

Story #12b

Moving Toward and Away

12. *Look at the same student and see no remarkable attributes one time – and striking qualities by looking once again.*
(The Teacher's Bill of Rights)

All right I have a confession. I usually enable people in the relationships in my life because I go for fun. You've heard me - if you've listened to any of these videos - talk about **fun** a lot. But perhaps I go a bit too far with that. Just this morning, I learned a lesson about it.

I was picturing my next week. Monday I will be with the *Youth Transformed for Life* kids. I always get them too wild. The teachers have to come in and say, "Oh yeah, he had fun - they had fun - but now they're a little too wild. The week after next, I'll be at the Rainbow Community School, where I usually get them a little too wild. It's because I go for the fun first, and then the kids get a little bit too out of control. And then, I have to establish structure afterward. So, I was reflecting on this tendency this morning, getting ready for those classes. And I realized that part of me did not want to think about it. I was trying to move away from the whole problem of enabling with too much fun up front, then regaining structure and discipline when it is a little too late.

And then I remembered Lisa Miller and her book, *The Awakened Brain* (2021). In it she says that there are two modes to go about

life, achieving and awakened. Your achieving mode might tend to look at problems as something to get around. But awakened mode might look at those same problems as lessons. In awakened mode, you might look at a problem as presenting an existential question - a chance to change your existence - make a learning experience from something that is a little bit annoying to you.

So, I want to read to you from her paragraph on integrating those two modes in what she calls "quest awareness" or "quest orientation", which makes your life *a journey*. Listen to this.

"Quest orientation is characterized by a tendency to journey in life: to search for answers to meaningful personal decisions and big existential questions; to perceive doubt as positive; and to be open to change, or more accurately, open to perceiving with fresh eyes, and then using new experience to fuel change. In quest, we open ourselves to the messages from life, take seriously this discovery, and then actively use learning to shape our decisions and actions—our personal operating manual" (Miller, 2021, p. 169).

So, I got to thinking about this. You're born to this life and at first, you think everything is good. You don't move away from things. That's why you can take candy from a baby. If a stranger walks up, the baby looks up and thinks everything is going to be great. Then life happens and you go to the school of hard knocks. So, bad things start to happen to you, and you start to fall. But the game of life is getting back - recovering your childhood - the ability to see things as wonderful again. But how? They're not wonderful.

Well ... in total freedom ... you can have the choice to make life a quest - make life a journey! You can decide for yourself to look

at the school of hard knocks and *take the hard knocks* - use them - learn from them - and say, "Thank you! Why did that just happen to me? Why am I like that? Why is this bad thing surrounding me? And what can I do about it - what can I do with it? It must be that there is a lesson for life in here, somewhere!"

And when you do that, you are recovering your childhood. And things start looking better and better. You can see life *is* good. So, that's the message for today. Moving away and toward. I'll see you in one of those tomorrows.

"If you are distressed by anything external, the pain is not due to the thing itself, but to your estimate of it; and this you have the power to revoke at any moment."

- **Marcus Aurelius (Meditations)**

Verse 20 The Sadness of Superficialities and of The Unfulfilled Great Integrity

"It is sometimes deeply depressing to be a rebel, knowing that we can never share most people's way of life, nor can they share ours.

Schooling stuffs the brains of our children with trivia.
The more trivia, the more their anxieties.
They indoctrinate the children to believe that the consequences are grave
when they fail to distinguish "good" from "evil", and agreement from disagreement.
What gross nonsense!

To escape the rubbish of all this so-called knowledge,
in the winter people run to the great feasts of lamb, pork,
and ox,

and they climb high in the mountains to view the first signs of spring.

We are so different! Having no desire for the trivialities, nor for their compensations, we are like infants not yet knowing how to laugh!
Ever wandering, and having no home to which we may return.

While most people are obsessed with superficialities, we feel empty.
While most people feel they know so much, we feel simple-minded.
While most people believe they live happily in the best of all possible worlds,
we are depressed to witness this world!
It is so painful to know that we will always be outsiders, endlessly moving like the ocean, aimlessly blowing like the wind.

While we fear what others fear, we don't treasure what others treasure.
Our treasure is the Great Integrity.
However, until it is shared, it will not be the Universal Integrity,
for we are part of them, and they are part of us."

(Laozi, 2005/circa 500 BC)



References

Laozi, D. R. A. C. J. (2005/circa 500 BC). *Tao te ching : a new translation & commentary*. New York: Barnes & Noble.

Miller, L. W. E. S. (2021). *The awakened brain : the new science of spirituality and our quest for an inspired life.*