moral of the story

Just because your relationship is going through some hard times, it does not mean you have to give up and break up. Pause and look for the reasons why it is not working and ask yourself what you can do to fix it.

Trustworthiness

In a small town, there was a farmer who sold every day a pound of butter to a baker. One day the baker decided to weight the butter to see if he was getting the right amount. Which he was not. Angry about this situation, he took the farmer to court.

The judge asked the farmer if he was using any measure to weigh the butter. The farmer answered: "Your Honor, I am primitive. I do not have a proper measure, but I do have a scale". The judge then questioned: "Then how do you weigh the butter?"

The farmer replied: "Your Honor, long before the baker started buying butter from me, I have been buying a pound loaf of bread from him. Every day, when the baker brings the bread, I put it on the scale and give him the same weight in butter. If anyone is to blame, it is the baker".

Moral of the story

In life, you reap what you sow. Do not try to cheat others.

Letting go

One day a university professor holding a bottle of water questioned his students how much they think this bottle of water weighs: "500 grams" shouted one student and another from the back "700 grams".

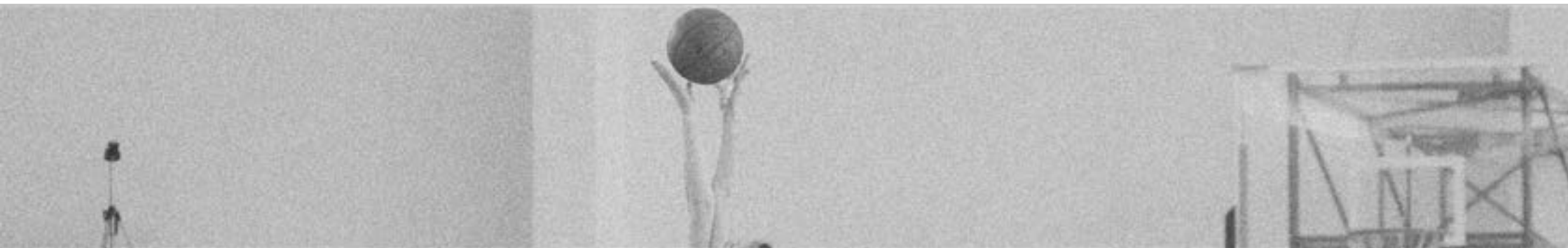
The professor said: "actually until we weigh the bottle we would not know". And then he continued: "Imagine I hold this bottle for a few minutes, what do you think will happen?". All the students said: "Nothing".

The professor continued: "What if I hold it for a bit longer, let's say I hold this bottle for a few hours? They replied: "Well, your arm would start to hurt", and he followed: "What if I hold this bottle for a day?". One student said that his arm would be practically paralyzed and in extreme pain.

The professor then said: "Notice that the weight of the bottle did not change during that time at all. The only thing that changed was how long I were holding it".

Moral of the story

This bottle represents our challenges, our problems, and our worries, that the longer we hold them the more pain they can cause us. The ability to letting go and to arise above the challenges that have been caused by others in our life is an important skill if you want to be happy and at peace with yourself.



Cottonbro - 2023

Watch yourself

There was once a pair of acrobats. The teacher was a poor widower, and the student was a young girl by the name of Medina. These acrobats performed each day on the streets to earn enough to eat. Their act consisted of the teacher balancing a tall bamboo pole on his head while the little girl climbed slowly to the top. Once at the top, she remained there while the teacher walked along the ground.

Both performers had to maintain complete focus and balance to prevent any injury from occurring and to complete the act. One day, the teacher said to the pupil: “Listen, Medina, I will watch you and you watch me so that we can help each other maintain concentration and balance and prevent an accident. Then we will surely earn enough to eat”.

Reflecting on the words his teacher had spoken, the little girl replied: “Dear master, I think it would be wiser for each of us to watch ourselves. To look after oneself means to look after both of us. That way I am sure we will avoid any accidents and earn enough to eat”.

Moral of the story

By learning how to nourish your mind and body you will naturally begin to treat those around you with more love, kindness, and compassion, and create a more positive impact on the world around you as a whole.

Encouragement

As a group of frogs was traveling through the woods, two of them fell into a deep pit. When the other frogs crowded around the pit and saw how deep it was., they told the two frogs that there was no hope for them. However, the frogs decided to ignore what the others were saying, and they advanced to try and jump out of the pit.

Despite their long efforts, the group of frogs at the top of the pit were still saying that they should just give up. That they would never make it out. Eventually, one of the frogs took heed to what the other frogs were saying and gave up, falling to his death. The other frog however continued to jump as hard as he could. Again, the group of frogs continued yelling at him to stop trying and just die.

He jumped even harder and at his last effort, he finally made it out. When he got to the others, they questioned: “Did you not hear us?”

The frog explained to them that he was deaf. He thought they were encouraging him the entire time.

Moral of the story

People’s words can have a big effect on others’ lives. Be careful about the negativity other people convey and do not listen to the naysayers.

Seeing beauty everywhere

A busker was playing his violin just outside a metro station, he was just wearing normal busker clothes. He was playing one of the most expensive violins ever and some of the most beautifully composed music ever created by the most talented artist and talented composers. The funny thing? More than 1000 people walked past and barely anyone noticed it, barely anyone connected, barely anyone was engaged. In just under an hour, he accrued just about over 30 dollars and that is not a bad amount for a busker. But the fascinating thing was that just a week earlier he had sold an entire arena for 100 dollars per seat.

Moral of the story

Do we miss beauty when we see it unexpectedly? We should be able to observe prettiness, and talent, in every aspect of our lives and around us. Focus your life on observing the little things because one day you look back and realize they were the big things.

The gift

One day a wise man was walking through a village with his disciples. A very angry and rude young man came up to him and started insulting him: “You have no right to teach others!”, he yelled and continued: “You are as stupid as everyone else here. You are nothing but a fake saint!”. The wise man was not upset by his insults and kept on smiling. The man insulted him again and again but the only reaction he could get back was a smile and absolute silence. Finally, he stomped his feet and left cursing.

The disciples were very angry and upset and one of them could not keep quiet and asked the wise man: “Why did you not reply to the rude young man?”. The wise man replied: “If someone gives you a gift and you refuse to accept it, to whom does the gift belong?”.

“Of course, to the person who brought the gift” replied the disciple. “That is correct” smiled the wise man.

Moral of the story

Do not let other peoples’ opinions and judgment interfere with your inner peace. Be in harmony with yourself and let others’ hatred consume their peace.

The struggle to grow

On a beautiful summer day, a man found a cocoon of a butterfly. One day, a small opening appeared. He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled its body through that little hole. Until it suddenly stopped making any progress and looked like it was stuck. So, the man decided to help the butterfly. He took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily, although it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings.

The man did not think anything of it and sat there waiting for the wings to enlarge to support the butterfly. But nothing happened. The butterfly, spend the rest of its life unable to fly, crawling around with tiny wings and swollen body.

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Moral of the story

Our struggles in life develop our strengths. Without these struggles, we never grow and never get stronger, so we need to tackle challenges on our own, and not rely on help from others.

Judge nothing before the appointed time

Once upon a time, there was an older farmer who had worked his crops for many years. One day, his horse ran away. Upon hearing the news, his neighbors came to visit: “Such bad luck” they said sympathetically to which the farmer replied: “Maybe”.

The next morning the horse returned, bringing with it three other wild horses. “How wonderful” the neighbors exclaimed to which the farmer replied: “Maybe”.

The following day, his son tried to ride one of the untamed horses, and thus was thrown and broke his leg. The neighbors again came to offer their sympathy on his misfortune, to which the farmer answered: “Maybe”.

The day after, military officials came to the village to draft young men into the army. Seeing that the son’s leg was broken, they passed him by. The neighbors congratulated the farm on how well things had turned out. Once again, the farmer said: “Maybe”.

Moral of the story

Practice non-judgment. Our life does not play always as we want. There is always tomorrow, and whether the day was good or bad, there are a million effects that can arise from one event. We need to realize this truth and live in a way that we are constantly aware of it to find peace and happiness.

Success in not overnight

Once a lady was in a marketplace and saw a famous painter, and she ran into him and said: “Can you draw me a portrait?”, “Sure I will draw you a portrait!” said the painter.

He reached for a pen and paper and only in 30 seconds he sketched an identical portrait of this lady and handing it back to her he said: “That will cost you 30000 dollars”. She replied: “How can you charge me 30000 dollars for something that took you only 30 seconds?”.

Smiling, the famous painter said: “It took me 30 years to be able to do it in 30 seconds”.

Moral of the story

The part you do not see (past) is what made what you can see today. You need to value learning, growth, and progress before you can turn into a successful person.



Mikhail Nilov - 2023

Understanding

A shop owner placed a sign above his store that said he was selling puppies. Signs like this always have a way of attracting young children, and to no surprise, a boy saw the sign and approached the owner: “How much are you going to charge the puppies for?”, to which the owner replied: “Anywhere from 30 to 50 dollars”. The little boy pulled out some change from his pocket and said: “I have 2.37 dollars; can I please look at them?” the shop owner smiled and whistled. Out of the kennel came a lady who ran down the aisle of his shop followed by five teeny puppies. One puppy was lagging considerably behind. Immediately the little boy singled out the lagging, limping puppy and said: “What is wrong with him?” the shop owner explained that the veterinarian had examined the little puppy and had discovered it did not have a hip socket and that it would always limp.

The little boy became excited and said: “That is the puppy that I want to buy”. The shop owner surprised by the boy’s enthusiasm replied: “You do not want to buy that little dog. If you want him, I will just give him to you”.

The boy looked at the store owner, pointing his finger he said: “I do not want you to give him to me. That little dog is worth every bit as much as all the other dogs and I will pay full price. I will give you 2.37 dollars now, and 50 cents a month until I have him paid for”. The shop owner countered: “do you want to buy this dog? He is never going to be able to run, jump, and play with you like the other puppies”.

To his surprise, the little boy reached down and rolled up his pants to reveal a badly twisted, crippled leg supported by a big metal brace. The boy looked up at the shop owner and softly said: “Well, I do not run so well myself, and the little puppy will need someone who understands!”



Moral of the story

Kindness and comprehension are both powerful. Everybody is valuable in the eyes of those who do not judge people by their flaws and disabilities.

Understanding

One day a father was cooking up something scrumptious for lunch, and his daughter walked into the kitchen with something on her mind, “What’s wrong” the father asked. “School is just so hard. Making sense is impossible. I do not think I will ever make it to the fourth grade” the daughter replied. In an instant, her dad smiled and took out three pots. He filled them with water and placed them on the fire. Once the three pots began to boil, he placed potatoes into one pot, eggs in another, and poured coffee beans into the third one. “What are you doing dad?” the girl asked. After 20 minutes, the father took the potatoes out of the pot and placed them on a plate, he did the same with the eggs, and then he poured the coffee into a mug.

“So, what do you see?” the father asked his daughter, to which the girl replied: “I only see potatoes, eggs, and coffee dad.” The father said to look closer and asked: “Which are you?”

Moral of the story

The potatoes, the eggs, and the coffee beans face the same adversity: boiling water. However, each one of them reacted differently. The potatoes are strong and unrelenting, but in the boiling water, they became soft and weak. The eggs were fragile with the thin outer shell protecting their liquid interior until it was placed in the boiling water, then became hard. Nevertheless, the coffee beans were unique. After their exposure to the boiling water, they changed and created something new. Which are you?

Control your temper

There once was a little boy who had a very bad temper. His father decided to hand him a bag of nails and said that every time the boy lost his temper, he had to hammer a nail into the fence. On the first day, the boy hammered more than 50 nails into the fence. Then he discovered it was easier to control his temper than to hammer all those nails into the fence.

Finally, the day came when the boy did not lose his temper at all. He told his father the news and the father suggested that the boy should now pull out a nail every day he kept his temper under control.

The days pass and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone. The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. Looking at the fence, the father said: “You have done well my son but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out, but it will not matter how many times you say I am sorry, the wound is still there”.

Moral of the story

Control your anger and do not say things to people in the heat of the moment, that you may later regret. Some things in life are unable to be taken back.

Value who you are

A popular speaker started his class by picking out of his back pocket a 20-dollar note. In this lecture hall of about 200 students, he asked: “How many of you would like this note?”. As predicted, all 200 hands went up, to which he said: “Interesting. Before I let you have it, let me ask you this question”. He took the note and folded it in half twice, and then he said: “How many of you still want this note?”. Once again, 200 hands went up. Now he said: “Let me try something else”. He took the note and crumpled it, and then he said: “How many of you still want this note?”. Still, 200 hands went up.

Finally, he chucked the note on the floor. Eh screwed it with his shoe and crumpled it even more, picked it back up, now with dirt, and said: “How many of you want this note?”. All 200 hands were still up.

He said: “Today you have learned an important lesson. No matter how much I crumpled that note, how much I crushed it up, how many times it was compressed on, you still wanted it, because it was still worth 20 dollars. In the same way that that 20-dollar note held its value, so do you!

Moral of the story

No matter how many times life will tread on you, life will crumple you, life will scrunch you, and life will squeeze you, you will always keep your value.

