



#129 *The Owl*



High on a mountaintop lived a wise owl. Periodically, the prairie dogs from the villages below would stop their hard work to make the long trek up the mountain to ask advice from the owl. Well, that is exactly what happened today. You see, a group of villagers needed some learned counsel because they were tired of the way they were living. For years and years, although they

*strove for a good life, they were getting sadder and sadder. Why, you say? Well, I can sum up their problems in four sentences. For one thing, their **leaders** were becoming hungry for power, even if it hurt their own prairie dog villages. Also, their **businesses** were so greedy and in competition with one another, that they had little time to help anyone. A third problem was that villagers were so used to **conquering nature** and taking resources from her, that they had made many lakes and forests dirty and unusable. But, perhaps the worst of all was that the prairie dog villagers had become the only animals around to **steal** from their own kind, eventually needing all manner of security to lock their doors and carry arms, lest they be robbed by other prairie dogs.*

So today, fed up with their way of life, and quite willing to strive for a new way, a rather large group decided to ascend the mountain to ask the owl what to do. As they entered his cave on the mountaintop, he bade them come in and state their reason for approaching. The villagers told him about their problems, hoping for a miraculous healing. The owl said that he could indeed advise how they could have a better life. It would be a life without fighting and selfishness. It would have very little work and very much play. It would be a life that put an end to politics and competition and conquering and stealing. The villagers' eyes opened wide. "Please heal us, wise owl!" spoke up one of the villagers. The owl paused, then asked a very interesting question, "If I tell you how to end these destructive parts of your life ... do you know what you would spend your time doing?" "Well, we would relax and have parties and fun," said one villager. "Yes, but what would you STRIVE toward?" asked the owl. "Your instinctive tendency is to work toward something. Without that,

you will end up right where you are today!” Well, the villagers had no answer, and the wise owl could see that. He told them to come back when they could answer that simple question and asked them to leave.

Many weeks passed before the villagers trekked back up the mountain. They had been in earnest collaboration, discussing what they would strive for if they became trouble-free, and had finally reached agreement. As they came back before the owl, he listened to their story of the many weeks they spent to discover their new goals in their new way of life. “I have one question more for you, before you are to be completely healed,” said the owl. “As you discovered what to strive toward, were you being political, or competing, or conquering or stealing?” “Well of course, not,” replied the villagers. “Then go,” said the owl, “you are healed.”

*STRIVING ISN'T ENOUGH
YOU MUST BE AWARE OF WHAT YOU ARE STRIVING FOR*