

REFRAMING AND CREATIVITY

BEING AND BREATHING

After spending nearly every waking minute with Angel for eight straight days, I knew that I had to tell her just one thing. So late at night, just before she fell asleep, I whispered it in her ear. She smiled – the kind of smile that makes me smile back –and she said, “When I’m seventy-five and I think about my life and what it was like to be young, I hope that I can remember this very moment.”

A few seconds later, she closed her eyes and fell asleep. The room was peaceful – almost silent. All I could hear was the soft purr of her breathing. I stayed awake thinking about the time we’d spent together and all the choices in our lives that made this moment possible. And at some point, I realized that it didn’t matter what we’d done or where we’d gone. Nor did the future hold any significance. All that mattered was the serenity of the moment. Just being with her and breathing with her.

TROUBLE

A woodcutter had two sons. Every time he went to the forest, he took one of them as an assistant. Once the woodcutter prepared everything for work, but told his sons that this time they had to go alone. He would stay at home to rest.

The boys were glad to take on their father's burden and left. But when they went out, the elder remembered to ask who would fix the cart if it broke, as his father always did this. And the father said not to worry. If that happened, they should call Trouble, she would fix the cart.

The boys went to the forest. They unharnessed, let the oxen graze and grabbed the axes. They started to work and quickly cut a lot of wood, loaded and even overloaded the car. They harnessed the oxen and drove back.

In the middle of the road, descending one downhill, the overloaded car intensified and the towbar broke. What now? How will they take the car with the wood? Then the elder

remembered his father's order and began to shout as loudly as he could: "Trouble! Trouble! Come and fix our cart!" But no one answered. When the big one got tired, the little brother started calling Trouble.

But the forest was deaf. It was getting dark. The birds returned to their nests. A pale moon appeared in the sky. Then the younger brother told the elder one that this Trouble would obviously not come, but that they should take care of repairing the broken thing.

It wasn't easy, but they had watched their father do it. They ran, found dry dogwood, cut it down, carved it nicely, made a new towbar and put it in the place of the broken one.

They took the car home.

As they unloaded the wood, they told their father what had happened. How the failure happened, how long they called the Trouble, and it did not call back, as if it had sunk into the ground. Then they got to work on their own and made a new towbar, stronger than the old one.

The father smiled and said, "Oh, boys, you were looking for Trouble in the wilderness, and it was with you. Trouble itself has helped you fix your car. Think about it and you will understand that it is so."

THE WEIGHT OF THE GLASS

Once upon a time, a psychology professor walked around on a stage while teaching stress management principles to an auditorium filled with students. As she raised a glass of water, everyone expected they'd be asked the typical "glass half empty or glass half full" question. Instead, with a smile on her face, the professor asked, "How heavy is this glass of water I'm holding?"

Students shouted out answers ranging from eight ounces to a couple pounds.

She replied, "From my perspective, the absolute weight of this glass doesn't matter. It all depends on how long I hold it. If I hold it for a minute or two, it's fairly light. If I hold it for an hour straight, its weight might make my arm ache a little. If I hold it for a day

straight, my arm will likely cramp up and feel completely numb and paralyzed, forcing me to drop the glass to the floor. In each case, the weight of the glass doesn't change, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it feels to me."

As the class shook their heads in agreement, she continued, "Your stresses and worries in life are very much like this glass of water. Think about them for a while and nothing happens.

Think about them a bit longer and you begin to ache a little. Think about them all day long, and you will feel completely numb and paralyzed – incapable of doing anything else until you drop them."

THE STRONG LION AND THE LITTLE MOUSE

A hunter trapped a lion in the woods, tied him with a rope, and sent his comrades into the town to buy a chain to tie the strong animal even tighter. The lion was tied to an oak tree. He roared terribly, the trees twisted in his voice, he rumbled with his feet and dug everything around, but he could not free himself. There was a hole near the root of the oak. And in the hole a mouse huddled, frightened by the loud roar. When the lion got tired of roaring and digging with his feet, the mouse went out to see where the loud noise was coming from. She looked around and, seeing nothing else, asked the lion what was going on. The king of animals swung his tail and told her to leave. The mouse got scared and went back to its hole, but it couldn't stand for long and came out again, but the lion chased it away this time as well. The third time the mouse came out of its hole and said softly to the lion, "Tell me, my friend, what do you need? Maybe I can help you." The lion growled, but still explained that the hunters had caught him and then gone in search of a chain to tie him even tighter and take him around the towns for the amusement of the people, who would say that the king of animals could become a laughing stock. Finally, the lion told the mouse that there was no way she, so small and weak, could help him. And the mouse wished he had told her earlier why he was roaring so terribly and that she would save him quickly. Then she threw herself on the lion's neck and, cross, cross, bit the rope. The lion, as soon as he saw himself free, ran away and wondered, "How could this happen? I, such a big and strong lion, king of all animals,

a scarecrow for small and big, what did I live to happen to me, so that now I am indebted to a nothing and no mouse!"

THE JESTER AND THE KING

Once upon a time a king had a jester in his court. The king was so fond of him that the jester enjoyed every kind of liberty of speech. He did not even spare the lords and ministers. So much that he began to ridicule even the king but no one could dare to complain against him. This made the jester bold and proud. He cared for none.

One day while the king was holding court and was busy with serious state affairs, the jester made fun of the king. Dead silence fell on the court. The king got highly offended and sentenced the jester to death. The jester bent down over his knees and begged for mercy but the king was angry that he turned down his request.

At last, when the jester pleaded for mercy again and again, the king said, "Die you must but I give you the freedom to choose the kind of death you like."

The clever jester at once used his ready wit and took good advantage of the concession saying "Your Majesty! I choose to die of old age." The king was impressed and forgave the jester with warning for the future.