Appreciating what you have

There was a blind girl who hated herself purely for the fact that she was blind. The only person she did not hate was her loving boyfriend, as he was always there for her. She said: “If I could see the world, I would marry you”.

One day, someone donated a pair of eyes to her, giving her the power to see everything, including her boyfriend. Her boyfriend asked her: “Now that you can see the world, will you marry me?”. The girl was shocked when she saw that her boyfriend was blind too and refused to marry him.

Her boyfriend walked away in tears, writing a letter to her saying: “Just take care of my eyes dear”.

Moral of the story

When our circumstances change, so does our mind. Some people may not be able to see the way things were before and might not be able to appreciate them. There are many things to take away from this story, like appreciation, gratitude, and humbleness.

Being human

The story goes that a famous emperor hired an assistant to follow him as he walked through the town square. The assistant's only role was to, whenever the emperor was applauded and praised, he had to whisper in his ear saying: "You are just a man, you are just a man"

Moral of the story

They say that two things define us: our patience when we have nothing and our humility when we have everything.

Love

Some time ago, a man punished his 3-year-old daughter for wasting a roll of gold wrapping paper. Money was tight and he became infuriated when the child tried to decorate a box to put under the Christmas tree. Nevertheless, the little girl brought the gift to her father the next morning and said: "This is for you Daddy."

The man became embarrassed by this overreaction earlier, but his rage continued when he saw that the box was empty, and then he yelled at her: "Don't you know, when you give someone a present, there is supposed to be something inside?"

The little girl looked up at him in tears and cried: "Oh Daddy, it is not empty at all. I blew kisses into the box. They are all for you Daddy". The father was crushed. He put his arms around his little girl and begged for her forgiveness.

A few days later, an accident took the life of the child. Her father kept the gold box by his bed for many years and, whenever he was discouraged or angry, he would take out an imaginary kiss and remember the love of his daughter who had put it there.

Moral of the story

Love is the most precious gift in the world.



Almaty - 2023

Be the boss of yourself

Once, a horse suddenly came galloping quickly down the road. The man had somewhere important to go. A young merchant, who was standing alongside the road, shouted to the horse rider: “Where are you going so fast?” The horseman replied: “I do not know! Ask the horse!”.

Moral of the story

The horse symbolizes our habits. The story tells the way we usually live, at the mercy of our habits which have been established not by our intentional actions, but by our surroundings and unconscious activities. The horse is pulling us along, making us run here and there and hurry everywhere and we do not even know why. If you stop to ask yourself from time to time why exactly you are running around so much, you might have an answer. But as much as we run, it will get us nowhere. We need to learn how to take back control and let the horse know who is in charge. You have always been the boss, so start acting like it.

A cracked pot

An elderly Chinese woman had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole which she carried across her neck. One of the pots had a crack in it while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water.

At the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years, this went on daily, with the woman bringing home only one and a half pots of water.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments. But the poor cracked pot was always ashamed of its imperfection, and miserable that it could only do half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what was perceived to be bitter failure, the cracked pot spoke to the woman one day by the stream: “I am ashamed of myself because this crack in my side causes water to leak out back to your house”.

The old woman smiled: “Did you notice that there are flowers on your side of the path, but not on the other pot’s side?”

That is because I have always known about your flaw, so I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walked back, you water them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you

being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house”.

The woodcutter

Once upon a time, a very strong woodcutter asked for a job with a timber merchant and he got it. His salary was really good and so were the working conditions. For this reason, he was determined to do his best. His boss gave him an axe and showed him the acres where he was supposed to feel the tree. On the first day, the woodcutter brought down 15 trees. “Congratulations,” said the boss, continuing: “Carry on with your work”.

Highly motivated by the words of his boss, the woodcutter tried harder the next day, but he could only bring 10 trees down. On the third day, he tried even harder, but he was only able to bring 7 trees. Days after he was bringing fewer and fewer trees.

The woodcutter thought: “I must be losing my strength”. He went to his boss and apologized, saying that he could not understand what was going on. The boss asked: “When was the last time you sharpened your axe?”, to which the woodcutter replied: “Sharpen? I had no time to sharpen my axe, I have been very busy trying to cut the trees...”

Moral of the story

Each of us has our unique flaws. But it is the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding. You have just got to take each person for what they are and look for the good in them.

Moral of the story

Most of us never update our skills. We think whatever we have learned is very much enough. But good is not good when better is expected. Sharpening our skills from time to time is the key to success.

A screw

There was an industrialist whose production line inexplicably broke down, costing him millions per day. He consulted the best technicians in town, but they could not track the source of the error in the machinery. At last, the industrialist finds an expert to check the matter. The expert just takes out a screwdriver, turns one screw, and the factory cranks back to life. He presents a bill for 100000 dollars. This came as a shock to the business owner as he thought that it was only one screw. Affronted, he demanded an itemized version. The expert was happy to oblige. The note read:

- For turning a screw: 1 dollar
- For knowing which screw to turn: 99999 dollars

Moral of the story

It is rightly said that the greatness of work is not judged by the effort spent behind it, but instead by the knowledge, intent, and outcome of it. The complexity of work is different for every individual depending on their knowledge and experience doing the same.

A glass of milk

One day, a poor boy who was selling goods from door to door to pay his way through school, found he had only one thin dime left, and he was hungry. He decided he would ask for a meal at the next house. However, he lost his confidence when a lovely young woman opened the door. Instead of a meal he asked for a drink of water. She thought he looked hungry so she brought him a large glass of milk. He drank it slowly, and when he finished, he asked: "How much do I owe you?". She replied: "You do not owe me anything. Mother has taught us never to accept pay for kindness". The boy smiled and said: "Then I thank you from my heart". As the boy left the house, he not only felt stronger physically, but his faith in humanity was stronger too. He had been ready to give up and quit. Years later that young woman became critically ill. The local doctors were baffled. They finally sent her to the big city, where they called in specialists to study her rare disease. The boy, now a renowned doctor, was called in for the consultation. When he heard the name of the town she came from, a strange light filled his eyes. Immediately he rose and went down the hall of the hospital to her room.

Dressed in his doctor's gown he went to see her. He recognized her at once. He went back to the consultation room determined to do his best to save her life. From that day he gave special attention to the case. After a long struggle, the battle was won. The boy who grew to be a doctor requested the business office to pass the final bill to him for approval. He looked at it, then wrote something on the edge and the bill was sent to her room.

She feared to open it, for she was sure it would take the rest of her life to pay for it all. Finally, she looked, and something caught her attention on the side of the bill. She began to read the following words: "Paid in full with one glass of milk".

Moral of the story

No act of kindness is ever wasted. Be kind to other people.

Your personal bank accounts

An old monk once told their students: "Imagine there is a bank, which credits your account each day with 86400 dollars, carries over no balance from day to day, allows you to keep no cash balance, and every evening right around midnight cancels whatever part of the amount you had not used during the day. What would you do?" he asked. "Draw out every cent, of course!" said all the students. The monk replied: "Well everyone has been provided with such a bank. It is called Time. Every morning, it credits you with 86400 seconds. Every night it writes off, as lost, whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose. It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft. Each day it opens a new account for you. Each night it closes the records of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours"

Moral of the story

There is no drawing against "Tomorrow". Therefore, there is not enough time or too much time. Time management is decided by us alone and nobody else. It is never the case of us not having enough time to do things, but the case of whether we want to do them. Lost time is never found again. Time is the real money distributed equally to everybody..



Krivec Ales - 2021

The judgmental woman

Once upon a time, there was a man who was very helpful, kindhearted, and generous. He used to help everyone without asking for anything to pay him back. He would help someone because he wants to and he loves to.

One day while walking to buy medicines for his long-time illness, he saw a purse. He picked it up and noticed that the purse was empty. Suddenly, a woman with a policeman showed up and got him arrested. The woman kept on asking where did he hide her money but the man replied: "It was empty when I found it". The woman yelled at him: "Please give it back, it is for my son's school fees!". The man noticed that the woman felt sad, so he handed her all his money and said: "Take these, sorry for the inconvenience". He could say that the woman was a single mother. The woman left and the policeman held the man for further questioning. The woman was very happy but when she counted the money, she was shocked to see that it was doubled. The next day while walking down the road to pay her son's school fees, she noticed that some skinny man was walking behind her. She thought that he would rob her, so she approached a policeman standing nearby. He was the same policeman, who she took along the inquire about the purse. The woman told him about the man following her, but suddenly they saw that man collapsing. They ran at him and saw that he was the same man whom they arrested the day back for stealing a purse.

He looked very weak and ill, and the woman was confused. The policeman said to the woman: "He did not return your money; he

gave you his own money that day. He was not the thief but hearing about your son's school fees, he felt sad and gave you his money". They helped the man stand up as he was saying: "Please go ahead and pay your son's school fees. I saw you and followed you to be sure that no one steals your son's school fees". The woman was speechless.

Moral of the story

Do not be judgmental. When you judge others, you do not define them; you define yourself.

A vase and a poor man

Once upon a time, there was an unfortunate poor man. His home was also very poor. He had a small and empty house, where mice made their nests and spiders made their webs. People tried to avoid coming into his house. “Why should they stick their noses into those poor ruins?” they said. And the poor man thought that poverty is the reason for his misfortunes, his eternal destiny. So once, the poor man met a wizard and complained to him about his poverty and miserable life.

The wizard felt sorry for the poor man and gave him an unprecedented vase and said: “This is a magical vase that will save you from poverty”. The poor man took the vase and wanted to sell it at first and then spend the money on alcohol and drugs, as usual, besides, why would he need such a magical thing? But then he started appreciating the vase and could not take it to the market. Instead, he brought the vase home, put it on the table, and started admiring it.

The poor man thought: “It is not right for such a beautiful thing to be empty”, so he picked some wildflowers and put them into the vase. It became even more beautiful. “Not good enough,” the poor man thought to himself again, looking at the vase standing next to a spider web. So, the poor man started cleaning his house of spider webs, sweeping out cockroaches and mice, cleaning the dust, washing the floor and the walls, and whitening the ceiling.

And it became clear that the house was not poor anymore, but

rather warm and cozy, and the poor were not poor anymore, but a hard-working host, who had no time for thoughts about misfortune.

Moral of the story

It is all in your mind. The way you feel is the way you represent your reality. Change your mind, and you will change your world.

Old man and rotten bananas

Once there was a poor old man who lived in a small town. One day a stranger appeared on his doorstep and requested a cup of water. After drinking the water, the stranger said that he was very pleased with the way he served a thirsty strange, so in return, he gave the old man a bunch of bananas. He said: “This is a rare breed and very tasty bananas”.

The old man was very fond of bananas. He took it in and placed it inside a cupboard. He was very happy and thought of eating one fruit out of the bunch. Suddenly he noticed a rotten banana in the bunch. He decided that he will eat that banana first and from tomorrow he will start eating the good ones. He ate the rotten banana and closed the cupboard.

The next day he opened the cupboard and noticed that another banana was rotten. He decided again to eat that one for the day so that he can start eating the good ones from the next day beyond. This went on and even when there were only two bananas left with one being rotten, he could not make up his mind to eat the good fruit. He finally finished the whole bunch by eating only the rotten bananas without ever tasting the good ones.

Moral of the story

Our life on earth is also like a bunch of bananas, with every single fruit being a day. Waiting for good days to come calling is like chasing the Moon.

Old man and a donkey

Once there was an old farmer and an old donkey. One day accidentally the donkey fell into a well. The farmer had evaluated the situation and thought to himself that neither the well nor the old donkey was worth the effort to save him. Hence, he decided to haul dirt to bury the old donkey in the well.

So, the farmer called his neighbors and together they started to shovel dirt into the well. The old donkey was terrified and hysterical in the beginning. But as soon as a hopeful idea came to his mind: “Every time the dirt hits my back, I can shake it off and step up”. He repeated these words to himself again and again: “Sake it off and step up”. This way he could struggle with the panic and encourage himself.

After some time, the donkey had stepped over the wall of the well. Although too tired, he was the winner, as he saved his own life.

Moral of the story

What was supposed to bury him, actually saved him. Never give up, keep trying .

Everyone has a story in life

A 24-year-old boy seeing out from the train's window shouted: "Dad, look the trees are going behind!". His father smiled and a young couple sitting nearby, looked at the 24-year-old's childish behavior with pity. Suddenly he again exclaimed: "Dad, look the clouds are running with us!".

The couple could not resist and said to the father: "Why do not you take your son to a good doctor?". The old man smiled and said: "I did and we are just coming from the hospital, my son was blind from birth, he just got out of surgery and can see now".

Moral of the story

Every single person on this planet has a story. Do not judge people before you truly know them.

A dish of ice cream

In the days when an ice cream sundae cost much less, a 10-year-old boy entered a hotel coffee shop and sat at a table. A waitress put a glass of water in front of him, to which the boy asked: "How much is an ice cream sundae?". The waitress replied that: "the ice cream costs 50 cents".

The little boy pulled his hand out of his pocket and studied several coins in it. "How much is a dish of plain ice cream?" he inquired. Some people were now waiting for a table and the waitress was a bit impatient. "35 cents", she said brusquely. The little boy again counted the coins and said: "I will have the plain ice cream".

