

Science Lesson #4

You Are Your Own Best Teacher

(Wonder and Critical Thinking)

www.bickart.org



[Introduction to Fables and Science](#)

Today's Lesson

Today, we will practice a most important life lesson. We will OBSERVE! We will learn to learn! Today, we might be learning the most important way to learn for your entire life! It is to be your own teacher - long after your elders taught you. Today we will learn to teach yourself. And the way to teach yourself is to observe life. The science demonstration will show dry ice, but the whole point of this lesson is to practice observing very carefully!

Observing is the way to learn things for your whole life. Look at [\[Fable #132\]](#) (Bickart, 2020, Volume 3) to see an example of one

way to make this point. Today, I will put this fable into my own words. This is a great way to use these fables. Read them to get the point, then put the lesson into words that work for your audience.

When someone teaches you something, you control the takeaway. You observe what they said with a kind of highlighter. Two people listening to the same teaching come away with two different lessons. So, you are always your own teacher. Sure, listen to all of life's teachers, but be aware that your attitude determines what you will learn.

Let me give you an example. You walk into a science lesson. It is teaching about how to wonder about how gravity works. But perhaps you are wondering the *mechanism* of gravity. Perhaps the ostensible use of this lesson is to make better and more innovative devices. In a STEM class, you might discuss products you could invent and bring to market. Perhaps the WONDER is to see how we humans can use resources of our environment to serve us. But, I'm here to say, "Watch out!" A science class can have a social impact. Be careful not to fall into the pattern of using the idea of WONDER in science to ONLY learn how to manipulate and control and even, maybe exploit nature.

Instead, we can balance out the desire to learn science for the purpose of getting something for ourselves - with the kind of learning that observes something to simply see the WONDER of it. Do you ever look at how a tree holds up its branches and say how full of wonder it is - simply calling it wonderful? Not because of what it can do for you or how much money or control it can give you - but just for its own sake? How about observing trees shapes for their beauty? How about because they put you in a state of awe and inspire you?

Well, that's a right brain use of science that could be great fun to pair with the left brain use of science that asks how and why

things work. There is more to life than the cause of things - there is also the awe-inspiring, wonder of things. And when we practice in science to observe life for both its use to us and for its own 'amazingness', we grow our character.

Now, this little excursion into the philosophy of science used some pretty great critical thinking. If you can see the two kinds of wonder: to wonder about the mechanisms versus to be in a childlike state of wonder, then you have done well!

But here's the bottom line. Think of science as a piece of life training. Then think of how you look at the world. Is all of nature and society - all of the people you know - a shopping mall of resources. Are you looking around at everyone and everything to see values and bargains of what they can do for you? If so, don't look for a FRIEND. The relationship of having a friend may be one of the greatest things on earth; and if you look to another person as a resource - to see what you can get from them, then that may be what you get. They may look back at you and ask, "What can I get from you?" I mean, what is a friend, anyway? Isn't a friend, someone who thinks you're pretty great? Isn't a friend the one who likes you as you are? And isn't it true, as Emerson said that, "the only way to have a friend is to be one"?

Well, we are practicing being friends with each other and with the whole world of nature every time we learn something and decide what to observe. If we look for inspiration, we'll get it and build our own character. If we look for mechanisms, we'll learn that too - and that's fine - as long as we don't stop there.



#132 *The Lamb Prodigy*



*Mama ewe was teaching her little lamb the ways of the world. She showed her how to feed on the delicious hay, grass, and grain. She hardly had to show her how to run and jump, for the little lamb seemed to know how to do this just about as soon as she could walk. Then came the time to teach her the most important lesson. "Listen carefully," began mama, "this is the maxim you will need to know to have a good life - and you will need to remember this all the days of your life." The little lamb bleated out, "Ok, mama. I'm listening." "I cannot teach you everything you need to know," said her mama with a soft and gentle voice, using her eyes to say how much she meant this. "You must not stop at what mama tells you, or the other leaders of our flock. It is good to listen to all of them, but it is most imperative that you watch and learn from life on your own. If you are always observing what is all around you, then you will keep on learning. Always remember, **you are your own best teacher!**"*

YOU ARE YOUR OWN BEST TEACHER

Click here then select Lesson #4 to see the video.

[\[Play video here to see live demonstration.\]](#)

What is provocative here?

Learning to learn may be the greatest lesson. And since the only one you can count on to always be with you is you - become your own teacher and you're set for life! And remember to OBSERVE well before you go into a lot of analytical thought (see the Lesson on [Becoming a Great Observer](#)).

Why Use Fables to Teach Science?

The Lamb Prodigy

Conversation Starters

- Can you think of more than one teacher that you have had in your life?
- What do you think has been some good lessons that you have been taught?
- What do you think the mother Ewe means when she says, "*You must not stop at what mama tells you, or the other leaders of our flock.*"?
- What do you think the mother Ewe means when she says, "*It is good to listen to all of them...*"?

- What does the emphasis on *observing* mean to you?

References

Bickart, J. (2020). *Bickart's Just-in-Time Fables (Volume 3)*
(Vol. 3). Asheville, NC: Red Shirt Interactive Group.