The waitress brought the ice cream, put the bill on the table, and walked away. The boy finished the ice cream, paid the cashier, and departed. When the waitress came back, she began wiping down the table and then swallowed hard at what she saw. The boy had left 15 cents – her tip.

Moral of the story

Be the judge of your actions.



SHVETS production - 2023

Chicken recipe

Once there was an older man, who was broke, living in a tiny house, and owned a beat-up car. He was living off 99 dollars social security checks. At 65 years of age, he decided things had to change. So, he thought about what he had to offer. His friends raved about his chicken recipe. He decided that this was his best shot at making a change.

He left home and traveled to different states to try to sell his recipe. He told restaurant owners that he had a mouthwatering chicken recipe. He offered the recipe to them for free, just asking for a small percentage of the items sold. That sounds like a good deal, right? Unfortunately, not most restaurants do. He heard the word NO over 1000 times. Even after all of those rejections, he did not give up. He believed his chicken recipe was something special. He got even more rejected before he heard his first yes.

With that one success, this old man changed the way all people around the world eat chicken, and you know the person behind this recipe.

Moral of the story

Remember, never give up, and always believe in yourself despite rejection.

Make wise decisions

One night four college kids stayed out late, partying and having a good time. They paid no mind to the test they had scheduled for the next day and did not study. In the morning, they hatched a plan to get out of taking their test. They covered themselves with grease and dirt and went to the Dean's office. Once there, they said they had been to a wedding the previous night and on the way back they got a flat tire and had to push the car back to campus.

The Dean listened to their tale of woe and thought. He offered them a retest three days later. They thanked him and accepted his offer.

Three days later, when the test day arrived, they went to the Dean. The Dean put them all in separate rooms for the test. They were fine with this since they had all studied hard. Then they saw the test. It had 2 questions only:

- 1 – Your name _____ (1 point)
- 2 – Which tire burst? _____ (99 points)
 - a) Front left
 - b) Front right
 - c) Back left
 - d) Back right

Moral of the story

Always be responsible and make wise decisions.

The right place

A mother and a baby camel were lying around under a tree, till the baby camel asked his mother: “Why do camels have humps?”. The mother camel considered this and said: “We are desert animals so we have the humps to store water so we can survive with very little water”.

The baby camel thought for a moment, then said: “Ok...Why are our legs so long and our feet rounded?”. The mother replied: “They are meant for walking in the desert”.

The baby paused. After a beat, the baby camel asked one more question: “Why are our eyelashes so long? Sometimes they get in my way”. The mama camel responded: “Those long thick eyelashes protect your eyes from the desert sand when it blows in the wind”.

The baby thought and thought. Then, he looked at his mother and said: “I see. So, the hump is to store the water when we are in the desert. The legs are for walking through the desert and these eyelashes protect my eyes from the desert sand. Then why are we in a zoo?”

Moral of the story

Skills and abilities are only useful if you are in the right place to use them. Otherwise, they go to waste.

One good deed

A man was taking a morning walk at the beach. He saw that along with the morning tide came hundreds of starfish and when the tide receded, they were left behind and with the morning sun rays, they would die. The tide was fresh and the starfish were alive. The man took a few steps, picked one, and threw it into the water. He did that repeatedly, picking the most starfishes possible.

Right behind him, there was another person who could not understand what this man was doing. He caught up with him and asked: “Why are you throwing the starfishes back into the ocean? There are hundreds of starfish. What differences does it make?”

This man did not reply, took two more steps, picked up another starfish, threw it into the water, and said: “It makes a difference to this one”.

Moral of the story

It is the little things that make a big difference.

Be grateful

A person visits a fruit seller every day and buys oranges, after weighing he would pick one out and taste one slice before complaining that it was sour. Before the lady could replace them, he would go away, thus the old merchant lady would smile every time he came back the next days.

The other shopkeeper was seeing this every day and then he asked: “Why does he do this every day and still come to your shop?”. The old lady replied: “He buys one orange from me and that is the reason I smile and always give him a little extra”.

Moral of the story

Be grateful for what you have today and more good things will come.

Stop wasting time complaining

People visit a wise man complaining about the same problems over and over again. One day, he decided to tell them a joke and they all roared with laughter. After a few minutes, he told the same joke, but this time only a few of them smiled. After an hour, he told the same joke for a third time, but no one laughed or smiled anymore.

The wise man smiled and said: “You cannot laugh at the same joke over and over. So why are you always complaining about the same problem, over and over again?”

Moral of the story

Do not waste time focusing on problems. Focus on the solutions.

When you want to succeed as badly as you want to breathe

There was a young man who wanted to make a lot of money. Therefore, he went to this guru and told him: “I want to be on the same level as you are”.

So, the guru looked at him: “So if you want to be on the same level as I am, met me tomorrow at 4 AM at the beach”.

So, the young man got there at 4 AM, all suited and ready to work. The guru grabs his handstand and said: “How badly do you want to be successful?”.

The young man replied: “Real bad”, to which the guru exclaimed: “walk on out to the water”. The young man walks into the water till it goes waist deep, thinking that the guru was crazy.

The guru said: “Go on and walk a little further”, so the young man goes in the water till the water hits his shoulders, thinking once more that the guru is making money but he is as crazy.

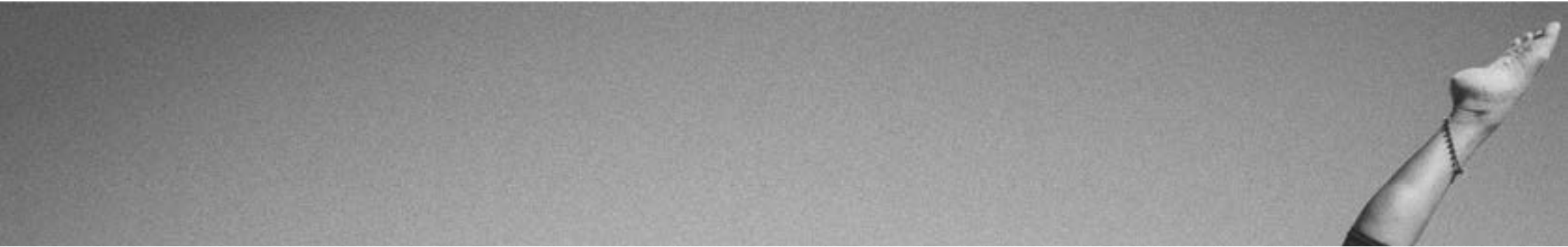
The guru said for the third time to go a little further, and the man walked into the ocean till the water hit his mouth. As the young man turned around to go back to the beach, the guru said: “I thought you want to be successful!”, to which the young man said: “I do”.

The guru picked up his body and dropped his head into the

water and held him down, while the man was stretching to get out of the water. Just before the young man was about to pass out, the guru raised him. The guru said: “I got a question for you. When you were underwater, what did you want to do?”

Moral of the story

When you want to succeed as badly as you want to breathe, then you will be successful.



Chevanon Photography - 2017

Think outside the box

In a small European town, hundreds of years ago, a small business owner owed a large sum of gold to a loan shark. The loan shark was a very old, unattractive-looking guy that just so happened to fancy the business owner's daughter. He decided to offer the businessman a deal that would completely wipe out the debt he owed him. However, the catch was that he would only wipe out the debt if he could marry the businessman's daughter. Needless to say, this proposal was met with a look of disgust. The loan shark said that he would place two pebbles into a bag, one white and one black. The daughter would then have to reach into the bag and pick out a pebble. If it was black, the debt would be wiped, but the loan shark would then marry her. If it was white, however, the debt would also be wiped, but the daughter would not have to marry the unattractive old loan shark.

Standing on a pebble-strewn path in the businessman's garden, the loan shark bent over and picked up two pebbles. Whilst he was picking them up, the daughter noticed that he had picked up two black pebbles and placed them both into the bag. Then asked the daughter to reach into the bag and pick one. The daughter naturally had three choices as to what she could have done:

1. Refuse to pick a pebble from the bag
2. Take both pebbles out of the bag and expose the loan shark for cheating
3. Pick a pebble from the bag fully well knowing it was black and sacrifice herself for her father's freedom.

She drew out a pebble from the bag, and before looking at it she "accidentally" dropped it into the midst of the other pebbles. She said to the loan shark: "Oh, how clumsy of me. Never mind, if you look into the bag for the one that is left, you will be able to tell which pebble I picked".

Moral of the story

There are more options for the same problem. Do not limit yourself to what is in front of you.

Happiness is an inside job

Once there was an old man who lived in a small village. The whole village was tired of him; he was always gloomy, constantly complained, and was always in a bad mood. The longer he lived, the viler he became, and more poisonous were his words. People did their best to avoid him because his misfortune was contagious. He created a feeling of unhappiness in others. But one day, when he turned eighty, an incredible thing happened. Instantly everyone started hearing the rumor: “The old man is happy today and he does not complain about anything. He smiles and his face is freshened up!”. The whole village gathered around the man and asked him: “What happened to you?”

The old man replied: “Nothing special. Eighty years I have been chasing happiness and it was useless. So, I decided to live without happiness and just enjoy life. That is why I am happy now”.

Moral of the story

Negative, just like positive, emotions spread like diseases. Do not be a negative person. Spread happiness and good fortune.

Listen carefully

A flood was threatening a small town, and everyone was leaving for safety except one man who said: “God will save me. I have faith”. As the water level rose, a jeep came to rescue him, the man refused to say: “God will save. I have faith”.

As the water level rose further, he went up to the second store, and a boat came to help him. Again, he refused to go, belying: “God will safe me. I have faith”. The water kept rising and the man climbed onto the roof. A helicopter came to rescue him, but as always, he replied: “God will save me. I have faith”. Well, finally he drowned.

When he reached his God he angrily asked: “I had complete faith in you. Why did you ignore my prayers and let me drown?” His Maker replied: “Who do you think sent you the jeep, the boat, and the helicopter?”.

Moral of the story

The only way to overcome the fatalistic attitude is to accept responsibility and believe in the law of cause and effect rather than luck.

Do not assume you are going to fail

During a research experiment, a biologist placed a shark in a large holding tank and then released several small bait fish into the tank. As you would expect, the shark quickly swam around the tank, attacked the smaller fish, and ate them.

The marine biologist then inserted a strong piece of clear fiberglass into the tank, creating two separate partitions. She then put the shark on one side of the fiberglass and a new set of bait fish on the other. Again, the shark quickly attacked. This time, however, the shark slammed into the fiberglass divider and bounced off. Meanwhile, the bait fish swam around unharmed in the second partition. Eventually, about an hour into the experiment, the shark gave up.

This experiment was repeated several dozen times over the next few weeks. Each time, the shark got less aggressive and made fewer attempts to attack the bait fish, until eventually, the shark got tired of hitting the fiberglass divider and simply stopped attacking altogether.

The biologist then removed the fiberglass divider, but the shark did not attack the bait fish. The shark was trained to believe a barrier existed between it and the bait fish, so the bait fish swam wherever they wished, free from harm.

Moral of the story

Do not give up just because something did not work out.

Your good deeds could change the world

Every Sunday morning a young girl took a light jog around the park near her home. There was a lake located in one corner of the park. Each time she jogged by this lake; she saw the same elderly woman sitting at the water's edge with a small metal cage sitting beside her. This past Sunday, her curiosity got the best of her, so she stopped jogging and walked over to her. As she got closer, she realized that the metal cage was a small trap. There were three turtles, unharmed, slowly walking around the base of the trap. She had a fourth turtle in her lap that she was carefully scrubbing with a spongy brush.

"Hello," the young girl said. "I see you every Sunday morning. If you do not mind my nosiness, I would love to know what you are doing with these turtles". The old lady smiled: "I am cleaning off their shells". "Anything on a turtle's shell, like algae or scum, reduces the turtle's ability to absorb heat and impedes its ability to swim. It can also corrode and weaken the shell over time," the elderly woman said. She went on: "I spend a couple of hours each Sunday morning, relaxing by this lake and helping these little guys out. It is my strange way of making a difference". The young girl then asked: "But do not most freshwater turtles live their whole lives with algae and scum hanging from their shells?", to which the old woman replied: "Yes, sadly, they do". The young girl scratched her head and said: "Well then, do not you think your time could be better spent? I mean, I think your efforts are kind and all, but freshwater turtles are living in lakes all around the world. And 99% of these turtles do not have kind people like you to help them clean

off their shells. So, no offense... but how exactly are your localized efforts here truly making a difference?”

The elderly woman giggled aloud. She then looked down at the turtle in her lap, scrubbed off the last piece of algae from its shell, and said: “Sweetie, if this little guy could talk, he would tell you I just made all the difference in the world”.

██████████
Moral of the story

Think that every person counts. A small deed each day can change the world if you look with your heart and not your eyes.

Do not get too greedy

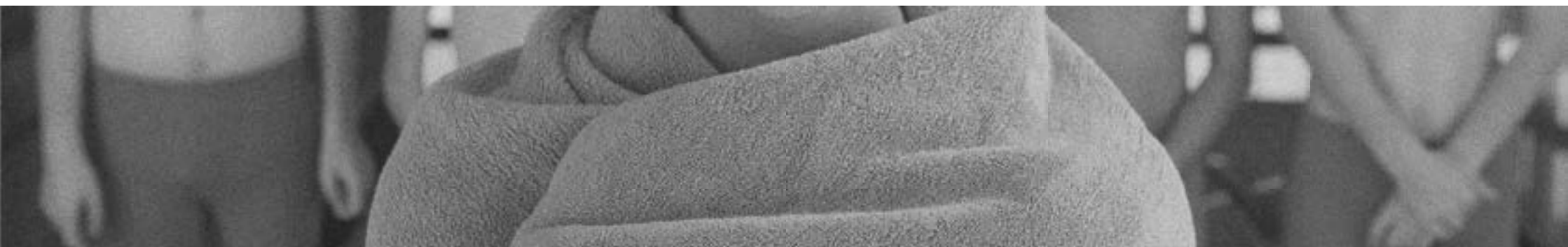
Once there was a lion who was feeling very hungry. He crawled out of his den and searched here and there, but he could only find a small hare. He caught the hare, but with some hesitation as he knew the hare would not fill him up.

As the lion was about to kill the hare, he spotted a deer coming his way and thought: “Instead of eating this small hare, let me eat that big deer”.

So, he let the hare go and went after the deer, but it vanished in the forest. The lion had nothing to eat as the hare was also long gone”.

██████████
Moral of the story

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.



Jeremy Angerson - 2019

Focus on the good things in life

Two friends were walking through the desert one time. At one stage in their journey, they argued and one friend slapped the other one in the face. The one who got slapped was hurt, but without saying anything he wrote in the sand: “Today my best friend slapped me in the face”.

They kept on walking until they found an oasis, where they decided to wash. The one who had been slapped got stuck in a mire and started drowning, but his friend saved him. After he had recovered from his shock, he wrote on a stone: “Today my best friend saved my life”.

The friend who slapped and saved his best friend asked him: “After I hurt you, you wrote in the sand and now, you write in stone, why?” The other friend replied: “When someone hurts us, we should write it down in sand where winds of forgiveness can erase it away. But when someone does something good for us, we must engrave it in stone where no wind can ever erase it”.

Moral of the story

Forgive and move on. Focus on what matters.

The fox and the grapes

One afternoon, a fox was walking through the forest and spotted a bunch of grapes hanging from a lofty branch. He thought: “Just the thing to quench my thirst”.

Taking a couple of steps back, the fox jumped and just missed the hanging grapes. The fox tried again and again but still failed to reach them.

Finally, giving up, the fox turned his nose up and said: “They are probably sour anyway”, and walked away.

Moral of the story

It is easy to despise what you cannot have.

Two friends and the bear

One day while on holiday, exploring the forest, two friends saw a bear coming towards them. Naturally, they were both frightened, so one, who knew how to climb trees, climbed one quickly. He did not spare a thought for his friend who had no idea how to climb.

The friend who could not climb a tree thought for a moment. He had heard that animals do not attack dead bodies, so he fell to the ground and held his breath. The bear sniffed him, thought he was dead, and went on its way.

After climbing down from the tree, the other friend asked: “What did the bear whisper in your ears?”. The boy laying on the ground replied: “The bear asked me to keep away from friends like you”.

Moral of the story

A friend in need is a friend indeed.

Sharing

Once two friends were traveling in a foreign country when they met a refugee. The refugee said had not eaten anything in over 3 days and looked extremely skinny and unhealthy. Then one of the friends offered him the rest of the sandwich he was eating.

Moral of the story

Help others to rise the higher levels.

The season of life

There was a man who had four sons. He wanted his kids to learn to not judge things too quickly.

So, he sent them each on a quest, in turn, to go and look at a pear tree that was a great distance away.

The first son went in the winter, the second in the spring, the third in the summer, and the youngest son in the fall.

When they had all gone and come back, he called them together to describe what they had seen.

The first son said that the tree was ugly, bent, and twisted. The second son said: “No, it was covered with green buds and full of promise”.

The third son disagreed, he said it was laden with blossoms that smelled so sweet and looked so beautiful, it was the most graceful thing he had ever seen.

The last son disagreed with all of them; he said it was ripe and drooping with fruit, full of life and fulfillment.

The father then explained to his sons that they were all right because they had each seen but one season in the tree’s life.

He told them that you cannot judge a tree or a person, by only

one season, and that the essence of who they are – and the pleasure, joy, and love that come from that life – can only be measured at the end when all the seasons are up.

Moral of the story

If you give up when it is winter, you will miss the promise of your spring, the beauty of your summer, and the fulfillment of your fall. Do not judge a life by one difficult season. Do not let the pain of one season destroy the joy of all the rest..

The power of uniqueness

Once there was an employee who was curious about the bosses' success. One day he came up to his boss – a very successful businessman in his 70s – and asked him what are where his top three tips for success.

The boss smiled and said: “Read something no one else is reading, think something no one else is thinking, and do something no one else is doing”.

Moral of the story

Do not go with the tide. Choose your destiny. Search for your uniqueness.

Building your house

An elderly carpenter was ready to retire. He told his employer-contractor of his plans to leave the house-building business to live a more leisurely life with his wife and enjoy his extended family. He would miss the paycheck each week, but he wanted to retire. They could get by. The contractor was sorry to see his good worker go and asked if he could build just one more house as a personal favor. The carpenter agreed, but over time it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end a dedicated career.

When the carpenter finished his work, his employer came to inspect the house. Then he handed the front-door key to the carpenter and said: “This is your house. This is my gift to you”.

The carpenter was shocked. What a shame! If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently. So, it is with us. We build our lives, a day at a time, often putting less than our best into the building. Then, with a shock, we realize we have to live in the house we have built. If we could do it over, we would do it much differently.

Moral of the story

You are the carpenter of your life, and every day you hammer a nail, place a board, or erect a wall. Someone once said: “Life is a do-it-yourself project”. Your attitude, and the choices you make today, help build the “house” you will live in tomorrow. Therefore, build wisely.



Elaine Bernardine Castro - 2019

Finding happiness

Once a group of 50 people was attending a seminar. Suddenly the speaker stopped and decided to do a group activity. He started giving each attendee one balloon. Each one was asked to write his/her name on it using a marker pen. All the balloons were collected and put in another room. Now, these delegates were let into that room and asked to find the balloon which had their name written within 5 minutes. Everyone was frantically searching for their name, colliding with each other, pushing around others and there was utter chaos.

At the end of 5 minutes, no one could find their balloon. Now each one was asked to randomly collect a balloon and give it to the person whose name was written on it. Within less than 5 minutes, everyone had their balloon.

The speaker then said: “This is happening in our lives. Everyone is frantically looking for happiness all around, not knowing where it is. But if you help others find their joy of living, they will help you find yours”.

Moral of the story

Our happiness lies in the happiness of helping other people. Give them their happiness and you will get your happiness. And this is the purpose of human life.

The black spot

One day a professor entered the classroom and asked his students to prepare for a surprise test. They waited anxiously at their desk for the test to begin. The professor handed out the question paper, with the text facing down as usual. Once he handed them all out, he asked his students to turn the page and begin. To everyone’s surprise, there were no questions... just a black dot in the center of the page. The professor seeing the expression on everyone’s face told them the following: “I want you to write what you see there”.

The students confused, got started on the inexplicable task. At the end of the class, the professor took all the answer papers and started reading each one of them aloud in front of all students. All of them with no exceptions, described the black dot, trying to explain its position in the middle of the sheet. After all, the sheets had been read, the classroom was silent, and the professor began to explain: “I am not going to grade on you this, I just wanted to give you something to think about. No one wrote about the white part of the paper”.

“Everyone focused on the black dot, and the same happens in our lives. We have a white paper to observe and enjoy, but we always focus on the dark spots.

Our life is a gift given to us, with love and care, and we always have reasons to celebrate – nature renewing itself every day, our friends around us, the job that provides our livelihood, the miracles we see every day, and so on. However, we insist on focusing

only on the dark spots - the health issues that bother us, the lack of money, the complicated relationship with our family members, the disappointment with a friend”

Moral of the story

Dark spots are very small compared to everything we have in our lives, but they are the ones that pollute our minds. Take your eyes away from the black spots in your life. Enjoy each one of your blessings, each moment that life gives you.

A hungry beggar and a rich man

One day a hungry beggar went to a house of a rich man. He asked for something to eat. The rich man invited the beggar in and gave him some soup, and the beggar drank the soup very quickly. When he finished the rich man asked: “Do you want more to eat?”. The beggar answered: “No thanks. That was enough. I am full, thank you, sir”.

But the rich man gave the beggar a large plate of meat. The beggar finished that very quickly also. “Do you want more to eat?” asked the rich man again. The beggar replied again: “No thanks. That was enough. I am full, thank you, sir”.

But the rich man did not stop. He gave the beggar some delicious chocolate cake. The beggar quickly finished the cake. “Why do you lie to me?” the rich man asked, “Every time I ask you if you want more to eat, you say no; but every time I give you more food, you eat it quickly”.

The beggar looked around. Outside the kitchen, there was a box. He filled the box with stones and asked the rich man: “Is this box full?”. The rich man replied that the box was full of stones. Then the beggar put some sand in the box that was full of stones and said: “Is this box full? To which the rich man answered: “Of course it is full”.

Then the beggar got a pail of water. He poured the water into the box that was full of stones and sand and said to the rich man:

“You see. Every time I ask you if the box is full, you say yes; but every time you say yes, I fill the box again. It is the same thing with the food you gave me. There is always room for more”.

Moral of the story

Accept everything good that comes to you. There is always space for positivity in our hearts.

The crow and the peacock

One day, a crow was living happily until he saw a peacock dancing in the forest. The crow felt very jealous. He wanted to be as beautiful and happy as the peacock. His contentment and beauty could not compare to that of the peacock. So, he had an idea.

“Every day, I will watch this peacock dance and whenever any of his feathers fall, I will pick them up and keep them. When I have enough, I will stick them on my tail, and I will become as beautiful as a peacock” the crow said.

The now grumpy crow followed the peacock wherever he went, picking up every feather he dropped. One day he thought he had finally collected enough feathers so he stuck them inside his feathers and started dancing with joy. Now he could finally be as happy and beautiful as the peacock. The next day, the crow went in search of the peacock again.

He quietly crept close and found him, with a group of other peacocks, dancing. He felt even more jealous. So, with his new feathers, he joined them in the dance. The peacocks soon realized that he was not one of them. Suddenly, all of them stopped dancing and said: “Why do you want to act like a peacock?”, to which the crow replied: “You are so beautiful and happy. I also want to be like you”. The peacocks said: “All of us have special abilities. You may not look or act like us, but you have gifts, like an intelligent brain which we do not have. So be satisfied, a crow”.

The grumpy crow went home and joined his friends. The older

and the wisest crow said to him: “Son, I hear you have learned an important lesson. You may not look like a peacock, but you are special in your way”.

Moral of the story

Be yourself and be happy with who you are. That is the only way to be truly happy.

A blind man in a small town

Once upon a time, there was a small town. There lived a man by himself who could not see. He was blind. Yet, he carried a lighted lamp with him whenever he went out at night.

One night as he was coming home after having dinner in a restaurant, he came across a group of young travelers. They saw that he was blind yet carrying a lighted lamp. They started passing comments on him and made fun of him. One of them asked him: “Hey man! You are blind and cannot see anything! Why do you carry the lamp then?”.

The blind man replied: “Yes, unfortunately, I am blind and I cannot see anything but a lighted lamp which I am carrying is for the people like you who can see. You may not see the blind man coming and end up pushing me. That is why I carry a lighted lamp”.

The group of travelers felt ashamed and apologized for their behavior.

Moral of the story

We should think before judging others. Always be polite and learn to see things from others' points of view.



Patrick Case - 2020

The trouble trees

Once a man hired a carpenter to restore an old farmhouse. He had just finished a rough first day on the job. A flat tire made him lose an hour of work, his electric saw quit, and now his ancient pickup truck refused to start. While the man drove the carpenter home, he sat in stony silence. On arriving, he invited me in to meet the family.

As both men walked towards the front door, the carpenter paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands. After opening the door, he underwent an amazing transformation. His face was wreathed in smiles, and he hugged his two small kids and kissed his wife.

Afterward, both men walked back to the employer's car. As both men passed the tree, the employer's curiosity got the best of him and asked: "Why did you touch the branches of this tree?". "Oh, that is my trouble tree" the carpenter replied and continued: "I know I cannot help having troubles on the job, but one thing for sure, troubles do not belong in the house with my wife and children. So, I just hang them up on the tree every night when I come home and pick them up in the early morning". He smiled and continued: "Funny thing is, when I come out in the morning to pick them up, there are not nearly half as many as I remember hanging up the night before".

Moral of the story

Do you deal with your problems the same way as the carpenter?

The mother's love for a boy

One day a boy came home and gave his mother a sheet of paper. He told her: "My teacher gave me this paper and told me to only give it to my mother". His mother's eyes were tearful as she read the letter out loud to her child: "Your son is a genius. This school is too small for him and does not have enough good teachers for training him please teach him yourself".

Many years after the boy's mother had died, the boy who was now a famous inventor had become one of the greatest inventors of his time. One day he was going through the old closet and found a folded letter that was given to him by his teacher for his mother.

He opened it and the message written on the letter was: "Your son is mentally ill. We cannot let him attend our school anymore. He is expelled". The inventor became emotional reading it and then he wrote in his diary: "I was a mentally ill child whose mother turned me into the genius of the century!".

Moral of the story

A mother's love and upbringing can help change the destiny of a child.

An old man and a son in prison

An old man lived alone in a small town. He wanted to spade his potato garden, but it was very hard work. His only son, who would have helped him, was in prison and he could not afford an attorney to get him out. The old man wrote a letter to his son and mentioned his situation: “Dear son, I am feeling pretty bad because it looks like I will not be able to plant my potato garden this year. I had to miss doing the garden because your mother always loved planting time. I am just getting too old to be digging up a garden plot. If you were here, all my trouble would be over. I know you would dig the plot for me if you were not in prison. Love, dad”.

Shortly, the old man received this telegram: “For Heaven’s sake, Dad, do not dig up the garden! That is where I buried the guns”. At 4 AM the next morning, a dozen of police agents showed up and dug up the entire garden without finding any guns. Confused, the old man wrote another note to his son telling him what had happened and asked him what to do next.

His son’s reply was: “Go ahead and plant your potatoes, Dad. It is the best I could do for you, from here”.

Moral of the story

No matter where you are in the world, if you have decided to do something deep from your heart, you can do it.

A poor man and a beautiful wife

A very poor man had a beautiful wife. His wife had luscious and beautiful long hair that she loved and adored. One day, her hair clips broke and she wanted a new one to take care of her hair. The wife said: “Honey can you please bring me a new hair clip?”. The poor man with a heavy heart said: “I am sorry, honey, I cannot even afford to get my broken watch fixed”. As he was walking to work, he saw a watch shop. He suddenly thought of something: “Why do not I just sell my broken watch for a little money to get my wife her hair clips?”. So, he sold the broken watch for a small fee and bought his wife new hair clips. As he got home, he was shocked to see his wife with shorter hair. With a smile on her hair, she said: “Honey I sold my long hair to the salon and bought you a new watch”.

With tears rolling down her husband’s eyes, he gave her the hair clips he got for her.

Moral of the story

We all must make sacrifices for the ones we love. Material things and beauty will not last forever, true love will.

Work hard for tomorrow

Once, a philosopher was passing by a village when he saw an old man with his young son pulling water from the well. The philosopher was confused to see this as at that time people harness horses or oxen to pull water from the well. With concern, he went to the old man and said: “Why are you unnecessarily tiring yourself and the young man, that now we have harnessed horses?”. The old man hushed him and said: “Please speak softly. I do not want my son to hear this. I can answer you but please come back when my son goes for lunch”.

The philosopher was perplexed. Still, he kept quiet and waited until the old man came to him alone at lunchtime. The philosopher questioned: “Why would you not let your son hear what I said?”. The old man replied: “I am 85 years old and yet I have the strength to work side by side 30 years old young. If today I engage horses to pull the water, then my son will not be able to have the same strength at 84, that I have now. That is why I requested you not to speak about it in front of my son. It is a question of health”. The philosopher was attentive to the old man.

“We heard that in near towns people use horses to pull water from the well. There are machines also that can do this job. But if I use horses or machines now then what will he do? What effect will it have on my son’s health? If we save ourselves from doing all the hard work now, then how will he be able to maintain his health?”

Moral of the story

What we do today will affect us tomorrow.

A girl and two apples

A little girl was sitting on a chair holding two apples in her hands. Her mother came to her and softly asked: “Honey can you share one apple with me?”. The girl looked at her mom for a second and suddenly took a bite of one apple then she quickly took a bite of the second apple. Seeing this made the mother feel sad, but she did not want to reveal her disappointment.

After a few moments of silence, the little girl handed one of the apples to her mother and said: “Mom, take this one. This is the sweeter one”. Suddenly, the mother realized .

Moral of the story

Likewise, in life, we should always avoid judging others by our level of perception and understanding. There is usually more to the story than we first see, and we should always remain open-minded..

Three dolls

A sage presented a prince with a set of three small dolls. The prince was not amused. He asked: “Do I look like a girl to you?”. The sage said: “This is a gift for a future king.

If you look carefully, you will see a hole in the ear of each doll”. The sage handed him a piece of string and said: “Pass it through each doll”.

Intrigued, the prince picked up the first doll and put the string into the ear. It came out from the other ear. “This is one type of person,” said the sage, “Whatever you tell him, comes out from the other ear. He does not retain anything”. The prince continued and put the string into the second doll.

The string came out from the mouth. “This is the second type of person”, said the sage, “Whatever you tell him, he tells everybody else”. The prince picked up the third doll and repeated the process. The string this time did not come out. “This is the third type of person”, the sage said, “Whatever you tell him is locked up within him. It never comes out”.

The prince surprised asked: “What is the best type of person?”. The sage handed him a fourth doll, in answer.

When the prince put the string into the doll, it came out from the other ear. “Do it again” said the sage. The prince repeated the process. This time the string came out from the mouth. When he

put the string in a third time, it did not come out at all.

The sage said: “This is the best type of person. To be trustworthy, a man must know when not to listen, when to remain silent, and when to speak out”.

Moral of the story

Know when to speak, when to be silent, and when not to listen. A simple task, but difficult to accomplish. Be conscious about the people around you.



Feruzbek Matkarimov - 2019

A story about faith

A beautiful 6-year-old girl was with her mother waiting for a store to open. Her beautiful red hair and freckles were the perfect images of innocence. Outside the store, it was raining very heavily. People gathered, some patiently, others irritated because of the inconvenience.

The girl's little voice broke the silence as she said: "Mom, let us run through the rain". The mother questioned: "What?", as the girl replied again to run through the rain. "No honey, we will wait until it slows down a bit", said her mother. The young girl waited about another minute and repeated the same words, to run through the rain. "We will get soaked if we do". The girl explained: "No, we will not, mom. That is what you said this morning". The mother astonished asked: "This morning? When did I say we could run through the rain and not get wet?", as the girl replied: "Do not you remember? When you were talking to Daddy, about his cancer, you said, if our faith can get us through this, we can get through anything.

Everyone stopped and stood silently. The mother paused and thought for a moment about what to say. This was a moment of affirmation in a young child's life. "Honey, you are right. Let us run through the rain".

Moral of the story

A time when innocent trust can be nurtured so that I will bloom into faith.

A lesson on time

A rich man was retiring when an angel of death came to him. He had worked long and hard to acquire massive wealth and retire in luxury and could not believe that his time was up. Being a very wealthy person, he decided to buy some more time from the angel of death at any cost. He bargained for a long time but the angel was unmoved.

Desperate, the rich man made the last proposal to the angel: "Give me just one hour of my life so that I could admire the beauty of this earth for the last time and spend some time with my family and friends whom I have not seen for a long time, and I will give you all my wealth". But the angel refused again.

Finally, the rich man asked if the angel could give him at least one minute so that he could write a goodbye letter. His wish was granted, and he wrote:

"Spend your time, which was given to you, in the right way. I could not buy even an hour of life with all of my health. Listen to your heart and check if the things surrounding you have true value".

Moral of the story

Cherish every minute of your life.

Four burning candles

In a room, four candles were burning. The ambiance was so soft you could hear them talking.

The first one said: “I am Peace, however, nobody can keep me lit. I believe I will go out”. Its flame rapidly diminished and got out completely.

The second one said: “I am Faith. Most of all I am no longer indispensable, so it does not make any sense that I stay lit any longer”. When it finished talking a breeze softly blew on it putting it out.

Sadly, the third candle spoke in its turn: “I am Love, I have not gotten the strength to stay lit. people put me aside and do not understand my importance. They even forget to love those who are nearest to them”. And waiting no longer it goes out.

Suddenly, a child entered the room and saw three candles not burning and asked: “Why are you not burning you are supposed to stay lit till the end”. Saying this the child began to cry. Then, the fourth candle spoke: “Do not be afraid child, while I am still burning, we can re-light the other candles because I am Hope”.

With shining eyes, the child took the candle of Hope and lit the other candles.

Moral of the story

The flame of Hope should never go out from our life and each of us can maintain Hope, Faith, Peace, and Love. Hope never abandons you. You abandon hope. Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential.

The check that saved his business

There was a business executive who was deep in debt and could see no way out. Creditors were closing in on him and suppliers were demanding payment. He sat on the park bench, head in his hands, wondering if anything could save his company from bankruptcy. Suddenly, an old man appeared before him and said: “I can see that something is troubling you”. After listening to the executive’s woes, the old man said: “I believe I can help you”. He asked the man his name, wrote out a check, and pushed it into his hands saying: “Take this money. Meet me here exactly one year from today, and you can pay me back at that time”. Then he turned and disappeared as quickly as he had come.

The business executive saw in his hand a check for 500000 dollars signed by one of the richest men in the world at that time. “I can erase my money worries in an instant!” he realized. But instead, the executive decided to put the uncashed check in his safe. Just knowing it was there might give him the strength to work out a way to save his business, he thought.

With renewed optimism, he negotiated better deals and extended terms of payment. He closed several big sales. Within a few months, he was out of debt and making money once again. Exactly one year later, he returned to the park with the uncashed check. At the agreed-upon time, the rich man appeared. But just as the executive was about to hand back the check and share his success story, a nurse came running up and grabbed the rich man. The nurse cried and said: “I am so glad I caught him! I hope he has not been

bothering you. He is always escaping from the rest home and telling people he is one of the richest men alive”, and she led the old man away by the arm. The astonished executive just stood there, stunned. All year long he had been wheeling and dealing, buying and selling, convinced he had half a million dollars behind him. Suddenly, he realized that it was not the money, real or imagined, that had turned his life around.

Moral of the story

It was his newfound self-confidence that gave him the power to achieve anything he went after.

A lesson on attitude

The park bench was deserted as a young girl sat down. She felt disappointed with life. The world was intent on dragging her down and she had every right to frown. The day was not going the way she planned, and if that was not enough to ruin her day, a young boy out of breath approached her, all tired from playing. He stood beside her, with great excitement, and said: “look what I found!”

In his hands was a flower, and what a pitiful sight. Its petals were wilting from not enough rain, or too little light. She wanted him to take his dead flower and go away. She faked a small smile and then turned her head.

But, instead of leaving the boy sat next to her side. He placed the flower to his nose and declared with surprise: “It sure smells pretty and it is beautiful, too. That is why I picked it; here, it is for you”. The girl replied: “Beautiful? This weed before me is dying. It was not vibrant with color or life” she thought. She did not want to accept it, but she thought if she did, he might leave. So, she reached for the flower and replied annoyed: “Oh, just what I needed”.

But, instead of him placing the flower in her hand, he held it in the air. It was then that she noticed for the very first time that this overly positive boy was blind. Shocked, with tears in her eyes like rain, she graciously thanked him for picking the very best one. “You are very welcome” the boy replied, and then ran off to play.

The boy was completely unaware of the impact he had just

made on the girl’s day. She sat there and wondered how he managed to see a self-pitying woman sulking on a bench. Perhaps from his heart, he had been bleeding with true sight. It was then, finally, through the eyes of a blind child, that she could see the problem as not with the world; the problem was in her.

Moral of the story

Cherish the little things and stop pitying. The world is what it is. You have to adapt and resolve the problems within your world



Andrea Piacquadio - 2020

Feeding each other

A woman who had worked all her life to bring about good was granted one wish: “Before I die let me visit both hell and heaven”. Her last wish was granted. She was whisked off to a great banqueting hall.

The tables were piled high with delicious food and drink. Around the table sat miserable starving people as wretched as could be. “Why are they like this?” the woman asked the angel who accompanied her. The angel replied: “Look at their arms”. She looked and saw that attached to the people’s arms were long chopsticks secured above the elbow. Unable to bend their elbows, the people aimed the chopsticks at the food, missed every time, and sat hungry, frustrated, and miserable. The woman exclaimed: “Indeed this is hell! Take me away from here!”. She was then whisked off to heaven.

Again, she found herself in a great banqueting hall with tables piled high with delicious food. Around the tables sat people laughing, contented, and joyful. “No chopsticks I suppose,” she said. The angel replied: “Oh yes there are. Look closer, just as in hell they are long and attached above the elbow but look, here people have learned to feed one another”.

Moral of the story

Life is much happier when you help others. Learn to share and you will achieve great success.

Be grateful

A rich man’s son was graduating college. For months, the son was asking his dad for a new car, knowing that he had more than enough money to buy it. However, the father decided that it was not the right time to give him a new car. When graduation day came, the young man’s father called in to speak to him. The father handed him a wrapped gift and congratulated the new man about to graduate on his achievement. However, the boy angrily raised his voice, threw down the gift, and stormed out.

Several years passed by. The young man had not seen his father since graduation day. He became successful and was wealthy like his father, with a beautiful home and family. He came to realize his father was aging, and it may be time to put the past behind them.

Just then, he received the message that his father had passed, and he had to return home to take care of the estate. He opened it, and as he flipped through the pages, a wrapped gift dropped from the box. In the gift was a car key. A dealer tag was attached to the key that read: “Paid in full. Wherever this car takes you, write about it to remember how you got this car. Love, dad”.

Moral of the story

No matter what you expect, be grateful for what you are given. It may be more of a blessing than you think.

Lesson from the hedgehogs

It was the coldest winter ever. Many animals died because of the cold. The hedgehogs, realizing the situation, decided to group to keep warm. This way they covered and protected themselves; but the quills of each one wounded their closest companions. After a while, they decided to distance themselves one from another and they began to freeze from death. So, they had to make a choice: either accept the quills of their companions or froze to death and disappear forever.

Wisely, they decided to go back to being together. They learned to live with the little wounds caused by the close relationships with their companions to receive the heat that came from the others. This way they were able to survive.

Moral of the story

The best relationship is not the one that brings together perfect people, but when each individual learns to live with the imperfections of others and can admire the other person's good qualities.

Depression and the old lady

A beautiful woman in an expensive red dress came to her psychiatrist saying that she was depressed and her life was meaningless. The psychiatrist called over the old lady who cleaned the office floors and then said to the rich lady: "I am going to ask this woman here to tell you how she found happiness. All I want you is to listen".

So, the old lady put down her broom, sat on a chair, and told her story: "My husband died of cancer. Three months later, my only son was killed in a car accident. I had nobody. I had nothing. I could not sleep. I could not eat, I never smiled at anyone. I even thought of taking my own life. Then, one evening, a little kitten followed me home from work.

Somehow, I felt sorry for that kitten. It was cold outside, so I decided to let the kitten in. I got some milk, and the kitten licked the plate clean. Then it rubbed against my leg and, for the first time in months, I smiled.

Then I stopped to think; if helping a little kitten could make me smile, maybe doing something for people could make me happy".

The old lady continued: "So, the next day, I baked some biscuits and took them to a neighbor who was sick in bed. Every day I tried to do something nice for someone. It made me so happy to see them happy. Today, I do not know of anybody who sleeps better than I do. I have found happiness by giving it to others".

When she heard that, the rich lady cried. She had everything money could buy, but she lost the things money cannot buy.

Heart gift

One day a little girl asked her daddy: “What are you going to get me for my 15th birthday, daddy?”, to which the father replied: “There is much time left”.

When the girl was 14 years of age, she fainted and was rushed to the hospital. The doctor came out and told her dad that she had a serious heart problem and that she probably was going to die. When she was lying in the hospital bed, the daughter said: “Daddy, have they told you I am going to die?”. The father replied: “No, you will live!”, as he left weeping, she said: “How can you be so sure?”. He turned from the door and said: “I know”.

She turned 15 when she was recovering from heart surgery and came home to find a letter on her bed saying: “My dearest daughter if you are reading this, it means all went well as I told you. One day you asked me what I was giving you for your 15th birthday. I did not know then, but now my present to you is my heart”.

Moral of the story

The beauty of life does not depend on how happy you are, but on how happy others can be because of you.

Moral of the story

Love your parents. They sacrifice a lot to make us happy and healthy. Many times, we are so busy growing up that we forget that they are also growing old.

The janitor

A poor man applied to be a janitor at a large company. As part of his interview, he was asked to take out the trash. After he was done, they offered him the job. The interviewer said: “now, just give me your email address. I will send you the paperwork you need to fill out and let you know when you start”. The poor man replied: “I do not have an email.”. the interviewer was perplexed since nowadays a man without an email account did not exist, saying: “A man who does not exist cannot hold a job”. Feeling like he could not sink any lower, the man left the office.

He did not know what to do. He only had 5 dollars left in his bank account. On his way home, he passed by a grocery store. In the window, he saw a box of apples for 5 dollars. He stopped and bought the fruit. As he continued home, he knocked on doors and soon sold the box of apples. With 10 dollars in his pocket, the man returned to the store and repeated his success.

The next day, he got up early and went out door-to-door. Soon he had enough money to buy a fruit stand, and then a store. After 10 years of hard work, the man owned one of the largest grocery store chains in the country. As the man grew older, he began planning his family’s future.

He went to buy life insurance. He talked with the salesperson and decided on a plan. The saleslady offered to send him a copy of his policy. “Just give me your email address, and I will send it over,” she said. The man responded: “I do not have an email ma’am”. The

lady was perplexed: “You do not have an email, and you yet make millions of dollars each year. Have you ever wondered what you could have done with one?”.

The man paused for a moment before saying: “I would be taking out the trash”.

Moral of the story

Do not be discouraged by today’s setbacks. They may lead to tomorrow’s success.



Danny Bor - 2023

The head start in the race of life

Once, a schoolteacher took his class to the park. “Lineup, lineup, we are about to race, everybody lineup,” he said. He showed a 100-dollar bill saying that the winner would keep it. “Before I say go, I am going to make a couple of statements, if those statements apply to you I want you to take two steps forward, and if those statements do not apply to you, I want you to stay right where you are,” the teacher said.

The teacher said: “Take two steps forward if both of your parents are still married”. Consequently, some kids took two steps forward and others remained in the same spot.

The teacher continued: “Take two steps forward if you grew up with a father figure in your home”. Once again, some of the kids took two steps forward, and others stayed. Once more, the teacher said: “Take two steps forward if you had access to a private education”. Some kids advanced, as the others were in the same spot looking at the kids in the front.

The teacher continued: “Take two steps forward if you had access to a free tutor growing up”. As you could expect, some kids advanced, and others remained in the same spot. This time, the teacher said: “Take two steps forward if you never had help mom or dad with the bills”.

“I want you guys in the front to turn around and look. Every statement I have made has nothing to do with anything any of you have done, has nothing to do with decisions you have made, and

everything I have said has nothing to do with what you have done. We all know these people up here have a better opportunity to win these 100 dollars. But does this mean that these people back here cannot race? No, we would be foolish to not realize we have been given more opportunities. We do not want to recognize that we have been given a head start. But the reality is that we have...”

Moral of the story

This is a picture of life. Just because you did not have the same opportunities as others around you, it does not mean you are going to lose. There is no excuse. You still got to run your race.

A little boy in the kitchen

One day, a little boy found his mother in the kitchen fixing dinner and slipped her a piece of paper. She dried her hands on her apron and took a minute to read it. This is what it said:

- For mowing the lawn: 5 dollars
- For cleaning my room this week: 10 dollars
- For going to the store for you: 0.5 dollars
- Babysitting my brother: .25 dollars
- For getting good grades on my report card: 5 dollars
- For raking the yard and picking it up: 2 dollars
- Total: 22.75 dollars

When the mother was finished reading the note, she stood there and looked at him. He could see memories of these events flashing through her mind. She picked up a pen and pad of paper and wrote the following:

- For the nine months, I carried you while you were growing inside of me: with no charge
- For every night I stayed up with you when you were upset, or sick, held you, and prayed for you: no charge.
- For all the difficult times and my tears for you: no charge
- For all the nights I worried about your future and what was ahead: no charge.
- For your shelter, food clothing, toys, and even wiping your nose: no charge

She then said: “Son, when I add up all of the costs, my love for

you is no charge”. After the boy finished reading his mother’s note, big tears welled up in his eyes. He looked straight at his mother and said: “Mom, I sure do love you”. The son then took the pen and his mother’s note and wrote in big words: “Paid in full!”.

Moral of the story

Do not charge your parents for the work you have done for them.
They never will charge you for their hard work in helping you grow.

The shoes of kindness

Once there was a man who felt terrible about life, so he decided to take a walk even though he did not know where he would go. Then, the most extraordinary thing happened when he was walking out of a park. He saw an old man sitting on a chair. He was a seller of second-hand shoes. The man thought he looked at least 70 years old. He seemed so tired and nobody was buying his shoes. The man wanted to give him something but he had not brought anything with him. Then, a little girl came towards him, saying: “Grandfather, may I polish your shoes?” The old man took pity on her, smiled and he gave her a shoe to polish. The little girl said: “I polish the shoe because I need money to buy my brother a new school uniform”.

The man heard this and tears came to his eyes. The old man answered: “Oh, little girl. Just stop doing this. Come with me and I will buy you a uniform”. Then they walked to a market, and the old man bought her a uniform for her brother. The girl was so happy that she said: “Thank you so much for doing this. May God bless you”. Then she left, leaving the old man smiling. He walked away from the market, but the man stopped him, whispering:

“You are a hero”

Thank you for your kindness!”

As the man walked away, he glanced back and could see the old man still smiling. The man was blown away by the kindness he had

witnessed. Someone who had so little for themselves was able to show such incredible generosity. The man began realizing that he had a lot to be thankful for.

Moral of the story

Sharing is beautiful when the other person has nothing to give you in return.

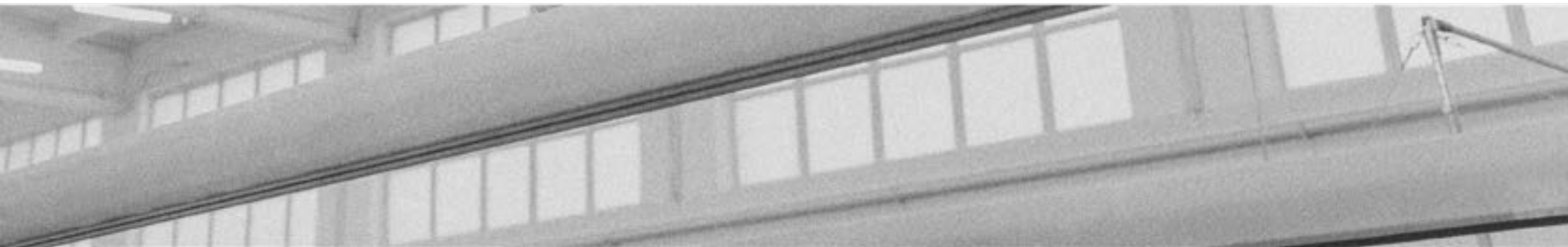
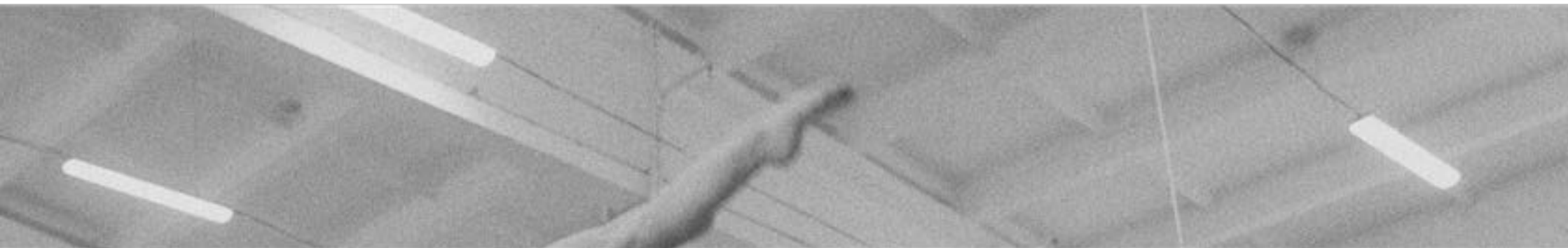
The bridge

Once upon a time, two brothers who lived on adjoining farms fell into conflict. It was the first serious rift in 40 years of farming side by side, sharing machinery, and trading labor and goods as needed without a hitch. Then the long collaboration fell apart. It began with a small misunderstanding and it grew into a major difference, and finally, it exploded into an exchange of bitter words followed by weeks of silence. One morning there was a knock on the older brother's door. He opened it to find a man with a carpenter's toolbox: "I am looking for a few days of work. Perhaps you would have a few small jobs here and there. Could I help you?". The older brother replied: "Yes. I do have a job for you. Look across the creek at that farm. That is my neighbor, it is my younger brother. Last week there was a meadow between us and he took his bulldozer to the river levee and now there is a creek between us. Well, he may have done this to spite me, but I will go him one better. See that pile of lumber curing by the barn? I want you to build me an 8-foot fence so I will not need to see his place anymore. Cool him down, anyhow". The carpenter said: "I think I understand the situation. Show me the nails and the post-hole digger and I will be able to do a job that pleases you. The older brother had to go to town for supplies, so he helped the carpenter get the materials ready and then he was off for the day. The carpenter worked hard all that day measuring, sawing, nailing, and building something huge. About sunset, when the older brother returned, the carpenter had just finished his job. The farmer's eyes opened wide and his jaw dropped. There was no fence there at all. It was a huge bridge. A bridge stretches from one side of the creek to the other. A fine piece of work han-

drails and all – and the neighbor, his younger brother, was coming across, his hand outstretched. "You are quite a fellow to build this bridge after all I have said and done," said the younger brother. The two brothers stood at each end of the bridge, and then they met in the middle, taking each other's hand. They turned to see the carpenter hoist his toolbox on his shoulder, saying: "No wait, stay! I have a lot of other projects for you!". The carpenter replied: "I would love to stay, but I have many more bridges to build".

Moral of the story

Build bridges and not fences. Accept your mistakes and try to resolve them.



Tima Miroshnichenko - 2021

The judge

Once upon a time, an old man spread rumors that his neighbor was a thief. As result, the young man was arrested. Days later the young man was proven innocent. After being released, the man felt humiliated as he walked to his home. He sued the old man for wrongly accusing him.

In court, the old man told the judge: “Your Honor, they were just comments, did not harm anyone”. The judge, before passing a sentence on the case, told the old man, to write all the things he had said about his neighbor on a piece of paper. Then he would have to cut the pieces up and, on the way, home, throw the pieces of paper out”. The judge continued: “Tomorrow, come back to hear the sentence”.

The next day, the judge told the old man: “before receiving the sentence, you will have to go out and gather all the pieces of paper that you threw out yesterday”. The old man exclaimed: “I cannot do that! The wind must have spread them and I will not know where to find them all”. The judge replied: “In the same way, simple comments may destroy the honor of a man to such an extent that one is not able to fix it”.

The old man realized his mistake and asked for forgiveness.

Moral of the story

Do not malignant or blame anyone without knowing the fact or truth. Your words may ruin someone’s reputation forever without any fault of theirs.

Twins

Two twin boys were raised by an alcoholic father. They were both ill-treated and abused mentally and physically. A few years later, at a school reunion, they both came to share their story.

One grew up to be an alcoholic, poor, and ill-being man, and when asked: “What happened?”, he said: “I watched my father...”.

The other grew up and never drank in his life. Was a healthy and successful man, and when asked: “What happened?”, he replied to the same way as his alcoholic brother: “I watched my father...”.

Moral of the story

Two boys, the same dad, thus two different perspectives. Your perspective in life will determine your destination. Today is a new day.

A story about coffee

A poor man and a rich man were both standing in line in a coffee shop. The poor man ordered and paid for his daily cup of coffee. After ordering, the poor man turned to the rich man and asked: “What are you having today?”. The rich man, seemingly startled, looked at the barista and replied: “I am going to have a newspaper and a biscuit”. Once the barista put in the order, the poor man suddenly offered his bank card and paid for the rich man’s order.

Stunned, the rich man said: “You should not do that”. The poor man replied: “Do what?”, to which the rich man exclaimed: “You should not pay for mine. I might be richer than you!”. The poor man stopped for a moment and said: “You just might be. But what we should do and what we can do are two completely different things”. The rich man welled up in the tears and said: “No one has ever done anything like this for me because they assume, I can take care of myself. That was very kind of you. Thank you!”.

Moral of the story

Be kind to others, no matter their appearance, you just might make someone’s day.

The old man and the king

A king was riding with his army when he noticed an old man planting a small tree. He found this very strange since the tree would take too long to grow and when it could bear fruit, the old man would no longer be around to eat its fruit. So, the king asked: “Why are you insisting on such a useless task?”, to which the man replied: “I am glad to sow, even if I am not one to reap. Are we not taking advantage today of the trees that were planted many years ago? Sowing is what matters. Not reaping”.

The king considered the old man’s actions wise and, moved, handed him a bag with many gold coins as a reward for the farmer’s wisdom. The farmer thanked saying: “See how things are? I have barely just planted this tree and I am already reaping valuable fruit”.

Moral of the story

Sowing is optional, but reaping is mandatory. Therefore, be careful what you sow. As we have the opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Marriage vs. Love

A student asks a teacher:

“What is love?”, to which the teacher replied: “

To answer your question, go to the wheat crop and choose the biggest wheat and come back. There is only one rule: you can go through them only once and cannot turn back to pick”.

The student went to the field, and went through the first row, he saw one big wheat, but he wondered... maybe there is a bigger one later. Then he saw another bigger one... he thought again:

“Maybe there is an even bigger one waiting for me!”.

Later, when he finished more than half of the wheat field, he started to realize that the wheat is not as big as the previous one he saw. He realizes he has missed the biggest one, and he regretted. So, he ended up going back to the teacher with an empty hand. The teacher told him:

“This is love... you keep looking for a better one, only to realize later that you have missed the person”. The student then asked: “What is marriage then?”.

The teacher replied:

“To answer your question, go to the corn field and choose the

biggest corn and come back. The same rule applies here: you can go through them only once and cannot turn back to pick”.

The student went to the corn field, this time he is careful not to repeat the previous mistake when he reached the middle of the field, he picked one medium corn that he feel satisfied, with and came back to the teacher. The teacher told him:

“This time you bring back a corn... you look for one that is just nice, and you have faith and believe this is the best one you get. This is marriage”.

Moral of the story

Have you found love? Marriage? Or both?

Money and sleep

Once there were two neighbors. One was a poor farmer, and the other was a landlord. The farmer used to be very relaxed and happy. He never bothered to close the doors and windows of his house at night. He had deep sound sleeps. Although he had no money, he was peaceful. Contrarily, the landlord used to be very tense always.

He was very keen to close the doors and windows at night. He could not sleep well. He was always bothered that someone might break open his safes and steal away his money. He envied the peaceful farmer.

One day, the landlord called the farmer and gave him a box full of cash saying: “My dear friend. I am blessed with plenty of wealth. I find you in poverty. So, take this cash and live in prosperity”. The farmer was overwhelmingly happy. He was joyful throughout the day.

Night came. The farmer went to bed as usual. But, today, he could not sleep.

He went and closed the doors and windows. He still could not sleep. He began to keep on looking at the box of cash. The whole night he was disturbed.

As soon as the day broke, the farmer took the box of cash to the landlord.

He gave the box saying: “Dear friend, I am poor. But your money took away peace from me. Please, bear with me and take back your money”.

Moral of the story

Money cannot get everything. Learn to be satisfied with what you have and you will always be happy.



Mason McCall - 2021

A walk to remember

One day a woman was walking down the street when she saw a beggar sitting on the corner. The man was elderly, unshaven, and ragged. It was very cold that day and he had just a torn coat wrapped around him. The lady stopped and asked: “Sir? Are you all right?”

The man looked up. He thought she was making fun of him like many others and said: “Leave me alone!”, thus to his amazement, the woman did not leave. She was smiling and asked: “Are you hungry?”, to which he answered sarcastically: “No! I have just come from dining with the president. Now go away!” Suddenly the man felt a gentle hand under his arm: “What are you doing? I said leave me alone!”. The girl grabbed the beggar and said: “I am going to get you something to eat and get you out of the cold for a while”.

With difficulties, she finally got the old man into the cafeteria and sat him at a table. The manager of the coffee shop stared at the old man: “What is going on here?” he asked. The lady replied: “I would like to buy him a meal”, to which the manager replied: “Not in here! Having this person here is bad for business”. The beggar smiled sarcastically again: “See lady. I told you so. Now if you will let me go”. The woman turned to the manager and smiled: “Sir, are you familiar with the banking firm down the street? “Of course, I am!”, he replied impatiently, “They hold weekly meetings in our banquet rooms”. The lady said: “Well sir, I am the president and CEO of the company”. She looked at the beggar and said: “Do you remember me?”. The beggar searched her face with his old, rheu-

my eyes: “You do look familiar”. The lady said: “I am a little older perhaps! When you worked here, and I came through that very door, cold and hungry. I was just out of college, I had come to the city looking for a job, but I could not find anything. I was down to my last few cents, kicked out of my apartment, then walked the streets for days... I saw this place and walked in to ask if I could work for something to eat. Then you made me the biggest roast beef sandwich ever, gave me a cup of coffee, and told me to sit and enjoy it.” There were tears in the beggar’s eyes: “How can I ever thank you?” he said. The lady replied: “You have already helped me. 15 years earlier”.

Moral of the story

Life is a rollercoaster. Sometimes you are the one in need. Sometimes you will help others in need.

Gossip story

Once in ancient Greece, a famous philosopher was reputed to hold knowledge in high esteem. One day an acquaintance met the great philosopher and said: “Do you know about I just heard about your friend?”, Socrates replied to hold on a minute and said: “Before telling me anything I would like you to pass a little test. It is called the Triple Filter Test”.

The philosopher continued: “Before you talk to me about my friend, it might be a good idea to take a moment and filter what you are going to say.

That is why I call it the Triple Filter Test. The first filter is Truth. Have you made sure that what you are about to tell me is true?”, to which the man replied: “No, actually I just heard about it and...”

“All right,” said the philosopher: “So you do not know if it is true or not. Now let us try the second filter, the filter of Goodness. Is what you are about to tell me about my friend something good?”, to which the man replied: “No, actually on the contrary...”

“So” the philosopher continued: “You want to tell me, something bad about him, but you are not sure it is true.

You may still pass the test though because there is one filter left: the filter of Usefulness. Is what you want to tell me about my friend going to be useful to me?”, to which the man replied: “No, not really...”

“Well” concluded the philosopher: “If what you want to tell me is neither true nor good nor even useful, why tell it to me at all?”

Moral of the story

A treasured lesson learned about gossip and its usefulness (or not).

Three old men and their story

Once a woman came out of her house and saw 3 old men with long white beards sitting in her front yard. She did not recognize them and said: “I do not think I know you but you must be hungry. Please come in and have something to eat”. “Is the man of the house home?” they asked, to which she replied: “No, he is out”. The 3 men replied: “Sorry ma’am, then we cannot come in”.

In the evening when her husband came home, she told him what had happened. The man said: “Go tell them I am home and invite them in!” The woman went out and invited the men in. “We do not go into a house together” they replied. “Why is that?” she asked, to which one of the men explained: “His name is Wealth, I am Love and the other one is Success”. Then he added: “Now go in and discuss with your husband which one of us you want in your home first”.

The woman went in and told her husband what was said. Her husband was overjoyed. “Since that is the case, let us invite Wealth. Let him come and fill our home with wealth!”. His wife disagreed: “My dear, why do not we invite Success?” Their daughter was listening from the other corner of the house. She jumped in with her suggestion: Would it not be better to invite Love? Our home would then be filled with Love!”

“Let us heed our daughter’s advice,” said the husband and said to his wife: “Go out and invite Love to be our guest”. The woman went out and asked the 3 old men: “Which one of you is Love?”

Please come in and be our guest”. Love got up and started walking toward the house. The other two also got up and followed him. Surprised, the lady asked Wealth and Success: “I only invited Love, why are you coming in?” The old man replied: “If you had invited Wealth or Success, the other two of us would have stayed out. But, since you invited Love, wherever he goes, we go with him”.

Moral of the story

Wherever there is Love, there is also Wealth and Success.

Two beggars

There lived two beggars in a city. One beggar was blind and the other was lame. Instead of being sympathetic to each other, they were enemies and competitive, the whole day they were competing with each other in the city like all other professionals. One night their huts caught fire, the blind man could run out but he could not see where to go, whereas the lame man could see the places where the fire had not yet spread but could not run. The fire was spreading fast and they could only feel their deaths coming. They realized that they needed each other.

The lame man suddenly realized: “The blind man can run and I can see”. They forgot all competition and bitterness between them. This was a critical moment when both were facing certain death. The blind man carried the lame man on his shoulders and they would function as one person. The lame man could see and the blind man ran and finally, they saved their lives.

For the first time, they became friends and dropped their anger and antagonism.

Moral of the story

Unity is strength. Work together. Win together.

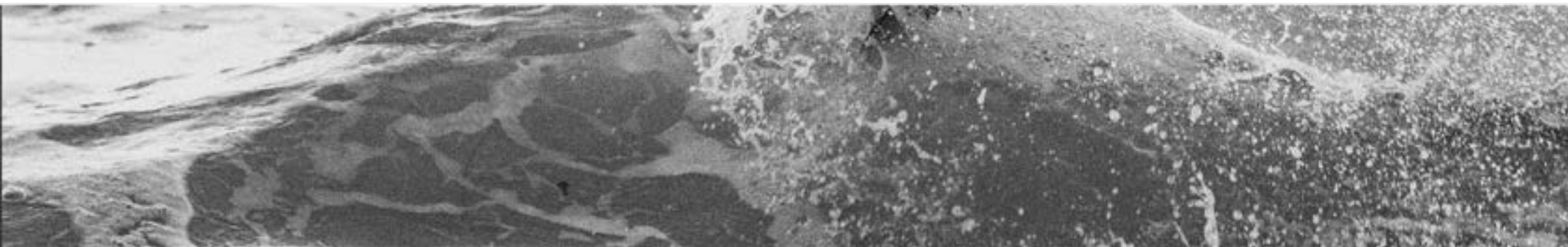
Two seeds

Once, two seeds lay side by side in fertile soil. The first seed said: “I want to grow! I want to send my roots deep into the soil beneath me and thrust my sprouts through the earth’s crust above me. I want to unfurl my tender buds like banners to announce the arrival of spring. I want to feel the warmth of the sun on my face and the blessing of the morning dew on my petals”. And so, she grew...

On the other hand, the second seed said: “Humm. If I send my roots into the ground below, I do not know what I will encounter in the dark. If I push my way through the hard soil above me, I may damage my delicate sprouts. What if I let my buds open and an insect tries to eat them? And if I were to open my blossoms, a small child may pull me from the ground. No, I should wait until it is safe”. And so, she waited. Then, one day, a yard hen scratching around in the early spring ground for food found the waiting seed and promptly ate it. The other seed turns out into a big tree with beautiful leaves and beautiful flowers.

Moral of the story

Do not be afraid to dream big. Those who dream big and think positively will grow and prosper. Those who think negatively and refuse to risk will get swallowed up by life.



Guy Kawasaki - 2018

The farmer and happiness

There once was a farmer who grew the best corn in the country. He won first prize at the state fair every year, and everyone flocked to his field in the late summer to enjoy his delicious harvest. One day, a news reporter went to interview the farmer and asked him about his secrets to success.

Days of research before the interview revealed to the reporter that the farmer would always share his best-producing seeds with neighboring farmers. When it came time for the interview, the reporter was loaded with a powerful question: “Sir, why do you share your best seeds with your neighbors, knowing that they are also going to enter into their corn into the competition, against you? Would this not make it difficult for you to win?”

The farmer looked up and took a deep breath before he replied: “During the season when a strong wind comes across the fields, pollen from the ripening corn is swirled from field to field. It is important to understand that if my neighbors grow poor corn, the cross-pollination will ultimately degrade the quality of my corn. So, if I want to grow great corn, I must help my neighbors grow good corn as well”.

Moral of the story

To live a meaningful and happy life, we must see the importance of enriching the lives of others. True happiness is found when we share with others.

Manage time

Once upon a time, a king and a lazy man were very good friends. One morning, the king said to his friend: “Why do not you work to earn some money?”, to which the lazy man replied: “No one gives me a job. People told everyone that I never do any work on time. The king continued: “You can go into my treasury and collect as much wealth as you can, till sunset”. The man rushed home to tell this good news to his wife. She said: “Go and get the gold coins and gems now!”. The lazy man replied: “I cannot go now; I have to eat first”.

After lunch, he took a nap for an hour. Then in the late afternoon, he picked up some bags and went to the palace. On the way, he felt hot so he sat under a tree to rest and ended up sleeping for another 3 hours. Near the palace, he found an old friend who talked to him for another 2 hours before reaching the palace’s gates.

However, when he reached the palace, it was already time for sunset. The palace gates had been shut. So, he had lost a golden chance because he had not learned the valuable lesson of the king.

Moral of the story

Time is a gift. So, use it wisely, and do not waste it!

Two men and a ship

A voyaging ship was wrecked during a storm at sea and only two of the men on it were able to swim to a small, desert-like island. The two survivors who have been good friends, not knowing what else to do, agreed that they had no other recourse but to pray for divine help. However, to find out whose prayer was more powerful, they agreed to divide the territory between them and stay on opposite sides of the island.

The first thing they prayed for was food. The next morning, the first man saw a fruit-bearing tree on his side of the land, and he was able to eat its fruits. The other man's parcel of land remained barren. After a week, the first man was lonely and he decided to pray for a wife. The next day, another ship was wrecked, and the only survivor was a woman who swam to his side of the land. On the other side of the island, there was nothing. Soon the first man prayed for a house, clothes, and more food. The next day, like magic, all of these were given to him. However, the second man still had nothing.

Finally, the first man prayed for a ship, so that he and his wife could leave the island. In the morning, he found a ship docked at his side of the island. The first man boarded the ship with his wife and decided to leave the second man on the island. He considered the other man unworthy to receive God's blessings since none of his prayers had been answered. As the ship was about to leave, the first man heard a voice from heaven booming: "Why are you leaving your companion on the island?". The first man replied:

"My blessings are mine alone since I was the one who prayed for them. His prayers were all unanswered and so he does not deserve anything". The voice rebuked him: "You are mistaken. He had only one prayer, which I answered. If not for that, you would not have received any of my blessings". Tell me! shouted the first man: "What did he pray for that I should owe him anything?" The voice said: "He prayed that all your prayers be answered".

Moral of the story

For all we know, our blessings are not the fruits of our prayers alone, but those of another praying for us.

Sometimes just let it be

Once a famous philosopher was traveling with his disciples from one town to another. While they were traveling, they happened to pass a lake. They stopped there and the philosopher told one of his students:

“I am thirsty, can you please get me some water from that lake there”.

The disciple walked to the lake. When he reached me, he noticed that some people were washing clothes in the water and, right at that moment, a bullock cart started crossing the lake right at the edge of it. As a result, the water became very muddy and very turbid. The discipline thought:

“How can I give this muddy water to him to drink?”

So, he came back and told the philosopher:

“The water in there is very muddy. I do not think it is fit to drink”.

Consequently, the philosopher said:

“Let us take a little rest here by the tree”.

After about half an hour, again the philosopher asked the same disciple to go back to the lake and get him some water to drink.

The disciple obediently went back to the lake. This time he found that the lake had absolutely clear water in it. The mud had settled down and the water above it looked fit to be had.

So, he collected some water in a pot and brought it to the philosopher. The philosopher looked at the water, and then he looked up at the discipline and said:

“See, you let the water be and the mud settled down on its own. You got clear water. It did not require any effort”.

Moral of the story

Your mind is also like that. When it is disturbed, just let it be. Give it a little time. It will settle down on its own. You do not have to put in any effort to calm it down. We can judge and take the best decisions in our life when we stay calm.

The cookie bag

Once upon a time, a woman was waiting at an airport one night, with several long hours before her flight. She hunted for a book in the airport shop, bought a bag of cookies, and found a place to drop.

She was engrossed in her book but happened to see, that the man beside her as bold as could be, grabbed a cookie or two from the bag, which she tried to ignore to avoid a scene. She munched cookies and watched the clock, as this gutsy cookie thief diminished her stock. She was getting more irritated as the minutes ticked by, thinking: “If I was not so nice, I would blacken his eye!” With each cookie she took, he took one too. And when only one was left, she wondered what he would do.

With a smile on his face and a nervous laugh, he took the last cookie and broke it in half, he offered her half as he ate the other. She snatched it from him and thought: “Oh brother, this guy has some nerve and he is also rude, he did not even show any gratitude!”.

She had never known when she had been so galled and sighed with relief when her flight was called, she gathered her belongings and headed for the gate, refusing to look back at the thieving ingrate.

She boarded the plane and sank into her seat. Then sought her bag of cookies which was almost complete. “If mine are here” she

moaned with despair: “Then the other was his and he tried to share”. Too late to apologize she realized with grief, that she was the rude one the real thief.

Moral of the story

We are often quick to jump to assumptions, but it is best not to let our assumptions blind us from the truth. We must learn to view things from another people’s perspective because we are not always right.



Li Sun - 2019

A king was gifted a pair of baby parrots

Once upon a time, there was a king who had gone to visit neighboring kingdoms. He was gifted a pair of baby parrots by the king of the last kingdom where he was visiting. They were the most beautiful birds he had ever seen. So, upon returning to his kingdom, he called for a bird trainer and asked him to train parrots. The king also arranged a place in the palace garden for the parrots. He often looked at them from his palace window.

As time passed, one day the trainer came to the palace and informed the king that one of the parrots was flying majestically, high in the sky. However, the other one was not moving from its branch since the day it arrived. Upon hearing this, the king summoned trainers and healers from the nearby kingdoms. They all tried their best but could not make the parrot fly. He even asked his courtiers to try to find a way to make the parrot fly, but they all failed. The parrot was not moving from his branch at all. Finally, after trying everything, the king thought that maybe he needs someone who may be more familiar with the natural habitat. He asked his courtier to get a farmer from the countryside and take him to the parrot to see if he can understand the problem with the parrot.

The next morning, the king was thrilled to see the parrot flying high above the palace gardens. He asked his servant to call the farmer to meet him. The servant quickly went and located the farmer, who came and stood before the king. The king asked him: “How did you make the parrot fly?”

With his hands folded with respect, the farmer said to the king: “It was very easy, your majesty. I simply cut the branch where the bird was sitting.”

Moral of the story

We are all gifted with the energy to find success in our life but fail to gather the courage that is required to reach heights of success and end up clinging to the things that are familiar to us. We need to free ourselves from our comfort zone to explore new opportunities and find success beyond our capacity.

A plastic bag and hate

Once a teacher decided to let her class play a game. The teacher told each child in the class to bring along a plastic bag containing a few potatoes. Each potato will be given a name of a person that the child hates. So, the number of potatoes that a child will put in his/her bag will depend on the number of people they hated. So, when the day came, every child brought some potatoes with the name of the people he/she hated. Some had two potatoes, some three while some had up to five potatoes. The teacher then told the children to carry the potatoes in the plastic bag with them wherever they go for a week. Days after days passed, and the children started to complain due to the unpleasant smell let out by the rotten potatoes. Besides, those having five potatoes also had to carry heavier bags. After one week, the children were relieved because the game had finally ended. The teacher asked: “how did you feel while carrying the potatoes with you for one week?”

The children let out their frustration and started complaining about the trouble that they had to go through having to carry the heavy and smelly potatoes wherever they go. Then the teacher told them about the hidden meaning behind the game.

Moral of the story

Throw away any hatred for anyone from your heart so that you will not carry burden for a lifetime. Forgiving others is the best attitude to take. Negativity about someone will keep peace of your mind away from you. Remember the good things about him/her and let go of the hatred.

A king, one leg, and one eye

Once upon a time, there was a kingdom, the king there only had one leg and one eye, but he was very intelligent and kind. Everyone in his kingdom lived happy and a healthy life because of their king. One day the king was walking through the palace hallway and saw the portraits of his ancestors. He thought that one day his children will walk in the same hallway and remember all their ancestors through these portraits. But the king did not have his portrait painted. Due to his physical disabilities, he was not sure how his painting would turn out. So, he invited many famous painters from his and other kingdoms to the court. The king then announced that he wants a beautiful portrait made of himself to be placed in the palace. The king said: “Any painter who can carry out this should come forward. I will reward him based on how the painting turns up”. All of the painters began to think that the king only has one leg and one eye. “How can his picture be made very beautiful?” they said, continuing: “It is not possible and if the picture does not turn out to look beautiful the king will get angry and punish us”.

So, one by one, all started to make excuses and politely declined to make a painting of the king. But suddenly one painter raised his hand and said that he was willing to make a very beautiful portrait of the king, which he would surely like. The king became happy hearing that and other painters got curious. The king permitted him and the painter started drawing the portrait. He then filled the drawing with paints. Finally, after taking a long time, he said the portrait was ready. All of the courtiers and other painters were curious and nervous thinking: “How can the painter make the

king’s portrait beautiful because of the king’s physical disabilities? What if the king did not like the painting and got angry?”

But when the painter presented the portrait, everyone in the court, including the king, was left stunned. The painter made a portrait in which the king was sitting on the horse, on the on-leg side, holding his bow and aiming the arrow with his one eye closed.

Moral of the story

Think outside of your judgments. We should always think of the positives of others and ignore their deficiencies.

Two beds in a hospital

Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One had his bed next to the room's only window. The men talked for hours on end every day. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, and other matters. And every afternoon the man with the bed near the window would pass the time describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window. The man in the other bed began to live for those moments when his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and color of the outside world.

The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake, the man said. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Lovers walked arm in arm, grand old trees graced the landscape, and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance. As the man by the window described all this in detail, the other man would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene.

One afternoon, the man by the window described a parade passing by. Although the other man could not hear the band, he could imagine all details with the man's descriptive words. Unexpectedly, an alien thought entered his head: "Why should he have all the pleasure of seeing everything while I never get to see anything? It does not seem fair. As the days passed and he missed seeing more sights, his envy eroded into resentment and soon turned him sour. He began to brood and he found himself unable to sleep. "I should be close to the window," he thought. The next day, the bed close to the window was empty. Unfortunately, the man died during the

night. Nurses arrived to bring water for his bath. The man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse did not understand what he was saying and asked him: "What window? This room does not have any window".

Moral of the story

Appreciate the small things and accept the good things people give to you – hope, joy, positive thinking – so that you can feel good a live one more day with a smile.

A father and a son working

Once a father and son were working in the garden. The child wanted to get appreciated by his father so he was trying his best to help his father by performing minor works as directed by his father. Then, the father saw a stone and said: “Son, remove that stone from that place, we will plant a nice tree there”. As directed by his father, the kid tried to move that stone but he was not able to move it. At last, the kid said to his father: “Dad, I am not able to move this stone. It is too heavy. I cannot do it!”. The father replied: “Try again. Use all your means necessary to remove this stone from that place”.

The kid again tried and used all his strengths but still, he was not able to dislodge that stone from its place.

The kid got tired and started to cry as he was not able to do it even after using all his efforts. Listening to his son crying, the father came running towards his son, sat beside him and hold him near himself, and said: “Why are you crying? You can move this stone. I told you to use all your means to move that stone. Did I not?”

The son with a sad look on his face replied: “I did. Dad I tried my best to remove that stone but still was not able to do it”, to which the father replied: “But you forgot about me, my son. If you need help, why did you not include me in your Means?”

The child was enlightened to hear this and started working along with his father again. Now, with his father’s help, he was able

to remove that large stone easily from its place and plant a new tree in its place.

Moral of the story

When we fail in Action and feel depressed, we should not forget about the help from others. Whenever we are not able to keep up, we should seek help from our family and friends and have faith in them.

Practical implications

We must be wary of creating an unsophisticated valorization of human experience through narrative. Motivational storytelling that provokes an emotional response, on the other hand, can be used for investigation and learning. Furthermore, stories can help us explore presumed binaries, such as “personal vs professional,” which are products of the discourse communities that surround us. Motivational storytelling stories can strengthen an individual’s ability to engage with and in other social and cultural contexts by offering access to non-dominant discourses about practice and professionalism. This can have ramifications for individuals’ future health-related behavior practices, such as physical activity.

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